

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—*Goethe.*

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[The Editor of "LIGHT" desires it to be distinctly understood that he can accept no responsibility as to the opinions expressed by Contributors and Correspondents. Free and courteous discussion is invited, but writers are alone responsible for the articles to which their names are attached.]

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

I regret that an error has crept into my notice of the approaching issue of Mr. Sinnett's book. I forgot that May would have passed into June before my words got into print, and I therefore should have said *this*, not *next*, month. The book may be expected immediately.

### The Regulation of Public Circles. (Continued from page 252.)

The more knowledge can be diffused, the less likely are we to be called upon again and again to protest against some such stupid act as a resort to physical force in order to demonstrate an opinion about some psychical mystery. The acquisition of knowledge through reiterated observation and experiment by competent investigators is the great desideratum. This knowledge—science rightly so-called—should be placed at the service of those who need it, and who will ask for it. To such it will be the guide-book that they seek. To the rest of the world it will be an idle tale, a curious survival of mediæval superstition, a cause of wonder and scorn to the race of Gallio. Better that than the waste of time and patience that indiscreet proselytism is now responsible for. This educational process will be a long one, and we must not be surprised if, for long to come, the antecedent question,—Is there anything to inquire into? anything worth the inquiry? occupies the mind of men, who are half attracted and half repelled by what they cannot help meddling with. Nor will it be a matter for regret if some men, whose minds are better occupied with more material things, but who have been attracted by the physical aspects of things psychical, should find out that they are in the wrong place, and should betake themselves to more congenial fields of research. That is the shortest and best way out of a bad job. It clears the way, prevents stoppages, and avoids friction.

After all, the true course of action remains to be indicated. This is to revert to the ancient practice of secluding the medium, and preserving a sensitive nature from contamination by mixed psychical influences; from abuse by ignorant stupidity; and from those grievous risks which public mediumship when used in excess or in mixed circles must always involve. The grave indictment against public circles as now conducted rests not only on the inadequate methods employed to convince the investigator,

but more largely on the damage done to the medium, and the spiritual dangers of possession that are incurred by all who are open to spiritual assault, and especially by the medium. They did these things better in the days of old Greece and Rome. A psychic, or sensitive, or medium, was then treated as a rare and delicate organisation to be preserved pure and undefiled from common contact. She—the female nature is usually the more sensitive—was trained with every care, was submitted to every refining and elevating influence, and was studiously defended from psychical contamination. Her inherent powers were developed; nor were they used until that development was sufficient to preserve the possessor of them from the risks which beset undeveloped mediumship. Even then, she was separated from the world, and consecrated to a life with which the things of the world had little to do.

So in the East. The development of the inherent psychical powers, which are our common heritage, though in different degrees, is there rightly regarded as a difficult and dangerous duty, to be approached with care, and to be carried out with all the prudent accessories of fasting, discipline, meditation, and the like; whereby the flesh is subdued to the spirit. With what horror, let us for a moment think, would any of these—Greek, Roman, or Eastern Occultist—regard the methods and means of a modern public circle. A fortuitous concourse of persons who are fortunate enough to possess five shillings, and who need have no other qualification for entry whatsoever:—the time of meeting carefully fixed for an hour when the body is satiated with food, and the system (perhaps) overstimulated by wine, though this is happily less and less frequent:—a medium whose powers, by this daily process of prostitution, are worn out, whose health is too frequently sapped, and who is the victim of a system that eats out the very life:—what would they—what would any reasonable creature—say of such doings?

I believe it is by a return to the intelligent principles of investigation which obtained in the days when the occult was approachable only after careful preparation, and through avenues jealously guarded, that we shall find satisfaction and safety. The development of the inner and truer Spiritualism, in its philosophical aspects, must necessarily be esoteric, and can be nothing else. But even the external presentation of its phenomena, in their very simplest form, can only be secured by attention to methods of investigation which I have indicated, and which are too often neglected. The phenomena must be graduated by the educated common sense of the investigator; he must be prepared in a way which organised methods cannot successfully interfere with; and usually he must be left to blunder his way out of a difficulty into which he has been unfortunate enough or foolish enough to fall, and to buy his knowledge in that shop where the genuine article is alone sold—Experience.

It would seem, then, if I am at all right in my principles, that the true path of successful investigation is that which has been pursued by scientific men in other subjects. Our unscientific observer must be left to his own devices, to a large extent. We can, indeed, do our best to prevent the

introduction of fraud into the circles which he may attend, but we cannot do more for him. We can usefully devote attention to tabulating and recording the phenomena, and to placing the results within his reach: but he must use or abuse them as he will. And when all is done, the great work which most needs careful attention is the preservation of mediums from harm and injury, and the full development in all their purity of the powers which they possess. There is good hope that the time of wonder-hunting is passing. Maskelyne supplies that element, and fancies that Spiritualism contains no other. But Spiritualists who are worth the name are emerging from mere tricky trifling with phenomena, which the conjurer appreciates and counterfeits, into an arena where he and his stage devices find no place. That is the best omen for the future.

