

Selected Chapters of
Spirit Teachings

Through The Mediumship of
William Stainton Moses

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Forward

The publishers take pride in the production of this book which has been out of print for too many years.

Its "author", the Rev. W. Stainton Moses, regarded as the man who gave Spiritualism its "bible" was one of the most remarkable mediums of the last century.

Spirit Teachings, which came through his hand in what is called "automatic writing", is regarded as Spiritualism's greatest classic.

Here, in language of matchless prose, is contained the religious, philosophical and ethical implications of Spiritualism, as viewed by the spirit world. The communicators, by sheer brilliant logic, compelled their medium to abandon, stage by stage, his orthodox religious beliefs. They gave clear evidence of their high purpose and furnished him with irrefutable proofs of Survival.

There were twenty-two spirit communicators, headed by one who signed himself "Imperator". Later, he revealed that he was one of the Bible prophets. Others proved that they were ancient philosophers and sages.

The writing of this script — it was done in Stainton Moses's normal waking state — took eleven years and filled twenty four notebooks. With the exception of the third, which has been lost, they are all preserved at the College of Physic Studies.

Stainton Moses was the son of a headmaster of a Lincolnshire grammar school. As a youth he won a scholarship which took him to Oxford. A successful college life, which seemed to offer the highest possible honours, was interrupted by poor health, which forced convalescence abroad.

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He was ordained a few years after his return. His first clerical appointment, at the age of twenty-four, was as a curate in the Isle of Man. He won praise for his labours for his parishioners during an outbreak of smallpox which took a heavy toll.

Ill health dogged his footsteps, causing him to resign from the Church. Dr. Stanhope Speer, who attended him, invited Moses to become his son's tutor. Mrs. Speer, confined to bed by illness, read a book on Spiritualism and asked Moses to ascertain whether the experiences described in it were true. Although at that time, he regarded Spiritualism as trickery and fraud, he promised to investigate the subject. Within six months, as a result of attending seances, he became a convinced Spiritualist.

About this time, his own psychic powers began to function, and many kinds of phenomena were experienced. By means of spirit rapping, questions were answered intelligently and long messages given. Materialised lights were often seen. Varying perfumes were poured, by invisible operators, on the sitters' hands and handkerchiefs. Direct writing was obtained on paper out of the circle's reach. Objects were brought from other rooms through bolted doors. There were levitations of the medium and of furniture. Occasionally the voices of the spirit communicators were heard. In trance, Moses delivered many inspirational addresses.

In his Introduction to Spirit Teachings, this tribute to his inspirers was paid by Moses: "There is no flippant message, no attempt at jest, no vulgarity or incongruity, no false or misleading statement, so far as I know or could discover; nothing incompatible with the avowed object, again and again repeated, of instruction, enlightenment and guidance by spirits fitted for this task."

Introduction

The communications which form the bulk of this volume were received by the process known as Automatic or Passive Writing. This is to be distinguished from Psychography. In the former case, the Psychic holds the pen or pencil, or places his hand upon the Planchette, and the message is written without the conscious intervention of his mind. In the latter case, the writing is direct, or is obtained without the use of the hand of the psychic, and sometimes without the aid of pen or pencil.

Automatic Writing is a well-known method of communication with the invisible world of what we loosely call Spirit. I use that word as the most intelligible to my readers, though I am well aware that I shall be told that I ought not to apply any such term to many of the unseen beings who communicate with earth, of whom we hear much and often as being the *reliquice* of humanity, the *shells* of what once were *men*. It is no part of my business to enter into this moot question. My interlocutors call themselves Spirits, perhaps because I so called them, and Spirits they are to me for my present purposes.

These messages began to be written through my hand just ten years since, 30th March 1873, about a year after my first introduction to Spiritualism. I had had many communications before, and this method was adopted for the purpose of convenience, and also to preserve what was intended to be a connected body of teaching. The laborious method of rapping out messages was manifestly unfitted for communications such as those which I here print. If spoken through the lips of the medium in trance, they were partially lost, and it was, moreover, impossible at first to rely upon such a measure of mental passivity as would preserve them from admixture with his ideas.

I procured a pocket-book, which I habitually carried about with me. I soon found that writing flowed more easily when I used a book that was permeated with the psychic aura, just as raps come more easily on a table that has been frequently used for the purpose, and as phenomena occur most readily in the medium's own room. When Slade could not get messages on a new slate, he rarely failed to get one on his own seasoned one. I am not responsible for the fact, the reason for which is sufficiently intelligible.

At first the writing was very small and irregular, and it was necessary for me to write slowly and cautiously, and to watch the hand, following the lines with my eye, otherwise the message soon became incoherent, and the result was mere scribble.

In a short time, however, I found that I could dispense with these precautions. The writing, while becoming more and more minute, became at the same time very regular and beautifully formed. As a specimen of calligraphy, some of the pages are exceedingly beautiful. The answers to my questions (written at the top of the page) were paragraphed, and arranged as if for the press: and the name of God was always written in capitals, and slowly, and, as it seemed, reverentially. The subject matter was always of a pure and elevated character, much of it being of personal application, intended for my own guidance and direction. I may say that throughout the whole of these written communications, extending in unbroken continuity to the year 1880, there is n flippant message, no attempt at jest, no vulgarity or incongruity, no false or misleading statement, so far as I know or could discover; nothing incompatible with the avowed object, again and again repeated, of instruction, enlightenment, and guidance by Spirits fitted for the task. Judged as I should wish to be judged myself, they were what they pretended to be. Their words were words of sincerity, and of sober, serious purpose.

The earliest communications were all written in the minute characters that I have described, and were uniform in style, and in the signature, "Doctor, the Teacher": nor have his messages ever varied during all the years that he has written. Whenever and wherever he wrote, his handwriting was unchanged, showing indeed, less change than my own does during the last decade. The tricks of style remained the same, and there was, in short, a sustained individuality throughout his messages. He is to me an entity, a personality, a being with his own idiosyncrasies and

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characteristics, quite as clearly defined as the human beings with whom I come in contact, if, indeed, I do not do him injustice by the broad comparison.

After a time, communications came from other sources, and these were distinguished, each by its own handwriting, and by its own peculiarities of style and expression. These, once assumed, were equally invariable. I could tell at once who was writing by the mere characteristics of the calligraphy. By degrees I found that many Spirits, who were unable to influence my hand themselves, sought the aid of a Spirit "Rector", who was apparently able to write more freely, and with less strain on me, for writing by a Spirit unaccustomed to the work was often incoherent, and always resulted in a serious drain upon my vital powers. They did not know how easily the reserve of force was exhausted, and I suffered proportionately.

Moreover, the writing of the Spirit who thus became a sort of amanuensis was fluent and easy to decipher, whereas that of many Spirits was cramped, archaic in form, and frequently executed with difficulty, and almost illegible. So it came to pass, that, as a matter of ordinary course, Rector wrote: but, when a Spirit came for the first time, or when it was desired to emphasise a communication, the Spirit responsible for the message wrote for himself.

It must not be assumed, however, that all messages proceeded from one solitary inspiration. In the case of the majority of the communications printed in this volume this is so. The volume is the record of a period during which "Imperator" was alone concerned with me; though, as he never attempted writing, Rector acted as his amanuensis. At other times, and especially since that time, communications have apparently proceeded from a company of associated Spirits, who have used their amanuensis for the purpose of their message. This was increasingly the case during the last five years that I have received these communications.

The circumstances under which the messages were written were infinitely various. As a rule, it was necessary that I should be isolated, and the more passive my mind the more easy was the communication. But I have received these messages under all sorts of conditions. At first they came with difficulty, but soon the mechanical method appeared to be mastered, and page after page was covered with matter of which the specimens contained in this book will enable the public to judge.

What is now printed has been subject to revision by a method similar to that by which it was written. Originally published in the SPIRITUALIST newspaper, the messages have been revised, but not substantially altered by those who first wrote them. When the publication in the SPIRITUALIST was commenced I had no sort of idea of doing what is now being done. Friends desired specimens to be published, and the selection was made without any special regard to continuity. I was governed only by a desire to avoid the publication of what was of personal interest only: and I perforce excluded much that involved allusion to those still living whom I had no right to drag into print. I disliked printing personal matter relating to myself: I had obviously no right to print that which concerned others. Some of the most striking and impressive communications have thus been excluded: and what is printed must be regarded as a mere sample of what cannot see the light now, and which must be reserved for consideration at a remote period when I and those concerned can no longer be aggrieved by its publication.

