



# Is Spiritualism True ?

379.

A LECTURE



**MRS. E. L. WATSON.**

Professedly under the Inspiration of the late  
**William Denton,**

As reported in the *Banner of Light*, with an explanation of  
the peculiar circumstances under which it was given.

---

PRICE, 3d.

---

MELBOURNE :

W. H. TERRY, 84 RUSSELL STREET.

1884.





# IS SPIRITUALISM TRUE ?

---

A Lecture given by Mrs. E. L. WATSON, at Metropolitan Temple, San Francisco, Cal., on the Occasion of the Thirty-Sixth Anniversary of Modern Spiritualism, under the Inspiration of Prof William Denton.

---

THE following remarks were made by Mrs. Watson in explanation of her departure from her usual course in permitting the name of the control to be announced :

"We feel that it is but simple justice to ourselves to say a few words in explanation of the announcement that on this occasion I should address you under the spirit-inspiration of our friend, Prof. Wm. Denton.

My friends are aware that in announcing the name of my spirit-inspirer I have departed from the rule of my life. I have never attached any importance to a name given through a spirit-medium, never have thought that it was a guarantee of higher intelligence.

For myself I do not claim to be a perfect psychological subject. While I am entirely dependent upon the influence which comes to me, and to which I am sensibly alive on these occasions, I am perfectly well aware that my own organism and my own lack of culture limit the intellectual action of my brain, even under the best condition of inspiration. I will say, in justice to myself and to those unacquainted with the laws of inspiration, that I began speaking before the public when I was not fourteen years of age ; that I have never received anything that is worthy

the name of a 'common school' education; that the only education I have received has been from observation and the instructions received when I have been in an abnormal state. At the same time I am always conscious when speaking, and I never know whether I am in a favorable condition for control or not. I go before my audiences always utterly unprepared to utter a sentence on my own part. I never know the opening words of my lectures, and am a listener with yourselves. The imperfections attending my ministrations are all on the human side, of course—to be accredited to my own ignorance and to my own want of susceptibility to the spiritual influences.

On this occasion I departed from my rule of announcing the spirit-control, for one very strong reason: Two weeks ago a friend—a veracious gentleman—came to me with a communication purporting to come from Prof. Wm. Denton, through a medium of the highest standing, declaring that he desired, four weeks from the time the message was given (which brings it to-night), to control me and address the audience upon the subject 'Is Spiritualism True?'

I said to my friend, 'I cannot consent; I am sometimes aware of the personality of my inspirations, but not always.' I persisted in the negative of the proposition, when suddenly, entirely unexpected to me, I felt conscious of Prof. Denton's presence; it was as palpable and as real to me as is the presence of this audience to-night. There came with this consciousness an electrical shock—a strong emotion. I immediately arose from my chair, and in the presence of two friends, who were listening to my argument against the announcement of the name, walked the room, trying to throw off the psychological influence. While I thus walked it seemed as though my friend Denton was beside me, and the thoughts with which he impressed me were these: 'I am aware of your feelings of reluctance in regard to announcing the name of your control. I am aware of your timidity and self-distrust as a medium, but you must remember that I made sacrifices for Spiritualism when I was in the form. I have many friends in San Francisco. I am your friend. You were the last representative of Spiritualism that I saw in the form in Australia. This is an

extraordinary occasion ; the curtain is dropped between me, as a personal identity, and the world for which I labored many years. No doubt there will be those present who will cavil, and ridicule the idea that I inspired you, but to me it will be a satisfaction, and some of my friends will feel and recognize my presence. It will be a satisfaction to me to be identified on the first Anniversary after my departure to spirit-life.'

All this passed through my mind very rapidly, and tears fell from my face. My pride stood between me and this announcement, because I felt the shafts of ridicule that would be immediately aimed at me. I have reason to feel, since Prof. Denton departed, that he was a warmer friend than I had supposed. It is only two or three weeks since I received from a prominent man in the East a letter, in which he speaks of Prof. Denton's warm friendship for me, and his recommending me to certain influential societies in the East.