M. A. (OXON.)

**BULLS OF EXCOMMUNICATION.**—The *Universe* of June 2nd, a leading Catholic newspaper, seems very angry with Spiritualists in general, and "LIGHT" in particular, and expresses itself in terms which can hardly be called Parliamentary. We do not think we are called upon to notice criticism (if it can be called such) couched in language that we do not feel justified in quoting in these columns, and which, if a fair specimen of Catholic English, would go a long way in preparing us to find that the disputed text of the Bull of Excommunication in question was genuine after all.

**"THE SPIRITUAL RECORD."**—This is the title of a new monthly magazine of facts and phenomena relating to Spiritualism. It consists, for the most part, of narratives from the records of a period singularly rich in phenomena familiar enough to some, but probably new to nine readers out of ten. The collection of these stories, and their preservation in some such form as this, form capital pioneer work, and we wish our contemporary every success. The editorial department shews a practised hand, and when we state that the magazine is printed by Messrs. Hay, Nisbet and Co., of Glasgow, readers will know that the typography is all that can be desired. Copies can be obtained of the printers.—(See Advt.)

**"A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE."**—The history of how this song came into being is thus succinctly told by the *Commonwealth*, of Boston, U.S.A.:—"A Life on the Ocean Wave" was written by the late Epes Sargent of this city. Some forty years ago Henry Russell, the English composer, being in America, asked Sargent to write a song for him, leaving the subject to his selection. In walking on the battery at New York the sight of the vessels in the harbour, dashing through the sparkling waters in the morning sunshine, suggested the poem, and the poet had it all planned out in his mind before he reached home. He shewed it to a friend, whose criticism was that it was "a fair lyric, but not a song." Sargent was disheartened, but a few days after he met Russell and handed him the lines. "Let us go to my room and try it on the piano!" said Russell. They went. Russell sat down before the instrument, placed the words before him, studied them attentively, humming a measure as he read, then threw his fingers on the keys; tried twice, and finally burst out exultingly into the stirring strain in which the melody is now set. In England it was immensely popular. It has been translated into several languages. It is curious that the two ballads which have been sung more than any other in England are "Home, Sweet Home," and "A Life on the Ocean Wave"—both the products of Americans.

**REICHENBACH AND THE PSYCHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY.**—The *Journal of Science* says that the experiments undertaken by this Committee, "and described in detail at the meeting held in Willis's Rooms, April 24th, if not entirely decisive, have, upon the whole, an affirmative character, and in short justify the public in concluding that 'there is something in it.' In other words, our verdict must be given in favour of Reichenbach, unless some quite unexpected source of error is detected on further experimentation." . . . "But whilst we would warmly encourage these investigations, and are prepared to welcome the results, whether the phenomena are traced to *od* or are merely novel manifestations of some form of energy already known, we must again express our inability to recognise their connection with Psychical Research, and still less with Spiritualism. As far as we see, there is in Reichenbach's phenomena nothing which need be unacceptable even to the most determined Positivist, or to anyone who regards the phenomena commonly attributed to soul, spirit, or mind as the mere outcome of organisation. True, certain persons can perceive the magnetic luminosity, whilst others fail so to do. But this fact seems to us to stand upon the same plane as the well-known differences between man and man in the recognition of colours, in the perception of remote or minute objects, and in the hearing of very acute sounds."

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN will lecture at Liverpool, June 17th. —Address The Lincolns, Humphrey-street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