It is an interesting subject for speculation where my own thoughts entered into the subject-matter of the communications. I took extraordinary pains to prevent any such admixture. At first the writing was slow, and it was necessary for me to follow it with my eye, but even then the thoughts were not my thoughts. Very soon the messages assumed a character of which I had no doubt whatever that the thought was opposed to my own. But I cultivated the power of occupying my mind with other things during the time that the writing was going on, and was able to read an abstruse book, and follow out a line of close reasoning, while the message was written with unbroken regularity. Messages so written extended over many pages, and in their course there is no correction, no fault in composition, and often a sustained vigour and beauty of style.

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I am not, however, concerned to contend that my own mind was not utilised, or that what was thus written did not depend for its form on the mental qualifications of the medium through whom it was given. So far as I know, it is always the case that the idiosyncrasies of the medium are traceable in such communications. It is not conceivable that it should be otherwise. But it is certain that the mass of ideas conveyed to me were alien to my own opinions, were in the main opposed to my settled convictions, and moreover, that in several cases information, of which I was assuredly ignorant, clear, precise, and definite in form, susceptible of verification, and always exact, was thus conveyed to me. As at many of the seances spirits came and rapped out on the table clear and precise information about themselves, which we afterwards verified, so on repeated occasions was such information conveyed to me by this method of automatic writing.

I argue from the one case to others. In one I can positively assert and prove the conveyance of information new to me. In others I equally believe that I was in communication with an external intelligence that conveyed to me thoughts other than my own. Indeed, the subject-matter of many of the communications printed in this volume will, by its own inherent quality, probably lead to the same conclusion.

I never could command the writing. It came unsought usually: and when I did seek it, as often as not I was unable to obtain it. A sudden impulse, coming I knew not how, led me to sit down and prepare to write. Where the messages were in regular course, I was accustomed to devote the first hour of each day to sitting for their reception. I rose early, and the beginning of the day was spent, in a room that I used for no other purpose, in what was to all intents and purposes a religious service. These writings frequently came then, but I could no means reckon on them. Other forms of spirit manifestations came too: I was rarely without some, unless ill-health intervened, as it often did of late years, until the messages ceased.

The particular communications which I received from the Spirit known to me as IMPERATOR, mark a distinct epoch in my life. I have noted in the course of my remarks the intense exaltation of spirit, the strenuous conflict, the intervals of peace that I have since longed for, but have seldom attained, which marked their transmission. It was a period of education in which I underwent a spiritual development that was, in its outcome, a very regeneration. I cannot hope, I do not try, to convey to others what I then experienced. But it may possibly be borne in upon the minds of some, who are not ignorant of the dispensation of the Spirit in their own inner selves, that for me the question of the beneficent action of external Spirit on my own self was then finally settled. I have never since, even in the vagaries of an extremely sceptical mind, and amid much cause for questioning, ever seriously entertained a doubt.

This introduction has become autobiographical in a way that is extremely distasteful to me. I can only plead that I have reason to know that the history of the pleading Spirit with one struggling soul has been helpful to others. It is unfortunately necessary for me to speak of myself in order to make what follows intelligible. I regret the necessity, and acquiesce in it only from the conviction that what I record may be of use to some to whom my experiences may come home as typical. I presume that no two of us ever struggle up to light by precisely similar methods. But I believe that the needs and difficulties of individual souls have a family likeness, and it may be in the future, as I am thankful to know that it has been in the past, serviceable to some to learn by what methods I was educated.

Besides this — the subject matter of these communications, and their bearing educationally on myself — the form and manner of their delivery is of infinitely small importance. It is their intrinsic claim, the end disclosed, the inherent and essential truth that they contain, which marks their value. To many they will be utterly valueless, because their truth is not truth to them. To others they will be merely curious. To some they will be as an idle tale. I do not publish them in any expectation of general acceptance. I shall be quite content that they be at the service of any who can find them helpful.

M.A. (OXON.)

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March 30, 1883.

The God-Idea

[S. Moses: I am reluctant to publish what is so private in its nature and bearings: but I am constrained to do so, and my justification is that what was the experience of one may be the experience of many, and the history of my mental and spiritual struggles may be helpful to others who are passing through a similar phase. After an interval of some days, during which I received no communication on the subject of the religious teaching of spirits, I requested permission to state further objections which pressed strongly on my mind. As I recall my state, I was perplexed and startled by what had been said. I was unable to accept what was so new; and the great point that weighed with me was that of "Spirit Identity." It seemed in my then state that I must have complete proof of the earth identity of the communicating spirit before I could accept the statements made. I believed such direct demonstration to be procurable; and I was distressed that it was not given. I did not know then (July, 1873) as I do now that the evidence of conviction is what alone is to be had; and that no cut-and-dried plan such as I propounded would really have carried with it the conviction I imagined. Moreover, I was distressed by the feeling that much that passed current for spirit communication was silly and frivolous, if not mischievous. I compared the teaching of the Christian moralists with spirit teaching very much to the disadvantage of the latter. I also considered that there was very wide divergence between teachings given by spirits, and that all sorts of opinions were professed. Most of these I disliked personally, and I did not believe that they benefited the people who received them. I fancied that many such were enthusiasts and fanatics, and was repelled by the idea. Neither from internal nor external evidence was I greatly attracted, and the objections that I put at that time were directed to the points above noticed. They related principally to evidence about identity, to what I thought would be the probable dealings of God with mankind, and to the general character and outcome of Spiritualism. The next answer made to me was as follows:—]

FRIEND, we are pleased to converse with you again; and if it be impossible for us to answer all your queries, and to solve all your problems, we can at least rectify some errors into which you have fallen as to the dealings of God with man, and the tendency of the mission which we have in charge.

The root of your error seems to lie in a false conception of God and of His dealings with mankind. Surely the page of human history bears upon it the story of one uniformly progressive revelation of One and the same God. The attempts of men to realise and picture to themselves the God whom they ignorantly worship have led to the strangest and most fallacious notions as to His nature and operations.

In the early days of man's history the crude notion of a God inherent in His spiritual nature took shape as a fetish, which was alternately prayed to with reverence or cast aside with contumely, in proportion as the prayer was granted or delayed. Men knew not that the block before which they bowed was powerless, and that round them hovered ever the bands of spirit ministers who were ready to succour and defend them, and to bear to them answers to their reasonable prayers. They could grasp no more of God than that. The tangible, palpable image was to them the embodiment of their idea. Mark this! of *their idea of God*, not of God Himself, but of the crude conception which was the best idea they could frame. Drawing their information from their own dealings, they imagined for themselves certain rules of conduct by which they proceeded to judge the God whom they had created. They feigned for Him human passions such as they found worthy of respect in their fellows. They credited Him with some failings which were inseparable from humanity as they knew it. He was jealous of His honour; long-suffering and of tender pity; according as they who spoke of Him imagined that He ought to be. He was, in short, a glorified man—a man endued with omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. They feigned Him such and made Him act accordingly. **Consequently all the revelation of God is characteristic of the age in which it is given.** It grows

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with human development, and is progressively proportioned to the development of human intellect and refinement, simply because the human medium becomes capable of being impressed with more accurate views of the Deity in proportion as he has shaken himself free from his former fetters of ignorance, and has himself progressed towards light and knowledge.

We have frequently said that **God reveals Himself as man can bear it**. It must needs be so. He is revealed through a human medium, and can only be made known in such measure as the medium can receive the communication. It is impossible that knowledge of God should outstrip man's capacity. Were we now to tell you—if we could—of our more perfect theology it would seem to you strange and unintelligible. We shall, by slow degrees, instil into your mind so much of truth as you can receive, and then you will see your present errors. But that is not yet. Indeed, since the conception which each frames for himself is to him his God, it cannot be that revelation can be in advance of capacity. It is in the nature of things impossible.

Hence you see that when you credit God with motives and say, "This cannot be. God is acting here contrary to His nature. He cannot so act now, because He did not so act then," you are simply saying, "My idea of God is so and so, and I cannot at present get another one. According to what I believe, my God would not do so." And that is precisely what we say. You have made your God, and you have made Him act as you see fit. By and by, as your mind expands—either in your present state of being or in another—you will get fresh light, and then you will say, "Now I see that I was wrong. God is not what I fancied at all. How could I ever have entertained such notions!"

This is very much the case with all progressive minds. To some the time of development comes not in this life. They must wait for a newer light in a newer life. But to some there comes a flood of knowledge even in their present place of existence. The old grows flat and profitless. The soul craves for a newer and truer revelation; for something which shall be as the spirit among the dry bones, and shall give them a resurrection unto life.

Well, you have had, or you are having, your revelation. Your mind, as some would say, has widened, and has pictured a God more in accordance with its advanced capacities.

You have received from an external source—the same whence all other Divine knowledge flows down to man—a newer and richer revealing of the Supreme, others may say.