When I arrived in Australia I succeeded Prof. Denton in Melbourne. My public reception and his farewell were held at the same place, on the same evening. His parting words were, 'I shall meet you in America.'

All these things came over me with great force and power. I put myself in Prof. Denton's place for a moment, and finally took my seat beside my friend, and said, 'I will have to give it up ; I cannot withstand my friend's desire.'

Whether I fail or not it will be no test of Spiritualism, but simply a test of my psychological susceptibility. I never stand upon the rostrum but I feel the sustaining power of the spirit, and I have felt the presence of that group of noble, patient, forbearing souls through the varied scenes of the last twenty-five years in my public and private ministrations. I do not suppose Prof. Denton will identify himself this evening, or be able clearly to express his thought. The failure or success of the experiment depends upon my passivity, and it is very difficult to be passive under some conditions."

---

Facts are the finger-prints of God ; and one fact is worth more than all the speculations of any number of men's minds.

One fact, if it be no larger than the print of a raindrop in the sand, falling ages ago, lives forever. One fact, if it be but the shadow of the moon cast across the disk of the sun, overturns hundreds of theories and lifts our thoughts of nature from the darkness of superstition and fear.

What are the facts relative to those occult forces which have been set at liberty within the last half century, in various quarters of the globe, that point directly to an intelligence independent of the physical brain? and what is the value of human testimony? For when questioning the facts relative to Spiritualism, whether it be ancient or modern, this question of human testimony is a very important one. Dr. Carpenter declares that when the phenomenon is so astounding as is represented by the modern Spiritist we must doubt our senses and fall back on common sense. But is it common sense to doubt our senses? What other avenues have we through which to ascertain anything in regard to the truths of natural law? If this rule of Dr. Carpenter had been adhered to, where would have been the natural sciences to-day? what would we have known of astronomy, of geology and all the rest, had we not relied upon our senses, had we not brought these to bear upon the records of the past? If we had not brought our senses to bear upon this realm of tangible life, what would be the value of our testimony in regard to any of the phenomena of nature? It is only through our senses that we can possibly become acquainted with these phenomena; it is only by the use of these powers that we can in any manner form an estimate in regard to the action of natural law.

Now when one witness appears declaring that he has seen the falling of a meteor, it is a very extraordinary occurrence; there are very few men, comparatively, that have seen the falling of a meteor; and yet, as few as are these witnesses, we believe them in regard to this phenomenon. There are very few men, comparatively speaking, who have witnessed a murder, and yet we all believe that murders do occur in this world. If you did not rely upon the study, upon the experiments, upon the testimony of the scientists, upon the discoveries of the inventors, how many things could you believe in this world? how barren would your

realm of facts become! The truth is that we rely upon the testimony of others for the great volume and majority of our well-known facts, and we rely upon the testimony of their senses for the establishment of these facts.

Now, then, we have witnesses in every age of the world to these astounding mental phenomena—phenomena which can be accounted for upon no other hypothesis than that of the Spiritualist; than that intelligence is possible independent of the visible physical brain. Unless we accept the testimony of the ancients in regard to these phenomena, the spiritual life of your sacred scriptures becomes extinct. Unless we accept the testimony of the ancients in regard to the possibility of receiving intelligent communication independent of physical brains, we must forever dismiss the subject of spiritual matter as contained in the bibles of the ages; and we are thrown back into the realm of cold materialism, except that in our day we may repeat these experiments, and we become witnesses ourselves to these phenomena which arrested the attention of the ancients and upon which they built strong superstructures of spiritual philosophy and from whence sprang the most notable religions of all ages.

Now I do not go to the Bible of any people to confirm me in spiritual things. But if so be that in my own experience, and in the experience of veracious men and women, there are given me evidences of the existence of these invisible intelligent forces, then do I see how it is possible that those are truthful affirmations on the part of the ancients.