## A SCIENTIST'S VIEW OF THOUGHT-READING.

The great interest which has been aroused in the minds of a large circle of the intelligent portion of the Liverpool public in the subject of Thought-reading by the experiments that have recently been made with more or less success in this city was manifested last night in the crowded condition of Hope Hall where a lecture was delivered by Professor W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E. The audience was a highly respectable one. The lecturer, who is a professor of physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin, is the secretary of a committee of prominent scientists, formed for the purpose of investigating the subject of Thought-reading or Thought-transference, and he has for many years been actively engaged in researches. His appearance was not so much in the capacity of a practical demonstrator of Thought-reading as the exponent of certain definite conclusions at which, after numerous successful experiments, he has arrived. The proceeds of the lecture are (as announced by Sir James A. Picton, who occupied the chair) to be devoted to two charitable institutions—one in Dublin, known as a crèche for the children of the poor, in which Professor Barrett is interested, and the other the Liverpool Mental Science Society, presided over by the Rev. Mr. Skewes, recently established for psychical research. Sir James remarked in introducing the professor that it was admitted on all hands that recent years had given rise to inquiries of a crucial nature into scientific subjects, particularly those connected with the mind and its relation to matter, to an extent that was never known before, and that the discoveries in modern science had certainly proved that, in the words of Shakespeare, "There are more things in Heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy." Professor Barrett observed that there was a widespread belief in the existence of something which might be called Thought-transference or Thought-reading, or mind acting upon mind, and, in his opinion, widespread beliefs had some foundation in truth. He set out in the investigation of this subject 12 or 13 years ago with a mental bias in its favour, and everybody who studied it must necessarily have a bias one way or another. The psychical willing game and the usual round of drawing-room experiments, which went by the mis-leading name of Thought-reading—and which were the only illustrations on the subject cited by physiologists—were nothing more than muscle-reading. In all those experiments some action must be performed, the hands of the operator being in gentle contact with the shoulders or some other part of the body of the subject. Many people had gone over the ground which Mr. Irving Bishop claimed to have discovered only by his own experiments, long before he startled the English public by his performances. The condition of the muscle might be sufficient to disclose to the operator the right or wrong direction of the subject, even when the subject was wholly unaware that he was giving those impressions, and when the operator was unaware he was receiving them. Thought-reading might be done by touches, looks, or gestures, and under that category would be classed Mr. Bishop's experiments. That gentleman, however, conducted his performances amid so much excitement as to give them a pantomimic character, and their scientific value was wholly destroyed. During a brief interval of the lecture, the Rev. E. H. Sugden, of Bradford, was asked to give some experiments in muscular interpretation. He was blindfolded, and Sir James Picton was requested to keep in mind a number, while he placed the muscular portion of his right hand on the back of that of Mr. Sugden, who held a piece of chalk. Both hands began to move almost instantly, and by-and-by the hands were withdrawn. The first figure written on the blackboard was a "6" legibly written, then a "7" imperfectly formed, an "8" written sideways, an "0" very distinct, and the latter figure, which Sir James said should have been a "5," was not completed. Sir James expressed himself well satisfied with the measure of success attending the experiment. At the instance of Captain Woollaston, Mr. Sugden made a most successful trial, every figure being plainly written. Captain Woollaston said he gave Mr. Sugden no conscious help, his hand being quite passive the whole of the time, but his mind was concentrated. Mr. Sugden was next blindfolded for the purpose of the pin-finding trick. The pin was hidden by Mr. Baron Benas in the tablecloth in front of the platform. Mr. Sugden led him down one of the side aisles, and several times stopped to feel for the pin, and eventually he declared his inability to discover its hiding place. He expressed the opinion that Mr. Benas's thoughts were not concentrated, but that gentleman assured his friends that they were, but he admitted that he was biased

against the experiment. Professor Barrett proceeded to describe a number of surprising, and what the committee of which he is a member consider conclusive, results in Thought-transference. Remarking that knowledge was crowded with illustrations of the sympathetic response of one inanimate thing to another, he proceeded to experiment with tuning forks placed some twelve inches or more apart on the table. He sounded the note of one, and when he touched it with his finger to stop the sound the note was just audible on the other. He also gave an interesting and successful experiment with the singing flame, and concluded with shewing a number of examples of drawings reproduced as the result of Thought-transference, and asserted that this subject had been placed on a basis too secure to be overturned by casual objectors. Sir James Picton, in according the lecturer and Mr. Sugden the thanks of the audience, remarked, in reference to the latter gentleman's experiments, that the one in which he was perfectly successful was just as good as 100 to prove his capacity for Thought-reading. Mr. Sugden, before the audience dispersed, expressed his willingness to try the pin-finding experiment again. He retired to be blindfolded, and in his absence a gentleman hid a pin in the coat of another sitting in the body of the hall. Mr. Sugden led his subject at a rapid pace along one of the aisles, returned without stopping, then walked without any apparent hesitation to the seat where the holder of the pin sat, and in a surprisingly short time held up the pin to the view of the audience amid tokens of entire satisfaction on their part. This concluded the proceedings—*Liverpool Daily Mercury*, May 29th.

