

**LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE:  
DESCRIBED  
BY A SPIRIT THROUGH A  
WRITING MEDIUM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649525751

Life beyond the Grave: Described by a Spirit through a Writing Medium by Anonymous

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Life Beyond the Grave,

*described by*

A SPIRIT,

*THROUGH A WRITING MEDIUM.*

LONDON:

E. W. ALLEN, 11 AVE MARIA LANE, E.C.

1877.

## PREFACE

BY THE WRITING MEDIUM.

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Most persons will admit that a preface to the following pages is required in order that their alleged spiritual origin may as far as possible be substantiated. They are stated to be a spirit communication; and, since nine persons out of ten will naturally ridicule that idea and prefer to attribute them to the wanderings of a disordered brain, I will endeavour to state here a few facts, by way of proving that the writer has not quite lost his sanity, and that he is likewise free from the charge of conscious imposition. How far unconscious imposition or "unconscious cerebration" may be adequate to explain their origin, I must leave the reader to judge of for himself. I should have been glad if I could have ventured to subscribe my own name and address as a further guarantee that they are not the result of a deliberate attempt to deceive the reader; but, in these days, the social position of a person who is suspected of holding communication with the other world is, in some parts of England, anything but enviable. Socially, such a person is avoided; and all belonging to him come under the same stigma. This I already know by experience,

and, for these reasons, I prefer to give the following pages to the world anonymously.

Most persons have heard of Planchette; but, for the benefit of those who have not, I may say that it consists of a miniature wooden table, about the size of an ordinary breakfast plate, mounted on three legs, two of which run upon small wheels, and the third terminates in the point of a lead pencil. This instrument is placed upon a sheet of white paper, and the hands of the sitter rest lightly upon it. If the person be mediumistic, planchette begins to move in ten or fifteen minutes, and the pencil traces marks or letters upon the surface of the paper. These are found to be intelligible words and sentences, frequently quite independent of any thought or will on the part of the sitter, or "medium," as he may be called. Not unfrequently the names of deceased persons are written out, and messages professing to come from them are found written on the paper. In some cases the communications seem to be limited to the thought and knowledge of persons present; in other cases, facts have been communicated which no one present was acquainted with, and which have subsequently been verified through other sources.\*

To make the origin of the following pages quite clear, I may state broadly that they were written by the same agency that writing is obtained through planchette; and the circumstances under which they came to be written are as follows:

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\* Planchettes can be obtained from J. Stormont, 59 Constitution Hill, Birmingham.—(See *Advt. at the end.*)

About ten years ago, I purchased a planchette and tried to get writing by its agency, but failed. I subsequently became interested in Spiritualism; and from personal investigation and a perusal of the literature of the movement, I soon became convinced that it was based upon *facts*. My personal experience was confined to the phenomena observed through various mediums. In myself I failed to develop the least trace of mediumship, either through table turning or planchette writing, until the summer of 1874, when I accidentally came in contact with an American medium who was reputed to have the power of developing mediumship in others. This person mesmerised my hand and arm—she never succeeded in mesmerising the brain—and the result was, that when I placed my hand on planchette I felt a dragging motion in the instrument, as if some invisible power were gently drawing it over the surface of the paper, uncontrolled by me. The result was a name professing to be that of a deceased person. This was followed by intelligible communications relating to the person named; and finally, as the facility of writing increased with the aid of the developing medium, I was able to get long and interesting messages professing to come from departed spirits. Considering that I had for years been unable to induce the slightest movement in planchette, and that the messages related to facts and theories not within my own knowledge and not emanating from my own thoughts, I was not a little surprised at this startling development of occult power. I soon found that



planchette was an impediment rather than an advantage to my progress as a writing medium, and that I could get on much more rapidly by simply holding the pencil in the hand and keeping the mind and the muscles of the arm perfectly passive.

Under these circumstances my hand would be involuntarily moved to write without the use of planchette, and I soon exhausted my curiosity by propounding endless questions to the supposed spirit touching the present, the past, and the future. Like many novices in spiritual investigations, I imagined a spirit would necessarily be omniscient, and I speedily became exceedingly credulous and prepared to swallow anything that might be written.

In the first blush of enthusiasm for this new gift, I fondly imagined I should be able to convince all my friends to the truth of Spiritualism without difficulty; and the communicating spirit who had given me long and interesting messages touching the mode and conditions of life in the spirit world, and had to some extent gained my confidence, promised to astonish my friends by predicting their futures, besides conveying messages from their departed relatives. He also predicted events of great public interest, which I was advised to publish.

With these promises before me, I went in boldly for convincing my friends; but, with the first attempt, my anticipation of mediumistic fame came to an untimely end, and I found that it was—if not all vanity and vexation of spirit, in all probability something worse. All my

“predictions” turned out to be lies, and I gave up writing mediumship in disgust, and vowed that, however true it might be as a fact, there was no reliance to be placed upon the veracity of spirits.

About six months after these experiences I was induced to try another developing medium — Mrs. Woodforde,\* whose speciality was said to be the development of writing mediumship and the removal of undesirable spirit influences. Mrs. Woodforde I found to be a lady of education and refinement, and her own experience and advice explained much to me that had been mysterious, and proved to be most useful and valuable in avoiding for the future the dangers I had so narrowly escaped in the past. These dangers cannot be too sufficiently kept in view by persons who dabble in mediumship. Unless the mediumship is developed under good auspices in the first instance, and guarded with extreme care, there is the greatest risk of the medium becoming the dupe of frivolous and deceitful spirits, who abound in the other world as much as in this. If the medium will abandon the popular error that a spirit is a superior being, instead of being just as human and fallible as himself, he will estimate the communications at their proper value, instead of receiving them with abject credulity, as is too frequently the case. It is, in

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\* Her address is generally to be found advertised in the columns of *The Spiritualist*, published by E. W. Allen, 11 Ave Maria Lane, London, E.C.; or *The Medium*, published by James Burns, 15 Southampton Row, London, W.C.

consequence of this foolish notion, that many persons give up communicating through planchette, on the assumption that it is diabolical; because, having asked foolish questions, they have induced foolish replies.

After a week's sittings with Mrs. Woodforde I found myself in complete possession of my former power of unconscious writing, but the character of the communications had entirely changed. Formerly they were of the earth earthy, and reflected my own state of mind to some extent. Now they impressed me with their greater purity, benevolence, and truthfulness.

This change, I was told, was attributable to the removal by Mrs. Woodforde's invisible friends—of the disagreeable influences by which I was formerly surrounded. Be that as it may, I found that the messages now written breathed nothing but good advice, whereas formerly their tendency was sometimes evil. Feeling more confidence in the trustworthiness of the messages, I re-commenced my writing experiences, and amongst other communications I received the series of messages which are reproduced in the following pages, and which are said to describe the Life beyond the Grave.

It may probably be urged by many readers of these pages that, even if the *bona fides* of the writer be admitted, there is no proof that he has not unconsciously reproduced thoughts and ideas which he has met with at various times in his course of reading in spiritual literature. This objection is the only alternative to the assumption that the