The Christian goes to his Bible as authority for his faith, his confidence and his hope. I accept of no authority except facts that can be demonstrated. Facts are constantly being reaffirmed, and are constantly repeating themselves in the realm of men's spiritual experience. I do not go to the Bible for my evidence of spiritual things, but to my own experience, to my own spiritual insight, and the experience of my fellow-men. If the facts of the Bible are corroborative, so much the better for Scripture, and none the worse for facts. Any hypothesis that explains the greatest number of related facts is admitted by the scientists to be in all

probability nearest the truth. This is a very good rule; now we claim that there has been no hypothesis presented in these modern times; none attempted that in any measure meets the exigencies of the case, that to any great extent explains the various phenomena of Modern Spiritualism. How can unintelligent electricity explain invisible intelligence? How can the idea that your mind can operate through your brain, and move tables, and lift pianofortes unconsciously to yourself, explain the intelligent communications that have been articulated through these ponderable, unintelligent bodies? How can the unconscious cerebration of a medium give to you, my auditor, the exact words which passed between you and your departed father, relating incidents occurring in that death-chamber thousands of miles away, the very memory of which had seemed to be obliterated, or greatly obscured in your own mind? Suddenly here, far from the place where the circumstances had transpired, you have repeated to you the incidents of that death-bed; and you have told to you in detail all the circumstances attending it; and you have reiterated to you the very parting words of that dear one just before you kissed the eyelids down. How can electricity, magnetism, mind-reading explain facts like these? and what hypothesis so reasonable as that of the presence purporting to communicate?

Again, how is it possible that electricity shall take a clean slate, which has been examined by the investigator, and has not been touched by the psychic, or writing medium; after the examination it is laid twenty feet away from the psychic, in the presence of three or four veracious witnesses; the movement of a pencil is heard upon that slate lying isolated from all human contact, upon which, after a few moments, on examination, there is found an intelligible sentence—how, in any other light than that of Spiritualism, can be explained this phenomenon of intelligent communication separate from all human contact?

Again, how is it possible for the exercise of the human will to introduce here, in your presence, the visible form of a departed friend, accurate in every detail, producing every feature, every idiosyncrasy; reproducing even the deformities that may be characteristic of the body? How can the will

power reproduce this visible, tangible body of the spirit in your presence?

Again, how is it possible, upon any physical law, that a person sitting in this room shall be able to relate in detail an occurrence upon the street, giving accurately every incident, every circumstance transpiring out there beyond the possibility of the human eye to perceive?

Well, you say, this is simply an extraordinary power of the human mind while acting through a physical brain; and all these phenomena of which we have spoken may be explained upon the same hypothesis: it is through intelligence here in the body acting in unknown ways unconsciously to itself, and operating by virtue of unknown laws, that these things transpire. Nay, but if it is proven that it is possible for you to be conscious of transactions out upon the street, removed from you as a physical being, and that you are not dependent upon any of the physical senses for your information, is it not proven to you that there is a spiritual power existent in the human body which is independent of that body? Is it not proof positive that there is in the nature of man a spiritual power which transcends the powers of the body? If we can see without the optic nerve, if we can hear without the tympanum of the ear, then can we not readily believe that, when eye and ear are dissolved by death, this transcendent power of the human soul may still be in existence, and that it may still take cognizance of the circumstances of our common earth? I declare to you that the facts of clairvoyance establish the fact of an independent spiritual nature in man; I mean a nature independent of these physical substances.

But, you say, there is no such thing as thought without a brain. Do you not know that in the physical form it is not the physical eye that sees? that the last analysis of the scientist cannot ascertain the connecting link between the delicate mechanism of the eye, and that inner force, that invisible nature, which takes cognizance of life's facts? Do you not know that the dead body weighs as much, actually, as the living body, and that there is in these physical senses no power apart from the spirit to perform any action whatsoever? If it is possible for us to hear with ears other than



the physical, to see with eyes other than those of the physical organism, does it not follow that these physical organs serve in the most external sphere, and that for the innermost thought and for the other states of consciousness, we must be dependent upon more refined substances? Every student of nature knows that a refined body may interpenetrate this body; that there are forces fluent. We can see this illustrated in the action of the common magnet; we can see how this magnet will act upon steel filings through wood or marble. What are the influences so delicate as to elude the power of the microscope and the physical perception? What are these influences that may inflow through wood and marble, and thus move ponderable substances? It shows conclusively that there are refined bodies, it may be in fluent states, attenuated forms embodied in these forms. It is as unreasonable to say that man may not be possessed of a spiritual organism and a physical at the same time, as it is to declare that you cannot be conscious of two sensations at the same time; yet we know that we see and hear and feel all at the same instant; we know that all our states of consciousness are affected by the visible environments. And we know, too, that this spiritual nature of man eludes all the finest and most delicate instruments which have yet been engaged in the service of scientific research.

