

you say, you have the testimony of a number of respectable and disinterested persons, who, at the alleged time and place, saw John Jones drink twelve tumblers of gin-and-water, and then go tottering and hiccuping along the street, you had better produce them without more ado. And this brings me to—

IV. *There is a body of evidence in favour of spiritualism at least as strong as can be alleged on behalf of any other creed.*

Here is the strong point for spiritualists, and perhaps some of their number may be inclined to think that the above proposition might be put with greater force. They may hold that whatever be the evidence in favour of the Christian miracles, there is fifty times as much in favour of spirit-rapping; that if there be a sufficient body of contemporary testimony to lead us to believe that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, there is very much stronger testimony to the fact that Mr Home, and a variety of other persons, have floated about in the air. An examination of the evidence, however, will alone enable

us to judge of the actual degree of its strength ; and, in the meanwhile, I am content to leave my proposition as it stands.

The first apostle of modern spiritualism seems undoubtedly to have been Swedenborg, in whose works the wide diffusion of the power at the present day is clearly predicted. We have not time, nor perhaps is it essential, to go into the career of the Poughkeepsie Seer, or of Kate and Margareta Fox, and the remaining pioneers of the existing creed. It may suffice for our purpose to note, that the power, or alleged power, of conversing with spirits manifested itself at about the same epoch in many different individuals and in various places, thus remarkably coinciding (if it be no more than a coincidence) with the prophecy of Joel : " And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit *upon all flesh* ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions ; and also upon the servants and the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit " (Joel ii. 28, 29). What I wish chiefly to direct attention to now is, the extraordinary man-

ner in which the new belief spread. Twenty years ago, to adopt the words which Mr Farrar uses of the early Christians, "It numbered but a handful of timid followers; . . . they were poor, they were ignorant, they were helpless." In 1861, Mr A. E. Newton of Boston estimated the spiritualists in the United States at between two and three millions. In 1866, Judge Edmonds puts their number at between five and six millions; and in 1867, at ten millions, adopting an estimate said to have been compiled by the Council of Roman Catholic Archbishops and Bishops assembled that year in Baltimore. Other estimates have been given; one by an Englishman, Mr E. H. Green, rating them as high as thirteen millions. We may dismiss these figures as exaggerations, and shall probably not be far wrong in adopting the more moderate computation of Mr Hepworth Dixon, an unbeliever, that "a tenth part of the population of the New England States, a fifteenth part of the population in New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, lie open, more or less, to impressions from what they call the spirit-world" ("New America," vol. ii., pp. 156, 157). He adds, "The number of their Lyceums,

the frequency of their picnics, the circulation of their journals, are facts within reach of some sort of verification." According to "Chambers' Cyclopædia" (article, "Spiritualism"), there were in the States in 1859, some ten years after the rise of the new creed, "one thousand public advocates of it, thirty periodicals devoted to its cause, besides hundreds of books and pamphlets that had already issued from the press," and since that time these figures have enormously increased. There are no reliable means of numbering the spiritualists in our own country, but judging from various indications, they must be far more numerous than is commonly supposed, probably to the extent—if united on some political object peculiar to themselves—of seriously influencing the national Legislature, or even, supposing Mr Hare's scheme to be adopted, of returning many spiritual members to Parliament. Thus we find four or five English periodicals devoted to the cause—*The Spiritual Magazine*, *Human Nature*, *Daybreak*, now the *Medium*, the *Spiritualist*, and the *Christian Spiritualist*.* We

* The *Queen* (lady's newspaper) has inserted an elaborate series of articles in favour of spiritualism, and *Temple Bar* has spoken of it not unfavourably.

read of "Progressive Libraries" and "Spiritual Depositories;" of associations of spiritualists at Clerkenwell, East London, Dalston, Brixton, Kilburn; of similar societies at Birmingham, Halifax, Bradford, and all over the country. In Australia, the establishment of the *Glowworm* as their organ is hailed by all spiritualists as evidence of the progress of the sect in those parts. Nor are these indications of the hold they have taken on the public mind, and the rate of their advance, confined to what is roughly called the Anglo-Saxon race. We hear of the *Revue Spiritualiste* in Paris, of a *Comité des Vereins für Spirite studien* established in Leipsig; while Mr Moncure Conway, the well-known Unitarian minister, author of "The Earthward Pilgrimage," and a non-spiritualist, stated at a public meeting, "that he had been recently travelling in Russia, and there among educated people, in the houses of Counts and Barons; wherever he mingled in intellectual society, he found that one or more of the members of the family were spiritualists." These indications of the power and progress of the belief might be very greatly multiplied, but enough has been said

to oblige us to arrive at the very modest conclusion of the *Spiritual Magazine*: "One thing is clear, that the spiritualists are *very numerous*."