Call it what you will. The two operations of revelation and comprehension, of knowledge and capacity, must be correlative. **The knowledge does not come until there is capacity to receive it**. Neither does the mind get higher revelation until it has so far advanced as to feel the want of it; and that for the simple reason that it is itself the agent through which comes the revelation of which it is the recipient.

All your fancied theories about God have filtered down to you through human channels; the embodiments of human cravings after knowledge of Him; the creation of minds that were undeveloped, whose wants were not your wants, whose God, or rather whose notions about God are not yours. You try hard to make the ideas fit it, but they will not fit in, because they are the produce of divers intelligences in divers degrees of development.

Think! You say to us that we are not of God, because our ideas of Him made known to you are not compatible with some notions which you have derived from certain of the books in your sacred records. Tell us which is the God with whom we are at variance in our ideal. Is it the God who walked in human form with Adam, and is fabled to have wreaked direful vengeance on the ignorant creatures who are said to have committed what you now see to be a very venial fault? Or, is it the God who commanded His faithful friend to sacrifice to Him the only child of his love as an acceptable offering? Or is it the God who reigned over Israel as an earthly monarch, and whose care was feigned to be devoted to the enunciation of sanitary laws, or to the construction of a tabernacle, who went forth with the armies of Israel to battle, and issued bloodthirsty laws and regulations for the extirpation of innocent and unoffending peoples? Or is it, perchance, the God who enabled His servant Joshua to arrest the course of the

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universe and to paralyse the solar system, in order that the Israelites might revel a few hours more in gore and carnage? Or is it rather with the God who feigned to be so angry with His chosen people because they wished for a visible monarch, that He visited upon them an elaborate revenge extending over many hundred of years? Or with which of the Gods of the prophets are we at variance? with Isaiah's God, or with Ezekiel's? or with the lugubrious Deity that Jeremiah's morbid mind imagined? or with David's Divinity—half father, half tyrant, cruel and yielding by turns, always inconsistent and irrational? or with Joel's? or with John's? or with Paul's Calvinistic conception, imagined and painted with horrid phantasies of predestination, and hell, and election, and a dreamy, listless heaven? Are we at variance with Paul, or John, or Jesus?

But there is no need to press the fact that revelation has always been proportioned to man's capacity, and coloured by man's mind. The idea of God has been throughout the ages the conception, more or less vivid, of those who have been the media of revelation. The implanted idea has taken form and shape from the mental surroundings of the medium through whom it was given. Such portion of truth as the teachers have been able to impart has been moulded by the spirit of the medium into an individual shape. To none has complete truth be given, only so much of truth, such aspect of truth, as was necessary for a particular age and people. Hence it is that the conceptions of God, such as those we have now alluded to, are various and divergent. Of course, we and our God are not Joshua and his God: neither are we Paul and his God: though we challenge comparison between the God we know and reveal, and that God who was dimly shadowed forth to a people that knew Him not, by Him who knew Him best, and lived nearest to Him, the man Christ Jesus. He had received conceptions of Deity far clearer than any which His followers have grasped; His religion was simple, plain, and earnest. His theology was equally plain. The cry to "Our Father who art in Heaven," how widely does it differ from the elaborate dissertations on theology in which the Supreme is first informed of the character which man has assigned Him, and then is requested to act up to it with especial reference to the wants or fancied wants which the ignorant worshipper puts forward!

God! Ye know Him not! One day, when the Spirit stands within the veil which shrouds the spirit world from mortal gaze, you shall wonder at your ignorance of Him whom you have so foolishly imagined! He is far other than you have pictured Him. Were He such as you have pictured Him, were He such as you think, He would avenge on presumptuous man the insults which he puts on his Creator. But He is other, far other than man's poor grovelling mind can grasp, and He pities and forgives the ignorance of the blind mortal who paints Him after a self-imagined pattern. He blames not the ignorance. That is no shame, so it be not wilful. But He blames the folly which hugs a low conception of Him, and will have no light let in on the dark and musty temple in which the idol is enshrined. He blames the lovers of darkness, the haters of light, who cling to the undeveloped fancies of the past, and can see no beauty in the simple moral grandeur of the God whom Christ revealed, but must needs graft on to that noble conception the anthropomorphic fancies of previous unenlightened ages. Of such there are not a few who cannot receive higher teachings yet. But of such are not you! When you rashly complain of us that our teaching to you controverts that of the Old Testament, we can but answer that it does indeed controvert that old and repulsive view of the good God which made Him an angry, jealous, human tyrant: but that it is in fullest accord with that divinely-inspired revelation of Himself which He gave through Jesus Christ—a revelation which man has done so much to debase, and from which the best of the followers of Christ have so grievously fallen away.

If there be naught in what we say of God and of man's afterlife that commends itself to you, it must be that your mind has ceased to love the grander and simpler conceptions which it had once learned to drink in. It must be that the machinations of the adversaries have availed to reach your spirit, and that the dark edge of that cloud which they have interposed between your world and its God, is resting with baleful influence upon you. We pray that we may be permitted to raise it, and to pour into your soul once more the beams of enlightenment and peace. We do not fear that any permanent harm will rest with you. Nor do we regret that you should try the foundations on which your knowledge rests. It will not be wasted time to do so.

Cease to be anxious about the minute questions which are of minor moment. Dwell much on the great, the overwhelming necessity for a clearer revealing of the Supreme: on the blank and cheerless ignorance of God and of

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us which has crept over the world: on the noble creed we teach, on the bright future we reveal. **Cease to be perplexed by thoughts of an imagined Devil. For the honest, pure and truthful soul there is no Devil or Prince of Evil such as theology has feigned.**

Evil comes not nigh him; the adversaries flee from his presence, and the powers of evil are powerless before him. He is guarded around by angel guards, ministered to by bright spirits, who watch over him and direct his footsteps. For him there waits a career of progressive increase in knowledge, and in all that elevates and ennobles the intelligence. He need fear no Devil, unless he creates one for himself. His affinity for good draws around him influences for good. He is fenced around by guardians; nor can he, save by voluntary surrender, fall a final victim to the foe. His is no exemption from temptation, from the snares of the destroyer, or from the atmosphere which during his probation time he must breathe. The clouds of sorrow and anguish of soul may gather round him, and his spirit may be saddened with the burden of sin—weighed down with consciousness of surrounding misery and guilt, but no fabled Devil can gain dominion over him, or prevail to drag down his soul to hell. All the sadness of spirit, the acquaintance with grief, the intermingling with guilt, is part of the experience, in virtue of which his soul shall rise hereafter. The guardians are training and fitting it by those means to progress, and jealously protect it from the dominion of the foe.

It is only they who, by fondness for evil, by a lack of spiritual and excess of corporeal development, attract to themselves the congenial spirits of the undeveloped who have left the body, but have not forgotten its desires. These alone risk incursion of evil. These by proclivity attract evil, and it dwells with them at their invitation. They attract the lower spirits who hover nearest earth, and who are but too ready to rush in and mar our plans, and ruin our work for souls. These are they of whom you speak when you say in haste, that the result of Spiritualism is not for good. You err, friend. Blame not us that the lower spirits manifest for those who bid them welcome. Blame man's insensate folly, which will choose the low and grovelling rather than the pure and elevated. Blame his foolish laws, which daily hurry into a life for which they are unprepared, thousands of spirits, hampered and dragged down by a life of folly and sin, which has been fostered by custom and fashion. Blame the ginshops, and the madhouses, and the prisons, and the encouraged lusts and fiendish selfishness of man. This is it which damns legions of spirits—not, as ye fancy, in a sea of material fire, but in the flames of perpetuated lust, condemned to burn itself out in hopeless longing till the purged soul rises through the fire and surmounts its dead passions. Yes, blame these and kindred causes, if there be around undeveloped intelligences who shock you by their deception, and annoy you by frivolity and falsehood.

More on this hereafter. Already we have said more than we had intended. And for myself, I hear the call which summons me to the adoration of the Supreme, when my prayer shall rise to the throne of Divine pity that a rill of that consoling grace may trickle down to your vexed spirit, and may shed on it healing and peace—the peace of God, the quietness of assurance and peace.

+IMPERATOR.