Now there may be some present to-night who doubt the fact of clairvoyance; who doubt the fact that ponderable bodies are moved without visible contact; that these mysterious rappings respond intelligently to questions of ours; that hands have been controlled to write sentences that were never formulated in the physical brain; and that the human organs of speech have been controlled to utter words that never entered the consciousness of the spirit medium thus influenced. But this question of human testimony comes in here, and we know that the witnesses of these phenomena number millions. There are many persons who suppose that the only witnesses of spiritual manifestations are those who attend the public séances, and that Spiritualists believe in miraculous manifestations and a miraculous power. Nothing of the sort! We believe preëminently in the universality and the eternity of nature; that every fact of

man's spiritual consciousness rests in immutable law—as much so as the formation of the strata of the earth. Will you listen to these witnesses? They are not all babes and sucklings; they are not all ignoramuses, nor all materialists, atheists and infidels. But we have the testimony of the ancients, such as Apollonius, Plato, Socrates, Jesus, St. Paul, James, Peter and John; and these, to the Christian, are excellent witnesses. They do not dare to tell me that these witnesses are far-fetched; they do not dare to tell me that these manifestations were not recorded until years after they took place; that they were a matter of tradition for a hundred years, and are therefore unreliable. They do not dare to tell me this, because their whole religious system rests upon the truth or falsity of these things. If they impeach their own witnesses, where are their facts? If they have no facts, how poor is their philosophy, how hollow is their religion; for the day has come when the imperative demand of every human soul (there are some who are asleep, and will be asleep long after Gabriel's trumpet has blown), but every soul that is awake demands some living fact to substantiate faith, and faith without a fact—circumstantial evidence at least—has become nothing but a puff of wind.

Christianity admits these witnesses of whom we have spoken, but here is the materialist, the atheist, the infidel—and mark you, Modern Spiritualism has converted more hard-headed materialists than were ever won by the Bible and all the Christians in the world; the converts to the old faith in these days are men who want free passports to heaven, no matter how they get there, only so they reach their journey's end in safety—those of whom we have spoken, the materialists and the atheists, do not accept these old witnesses; they say, "Bring us a living witness, just produce a living, breathing man or woman who has seen some of these things. Moreover, we can't believe it then." "Let me see it for myself, let me question it for myself," said Prof. Hare; "I will demonstrate to you in a few hours, in a few days, at the very longest, how fallacious, how preposterous it is to suppose that dead men can speak or manifest their presence." And he went to work as a scientist; not by any means as a Solon of the old faith; not by any means ready to take

evidence at second hand, but determined to investigate these phenomena just as he would investigate any chemical action, or any of the physical phenomena in nature. This is the way, let me tell you, to investigate spiritual facts; to go to work with your eyes and ears open, determined to get at the bottom proof; determined to know the truth or the falsehood. What was his conclusion? After a thorough, scientific and rigid investigation he was forced to admit the facts.

What was the result of the investigations of Judge Edmonds, of the Supreme Court of New York? Mediumship in his own family. (Our mediums are not all dwelling in poverty and ignorance.) Mediums developed in his own family. Nay, himself developed in clairvoyance, beheld the spiritual presence, not clothed in materiality, but demonstrating the power of intelligence to exist after the decay of the body; beheld spirits, many in number, friends whom he had buried, conversed with them face to face in this natural life into which he entered. Under these circumstances his own daughter, a cultured, beautiful, refined young lady, developed in various phases of mediumship, speaking in tongues of which she had no knowledge in her normal state. At last, in spite of the sacrifices, the ridicule, the ostracism, and of all the crosses that men were called upon to bear under those circumstances, at that time, Judge Edmonds came forth nobly, grandly, and declared his conviction and knowledge of the fact that spirits can and do communicate.