### THOUGHT-READING.

Mr. Irving Bishop says he can read the number of a bank note which is only known to the person whose thoughts he professes to read, and Mr. Henry Labouchere denies its possibility. The following letter on the subject from the *Times* of June 4th, explains itself, and sets down the conditions of the proposed trial. We hardly think Mr. Bishop will accept them. However, we shall see.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,—I observe in *The Times* an advertisement of a "*Séance Extraordinaire*" at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, on Tuesday evening, the 12th of June, at which Mr. Irving Bishop, the "eminent thought-reader" will appear, under the "special patronage" of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh and others. It is further advertised that:—

"Mr. Irving Bishop will endeavour, as challenged by Henry Labouchere, Q.C., M.P., for the sum of £1,000 to read the number of a bank note concealed in any manner, and known only to the owner. The £1,000, if won by Mr. Bishop, will be presented to the Victoria Hospital for Children, as well as the entire proceeds of the *séance*."

I am not one of those who believe that any human being can really read the thoughts of another unless the two persons are in collusion, or the one person acquires a knowledge of the thoughts of the other by watching the effects on him of suggestive observations or signs. In order to test the possibility of genuine "Thought-reading," I offered to bet Mr. Bishop £1,000 to £10 that he could not tell the number of a note enclosed in an envelope, and known alone to the person whose thoughts he professes to read, under conditions which would render all collusion or trickery impossible. I am quite ready to stand by my offer. The first point obviously is to be safe against collusion. As the charity for which Mr. Bishop appears is in Chelsea, I will place the note which is to be experimented on in the hands of Mr. Firth, M.P. Mr. Bishop will hardly dispute the *bona fides* of this gentleman, and the inhabitants of Chelsea have already expressed their confidence in him by electing him as one of their members.

Mr. Bishop shall place £100 and I £1,000 in Mr. Firth's hands, before the experiment commences.

Mr. Bishop shall then have two clear and distinct guesses at each figure of the number of the note. While guessing, he must ask no questions, make no observations, flourish no pencil, and make no signs. The reason why these conditions are necessary is, that my contention is that wherever Mr. Bishop is successful in "reading" the thoughts of others, this is either due to collusion, or to his watching the effect of observations or signs upon them. Thus in endeavouring to guess a figure, he would reduce the guessing to a certainty by a process of elimination.

If Mr. Bishop does guess the number of the note under these conditions, the £1,000 would at once be handed to him by

Mr. Firth, and he, of course, will be at liberty to retain it, or to bestow it on the Victoria Hospital or any other charity that he pleases. If he does not guess it, the £100 would be handed to me by Mr. Firth, and I shall do what I please with it.

Should Mr. Bishop not accept these conditions, which would, it seems to me, bring his pretensions to "Thought-reading" to a practical issue, the authorities of Victoria Hospital, and the patrons of the charity under whose auspices he appears at the St. James's Hall, would do well to insist upon his revising his advertisement, for the misleading character of which they otherwise will be responsible.—Your obedient servant,

H. LABOUCHERE.

10, Queen Anne's-gate, May 31st.

### LANGHAM HALL LECTURES.

#### SPECIAL LECTURE FUND.

The following donations have been received:—

	£	s.	d.
An Inquirer ... ..	5	5	0
Mrs. M. A. Stack ... ..	3	3	0
The Hon. Percy Wyndham, M.P. ...	2	2	0
Mrs. E. M. James ... ..	2	2	0
J. F. Haskins ... ..	2	2	0
Dr. Dixon ... ..	2	2	0
Morell Theobald ... ..	2	1	0
"Lily" ... ..	2	0	0
Mrs. Strawbridge ... ..	1	5	0
E. Dawson Rogers ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. Parrick ... ..	1	1	0
J. S. Farmer ... ..	1	1	0
Rev. W. Miall ... ..	1	1	0
B. Petersen ... ..	1	1	0
H. Wedgwood ... ..	1	1	0
R. Donaldson ... ..	1	1	0
Sandys Britton ... ..	1	1	0
W. Theobald ... ..	1	1	0
Miss H. Withall ... ..	1	1	0
G. Damiani ... ..	1	1	0
W. E. Surtees, D.C.L. ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. Western ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. Fitzgerald ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. J. Schweitzer ... ..	1	1	0
"M. A. (Oxon.)" ... ..	1	1	0
C. C. Massey ... ..	1	1	0
"J." ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Sainsbury ... ..	0	10	6
Matthew W. White ... ..	0	10	6
Thomas Stocking ... ..	0	10	0
A Friend ... ..	0	10	0
Miss Houghton ... ..	0	10	0
Miss Arundale ... ..	0	10	0
"Queer Times" ... ..	0	10	0
Mrs. Tebb ... ..	0	10	0
G. P. Allan ... ..	0	10	0

[Particulars of the next lecture will be found in our advertisement columns.]