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The Religion of the Body, and of the Soul

[S. Moses: On Aug. 26th, 1873, I had been reading over previous communications, and had thought much about the symbolic nature of spirit utterances. I had wondered whether we erred in being too literal in their interpretation. I put the question, and was told that I was in no fit state for communing. This is one instance out of many where the difficulty of communication was apparent. I was told to refresh myself. The day was rainy, dreary, and comfortless. I was below par, and in a strange place, being from home on a visit. I did as I was bid, and then it was written, at first with pain and slowly, then more easily:—]

The conditions, though still unfavourable, are better. You would be well advised to prepare yourself always, both mentally and bodily, for communion. As we have before said that we cannot operate when the body is overloaded with food, so now we say, that a system depressed and weak is not favourable for our purposes. We do not advocate the depression of the vital powers by neglect of due food any more than we countenance gluttony and drunkenness. We preach the mean in all things where it is knowable. Asceticism and self-indulgence are the extremes which are evil in their results. That is the mean for each which leaves the bodily powers in perfect play whilst it leaves the mental faculties unclouded and unexcited. A clear, active, undepressed yet unexcited mind we ask for, and a body whose powers are vigorous and neither in excess nor defect of their capacity. Each man might do much, by the exercise of a judicious self-control, to render himself better fitted both for his work on earth, and also for receiving instruction from those who are sent to minister to him. The habits of daily life are frequently unwise, and lead to a diseased state of body and mind. We lay down no rule beyond the general one of care and moderation. We can only tell what suits individual wants by being brought into personal contact. Each must learn to settle for himself what is best for him.

It is part of our mission to teach the religion of the body as well as of the soul. We proclaim to you, and to all, that the due care of the body is an essential prerequisite to the progress of the soul. So long as spirit is prisoned in the earth body through the avenues of which it finds its expression on the plane of matter, it is essential that you care intelligently for that body, lest it react on the spirit and affect it injuriously. Yet it is only in rare cases that intelligent discrimination is exercised with regard to food and clothing, and the habits of life which have so great an effect on spirit. The artificial state of existence which prevails, the ignorance with respect to all or nearly all that influences health, the vicious habits of excess that are so nearly universal, these are all bars and hindrances to true spiritual life.

Touching the matters on which you question, we remind you that we have many times said that we take the knowledge already existing in the mind, refine and spiritualise it, and build upon it as a foundation, only rejecting that which is noxious and untrue. We deal with old opinions as Jesus dealt with the Jewish law. He apparently abrogated the letter while He gave to the spirit a newer and nobler meaning. We do the same with the opinions and dogmas of modern Christianity as He did with the dicta of the Mosaic law, and the glosses of Pharisaical and Rabbinical orthodoxy. Even as He proclaimed the truth, true for all ages, that the letter might well be dispensed with, so that the spirit were retained; so do we, in words drawn from your own teachings, say to you that the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. Rigid adherence to the strict letter of the law is quite compatible with—nay, usually leads to—neglect of the true spirit. The man who begins by observing scrupulously the minutiae of the ritual law ends by becoming the proud, arrogant, unlovely Pharisee, whose religion is swallowed up by his theology, and who yet can thank God that he is not like other men.

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It is against this insidious form of religion that we wage determined war. Better for each struggling spirit that it should grope unaided after its God, trusting in the end to find Him, though after many wanderings, than that it should be cramped and confined by the trammels of an earth-born orthodoxy, which prescribes the God, as well as the way to reach Him—that way being through a wicket of which it holds the only key—which cramps all natural aspirations, drowns all soaring thoughts, and condemns the free spirit to mere mechanical action without a particle of true spiritual religion in it. Better, we say, anything than this parody on spiritual religion.

Some there are, and they not the noblest of your race, for whom it is essential that deep subjects of religion should be thought out ready to their hand. For them free spiritual thought would mean doubt, indecision, despair, death. They cannot climb the giddy heights where man must gaze into hidden mysteries, and face the unclouded radiance of the Sun of Truth. Not for them the pinnacles which overhang precipices deep down in which lie hid the Eternal Verities. They cannot gaze lest they fall: they cannot endure the ordeal: they must fall back on safer and more beaten paths, where others have walked before, even though the way be tortuous and uncertain. They must be hemmed in between high walls over which they dare not look. They must walk warily, picking their way step by step, and avoiding all inequalities, lest they stumble and fall. And so they fall back on the prescribed dogmas of unyielding orthodoxy. So it has been decided by the wisdom of the Church is the answer of their priests. Doubt is ruin; thought only ends in bewilderment; faith is the only safety. Believe and be saved. Believe not, and be damned. They are not able to receive these things. How should they? They have not yet grasped the fragments of truth that lie on the very threshold of knowledge. How, then, should they enter in and dwell in the penetralia where truth is enshrined in fullness?

Some there are who are not merely unable, but unwilling, to receive or entertain anything which militates against that ancient and received theology which they have learned to consider as the embodiment of Divine truth.

It has sufficed the needs of the saints of Christendom. It has cheered the martyr at the stake, and consoled the dying saint in ages long gone by even as now. It was their fathers' creed. It was the gospel of salvation which they learned from a mother's lips. It is that which they have received as the deposit of the truth, and which they are determined to teach their children, that they in turn may hand on the truth whole and undefiled. And so a feeling of heroic determination comes over them that they will not even touch that which seems to contravene this faith of theirs, consecrated to them by so many associations, and endeared by so many memories. They are, as they fancy, defenders of the faith: and all a martyr's zeal burns within them. They cannot be reached by any influence that we can bring to bear. Nor would we willingly interfere with so comfortable a faith. Were we to make the attempt, we should need to upset from the very foundations the edifice they have reared. We should need to make war on this faith which they love so well, and hew it down with merciless axe. Their Immutable God and their stereotyped religion, changeless and unchangeable, we should need to attack, and show that though God changes not, yet the mind of man does, and that what was sufficient for the past may be, and often is, quite inadequate for the future. We must show them—what they could never see—the progressive march of revelation, the gradual enlightenment of man in proportion to the freedom of his thought and the enormous mass of purely human fiction which they have dignified by the title of Divine Revelation. The task would be vain: and we are not so foolish as to attempt it. They must gain their knowledge in another sphere of being.

Some, again, have never thought about the matter at all. They have a sort of conventional idea about the external profession of religion, because they cannot get on well socially without it. But it is of the slenderest make, and will go into very small compass when not in use. It is indeed but the outside covering, which is not intended for anything but show. So long as it looks well from a distance, it serves the purpose for which they use it. These and such as these are our bitterest opponents. To force them to think about religion is most irksome and annoying to them. The subject is distasteful, tolerated only in its lightest form from sheer necessity. It is the business of priests to settle what is right, they take as much as is necessary on trust. To force them not only to see the flaws in the old faith, but to admire the excellences in the new, is a double aggravation, involving double trouble. They will have none of it. They cling to the past, and live in it. They are well as they are. Progress they hate. Freedom they know

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nothing of save in that conventional sense in which it approaches very near to slavery. Free thought to them means scepticism, doubt, atheism, and these all are not respectable. They are social blunders. Progress means something which politically and religiously is horrible to them. They not only shrink from it, but they view it with loathing and contempt. The good old times enshrine their ideal; and in the good old times such things were never heard of. Hence they are manifestly wicked, and to be avoided.

It is, no doubt plain to you that we have no dealings with these three classes, and with the myriads who lie in between them, enclosed within the poles of inability and unwillingness, or positive aversion. Hereafter you will learn that it does not rest with us to choose in the matter. We cannot reach them even if we would.

We strive to inculcate on all that the way to know God is open and free, and that the man who prefers stagnation to progress is violating one of the first conditions of his being. We say that man has no right to close the road to God, and to lock up the wicket, compelling all to pass through his door. We say again that rigid orthodoxy, dogmatic faith prescribed in human words, inflexible lines within which he who walks not is therefore lost—these are human figments, bonds of man's making to tie down aspiring souls, and pin them to earth. Better, we reiterate, for each struggling spirit to wander forth with no guide but its appointed angel, to pray for itself, to think for itself, to work for itself till the day-dawn of truth rise upon it, than that it should surrender its freedom and accept its religion at the dictation of any. Far, far better that the wanderings should be tortuous and long drawn out, and the creed scant and little satisfying; better that the cold winds should brace it, and the storms of heaven beat upon it, than that it should be cramped within the narrow, choking, airless avenue of human dogmatism, gasping for breath, crying for bread, and fed only with the stones of an ancient creed, the fossilised imaginings of human ignorance. Better, far better, that the shallowest and crudest notions of the Great Father should come to His child direct from spirit to spirit, the Divine inbreathing of Divine truth, than that he should consent to receive the most elaborate theology which fits and suits him not, and dream on in drowsy carelessness through the probation life, only to awake to a bitter consciousness of the falsity of that which he has so heedlessly accepted. **Honesty and fearlessness in the search after truth are the first prerequisites for finding it. Without these no spirit soars. With these none fail of progress.**

We have yet to show you more of this as exemplified in the Life and Example of the Lord Jesus.