It will perhaps be alleged that, in weighing the depositions of these millions of people, we are bound to take into account that the mass of them are persons in what are called the lower walks of life, and consequently prone to superstition. This is equally true in the case of the mass of the early converts to Christianity, and to all new religions. Indeed, to assert that a new creed is successful in gaining votaries on a large scale, is only to assert, in other words, that the vast majority of such votaries must needs belong to the lower classes, inasmuch as these constitute the great bulk of mankind. An army must, after all, be mainly made up of privates. But it is to be observed, further, that a proportionately larger number of the early converts to spiritualism have been men of education, of great reasoning powers, and of acknowledged eminence, than can be found in the list of the early votaries of any other creed under the sun. Neither Christianity nor Mahometanism, in the first quarter of a century of their respective

existences, could boast such an array of names as those of Professor and Mrs de Morgan, Mr Wallace, Mr Varley, Mr Robert Chambers, Dr G. Wilkinson, Mr Laman Blanchard, Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall, Mr William Howitt, Dr Gully, Mr Laurence Oliphant, Mr Hiram Powers, General Banks, Lord Lytton, Mr T. Adolphus Trollope, Mrs Crowe, Mrs Beecher Stowe, Mrs Mowatt, Mr Robert Owen, Mr R. D. Owen, Mr Nassau Senior, Judge Edmonds, Dr Hare, Elder Frederick, Professor Bush, Dr Elliotson, Lord Lindsay, Mr Hain Friswell, The Hon. Mrs Egerton, Captain Burton, Mr Wilkinson, Lord Adare, the Master of Lindsay, Baron Reichenbach, M. Leon Favre, Signor Damiani, Count Poninski, the Baroness von Güldenstübbe, Mr and Mrs Gerald Massey, the Rev. William Ker, Professor William Denton, Mr Thackeray, Sir Walter Trevelyan, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Brougham, and Archbishop Whately,* not to speak of others, with re-

* The above list is compiled from the *Spiritualist* and other journals. I have omitted many names given by one of them—*e.g.*, John Stuart Mill, Tennyson, Sir C. Wheatstone, Washington Irving, Abraham Lincoln, Horace Greeley, Longfellow, Victor Hugo, Guizot, Garibaldi, the ex-Emperor of the French, &c., because I do not find in these instances any *proof* given: and, very likely the wish to claim them as converts has been father to

gard to whose belief in spiritualism we have some, but not conclusive, evidence. Now here is a list of men and women above the average in intelligence and position—mathematicians, naturalists, electricians, judges, lawyers, generals, poets, poetesses, novelists, peers of the realm, professors, travellers,

the thought. With regard to the ex-Emperor, however, I have heard affirmative evidence from persons connected with the French Court. Some doubt may be felt with regard to some of the names given above. According to Mr Weld, "Last Winter in Rome," p. 180, Mr Thackeray distinctly informed the author that he gave in his adhesion to the truth of spiritualism : and this statement is to some extent borne out by remarks which he has been heard to make at the Garrick Club, where I knew him well and met him almost daily. Mr Fitzpatrick, in his "Memoirs of Whately," affirms that the Archbishop was a spiritualist. "Some of the last acts of his life were excited attempts at table-turning, and enthusiastic elicitation of spirit-rapping." Lord Lyndhurst was claimed as a convert by the *Spiritual Magazine* for 1863, p. 519, and the assertion has not, as far as I know, been denied. The same may be said of Mr Nassau William Senior. Mr Senior made no secret of his belief among his friends. He it was who recommended the publication of Mr Home's recent work by Messrs Longman (*Spiritual Magazine*, 1864, p. 336). Lord Brougham, in a preface to the "Book of Nature," by C. O. Groom Napier, F.C.S. (Hotten), goes so far as to write what follows : "There is but one question I would ask the author, Is the spiritualism of this work foreign to our materialistic, manufacturing age? No ; for amidst the varieties of mind which divers circumstances produce, are found those who cultivate man's highest faculties ;—to these the author addresses himself. But even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud, if it be no bigger than a man's hand ; *it is modern spiritualism.*"

doctors, distinguished actresses, essayists, political economists, clergymen of the Church of England, &c.; whom it is impossible to picture to one's self as lending themselves to fabrications in which they could have no conceivable worldly interest; and many of whom, one would suppose, from their known characters and pursuits, to be very unlikely to fall into a gross delusion—to be in the habit of weighing evidence and conducting scientific experiments. And to the names which I have given might be added those of others, who, while hesitating to give in their positive adhesion to spiritualism, have admitted that the phenomena which have come under their observation are of so startling a character as to defy explanation. Thus, Sir David Brewster writes: "We could give no explanation of them (the experiments), and could not conjecture how they could be produced by any kind of mechanism. Hands are sometimes seen and felt; the hand often grasps another and melts away, as it were, under the grasp" ("Home Life of Sir David Brewster," Edinburgh, 1869). Mr Crookes, F.R.S., editor of the *Chemical News*, tells us in the *Quarterly*