**ALLEGED PHOTOGRAPHY OF SOUND.**—It is said that the direct photography of sound vibrations has recently been effected by Professor Boltzmann, as follows: A small, thin platinum plate was attached perpendicularly to the centre of a thin iron plate, which, as in the telephone or phonograph, was fixed on a wall piece and vibrated to sound. With a solar microscope an image of the platinum plate was focused on a screen. Then a prepared photographic plate was quickly moved across in the plane of the screen by a strong spring while the mouthpiece was spoken to. A bounding line between light and shadow was so obtained on the prepared plate, forming a curve which closely corresponded to the sonorous vibrations. To the vowels pretty simple curves correspond—often approximately curves of sines—often interference curves of two or three curves of sines. The consonants give very multifarious curves.

**A PRESENTIMENT.**—The *Valley Virginian* (Staunton, Va.) gives the following presentiment: "On the 12th ult., Miss Sue V. Wingfield, daughter of Judge Wingfield, of Bedford county, died at the residence of John A. Herring, Esq., near Bridgewater. She had been governess in Mr. Herring's family, and after an illness of a few days of rheumatism of the heart and lungs, she passed away in the bloom of her young life. On leaving with the corpse, Mr. Herring remarked that he would never see Miss Rebecca Davis again, who was a member of the family, and gave instructions as to the disposition of the body should anything occur during his absence. On Saturday following, the 14th, Miss Davis was taken suddenly sick, from which she died. She had long been one of the family and was greatly esteemed by those who knew her. It was a strange presentiment with Mr. Herring, that he should express himself so confidently that he would never see his relative again."

## "THE 'SPIRITUALIST' CRAZE."

By John B. Farmer,

Author of "*A New Basis of Belief in Immortality*," "*How to Investigate Spiritualism*," &c., &c., &c.

Such is the title of a paper in the *Baptist Magazine* for May, which is a fair sample of a type of utterance we had fondly hoped was a thing of the past. This illusion, however, has been somewhat rudely dispelled of late in numerous quarters. Not long since, the *Church Quarterly* launched its invective, and now *Blackwood* and the magazine in question follow in its wake, to say nothing of smaller fry. A common feature characterises them all: they fail to distinguish between "things that differ."

The dignity of our Baptist contemporary has been ruffled by the fact of the "deplorably prevalent" and "singular phenomenon" (Spiritualism) "of our times" having been "somewhat rudely thrust" upon its notice "by some paper at the end of a very innocent-looking book" which had been sent for review. An attempt was there made to establish the fact of a future life in such a way as to convince those who have yielded to sceptical impressions. Our critic allows that such an endeavour is legitimate enough in itself, but "gravely doubts" whether the author had adopted a legitimate method. We will now quote from the *Baptist Magazine* :—

The particular section to which we refer, is thus introduced :—

"Were the spirits of two persons once living upon the earth to make their appearance, and to identify themselves to the perfect satisfaction of several witnesses of the most trustworthy character, there would be in such a case no longer any doubt of the soul's conscious existence beyond the grave. In the affairs of life, any judge or jury in court would consider such evidence as conclusive."

Then follows a quotation of the account, in the Gospel of Matthew, of the appearance of Moses and Elias at the Transfiguration of our Lord, accompanied by certain proper and well-known considerations which go to shew that that account is perfectly credible. So far well. The author proceeds :—

"But the proof which the Gospel historians have recorded of the re-appearance of the dead fails to convince the sceptical mind. Persons of this class have no faith in the leading doctrines of the Bible, and therefore set aside its authority. They want evidence of a stronger and more direct kind. Can such evidence be given? Is it within the range of human experience and testimony? . . . To meet the demands of the sceptic, the reader will not, we trust, be offended, should we take the liberty of culling a leaf from the pages of modern spiritualism; for any evidence which can confirm so grand a truth as the immortality of the soul must meet the acceptance of every one who wishes well to his fellow men."

Now, we cannot but think that the author would have shewn more wisdom had he ignored the so-called evidence from "the pages of modern Spiritualism" altogether. Most people who have examined the matter with any fair degree of intelligence and discrimination, are unable to escape the conclusion that those pages are so defiled with falsehood and imposture, as well as with hasty and blundering inferences from misapprehended facts, as to require to be put out of court when any scientific or theological issue has to be tried. At any rate, many of their statements are so obviously the sheerest fabrications, and many more of them so unmistakably the product of the wildest delusion, that, if we put ourselves to the trouble of looking into them at all, we may well do so with very little expectation of finding in them facts upon which we may confidently rely. . . . If we are asked whether we assert that *all* the alleged manifestations are impostures, we reply that so many of them have been proved to be of that character that the rest are sufficiently discredited. . . . We do not believe that God has thus left "the gates ajar" for the dwellers beyond thus freely to come back, re-materialised, to be seen and chatted with. Those "gates" have been occasionally opened. . . . Had it been our Lord's will that the "realities of the future life" should stand revealed, He Himself would surely have revealed them. He was familiar with them in all their multifarious details; yet He said but little about them, and what He did say pointed to subjective principles rather than to objec-

