

*Spiritualism is
a philosophy of yesterday*



Abstract and train of thoughts

The main difference between Spiritualists and Spiritists is that the latter believe in the successive reincarnations of the human soul.

The Spiritualists do not believe in reincarnation.	3
There are two kinds of Spiritualists:	3
There are genuine Spiritualists, who believe in the immortality of the spirit and the possibility of the living communicating with the spirits of the departed, either through pure mediums or by means of the Secret Science. And there are those fanatical Spiritualists, who blindly accept the claims of every "spirit."	3
In any case, Spiritualism is a philosophy of yesterday.	4
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Spiritism is as opposed to our teachings as is Occultism to those of Allan Kardec.	5
It is the Spiritists who would doom the Divine Monad to a terrible torment, filled with gross earthly experiences, without the smallest ray of spirituality to enlighten them!	5



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The twenty millions of Western believers in the modern phenomena and those who attribute them to the agency of departed spirits or souls (*bhūtas*) are divided into two great sects — the Spiritualists and the Spiritists. The latter are “Re-incarnationists,” or believers in the successive reincarnations or transmigrations of the human soul.¹

The Spiritualists do not believe in reincarnation.²

Occultism supports *and proves Spiritism*, while *Spiritualism* (Anglo-American) is diametrically opposed to [Occultism’s] most important teaching, reincarnation.³

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There are genuine Spiritualists, who believe in the immortality of the spirit and the possibility of the living communicating with the spirits of the departed, either through pure mediums or by means of the Secret Science. And there are those fanatical Spiritualists, who blindly accept the claims of every “spirit.”

[This article was written by H.P. Blavatsky as a reply to Mr. Colby who denied in the *Banner of Light* the existence of Magic. After the cutting had been pasted in her Scrapbook, Vol. I, pp. 70-71, Madame Blavatsky made some pen and ink remarks and additions, which are shown herewith in footnotes appended as indicated by Blavatsky herself. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.

N.B. In this Philaletheians edition, the position of the above remarks has been reversed: Madame Blavatsky’s own corrections have been incorporated in the main text, and the material corrected appended as footnotes. — ED. PHIL.]

I am not⁴ myself a Spiritualist, if, as says Colonel Olcott, a firm belief in our spirits⁵ immortality and *the knowledge* of a constant possibility for us to communicate with the spirits of our departed and loved ones, either through honest, pure mediums, or by means of the Secret Science, constitutes a Spiritualist. And⁶ I am not of those fanatical Spiritualists, to be found in every country, who blindly accept the claims of every “spirit,”⁷ for I have seen too much of various phenomena, undreamed of in America. I *know* that MAGIC does exist, and 10,000 editors of Spiritual papers cannot

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CORRECTIONS CONCERNING OCCULTISM) IV p. 486

² *ibid.*, (A LEVY OF ARMS AGAINST THEOSOPHY) IV p. 548

³ *Cf. ibid.*, (NOTE TO “RADIANT MATTER”) II p. 377

⁴ [Corrected from “I am.”]

⁵ [Corrected from “souls.”]

⁶ [Corrected from “But.”]

⁷ [Quotes removed from “spirit.”]

change my belief in what I know. There is a white and a black magic; and no one who has ever travelled in the East, can doubt it, if he has taken the trouble to investigate. My faith being firm I am, therefore, ever ready to support and protect any honest medium — aye, and even occasionally one who appears *dishonest*; for I know but too well, what helpless tools and victims such mediums are in the hands of unprogressed, invisible beings. I am furthermore aware of the malice and wickedness of the elementary, and how far they can inspire not only a sensitive medium, *but any other person* as well. Though I may be an “irresponsible woman” in the eyes of those who are but “too responsible” for the harm they do to EARNEST Spiritualists by their unfairness, one-sidedness, and spiritual sentimentalism, I feel safe to say, that generally I am quick enough to detect whenever a medium is cheating *under control*, or cheating consciously.¹

In any case, Spiritualism is a philosophy of yesterday.