Journal of Science, "That certain physical phenomena, such as the movement of material substances, and the production of sounds resembling electric discharges, occur under circumstances in which they cannot be explained by any physical law at present known, is a fact of which I am as certain as I am of the most elementary fact in chemistry. My whole scientific education has been one long lesson of exactness in observation; and I wish it to be distinctly understood that this firm conviction is the result of most careful investigation." Mr J. M. Peebles, the United States Consul at Trebizond, in a lecture delivered at Battle Creek, near Chicago, and published in the Chicago paper *The Present Age*, of September 3, 1870, relates the following in connection with the Right Hon. John Bright:—"While in England I dined with John Bright, when transpired quite an earnest conversation on the subject of spiritualism. He said he had witnessed some of D. D. Home's manifestations. They were wonderful. He could attribute them to no cause unless it be the one alleged, that of intelligent disembodied spirits. 'But,' he added, with due caution, 'I do not say that this is

so ; but if it be true, it is the strongest tangible proof we have of immortality.” “The late Professor Baden Powell, in his essay on the ‘Spirit of the Inductive Philosophy,’ seems to intimate an inclination to believe that spiritual phenomena will yet be recognised as a part of the domain of nature, and become a subject for philosophic investigation. ‘In the present state of science,’ he remarks, ‘of all subjects that on which we know least is perhaps the connection of our bodily and mental nature, the action of the one on the other, and all the vast range of sensations, sympathies, and influences, in which those affections are displayed, and of which we have sometimes such extraordinary manifestations in peculiar states of excited cerebral or nervous action, somnambulism, spectral impressions, the phenomena of suspended animation, double consciousness, and the like. In such cases, science has not yet advanced to any generalisations; results only are presented, which have not as yet been traced to laws; yet no inductive inquirer for a moment doubts that these classes of phenomena are all really connected by some great principle of order. If,

then, *some peculiar manifestations* should appear, of a more extraordinary character, still less apparently reducible to any known principles, it could not be doubted by any philosophic mind that they were in reality harmonious and conspiring parts of some higher series of causes as yet undiscovered. The most formidable outstanding apparent anomalies will at some future time undoubtedly be found to merge in great and harmonious laws, the connection will be fully made out, and the claims of order, continuity, and analogy eventually vindicated” (“Chambers’s Cyclopædia”—“Spiritualism”). Professor Challis, the celebrated mathematician and Plumian Professor at Cambridge, wrote, in 1863, a letter to the *Clerical Journal*, in which he says: “But although I have no grounds, from personal observation, for giving credit to the asserted spontaneous movements of tables, I have been unable to resist the large amount of testimony to such facts, which has come from many independent sources, and from a vast number of witnesses. England, France, Germany, the United States of America, with most of the other nations of Christendom, contributed simultaneously their quota of

evidence *In short, the testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up.*"

Now, what are these narratives which flow in upon us from all parts of the Christian world with such a consensus, and from so many independent sources, that, according to Professor Challis, if they are not admitted to be true, "the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up?" What is it that these millions of witnesses depose to? Their evidence is to the effect that heavy dining-tables have risen several feet above the ground, and remained suspended in the air without visible means of support; that they have been rendered alternately so light that they could be raised from the carpet "like a sheet of paper," and so heavy that they could with difficulty be moved; chairs have glided mysteriously over the floor, ponderous pieces of furniture have been carried along "as a leaf is carried by the wind on a turnpike road," and that, often in large and well-lighted rooms, "the light being sufficient

to see the maker's name on the watch in very small characters. *A tremulous motion has run up the arms of all those present; small hand-bells placed on the carpet have rung when nothing could have touched them; they have then come over of their own accord and placed themselves in the hands of some of the witnesses.* These, and all the other phenomena to which I am referring, have been repeatedly exhibited before professed sceptics, who, though totally unable to explain them, or to conjecture how they could be produced by any other causes than spiritual agencies, have gone away quite unconvinced that they *were* so produced. For instance, those which I have italicised above are deposed to by Sir David Brewster. Tables large and small have oscillated with great violence, while numerous objects placed on them, such as delicate statuettes under glass-shades, have been quite undisturbed. In some cases the whole room has vibrated so violently, that engineers present have said that nothing but the strongest machinery could cause such oscillations.* Nor have such

* Deposition of Mrs Honeywood before the Dialectical Society.