tive circumstances. . . . Besides, even if we were to admit the existence of a little wheat in the shape of facts, we are not required thereupon to propound some theory by which the facts may be elucidated and systematised into a science or a philosophy. What philosophy have you of the snowdrop, of the rose, of life, of the elemental forces of the universe? If you have any philosophy of these things, it is speculative, not positive; partial, not complete; loose, not fixed; hypothetical, not authoritative; an attempt of the human reason which cannot, without the most contemptible arrogance, proceed upon the assumption of its own infallibility. Let science explain what it can; but do not tell us that when strange phenomena appear we are bound to accept your explanation of them, or otherwise to propound some better explanation of our own. We prefer to wait, and to allow the phenomena to multiply, if they are to multiply, *in the natural order of things*, and not to plunge ourselves into nobody knows what possible blundering, or into nobody knows what inevitable bewilderment, by our meddlingness. . . . This thirst for communications from the dead is so much the more pitiful and mean because it implies an ungrateful dissatisfaction with the more substantial privileges which God has placed within our reach.

We have quoted thus fully because we desire to state the arguments adduced as fairly as possible, but after reading and re-reading the passages and examining them carefully, bearing in mind while doing so the paragraphs to which they are intended as an answer, we entirely fail to perceive any sequence of statement of case and reply. The evidence of 2,000 years ago may satisfy the *Baptist Magazine* and those of a like manner of thinking, but it was not for such that the author of the book in question quoted the evidence of continued existence after death which Modern Spiritualism affords. It was for the sceptical mind, for "those who have no faith in the leading doctrines of the Bible," and whose name we may add is legion. "We have Moses and the Prophets—Christ and His Apostles," says our critic in a passage we have not quoted. True: and for many these suffice, but there are a far greater number who argue with undeniable force that communion with the world of spirit if possible at one period of human history, must be possible now and that both must stand or fall together. And surely they are right, but we would go further and say that without the light which Spiritualism throws upon the Bible much that is recorded there is thoroughly inexplicable.

Our critic must be singularly ignorant of the tendency of modern thought if he is unaware that materialistic ideas had become "deplorably prevalent" until Spiritualism came and placed once more the doctrine of the reality of a future life upon a surer and firmer basis than ever before. We sometimes hear loud complaints of the feebleness of spiritual life in these days, and no wonder, if the main-spring of that life has been cut off for nearly twenty centuries. The Bible record tells of the unceasing impingement of the spiritual upon the material world for more than 4,000 years. It shines forth in unclouded glory upon every page of that old and wonderful book which so many cherish and reverence, but it is asserted that all at once this intercourse between earth and Heaven, so beautifully symbolised by Jacob in his dream, ceased and was no more. We do not believe it. There is not the shadow of a reason for believing that the ministry of angels was so limited. With but rare intervals it has continued through the ages down to the present time, when, in response to the pressing need of the age a widespread outpouring of spirit has taken place. As regards the Christ failing to reveal the realities of the future life, He himself gives a reason for such an omission—"Ye cannot bear them." The world was not then ready for such revelations—indeed even now the higher teachings of Spiritualism are beyond the comprehension of all except a select few. Spiritualism has come with its scientific evidence of the realities of a future life in the same way that every other great invention or discovery has come, at the time when necessity demanded it,

Beyond all this, however, the question is not one of argument, but is rather one of *fact*. Here we must join issue with our contemporary, and while admitting that fraud and folly has, to a certain extent, soiled the pages of the record of Spiritualism, yet this has not been the case to nearly the degree indicated in the passage we have quoted. Taken as a whole, the history of Spiritualism for the past thirty-four years will compare favourably with that of any other movement for a like period, either in ancient or modern times. Spiritualism is yet young. Give it time, and its innate truth and purity will assert itself and rid the external organisation of the fringe of fraud and folly which is in reality no part or parcel of Spiritualism, any more than the excesses of the early followers of John Wesley were germane to Methodism. Among the early Christians there were "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake." And so on. Many passages occur to us, but probably the editor of the B.M. will recollect them just as readily as if quoted in this place. But, because of this testimony as to the wrong-doing and folly of professing Christians, Spiritualists do not condemn the teaching of the Christ; yet this is exactly the style of argument adopted by our contemporary.