We have shown you what to the enlightened mind is the true attitude of the spirit. This fearless thinking out of the way to God by those who are enabled to attempt it, will infallibly lead to what we unceasingly proclaim, a spiritual, refined, and elevated religion, in place of a literal, dogmatic interpretation of the words of your sacred records. For all utterances of spirits through man have a spiritual interpretation as well as a material one which meets the eye. And it is this spiritual interpretation which is entirely missed by a materialistic age. Man has gradually built around the teachings of Jesus a wall of deduction, and speculation, and material comment, similar to that with which the Pharisee had surrounded the Mosaic law. The tendency has increasingly been to do this in proportion as man has lost sight of the spiritual world. And so it has come to pass that we find hard, cold materialism deduced from teachings which were intended to breathe spirituality, and to do away with sensuous ritual.

It is our task to do for Christianity what Jesus did for Judaism. We would take the old forms and spiritualise their meaning, and infuse into them new life. Resurrection rather than abolition is what we desire. We say again that we do not abolish one jot or one tittle of the teaching which the Christ gave to the world. We do but wipe away man's material glosses, and show you the hidden spiritual meaning which he has missed. We strive to raise you in your daily life more and more from the dominion of the body, and to show you more and more of the mystic symbolism with which spirit life is permeated. They take but a shallow view of our teaching who pin themselves to the letter. We would raise you from the life of the body to that which shall be to you the fit approach to the state disembodied. There is but a glimpse possible as yet; but the time will come when you will be able to see, as we

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cannot explain to you in your present state, the true dignity of man's higher life even on the earth sphere, and the hidden mysteries with which that life is teeming.

Before you can reach so far you must be content to learn that there is a spiritual meaning underlying everything; that your Bible is full of it; man's interpretations, and definitions, and glosses being but the material husk which enshrines the kernel of divine truth. Were we to throw away this husk the tender kernel would wither and die. So we content ourselves with pointing out, as you can bear and understand, the living verity which underlies the external fact with which you are familiar.

This was the mission of the Christ. He claimed for Himself that fulfillment of the law, not its abolition or abrogation, was His intent. He pointed out the truth which was at the root of the Mosaic commandment. He stripped off the rags of Pharisaical ritual, the glosses of Rabbinical speculation, and laid bare the divine truth that was beneath all, the grand principles divinely inspired which man had well-nigh buried. He was not only a religious but a social reformer; and the grand business of His life was to elevate the people, spirit and body, to expose pretenders, and to strip off the mask of hypocrisy; to take the foot of the despot from the neck of the struggling slave, and to make man free by virtue of that truth which He came from God to declare. "Ye shall know the truth," He told His followers, "and the truth shall make you free: and ye shall be free indeed."

He reasoned of life and death and eternity; of the true nobility and dignity of man's nature; of the way to progressive knowledge of God. He came as the Great Fulfiller of the law; the man who showed, as never man showed before, the end for which the law was given—the amelioration of humanity. He taught men to look into the depths of their hearts, to test their lives, to try their motives, and to weigh all they did by the one ascertained balance—the fruits of life as the test of religion. He told men to be humble, merciful, truthful, pure, self-denying, honest in heart and intent; and He set before them a living example of the life which He preached.

He was the great social reformer, whose object was at least as much to benefit man corporeally, and to reveal to him a salvation from bigotry and selfishness, and narrow-mindedness in this life, as it was to reveal glimpses of a better life in the hereafter. He preached the religion of daily life, the moral progress of the spirit in the path of daily duty forward to a higher knowledge. Repentance for the past, amendment and progress in the future, summed up most of His teaching. He found a world buried in ignorance, at the mercy of an unscrupulous priesthood in matters religious; under the absolute sway of a tyrant in matters political. He taught liberty of both; but liberty without license; the liberty of a responsible spirit with duties to God and to itself; of a spirit corporeally enshrined with a corresponding duty to its brethren in the flesh. He laboured to show the true dignity of man. He would elevate him to the dignity of the truth, the truth which should make him free. He was no respecter of persons. He chose His associates and His apostles from the mean and poor. He lived amongst the common people; of them, with them, in their homes; teaching them simple lessons of truth which they needed and which they could receive. He went but little among those whose eyes were blinded by the mists of orthodoxy, respectability, or so-called human wisdom. He fired the hearts of His listeners with a yearning for something nobler, better, higher than they yet possessed; and He told them how to get it.

The gospel of humanity is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the only gospel that man needs; the only one that can reach his wants and minister of his necessities.

We continue to preach that same evangel. By commission from the same God, by authority and inspiration from the same source, do we come now as apostles of this heaven-sent gospel. We declare truths the same as Jesus taught. We preach His gospel, purified from the glosses and misinterpretations which man has gathered around it. We would spiritualise that which man has hidden under the heap of materialism.

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We would bring forth the spirit-truth from the grave in which man has buried it, and would tell to the listening souls of men that it lives still; the simple, yet grand truth of man's progressive destiny, of God's unceasing care, of Spirit's unslumbering watch over incarnated souls.

The burdens that a dogmatic priesthood has bound upon men's backs, we fling them to the winds; the dogmas which have hampered the soul, and dragged down its aspirations, we tear them asunder, and bid the soul go free. Our mission is the continuation of that old teaching which man has so strangely altered; its source identical; its course parallel; its end the same.

[S. Moses: I inquired whether I rightly understood that the work of teaching, a section of which is under the direction of Imperator, derived its mission from Christ.]

You understand aright. I have before said that I derive my mission, and am influenced in my work, by a spirit who has passed beyond the spheres of work into the higher heaven of contemplation. . . . Jesus Christ is now arranging His plans for the gathering in of His people, for the further revelation of the truth, as well as for the purging away of the erroneous beliefs which have accumulated in the past.

S. Moses: I have heard something of this from other sources. Is this then the return of Christ?

It is the spiritual return. There will be no such physical return as man has dreamed of. This will be the return to His people, by the voice of His Messengers speaking to those whose ears are open; even as He Himself said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear; he that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

S. Moses: Is this message coming to many?

Yes, to many it is being made known that God is now specially influencing man at this epoch. We may not say more. May the blessing of the Supreme rest on you.

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Earth In The View of Spirit

[S. Moses: Emperor having been absent, I asked some questions as to the cause, and was told that he had other work, not in this world, which had detained him. He was able, he said, to influence me without actual presence with me, as I should understand the term, but that this required the direction of thought (so to say) to me. Preoccupation would prevent that. And on this and other occasions he spoke of what I may call a meeting of the spirits for solemn adoration, and prayer, and praise, and intercession. More questions elicited amongst other answers the following on 12th October 1873—:]

We had betaken ourselves to prayer and intercession, and had withdrawn for awhile from the cares and anxieties which beset a mission to your nether sphere, into the peaceful seclusion and harmonious atmosphere of the sphere of adoration. It is well that we refresh ourselves at times with rest and the society of the blessed lest we fail and faint in our work; lest we grow sad and weary in spirit, and cease to labour with zeal and success.

Ah! you who in your earth-life have toiled among the lanes and alleys of your crowded cities, who have trodden the haunts of vice in the mission of mercy, who have breathed the stifling air, fever-laden and noisome in its impurity; who have watched the scenes of misery and sin, and have felt yourselves powerless to alleviate, much more to remove distress and want—you may know what are the feelings with which we minister amongst you. You have felt sick at heart, or you have pondered over the ignorance and folly and vice which you have no means of removing. You have felt prostrate with association with poverty and crime, and mind and body has wavered under the thankless toil. Yet what do we see and feel compared with what we do? You are apt to think of us as mysterious far-off beings who have no interest in your lives, no knowledge of your miseries, and no share in the troubles that beset you. **You do not understand that we can enter into your feelings and know the hidden griefs that vex you,** even more really than your fellow-man can. You think of us as dissociated from earth, whereas we have very real knowledge alike of its sorrows and its delights. And you fancy that the miseries, physical and spiritual, which crowd around the lives of some are beyond our ken. It is far otherwise. We see far more clearly than you the causes that produce sorrow, the temptations that beset the criminal, the miseries that drive to despair, the hordes of the undeveloped who throng around and tempt to vice and sin.

Our view is not alone of material misery, but of spiritual temptation; not alone of the sorrows that meet the eye of sense, but of the hidden grief of which man knows nothing. Do not fancy that we are unable to see and to know your sorrows and crimes, nor that we can mix with your people, and breathe the atmosphere of your world without drinking in somewhat of its curse.

