

The Other Side of Salvation: Spiritualism and the Nineteenth-Century Religious Experience

John B. Buescher



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"You likely have never heard of the extraordinary characters that inhabit these pages. But after reading about them, you may wonder how we developed the blind spot in which these people have been made invisible."—John B. Buescher

During the 1850s, a surprising number of Americans believed that the deceased could be contacted through trance mediums and séances. Many of the radical leaders of the anti-slavery, women's rights, Temperance, prison reform, and labor reform movements were involved in spiritualism and used it as a conduit for social and political change. To them, spiritualism was a scientific alternative to religious systems that they believed relied on speculation and arbitrary dogma. Among the liberal religious denominations, Universalism was the one most affected by the spiritualist movement.

Drawing from journals, newspapers, manuscripts, and the personal papers of spiritualists and their opponents, this book tells the stories of visionary seers, prophets, and inventors, pioneers in psychic healing, and public lecturers who took to the podium, while in trance, to deliver communications from the spirits and to simultaneously agitate for reforms in society. A fascinating read for anyone interested in America's religious history.



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