

Extract  
from letter  
from W. A. Colcord

Regarding the criticisms from your brother and Brother Robinson, I will say that while some of these Mrs. Colcord and I regard as perhaps a little on the hypercritical order, and not altogether practical or feasible, still, on the whole, we think that, like the criticisms from the Pacific Press, they contain some good suggestions, and are glad that they have been sent on. We shall study all of these suggestions and criticisms very carefully, and do our best to make alterations and improvements in the manuscript wherever it seems best and practical to do so. Neither you nor anyone else need think that either of us are at all sensitive over any criticisms or suggestions of this character being made.

I wish however, to make a few observations upon some few points in Brother Robinson's letter.

In the first place I wish that both your brother and Brother Robinson might understand that Mrs. Colcord is doing considerable part of this revision, and that it is not all being made "by Brother Colcord," as the letter from them would indicate.

If all the suggestions they make were followed, we would throw out most, or all, of the statements or quotations from, or regarding the Emperor Nicholas, the Wesleys, Gladstone, Funk, Staed, Beecher, and Savage. Should we do this, what would be left? The book would be back pretty much where it was before we began work on it.

It is true, however, that considerable prominence is given to the writings of such men as Funk, Savage, and Stead, but these are very prominent and well-known men in this field. It may be however, that this can be modified somewhat, and a few good quotations from a wider range given. Already, though, there are some statements from Crookes, Peebles, and others. As you know, we were limited in time, expense, and space, and it would hardly be reasonable to expect that under these circumstances all should be done in the way of revision and preparing new matter that might have been done under other circumstances, that is, without such limitations. If we can have some of these restrictions removed, and some one will agree to stand the expense, we can go into the matter more fully and produce different results, but we did the best we could with the limitations under which we labored.

We hardly feel to strike out all of the matter which your brother and Brother Robinson question or think should be out, but we will give this careful consideration, and whatever is left in we will endeavor to guard carefully with proper comments.

We can see no good ground for omitting reference to Emperor Nicholas, at least in the English edition. It might be best to omit this in a foreign edition gotten out for Russia, but why in other languages should all the rest of the world be shut out from this bit of interesting information, out of respect to Russia? The quotation regarding this was taken from the Melbourne Age, the leading daily paper in Australia. We do not therefore, see any very good reason why we should be so delicate about using it in this book.

Regarding the case of Mr. Funk, it may be well under all the circumstances, to be somewhat guarded in our remarks concerning him; but if he was not a Spiritualist then I think it would be pretty difficult to prove that Mr. Stead was either. If Mr. Funk's two books, "The Widow's Mite," and "The Psychic Riddle," do not prove him to be a Spiritualist, then I would like to know how Mr. Stead's book, "How I know that the Dead Return" proves him to be a Spiritualist. Moreover, is there a line or word in print from Mr. Funk repudiating the views which he set forth in the two books names? Had he before his death written a book or an article disclaiming belief in the doctrine, the case would be different, but I have never heard of his having done so. The very fact of his having collected such an immense library upon the subject; of his having written as he did upon the it; of his having attended seances and consulted Spiritualist mediums almost without number; of his having acted upon mediumistic suggestions; of his having spirits of the dead; of his family feeling so keenly as they do over his case; and of his daughter's having destroyed his great spiritualistic library at her first opportunity after her father's death, all go to show that he was, to all intents and purposes, evidently a Spiritualist in fact though he may never have been on in name and that he was involved in Spiritualism very deeply too.

However, out of respect to his family, I think it will be well for us to guard very carefully what is said regarding Mr. Funk, personally, but we are not at all convinced that all reference to his becoming a Spiritualist should be eliminated. He was too prominent a man, and did altogether too much in this line, to have his case suppressed entirely, we think.

There is almost no limit to the improvements and alterations that can be made in literary productions if enough time, thought, and attention are given to them. When Mrs. Colcord and I forwarded this manuscript to you in the first place, we were conscious that we ourselves could doubtless have made improvements in it had we taken time to study it more and write it all over again. However, as it was prepared, the Pacific Press people pronounced it "a tremendous improvement over the old."

In view of this we were a little surprised not to find a word of approval, commendation, or appreciation from either your brother, or Dores Robinson concerning it. But I presume that they were not writing for that purpose. By turning all this matter and these criticisms back to us, it throws a pretty hard heavy burden and responsibility on us; but unless we have some more wilting, hot spells again, I think we shall be able to wade through it and bring order out of confusion without much delay.