astounding effects been produced upon walls and articles of furniture only. There exist numerous well-authenticated instances of the human body being carried into space—a result which no conjuring could bring about. Thus, in the presence of Lord Lindsay, Lord Adare, and Mr Berghem, on July 11, 1871, Mr Home was carried out of one window of a room seventy feet from the ground and brought in at another window. The moon was shining full into the room, and Mr Home was seen “floating in the air outside the window.” A minute account of the whole affair has been published by Lord Lindsay in the *Spiritualist* of July 15, 1871. Long before this, Mr Home had been seen to rise in the air, and pass out of one open window into another in a house near the Victoria Railway Station, and had been observed by one witness on another occasion “*gliding in the air several feet above the ground.*”* Mr E. L. Blanchard, the well-known author, testifies to having been “uplifted by the spirits himself, and kept for some time in the air.”† Mr J. Jones, of Enmore

* Deposition of Mr Jenkin, M.R.I., F.R.G.S., barrister-at-law, before the Dialectical Society, in 1869.

† Deposition of Mr E. L. Blanchard before the same Society.

Park, South Norwood, has seen chairs floating in the air, and had also "seen his own mother, an aged lady, raised off the ground, chair and all, by invisible agencies. *These things all occurred in the presence of many witnesses.*"* The Master of Lindsay, Grosvenor Square, and Mrs Cox, of Cox's Hotel, Jermyn Street, had seen Mr Home "floating in the air," and the former had also been a witness to his exploit near the Victoria Station.† At the house of Mrs Berry, on the 16th of December 1870, "her niece, Miss Berry, was floated in the air." On the 31st of May, at 74 Navarino Road, Dalston, Miss Cook of Hackney was not only floated in the air, but "carried about the room." These facts are testified to by eye-witnesses.

At a meeting of the St John's Association of Spiritualists, held at Clerkenwell on December 9, 1869, Mr Crockett testified to having seen a young man "lifted, chair and all, three times from the floor, without visible agency, *in the presence of some dozens of persons.*" Mr Henry Lord, secretary to

* Deposition of Mr Jones.

† Deposition of the Master of Lindsay and Mrs Cox.

the Halifax Psychological Society, certifies to Mrs Sagar having been "carried round her bedroom in mid-air." On another occasion, in the midst of a large circle, Mr Hearne was raised by the spirits to the ceiling, which was twelve feet from the floor, and had his head bumped against it. The same gentleman is said to have been "caught away" whilst walking in the neighbourhood of Islington in open day, and conveyed by invisible agency to a room in Mr Guppy's house at Highbury, the doors and windows being all closed. "Having made the strictest inquiries respecting this very remarkable event," writes Mr Benjamin Coleman, a very competent authority, "I am as certain of its having happened as I can be of any fact which I have not myself witnessed." Here, it is true, we want direct testimony; but, on another occasion, Mrs Guppy was carried by spirits from her house at Highbury Hill Park, a distance of nearly three miles, to a room in Lamb's Conduit Street, measuring twelve feet by ten, the doors and windows being closely fastened; and a party, which quite filled all the available space, being closely seated round a table, shoulder to shoulder. She

appeared to come through the ceiling, and was deposited on the table in complete *deshabille*, holding a household account-book in one hand, and a pen, with the ink still wet, in the other. These facts are deposed to by eleven respectable witnesses, who give their names and addresses. At another time Mrs Guppy and Mr Hearne were seen by several people floating in the air together. "I and at least *five hundred intelligent witnesses*," writes Mr Coleman, "know for a certainty that windows, doors, and stone-walls are no barriers to spiritual forces."

Other phenomena, not less startling than these, and equally well attested, present themselves to our notice. Sheets of paper, previously marked for identification, have been covered with crayon drawings, "in spaces of time varying from seven to ten seconds;" sometimes the paper has been marked by all those present, and "placed under a shawl which had been tied round the table."* This is an experience which seems to have been often repeated; and similarly, people who scarcely knew anything of drawing have, under spirit influence,

* Depositions of Messrs Coleman and Borthwick.

produced the most exquisite sketches.* And persons who knew next to nothing of music have played pieces which competent critics have pronounced "inexpressibly weird-like," "like the tones of a human being issuing from the pianoforte;" clouds of feathers and flowers (two or three hundred at a time) have poured down from the ceiling; spirit-lights like stars have moved about a room for an hour at a time; musical instruments have played tunes in a full blaze of light, and when it could be proved that there was no living being within eight feet of them. Mr Home, on many occasions, handled red-hot coals without being injured, and, what is much more striking, placed them *on the heads* and in the hands of persons present; and these facts are testified to by Lord Adare, Lord Dunraven, the Master of Lindsay, the Countess de Pomar, Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall, and many others.

Of course, it will be objected that some of these appearances were due to trickery—an allegation to which the Christian miracles are equally subject,

* Specimens have been exhibited by Count Poninski before the Leipsic Association for Spiritual Studies.