

9-30-1879

## Letter from L. Maria Child, 1879-09-30, Wayland, Mass., to Anne Whitney, Boston, Mass.

Lydia Maria Child

Wellesley College Archives

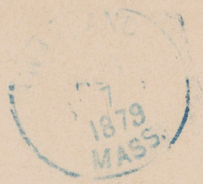
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Aug 5-79

Anne Whitney.  
92 Mount Vernon St,  
Boston,

Mass — '79,



That some of the alleged phenomena of modern "Spiritualism" are true, I have not the shadow of a doubt. I do not suppose them to be super-natural; I simply suppose them to be regulated by laws, of which we are not, as yet, cognizant. It is in vain to attribute to "jugglery" things which occurred several times in my own house, where there are no trap-doors, and when no professional medium was present, or even any believer in "Spiritualism." The article in the Scientific Monthly seems to me very one-sided and narrow.

We shall have a conscious existence after we leave this body, whether we like the mode of that existence, or otherwise. For myself, I am quite indifferent about it.

Yours affectionately,  
L. M. Child.

#18

I expect to go to 3 Beaver St. rather earlier than I did last year.

Wayland, Sep. 30<sup>th</sup>, 1879.

Dear Anne,

Your letter made me smile; we seemed to be at such cross-purposes. You talk of "boring" me because you are not one of my "old friends." While I have often thought to myself, How tedious such an old-fashioned body as I am must be to her, in the prime of her life, and with her whole soul absorbed in Art! I came to see you much less frequently than I would have liked to do, for the simple reason that I did not think it kind to disturb your labors in the studio, by morning-calls; I thought it imprudent to be out after dusk; and the short afternoons

furnished very little time for social intercourse.

As for your having "given up the old theological beliefs," few have gone through that process more thoroughly than I have. With regard to a future life, my mind is in a very quiescent state. I am exceedingly weary with the long struggle of life, and the idea of simply falling asleep seems restful to me. But though I am willing to sleep and wake no more, I have a very strong conviction that I shall wake.

Phenomena pointing to this have been occurring in all nations, and in ages when there was no communication of ideas between nations. Of course, everything that eludes investigation becomes the source of puerile superstitions. But when superstitions are universal, and continuing through all the

changes of time and circumstance, they plainly indicate a cause.

It is absurd to say that things cannot be because they are not in harmony with known laws. We only know the laws of our present existence here, and those very imperfectly. Doubtless there are other modes of existence, the laws of which are very different from the laws which regulate us. A scientific worm might reason with a butterfly that it was impossible to travel on the air more easily and swiftly than upon the earth, that it could not be, because it was contrary to all known laws. Nevertheless, the butterfly is at home on the air, sometimes lights on the earth, and even touches the crawling worm, which may be quite unaware of the winged presence. We mortals are not the top of creation, much as we think of ourselves.