With regard to the last few sentences, we can only say that the phenomena have been accumulating for upwards of thirty years, and we think we may surely be content with foundations laid and tested by such an eminent galaxy of names as will be found on page 274 of the present issue. But, if these are not enough, there are the members of the Psychical Research Society, amongst whom are many who have already made their mark in other branches of human knowledge and inquiry. These men are commencing *de novo* in a research into these subjects. They take nothing for granted, and test and try everything that comes under their notice, and yet in so far as they have gone they have come to the very same general conclusions as Spiritualists arrived at twenty-five or more years ago. The "thirst for communications from the dead is so much the more pitiful and mean, because it implies an ungrateful dissatisfaction with the more substantial privileges which God has placed within our reach." Well, this may be so, but the argument cuts like a two-edged sword. If a future life for man is a fact, it surely behoves us to obtain as much information as possible of the nature and conditions of that life. Such knowledge can hardly unfit a man for continued existence, and it may prepare him for it. Besides, this argument would restrict and condemn all inquiry in any branch of human knowledge whatever. For ourselves, we have faith enough to believe that there are no privileges which God has placed beyond our reach, and that therefore "ungrateful dissatisfaction" is impossible. This weapon is too rusty for use in the nineteenth century, though it might have done service three or four hundred years ago. Here we must stop, the exigencies of space forbidding further enlargement, but we hope the little that has been said will present the matter in a somewhat different light.

### HEALING THE SICK.

By A. P. S.

Less attention than they deserve has been paid in this country to the very remarkable cures that have lately been effected in India by Colonel Olcott, the President of the Theosophical Society. A paper I have just received from India records some further examples of the success Colonel Olcott has achieved, and some short extracts may interest the readers of "LIGHT." In the *Indian Mirror*, for April 27th, I read the following certificate:—

The undersigned certifies that he has just been restored to speech by Colonel Olcott after a mesmeric treatment of not more than five minutes; and also had strength restored to his right

arm, which then was so powerless that he could not lift a pound's weight. He lost the power of articulating words in the month of March 1882.

(Sd.) Ram Kishun Lal, witnessed by the cousin of the patient.

This wonderful cure was wrought in our presence as described above.

(Sd.) Soshi Bhushan Moitra, Amjad Ali, Jogesh Chunder Bannerji, Govinda Churn, M.A., B.L., Amir Haidar, Pleader, Mohes Narain Gajadher Prasad, Pleader, Judge's Court, Sagivan Lal, Lal Vihari Bose, Haran Chunder Mittra, M.A., Bama Chunder Mukerji Bani Nath Bannerji, Girija Sekhur Bannerji, Hem Chunder Singh, Annada Churn Mukerji, Ishwar Chunder Ghose, Baldeo Lal, B.A., Purnendra Narain Singh, M.A., B.L.

The incident referred to is further described in the course of a letter in the same paper, which says:—

"Colonel Olcott's short stay at Bankipore was the occasion of great commotion among all classes of men. Streams of people poured in from all sides, attracted by the miraculous cures he wrought, and thronged in hundreds at his door. During three days, the Colonel treated some twenty cases, and in many instances made an almost instantaneous cure. Cases of rheumatic pain, hemiparesis, pain in the shoulders, and other local affections even of a very long standing, were invariably cured. But the most marvellous instances were offered by a case of deafness and a complicated case of guttural paralysis. Babu Kunja Behary Ghose, a contractor, had for years past, lost all power of hearing in his left ear. After a few mesmeric passes, the Babu could hear low whispers, at a distance of twenty feet. But the next case was still more wonderful, and deserves the name of a miracle. The subject, late a Mohurrir in the Fouzdari Court, and a distant relation of the Judge's Sheristadar, had in March last year, been afflicted with guttural paralysis, and could utter only inarticulate sounds. He had also lost use of his right arm, which could not raise any weight, however slight. In five minutes, the man got cured, and could give vent to his feelings, which he did, in a most affecting manner. No one among the spectators could fail to be deeply affected with the successful struggles of Ram Kishun Lal to speak once more in his life, and when the Colonel asked him to raise a chair, which he did to the height of his breast, the spectators burst forth into spontaneous cheers, and beams of joy shot through the eyes of the Colonel himself. This scene was witnessed by some of the most respectable men of the station, who have since borne testimony to the marvellous cure in the local papers."

These cases are in no way more remarkable than many others which might be cited. While I was recently in India Colonel Olcott cured a boy, son of Baboo Surji Kunar Bysach, who had, for six or seven years, been suffering from constant fits of epilepsy. The father wrote a letter over his own signature in the *Indian Mirror* to state what had been accomplished, and another letter, signed by three witnesses, gives a full account of the Theosophical meeting at which the feat was performed. The work in which Colonel Olcott is thus engaged has grown out of similar achievements with which his last visit to Ceylon was associated. There he restored the use of their limbs and faculties to a large number of paralytic persons, under circumstances quite as sensational as those attending the miracles of healing recorded in the New Testament.