Bring more witnesses, say you. Profs. Zöllner, and Wallace, and Crookes, whose names stand high upon the roll of scientific fame, went to work to investigate Spiritualism—all satisfied in their own minds previously to this undertaking that at the most it was simply an occult force which science after a time would explain. They investigated with as much care as they would any principle in nature; they watched the phenomena most closely; they brought their delicate instruments to bear in this investigation, and the result was that these men, notwithstanding the ridicule of their contemporaries and scientific brethren, came out and placed over their signature the record of the result of their investigation, and declared that upon no other theory

than that of spiritual intelligence could these wonderful, these astounding phenomena be explained.

More witnesses, say you? At the Church Congress in England there came forth an array of talent, questioning: "What are we to do with this subject of Spiritualism?" Canon Wilberforce and others admitted that the spiritual phenomena are founded on fact; that it was no longer of any use for the Church to ignore this fact which was now proven: How we are to deal with it, becomes the question. And these leaders in the Church recognized in Spiritualism a very efficacious weapon which might be wielded against their enemies—the Materialists and the Atheists. And they said: It seems to us that the Church is not called upon to fling away from herself this wonderful weapon, this most powerful in all the arsenal of faith, the spiritual knowledge by which she may reduce materialism to a minimum and bring over the world to a conviction of man's immortality.

These are a few of our witnesses, and to these can be added thousands of laymen all over our country. For my own part I investigated as a student of nature, as a scientist and a lover of truth; and I became convinced of the fact, not only that man is a spiritual being now while encased in this form of clay, and possessed of transcendent powers, but that these powers are liberated by the change called death, and may react upon matter so as to give the strongest evidence of man's immortality and remove from us the incubus of theology that has oppressed the heart of humanity so long with its dread weight of doubt and fear. I ascertained by thorough investigation, not only that men have souls, but through the operation of psychic laws I discovered that spirits in the form might read the history of inanimate matter, its transformations, its journeyings over the face of the earth. I have taken fragments of an Egyptian pyramid and placed them, covered and sealed, without the knowledge of the psychic subject, in her hand, and straightway the subject has declared the nature of the substance, and given me the ancient history of the pyramid. I have taken a meteoric stone, and, the medium having no previous knowledge of the character of the article, holding it in her hand, has explained to me the nature of the substance, and given

me a chemical analysis of it. In thousands of instances I have been able to demonstrate that there is a spiritual insight, that there is a psychic perception of the soul of things, by which, in time, the history of the planet may be read, from the moment it leaped, a tongue of fire, from the parent sun, up to the present time when brains respond to spiritual powers, as when in the great Pentecostal Day the multitudes proclaimed the presence of the Most High.

I have in my own investigation determined the fact that disembodied spirits may project themselves into space under a clothing of refined matter. I have demonstrated in my own investigations the fact that without these physical eyes men and women may travel long distances and penetrate into deep mysteries; that they may not only read my present thought, but the incidents of my past life. I have demonstrated the fact that these powers are not resident in the Anglo-Saxon race only; that they are not peculiar to any age or nation of the world, but are known to every tribe or people on the face of the planet. In every age of the world these droppings from out the invisible heavens, these heart-throbs of unseen worlds, have revealed to you facts before unknown, even as the microscope reveals to your vision material forms of which before you had no knowledge—and even as the telescope (through which, you will remember, the theologians and philosophers solemnly refused to look, when called upon by Galileo: “See for yourselves this wonderful thing! behold these moons of Jupiter!” and they said: “No, we have no use for four moons of Jupiter; they would not influence the earth if they existed, and therefore they do not exist!”)—even as this telescope reveals new worlds to man.

Now, in our age, when we say: “Come and look through our spiritual spectrum, it unravels the mysteries of death, it gives to us the secret of man’s inspiration and proof of his future existence,” they say: “No, no; we had all needful inspirations eighteen hundred years ago; we have our authority, we have our precedent; we have no use for these inspirations, for clairvoyance; no use for spirit visitors; and therefore there are none such.”