What is the contrast from your life to that of the outcast in the noisome atmosphere of some foul den in a back alley of your crowded cities—the home of misery and crime—compared with that which strikes cold and chilling on us as we come to your lower spheres! We come from the land of light and purity and beauty, wherein is naught that is unclean, unholy, or impure—from a scene blurred with no disfigurement, where is no shadow of darkness—nothing but radiance and unspotted purity. We leave the society of the perfected, and the atmosphere in which dwells peace; we quit the light and love, the harmony and adoration of the spheres, and we descend to your cold earth, to a clime of darkness and despair—to an atmosphere of repulsion and sorrow—to an air heavy with misery and guilt—to a people disobedient, unbelieving, steeped in materialism, and dead to spirit influence—to a world crowded thick with vice, surrounded by the spirits of the undeveloped, and deaf to the voice of God. We quit the home where God's light and truth prevail, for the outer darkness of your earth, where only the faintest glimmer of spirit-truth, from circles rare and few, greets our eyes. Harmony and peace we exchange for turbulence and discord, for war and turmoil; the society of the pure and peaceful for the chilling company of the sceptic and scorner, or even of the drunkard and sensualist, the outcast and the thief. We leave temples where we adore the God of heaven for your nether world, where our God is unknown, and where a being of man's own imagining

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reigns in His place, save when even that idol has been dethroned, and man has relapsed into absolute disbelief in all spirit and all incorporeal existence.

This we do, only in most cases to find a people who are deaf and dead to us; aye, and even those who do in a measure listen to our words so long as they please them, and coincide with what they have themselves fancied—even they will turn away from following when we would raise them to a higher level and show them a purer light. The story of Jesus is fulfilled again. The people will wonder at miraculous works; they will follow so long as personal interest is excited, and personal curiosity gratified; but when we raise them from that level, when we cut out the egoistic element, and deal with eternal and imperial facts, they turn back—they are not able to receive what is too high for them. And so the designs of God are thwarted, and the benefits which we are commissioned to bestow are cast aside with thanklessness; and the chilling sense of threatened failure is added to our sorrow. So it is; and we withdraw at times for rest and refreshment, and return with the harmony of the spheres to cheer and comfort us in the midst of our labours in a cheerless world, and among a thankless people.

[S. Moses: I had not received a communication before which so savoured of pure human weakness, almost of the tone of despair. There had before been a tone of dignity which seemed to be above that of earth. Nothing, indeed, was more striking in the presence and words of IMPERATOR than his absolute superiority to the weaknesses, the petty cares and concerns of earth. He seemed to move, as indeed he did, in another world, and to be at once careless and unconcerned by the things which filled our human gaze. He was superior to them: his views were wide, and concerned with matters of imperial significance. Yet he was always tender and compassionate to our weakness, and quite undisturbed by any gusts of human passion. He was “in the world, but not of it,” a visitor from a calmer and more peaceful sphere, bringing with him somewhat of its repose. I remarked the tone of his words, and it was replied:—]

We complain, but we do not faint. Association with you and with your surroundings causes us to imbibe somewhat of the tone of your mind. We have said what we have said that you may know that we sacrifice somewhat, and that we are amenable to the same feelings which sway you. We suffer mental agony and spiritual distress. We feel pangs as real as those which wring the hearts of men. Were we not (as you say) human in our sympathies, we could not enter into your necessities. You will know, too, one day, that by a law as yet unknown to you, the spirit returning to earth takes on much of the pure human tone which it loses when absent. It becomes assimilated to earth and earthly ideas.

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The Spirit-Creed

[S. Moses: In order to follow the argument which I was now entering upon, it is necessary for the reader to remember that I was trained in strict accordance with Protestant Church principles: that I had spent much time in reading the theologies of the Greek and Roman Churches, and that I had accepted, as most nearly according with the views at which I had arrived, the tenets of that portion of the Church of England called Anglican. I had seen cause to revise some of my strong beliefs, but substantially I was what would be called a sound High Churchman.

From this time commences that state, to which I shall have often to refer, of great spiritual exaltation, during which I was profoundly conscious of the presence and influence of one commanding Intelligence, and of an action on my mind which eventuated in a development of thought amounting to nothing short of spiritual regeneration.]

You have objected to our teachings that they are not consistent with the received creed of orthodoxy. We have more to say on this subject.

Religion, the spirit's healthful life, has two aspects—the one pointing to God, the other to man. What says the spirit-creed of God?

In place of an angry, jealous tyrant it reveals a loving Father who is not loving in name alone, but in very deed and truth; into whose dealings naught but love can enter; who is just and good and full of affection to the lowest of His creatures.

It does not recognise any need of propitiation towards this God. It rejects as false any notion of this Divine Being vindictively punishing a transgressor, or requiring a vicarious sacrifice for sin. Still less does it teach that this omnipotent Being is enthroned in a heaven where His pleasure consists in the homage of the elect, and in the view of the tortures of the lost, who are for ever excluded in quenchless misery from light and hope.

No such anthropomorphism finds any place in our creed. God, as we know Him in the operation of His laws, is perfect, pure, loving, and holy, incapable of cruelty, tyranny, and other such human vices: viewing error with sorrow as knowing that sin contains its own sting, but eager to alleviate the smart by any means consistent with the immutable moral laws to which all alike are subject. God, the centre of light and love! God, operating in strict accordance with those laws which are a necessity of orderly existence! God, the grand object of our adoration, never of our dread!

We know of Him as you cannot know, as you cannot even picture in imagination: yet none has seen Him: nor are we content with the metaphysical sophistries with which prying curiosity and over-subtle speculation have obscured the primary conception of God amongst men. We pry not. The first conception with you even is grander, nobler, more sublime. We wait for higher knowledge. You must wait too.

On relations between God and His creatures we speak at large. Yet here, too, we clear off many of the minute points of human invention which have been from age to age accumulated round and over the central truths. We know nothing of election of a favoured few. The elect are they who work out for themselves a salvation according to the laws which regulate their being.

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We know nothing of the potency of blind faith or credulity. We know, indeed, the value of a trustful, receptive spirit, free from the littleness of perpetual suspicion. Such is God-like, and draws down angel guidance. But we abjure and denounce that most destructive doctrine that faith, belief, assent to dogmatic statements, have power to erase the traces of transgression; that an earth lifetime of vice and sloth and sin can be wiped away, and the spirit stand purified by a blind acceptance of a belief, of an idea, of a fancy, of a creed. Such teaching has debased more souls than anything else to which we can point.

Nor do we teach that there is a special and potent efficacy in any one belief to the exclusion of others. We do not believe that truth is the perquisite of any creed. In all there is a germ of truth; in all an accretion of error. We know, as you know not, the circumstances which decide to what special form of faith a mortal shall give his adherence, and we value it accordingly. We know exalted intelligences who stand high in spirit life, who were enabled to progress in spite of the creed which they professed on earth. We value only the earnest seeking after truth which may distinguish the professors of creeds the most widely dissimilar. We care not for the minute discussions which men delight in. We shrink from those curious prying into mysteries transcending knowledge which characterise your theologies. The theology of the spirit is simple and confined to knowledge. We value at nothing mere speculation. We care not for sectarianism, save that we know it to be a mischievous provoker of rancour, and spite, and malice, and ill-will.

We deal with religion as it affects us and you in simpler sort. Man—an immortal spirit, so we believe,—placed in earth-life as a school of training, has simple duties to perform, and in performing them is prepared for more advanced and progressive work. He is governed by immutable laws, which, if he transgresses them, work for him misery and loss; which, also, if respected, secure for him advancement and satisfaction.

He is the recipient of guidance from spirits who have trod the path before him, and who are commissioned to guide him if he will avail himself of their guidance. He has within him a standard of right which will direct him to the truth, if he will allow himself to be guided to keep it and protect it from injury. If he refuse these helps, he falls into transgression and deterioration. He is thrown back and finds misery in place of joy. His sins punish themselves. Of his duties he knows by the instinct of his spirit as well as by the teaching of his guardians. The performance of those duties brings progress and happiness. The spirit grows and gains newer and fuller views of that which makes for perfect, satisfying joy and peace.

This mortal existence is but a fragment of life. Its deeds and their results remain when the body is dead. The ramifications of wilful sin have to be followed out, and its results remedied in sorrow and shame.

The consequences of deeds of good are similarly permanent, and precede the pure soul and draw around it influences which welcome and aid it in the spheres.

Life, we teach you, is one and indivisible. One in its progressive development; and one in the effect on all alike of the eternal and immutable laws by which it is regulated. None are excused as favourites; none are punished mercilessly for error which they were unable to avoid. Eternal justice is the correlative of eternal love. Mercy is no divine attribute. It is needless; for mercy involves remission of a penalty inflicted, and no such remission can be made save where the results have been purged away. Pity is Godlike. Mercy is human.