Spiritualism is a philosophy (if one, which so far we deny) of but yesterday. Occultism and the philosophy of the East, whether true absolutely, or relatively, are teachings coming to us from an immense antiquity. And since — whether in the writings and traditions of the East, in the numberless Fragments, and MSS. left to us by the Neo-Platonic Theosophists; in the life observations of such philosophers as Porphyry and Iamblichus; in those of the medieval Theosophists and so on, *ad infinitum*; — since we find in all these, the same identical testimony as to the extremely various and often dangerous nature of all those Genii, Demons, Gods, Lares, and “Elementaries,” now all confused into one heap under the name of “Spirits,” we cannot fail to recognize in all this something “enduring the test of *universal experience*,” and “coming unchanged” out of every possible form of observation and experience.²

But there is a far lesser abyss between the Spiritualists and the Theosophists than there is between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics.

Even the Christian Spiritualists have their own peculiar views upon Christ, which, according to the canons of the established Church are “heretical,” but which, we doubt, the Spiritualists will ever give up. Then again, how about — “Though an angel from Heaven preach unto us any other Gospel than that which has been preached unto us, let him be accursed”? Well, time will show, and time is the only and best inspirer of wise schemes and devices. Meanwhile, the Spiritualists — and so far the Theosophists with them — have won the day, for the reality of the phenomena has been admitted at the Church Congress; and we have as good hopes, that, whatever happens, it is neither the Spiritualists nor the Theosophists who will be the conquered in the long run. For, divided as we may be in our conflicting beliefs as to the agency of the phenomena, we are at one as regards the reality of the manifestations, mediumship in all its various aspects,³ and the highest phases of Spiritualism such as personal inspiration, clairvoyance, *etc.*, and even the *subjective* intercourse between the living and the disembodied souls and spirits under conditions fully defined

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE SCIENCE OF MAGIC) I pp. 140-41

² *ibid.*, (THOUGHTS ON THE ELEMENTALS) XII p. 197

³ We never *denied* mediumship, we have only pointed out its great dangers and questioned the advisability of giving way to it and to the control of yet (to Spiritualists) unknown forces.

in Part I of “Fragments of Occult Truth.” At all events, there is a far lesser abyss between the Spiritualists and the Theosophists than there is between the Protestants and the Roman Catholic clergy, their common Christianity notwithstanding.¹

Spiritism is as opposed to our teachings as is Occultism to those of Allan Kardec.²

The Spiritists . . . who, like the blind, have to employ the eyes of others to cognize objects too far away to be touched, are only able to learn *what those “spirits” are willing to tell them.*³

It is the Spiritists who would doom the Divine Monad⁴ to a terrible torment, filled with gross earthly experiences, without the smallest ray of spirituality to enlighten them!

With the Occultists, forgetfulness of one’s *self* is the very greatest virtue. It is rather the Spiritists who would doom the divine monad to a terrible torment, to the perpetual recollection of one or more shameful or criminal existences, filled with earthly and gross experiences, without the smallest ray of spirituality to enlighten them.⁵



“Spirit, Spirits, Spiritualism,” in the same Series.

“The Perispirit of Allan Kardec,” in our Constitution of Man Series.

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, [SPIRITUALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES] III pp. 345-46. [Allan Kardec is the nome de plume of the French educator, translator, and author Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, 1804–1869. Kardec is the founder of Spiritism and author of five books known as the *Spiritist Codification*.]

² *ibid.*, (THEOSOPHY AND SPIRITISM) V p. 48; [Full text in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series, under the title “Blavatsky refutes the assertions of a French Theosophist.”]

³ *ibid.*, V p. 49

⁴ [Note to Students: Monad (*μοναδα*, in Greek) is the accusative case of *μονα*. However, as the term is here used in the nominative case (*μονα*), *i.e.*, the subject of the verb, it should be transliterated as monas (*pl.* monases), *i.e.*, the object of the verb, and not as monad (*pl.* monads). The same grammatical rule applies to duad, triad, tetrad, pentad, hexad, heptad, ogdoad, hebdomad, decad, *etc.* — ED. PHIL.]

⁵ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THEOSOPHY AND SPIRITISM) V p. 46