These theologians and these materialists ask us, with an arrogant air: "What is the use if it is true?" Well ask God Almighty that question. I am not accountable for the facts of nature, but simply for their discovery. If there is a fact here for which there is no use, charge it to the Almighty. But my belief is that every fact is of use. It may be that the four moons of Jupiter are of no particular service to this earth; but I have come to the conclusion that there are other worlds in the immeasurable depths of space for which the Infinite has a care, and that he clasps them in his arms.

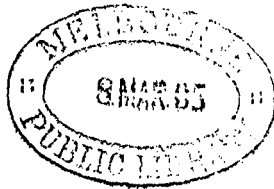
But if to-day I have not discovered the use of these facts, mayhap the next year, the next century, the next indefinite period may discover the use of them. But, you say, it is preposterous that our sainted dead will come and rap at our doors and on our tables. But did they not rap before they died? And what is death if it has destroyed the affection that would come rapping for admission at your doors? Did they not use the physical forces before they died? and what reason have you to suppose that they can dispense with them now in their efforts to communicate with you?

You will doubtless remember when Mr. Field came rapping at the doors of the English capitalist with his scheme of the Atlantic cable, the incredulity with which it was received, and the difficulties he encountered. But there is nothing so successful as success; and at last, when the fact was established, the nations on bended knees whispered to each other under the waves of the sea. As these electrical forces are utilized in various ways to-day, so will it be with these unseen rappings and manifestations that come to us from the world beyond.

Who might prophesy the result of the observation of that common phenomenon, the falling of an apple? It waited for the eye of a Newton, and lo! the law of gravity burst from its unconscious bonds, and there opened upon the soul a vision of beauty which unraveled the mystery of the stars. So it is with these phenomena. How insignificant is the alphabet! Who, looking upon this little row of twenty-six letters, could prophesy what a Shakspeare and a Byron could do with these few little arbitrary signs? But when

intelligence grasps them as powers, they carve a Macbeth, a Hamlet, a thousand beautiful imaginings—nay, things that are being verified in our own lives.

Tell me of the insignificance of these phenomena ! I tell you there is nothing insignificant in the system of God's government, from the drop of dew that distils in the silence of night to the most distant star ; from the opening of these lily-hearts and roses ; from the breath of the infant, as sweet as the fragrance of the violet ; from the whispered prayer of the penitent ; from the wringing of the hands of an abandoned woman ; from the priceless jewel of tears of sympathy, to the gleaming, radiant vision which dawns upon the astronomer through his own instrument—the power of whose lens shall yet be intensified until the deeps and vacuums now unfilled shall burst upon his vision in blooms of beauty everlasting. There is nothing insignificant ; nothing in nature that God does not need ; but every fact in the universe is a link in that chain which makes up the immortal destiny and happiness of his children everywhere.



The following Works by the late William Denton may be obtained at the "Harbinger of Light" Office, 84 Russell Street, Melbourne:

Geology. The past and present of our planet, 7/6

Soul of Things; or, Psychometric Researches and Discoveries. 3 vols. 7/6 each.

What was he? or, Jesus in the light of the 19th century, 6/3

Is Darwin Right? or, the Origin of Man, 5/-

Radical Discourses on Religious Subjects, 6/3.

Radical Rhymes. 6/3.

The Irreconcilable Records; or, Genesis and Geology, 2/-  
Paper, 1/3.

Be Thyself, 6d. Is Spiritualism True? 6d.

Christianity no Finality. 6d. Commonsense Thoughts on  
the Bible, 6d. Man's true Saviours, 6d.

The Deluge, in the Light of Modern Science, 6d.

Sermon from Shakespere's Text, 6d. What is Right? 6d.

Pocasset Tragedy, 6d. Who are Christians? 6d.

Orthodoxy False, 6d.

The God proposed for our national constitution, 6d.

Garrison in Heaven, 6d.

Five Lectures delivered in Melbourne, reported in five Nos.  
of *Harbinger of Light*, 2/6 Denton Memorial No., with  
portrait, 6d. Cabinet Photo., 2/6; Carte, 1/-