We know naught of that sensational piety which is wholly wrapped up in contemplation, to neglect duty. We know that God is not so glorified. We preach the religion of work, of prayer, of adoration. We tell you of your duty to God, to your brother, and to yourself—soul and body alike. We leave to foolish men, groping blindly in the dark, their curious quibbles about theological figments. We deal with the practical life; and our creed may be briefly written:—

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Honour and love your Father, God. (Worship).....	Duty to God.
Help your brother onward in the path of progress. (Brotherly love).....	Duty to neighbour.
Tend and guard your own body (Bodily culture).....	Duty to self.
Cultivate every means of extending knowledge. (Mental progress).....	Duty to self
Seek for fuller views of progressive truths. (Spiritual growth).....	Duty to self
Do ever the right and good in accordance with your knowledge (Integrity).....	Duty to self
Cultivate communion with the spiritland by prayer and frequent intercourse. (Spiritual nurture).....	Duty to self

Within these rules is roughly indicated most that concerns you here. Yield no obedience to any sectarian dogmas. Give no blind adherence to any teaching that is not commended by reason. Put no unquestioning faith in communications which were made at a special time, and which are of private application. You will learn hereafter that the revelation of God is progressive, bounded by no time, confined to no people. It has never ceased. God reveals Himself as truly now as of old. He was revealed on Sinai. God does not shut off the progressive revealing of Himself in measure as man can bear it.

You will learn also that all revelation is made through a human channel: and consequently cannot but be tintured in some measure with human error. No revelation is of plenary inspiration. None can demand credence on any other than rational grounds. Therefore to say of a statement that it is not in accord with what was given through a human medium at any stated time is no derogation necessarily from the truth of that statement. Both may in their kind be true; yet each of different application. Set up no human standard of judgment other than that of right reason. Weigh what is said. If it be commended by reason, receive it; if not, reject it. If what is put before you be prematurely said, and you are unable to accept it, then in the name of God put it aside, and cling to aught that satisfies your soul and helps its onward progress. The time will come when what we lay before you of divine truth will be valued amongst men. We are content to wait, and our prayers shall join with yours to the Supreme and All-wise God that He will guide the seekers after truth, wherever they may be, to higher and more progressive knowledge, to richer and fuller insight into truth. May His blessing rest on you!

+IMPERATOR.

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God and Man

[S. Moses: Some reiterated objections of mine, which have been stated before, were finally answered thus (Aug. 31, 1873):—]

We propose to speak to you on a subject of which we have before treated, but not at large. You have alleged, and it has frequently been said, that the creed we profess and the system of religion which we teach, are vague, shadowy, and impalpable. It has been said that the effect of our teaching is to unsettle men's minds as to the old faith, without providing a new and rational form of belief. Many of these objections we have dealt with separately, but we have not yet attempted to set before you an exhaustive outline of the religion which we desire to see rooted among men. This we propose to do now, so far as it is possible.

We commence with God, the Supreme, All-Wise Ruler of the universe, who is enthroned over all in eternal calm, the Director and Judge of the totality of creation. Before His Majesty we bow in solemn adoration. We have not seen Him, nor do we hope yet to approach His presence. Millions of ages, as you count time, must run their course, and be succeeded by yet again myriads upon myriads, ere the perfected spirit—perfected through suffering and experience—can enter into the inner sanctuary to dwell in the presence of the All-pure, All-holy, All-perfect God.

But though we have not seen Him, we know yet more and more of the fathomless perfection of His nature, through a more intimate acquaintance with His works. We know, as you cannot, the power and wisdom, the tenderness and love of the Supreme. We trace it in a thousand ways which you cannot see. We feel it in a thousand forms which never reach your lower earth. And while you, poor mortals, dogmatise as to His essential attributes, and ignorantly frame for yourselves a being like unto yourselves, we are content to feel and to know His power as the operation of a Wise and Loving and All-pervading Intelligence. His government of the universe reveals Him to us as potent, wise, and good. His dealings with ourselves we know to be tender and loving.

The past has been fruitful of mercy and loving-kindness; the present has been instinct with love and tender considerations; into the future we do not pry. We are content to trust it in the hands of One whose power and love we have experienced. And we do not, as curious mortals please themselves with imagining, picture a future which has its origin in our own intelligence, and is disproved by each advancement in knowledge. We trust Him too really to care to speculate. We live for Him and to Him. We strive to learn and do His will, sure that in so doing we shall benefit ourselves and all created beings whom we tend; the while we pay to Him the honour which is His due, and the only homage which His Majesty can accept. We love Him; we worship Him; we adore Him; we obey Him; but we do not question His plans, or pry into His mysteries.

Of man we know more than we are permitted to tell, as yet. We are not charged to gratify curiosity, nor to open out to you views and speculations which would but bewilder your mind. Of the origin of man you may be content to know that the day will come when we shall be able to tell you more certainly of the spiritual nature, its origin and destiny; whence it came and whither it is going. For the present you may know that the theological story of a fall from a state of purity to a state of sin, as usually detailed and accepted, is misleading. Few, perhaps, even of those among you who have pondered on the subject, have not given up all attempts to reconcile with reason so distorted a legend. You may better direct your attention for the present to man's condition as an incarnated spirit, and seek to learn how progressive development, in obedience to the laws which govern him, leads to happiness in the present and advancement in the immediate future. The far-off spheres, into which only the refined and purified can enter, you may leave in their seclusion. It is not for mortal eye to gaze into their secrets. Sufficient that you know that they unfold their portals only to the blessed ones, and that you and all may be ranked within them after due preparation and development.

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It is more important that we speak of man's duty and work in the earth-life. Man, as you know, is a spirit temporarily enshrined in a body of flesh; a spirit with a spiritual body which is to survive its severance from the earth body, as one of your teachers has inculcated rightly, though he erred in minor particulars. This spiritual body it is the object of your training in this sphere of probation to develop and fit for its life in the sphere of spirit. That life, so far as it concerns you to know, is endless. You cannot grasp what eternity means. Sufficient now that we demonstrate to you enduring existence, and intelligence existing after the death of the physical body.

This Being, temporarily enshrined in the body of earth, we regard as a conscious, responsible intelligence, with duties to perform, with responsibilities, with capacities, with accountability, and with power of progress or retrogression. The incarnated spirit has its conscience, rude frequently and undeveloped, of inherent right and wrong. It has its opportunities of development, its degrees of probation, its phases of training, and its help in progression if it will use them. Of these we have spoken before, and shall say more hereafter. For the present we tell you of man's duty in the sphere of probation.

Man, as a responsible spiritual being, has duties which concern himself, his fellow-man, and his God.

Your teachers have sufficiently outlined the moral code which affects man's spirit, so far as their knowledge has extended, and has been communicable to you. But beside and beyond what they have taught you lies a wide domain. The influence of spirit upon spirit is only now beginning to be recognised among men; yet therein lie some of the mightiest helps and bars to human progress. Of this, too, you will learn more hereafter; but for the present we may sum up man's highest duty as a spiritual entity in the word **PROGRESS**—in knowledge of himself, and of all that makes for spiritual development. The duty of man considered as an intellectual being, possessed of mind and intelligence, is summed up in the word **CULTURE** in all its infinite ramifications; not in one direction only, but in all; not for earthly aims alone, but for the grand purpose of developing the faculties which are to be perpetuated in endless development. Man's duty to himself as a spirit incarnated in a body of flesh is **PURITY** in thought, word, and act. In these three words, Progress, Culture, Purity, we roughly sum up man's duty to himself as a spiritual, an intellectual, and a corporeal being.

Respecting the duty which man owes to the race of which he is a unit, to the community of which he is a member, we strive again to crystallise into one word the central idea which should animate him. That word is **CHARITY**. Tolerance for divergence of opinion; charitable construction of doubtful words and deeds; kindness in intercourse; readiness to help, without desire for recompense; courtesy and gentleness of demeanour; patience under misrepresentation; honesty and integrity of purpose, tempered by loving-kindness and forbearance; sympathy with sorrow; mercy, pity, and tenderness of heart; respect for authority in its sphere, and respect for the rights of the weak and frail: these and kindred qualities, which are the very essence of the Christ-like character, we sum up in the one word Charity, or Active Love.

As to the relation between man and his God, it should be that which befits the approach of a being in one of the lowest stages of existence to the Fountain of Uncreated Light, to the great Author and Father of all. The befitting attitude of spirit before God is typified for you in the language of your sacred records when it is said that the exalted ones veil their faces with their wings as they bow before His throne. This in a figure symbolises the **REVERENCE** and **ADORATION** which best become the spirit of man. Reverence and awe, not slavish fear. Adoring worship, not cowering, prostrate dread. Mindful of the vast distance that must separate God from man, and of the intermediary agencies which minister between the Most High and His children, man should not seek to intrude himself into the presence of the Supreme, least of all should he obtrude his curiosity, and seek to pry into mysteries which are too deep for angel-minds to grasp. **REVERENCE**, **ADORATION**, **LOVE**; these are the qualities that adorn a spirit in its relation to its God.

