

Spiritualism

No. 4.

HUMAN TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

COMPILED BY GEORGE A. BACON.

ALL dreams might be trusted, if men would only bring their bodies into such a state, before going to sleep, as to leave nothing that might occasion error or perturbation in their dreams. — *Plato*.

THAT to some persons prophecy occurs in dreams is not to be disbelieved. — *Aristotle*.

HAPPY would it be, if, whenever a spiritual mystery is presented to our thoughts, we did not reject it, because, transcending our little knowledge, it happens to be "undreamt of in our philosophy"! happy would it be if we did not suffer doubts and suspicions, and the sophistries of a sensualized scepticism, to shut up the avenues of our souls, instead of opening the door wide to give the mystery a stranger's welcome! — *Prof. Henry Reed*.

It appears to me no way contrary to reason to believe that the happy departed spirits see and know all they would wish, and are divinely permitted to know. In this, Mr. Wesley (the founder of Methodism) is of the same mind, — and that they *are* concerned for the dear fellow-pilgrims whom they have left behind. I cannot but believe they are. . . . Nor doth it seem contrary to reason to suppose a spirit in glory can turn its eye with as much ease, and look on any object below, as a mother can look through a window, and see the actions of her children in the court underneath it. If bodies have a language by which they can convey their thoughts to each other, though sometimes at a distance, have spirits no language, think you, by which they can converse with our spirits, and, by impressions on the mind, speak to us as easily as before they did by the tongue? And what can interrupt either the presence, communication, or sight of a spirit?

"Walls within walls no more its passage bar
Than unopposing space of liquid air."

. . . Though it is allowed we may have communion with angels, various are the objections raised against the belief of our communion with that other part of the heavenly family, — *the disembodied spirits of the just*. If there is joy throughout all the realms above, yea, "more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over the ninety and nine which went not astray," how evident it is to an impartial eye that the state, both of the one and the other,

must be known there, together with the progress of each individual! . . . Have not spirits faculties suited to spirits, by which we may suppose they can as easily discern our soul as we could discern their body when they were in the same state as ourself? . . . If "he maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire," cannot a spirit be with me in a moment, as easily as a stroke from an electrical machine can convey the fire, for many miles in one moment, through thousands of bodies, if properly linked together? — *Mrs. Mary Fletcher.*

THAT the dead are seen no more, I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent testimony of all ages and all nations. There is no people, rude or unlearned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth: those that never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience could make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues confess it with their fears. — *Samuel Johnson.*

I MERELY mean to say what Johnson said,
That, in the course of some six thousand years,
All nations have believed that from the dead
A visitant at intervals appears;
And what is strangest upon this strange head
Is, that, whatever bar the reason rears
Gainst such belief, there's something stronger still
In its behalf, let those deny who will. — *Byron.*

I MUST confess, as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven principally kindles my love to them on earth. If I thought that I should never know, and consequently never love, them after this life, I should number them with temporal things, and love them as such: but I now delightfully converse with my pious friends, in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them forever; and I take comfort in those that are dead or absent, believing that I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love. — *Richard Baxter.*

As to the power of holding intercourse with spirits emancipated from our present sphere, we see no reason why it should not exist; and do some reason why it should rarely be developed, but none why it should not sometimes. These spirits are, we all believe, existent somehow; and there seems to be no good reason why a person in spiritual nearness to them, whom such intercourse cannot agitate or engross so that he cannot walk steadily in his present path, should not enjoy it when of use to him. — *Margaret Fuller.*

ALL houses wherein men have lived and died
Are haunted houses. Through the open doors,
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide,
With feet that make no sound upon the floors. — *Henry W. Longfellow.*

Oh! tell me not that the fathers of this Republic are dead, — that generous host, that airy army of invincible heroes. They hover as a cloud of witnesses above this nation. Are they dead that yet speak louder than we can speak, and a more universal language? Are they dead that yet act? Are they dead that yet move upon society, and inspire the people with nobler motives and more heroic patriotism? — *Henry Ward Beecher.*

I CANNOT get over the feeling that the souls of the dead do somehow connect themselves with the places of their former habitations, and that the hush and thrill of spirit which we feel in them may be owing to the overshadowing presence of the invisible. St. Paul says, "We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses;" but how can they be witnesses if they cannot see, and be cognizant? — *Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence, of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God in various passages both of the Old and New Testament; and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath, in its turn, borne testimony, — either by examples seemingly well attested, or by prohibitory laws, which at least suppose the possibility of commerce with evil spirits. — *Blackstone.*

I THINK a person who is terrified with the imagination of ghosts and spectres much more reasonable than one, who, contrary to the reports of all historians, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of spirits fabulous and groundless. Could not I give myself up to this general testimony of mankind, I should to the relations of particular persons who are now living, and whom I cannot distrust in other matters of fact. — *Addison.*

THE inquiry is not, as I take it, whether the inhabitants of the invisible spaces do really come hither or no, but who they are who do come. — *Daniel De Foe.*

WE believe, on the authority of Scripture, that spirits are capable of entering human bodies, of speaking through them, and acting in them; and hence we believe in the possibility of spirits operating on matter in the way of rapping out the letters of the alphabet, or in the way of writing with the pencil. — *Dr. Campbell,* in "British Standard."

As the manifestations have spread from house to house, from city to city, from one part of the country to the other, across the Atlantic into Europe, till now the civilized world is compelled to acknowledge their reality, however diverse in accounting for them; as these manifestations continue to increase in variety and power, so that all suspicion of trick or imposture becomes simply absurd and preposterous; and as every attempt to find a solution for them in some physical theory relating to electricity, the odic force, clairvoyance, and the like, has thus far proved abortive, — it becomes every intelligent mind to enter into an investigation of them

with candor and fairness as opportunity may offer, and to bear such testimony in regard to them as the facts may warrant, no matter what ridicule it may excite on the part of the uninformed or sceptical. Our conviction is, that they cannot be accounted for on any other theory than that of spiritual agency. — *William Lloyd Garrison.*

I HAVE sat with three others around a small table, with every one of our eight hands lying plainly, palpably, on that table, and heard rapid writing with a pencil on paper, which, perfectly white, we had just previously placed under that table; and have, the next minute, picked up that paper with a sensible, straight-forward message of twenty to fifty words fairly written thereon. I do not say by whom, or by what, said message was written; yet I am quite confident that none of the persons present who were visible to mortal eyes wrote it. — *Horace Greeley.*

It is a sublime and beautiful doctrine of the early fathers, that there are guardian angels appointed to watch over cities and nations, to take care of good men, and to guard and guide the steps of helpless infancy. — *Washington Irving.*

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thoughts would hold
An hour's communion with the dead! — *Tennyson.*

LET sceptical, hard, matter-of-fact men talk as they may, there is a lingering belief in the possibility of occasional communication between the natural and the supernatural, the *visible* and the *invisible* world, inherent in human nature.

There are few persons whose lives do not contain at least some few occurrences which are incapable of being satisfactorily explained by any known laws, — remarkable presentiments, coincidences, and sometimes apparitions even, which seem to be beyond the reach of accident or chance, and overcome us with a special wonder. — *Bayard Taylor.*

WE need not doubt the fact, that angels, whose home is heaven, visit our earth, and bear a part in our transactions; and we have good reason to believe, that, if we obtain admission into heaven, we shall still have opportunity, not only to return to earth, but to view the operation of God in distant spheres, and be his ministers in other worlds. — *Rev. Wm. Ellery Channing.*

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