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Such, in vaguest outline, are the duties which man owes to himself, to his fellow, and to his God. They may be filled in by future knowledge; but you will find that they include within them those qualities which fit a man for progress in knowledge, and render him a good citizen, and a model for imitation in all the walks of life. If there be nothing said of that external and formal duty which is made so much of by the Pharisaic mind, both now and heretofore, it is not that we do not recognise the importance of external acts. So long as man is a physical being, physical acts will be of importance. It is because we have no fear that sufficient importance will not be attached to them that we have not dwelt on this side of the question. We are concerned rather with spirit, and with the hidden spring, by which, if it be working aright, the external acts will be duly done. We carry throughout the principle on which we have always dealt with you, of referring you back to that which is your true self, and of urging you to consider all you do as the outcome and external manifestation of an internal spirit, which, when you leave this sphere, will determine your future condition of existence. This is the true wisdom; and in so far as you recognise the spirit that animates everything, that is the soul of all, the life and reality which underlies Nature and Humanity, in all their several manifestations, are you actuated by true wisdom. This being the duty of man in such sort as we are now able to put it before you, we have now to deal with the results of the discharge of that duty, or its neglect. He who fulfils it according to his ability, with honesty and sincerity of purpose, and with a single desire to discharge it aright, earns his legitimate reward in happiness and progress. We say progress, because man is apt to lose sight of this enduring fact, that in progress man's spirit finds its truest happiness. Content is, in the pure soul, only retrospective. It cannot rest in that which is past; at best it views the achievements of the bygone days only as incentives to further progress. Its attitude to the past is one of content, to the future, of hope and expectation of further development. That soul which shall slumber in satisfaction, and fancy that it has achieved its goal, is deluded, and in peril of retrogression. The true attitude of the spirit is one of striving earnestly in the hope of reaching a higher position than that which it has attained. In perpetually progressing it finds its truest happiness. **There is no finality; none, none, none!**

And this applies not only to the fragment of existence which you call life, but to the totality of being. Yea; even the deeds done in the body have their issue in the life disembodied. Their outcome is not bounded by the barrier which you call death. Far otherwise; for the condition of the spirit at its inception of its real life is determined by the outcome of its bodily acts. The spirit which has been slothful or impure gravitates necessarily to its congenial sphere, and commences there a period of probation which has for its object the purification of the spirit from the accumulated habits of its earth-life; the remedying in remorse and shame of the evil done; and the gradual raising of itself to a higher state towards which each process of purification has been a step. This is the punishment of transgression, not an arbitrary doom inflicted to all eternity by an angry God, but the inevitable doom of remorse and repentance and retribution, which results invariably from conscious sin. This is the lash of punishment, but it is not laid on by a vengeful Deity; **a loving Father leads his child to see and remedy his fault.**

Similarly, reward is no sensuous ease in a heaven of eternal rest; no fabled psalm-singing around the great white throne, whereon sits the GOD; no listless, dreamy idleness, cheaply gained by cries for pity, or by fancied faith; none of these, but the consciousness of duty done, of progress made, and of capacity for progress increased; of love to God and man fostered, and the jewel of truth and honesty preserved. This is the spirit's reward, and it must be gained before it can be enjoyed. It comes as the rest after toil, as the food to the hungry, as the draught to the parched, as the pulsation of delight when the wanderer sights his home. But it is only the toil-worn, the travel-stained, the hungry, the parched traveller who can enter into the full zest. And it is not with us the reward of indolent, sensuous content. It is the gratification which has been earned, and which is but an additional spur to future progress.

In all this you will see that we have dealt with man as a living intelligence, alone in his responsibilities, and alone in his struggles. We have not thought it necessary here to touch upon the aid ministered by guardian spirits, nor upon the impulses and impressions which flow in upon the receptive soul. We are concerned now with that phase of man's existence which is open to your inspection, and which is manifested to your eye. Neither have we made any mention of a boundless store of merit laid up for him by the death of the sinless Son of God, or of the Co-equal

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Partner of the Throne of Deity—a store on which he may draw at will to make up for his own shortcomings. We have not spoken of such an atonement of magical potency and universal application in answer to a cry of faith. Nor have we told you that a death-bed repentance has power to obtain for man—base, evil, grovelling animal as he may be—an entrance in the very society of God and the blessed ones, by the charm of imputed righteousness bought by vicarious suffering. We have not pointed to any such conception of a debased and foolish imagination. Man has helps, powerful, near, always available. But he has no reserve fund of merit on which he can draw at large at the close of a lifetime of debauchery, sensuality, and crime, when he has drunk to the very dregs the cup of physical enjoyment, and so go straight to the holy of holies and the sanctuary of God. He has no vicarious sacrifice on whom he can call to suffer in his stead when his coward heart is wrung with fear at the prospect of dissolution, and his base spirit trembles at the prospect which remorse conjures up. Not for such base uses would any of the messengers come; not to such would the ministers bring consolation. They would let the coward feel his danger, if perchance he may see and repent him of his sin. They would let the lash be laid on, knowing that so only can the hard heart be made to feel. Yet for such, your teachers tell you, the Son of God came down, and died! Such are the choicest recipients of mercy! the most appropriate subjects for divine compassion!

No such fable finds a place in our knowledge. We know of no store of merit save that which man lays up for himself by slow laborious processes. We know of no entrance to the spheres of bliss save by the path which the blessed themselves have trod; no magical incantation by which the sinner may be transformed into the saint, and the hardened reprobate, the debased sensualist, the purely physical animal become spiritualised, refined, glorified, and fitted for what you call heaven. Far from us such blasphemous imaginations.

And while man feigns for himself such ignorant and impossible fancies, he neglects or ignores those helps and protections which encircle him all around. We have no power, indeed, to work out for man the salvation which he must work out for himself; but we are able to aid, to comfort, and to support. Appointed by a loving God to minister, in our several spheres, to those who need it, we find our power curtailed, and our efforts mocked at by those who have become too gross to recognise spirit-power, and too earthy to aspire to spiritual things. These helps man has ever round about him; helps which he may draw to himself by the mighty engine of prayer, and knit to him by frequent communion with them.

Ah! you know little what power you neglect when you omit to foster, by perpetual prayer, communion with the spirits, holy, pure, and good, who are ready to stand by and assist you. Praise, which attunes the soul to God, and prayer, which moves the spirit agencies—these are engines ever ready to man's service. And yet he passes them idly by, and makes his hopes of future bliss rest on a faith, on a creed, on an assent, on a vicarious store of merit, on any shadowy, baseless figment rather than on fact.

We attach little importance to individual belief: *that* is altered soon enough by extended knowledge. The creed which has been fought over with angry vehemence during the years of an earth lifetime is surrendered by the enfranchised spirit without a murmur. The fancies of a lifetime on earth are dissipated like a cloud by the sunlight of the spheres. **We care little for a creed, so it be honestly held and humbly professed; but we care much for acts. We ask not what has such one *believed*, but what has he *done*?** For we know that by deeds, habits, tempers, characters are formed, and the condition of spirit is decided. Those characters and habits, too, we know are only to be changed after long and laborious processes; and so it is to acts rather than words, to deeds rather than professions, that we look.

The religion which we teach is one of acts and habits, not of words and fitful faith. We teach religion of body and religion of soul; a religion pure, progressive, and true; one that aims at no finality, but leads its votary higher and higher through the ages, until the dross of earth is purged away, the spiritual nature is refined and sublimated, and the perfected spirit—perfected through suffering and toil and experience—is presented in glorified purity before the very footstool of its God. In this religion you will find no place for sloth and carelessness. The note of spirit-teaching is earnestness and zeal. In it you will find no shirking of the consequences of acts. Such shirking is

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impossible. Sin carries with it its own punishment. Nor will you find a convenient substitute on whose shoulders you may bind the burdens which you have prepared. Your own back must bear them, and your own spirit groan under their weight. Neither will you find encouragement to live a life of animal sensuality and brutish selfishness, in the hope that an orthodox belief will hide your debased life, and that faith will throw a veil over impurity. You will find the creed taught by us is that acts and habits are of more moment than creeds and faith; and you will discover that that flimsy veil is rent aside with stern hand, leaving the foul life laid bare, and the poor spirit naked and open to the eye of all who gaze upon it. Nor will you find any hope that after all you may get a cheap reprieve—that God is merciful, and will not be severe to mark your sins. Those human imaginings pale in the light of truth. You will gain mercy when you have deserved it; or rather, repentance and amendment, purity and sincerity, truth and progress will bring their own reward. You will not then require either mercy or pity.

This is the religion of body and spirit which we proclaim. It is of God, and the days draw nigh when man shall know it.

+IMPERATOR.