In all these cases it is an imperfect explanation of the result attained to say that it is due to Colonel Olcott's mesmeric power. Assuredly, I do not want to underrate this, nor the noble and self-denying life which Colonel Olcott has been leading for many years past, and one of the fruits of which is the development of his mesmeric power. But, of course, as Theosophists generally will be aware, the overwhelming curative force which he wields in the cases now attracting so much attention in India, is mainly derived from the great Adepts who are Colonel Olcott's masters, and who are able, now that his psychic faculties are in the state of development they have reached, to transmit their magnetism through him to suffering patients with whom he may come in contact. Some short-sighted critics of the Adept "Brothers'" policy in their dealings with the outer world are apt to find fault with them for not going about among their fellow creatures doing good after the Christian example. Complaints of this kind rest upon ignorance of the higher functions of the great "Mahatmas,"—upon an ignorance that will not be instructed. But the spectacle afforded by Colonel Olcott's present labours may suggest to more impartial observers that doing good amongst the sick is a task which is not excluded from the programme of Theosophical effort. The only difficulty in the way of carrying it out more extensively is that of finding persons qualified to work at it as the agents of the Brothers, and content to employ themselves upon it.



## OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"

4, NEW BRIDGE STREET,

LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.

## TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "LIGHT." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their sances.

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding and enclose stamps for the return postage.

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## Light:

SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH, 1883.

## REVIEWS.

THE BATTLE GROUND OF THE SPIRITUAL REFORMATION. By S. B. Brittain, M.D. New York: Published for the Author, by Colby and Rich, 6, Montgomery-road, Boston, U.S.A. (8s. 6d.) or FROM THE OFFICE OF "LIGHT."

This work is one of the most solid contributions to American spiritual literature we have come across for some time, and its value is considerably enhanced by the clear, logical, and vigorous style in which it is written. The title—a very happy one, we think—is apparently an outgrowth of Dr. Brittain's introductory argument that the bold protest of Luther, Melancthon and Calvin was but the small beginning of a grand wave of freedom which shall not be stayed in its course till all the nations come under its influence. "The work of the reformers was incomplete," says Dr. Brittain, and then he proceeds to shew that though the agencies in operation now are somewhat different from those set in motion by the Protestant Reformers, yet the adaptability to the work in hand is just as suitable, and the certainty of their accomplishing the required end just as sure. The following passage will alike illustrate the author's meaning and serve as a keynote to the whole book.

"I emphasise the statement that the Reformation is not finished. On the contrary, its deeper meaning is just beginning to be apprehended. In our time it is something far more significant than a resolute protest against the conception of the pervading religion and the arbitrary dogmata of Ecclesiastical Councils. It is not in the highest sense a rude conflict with hoary errors and gigantic wrongs: it is not a mere tilt with the agents of despotic authority. It takes form in a new psychological science, and more profound philosophy of human nature, covering the entire realm of our relations to all things visible and invisible. The battle ground of this spiritual Reformation is not limited by geographical and national boundaries. It does not stop at the lines which separate the races of men, and is not confined to the large area of modern civilisation."

Primarily this book is the outcome of the Secular Press Bureau, an organisation established for employing the secular press of the United States for the purpose of such a statement of the facts and illustrations of the principles of Spiritualism as might be necessary to correct the popular misconception of its character, and to properly vindicate its claims before the world. Dr. Brittain was appointed manager and "editor-at-large," and he continued to wield the reins most effectively until he passed to "the land of the greater number." Of course, in a scheme of this kind differences of opinion were sure to arise as to matters of detail. With these we have nothing now to do. All we can say, in the light of recent events, is that Dr. Brittain did his work well, and probably introduced the subject to quarters not before accessible. His replies to animadversions, of which this book is a selection, were, whenever practicable, published in the

journal in which the attack was made, and if this were declined they appeared in the *Banner of Light*.

Dr. Brittain was a true Spiritualist, and by his removal we lose one of the few remaining representatives of a generation who stood the brunt of popular opinion to an extent of which younger Spiritualists little dream. A scholarly, calm, and temperate writer, he fought long and well for a cause he had thoroughly at heart, and we can say no better than that he will long be remembered by what he has done.

On page 270 will be found a selection from the work entitled "Our Spiritual Guests," in which is propounded a somewhat novel theory as to the manner and method of so-called materialisations. We insert this particular section, not so much because we agree with the deductions of the author, but rather because it exhibits very fairly his general style and method.

DALSTON ASSOCIATION BAZAAR.—Attention is directed to the advertisement of the bazaar in aid of the funds of the Dalston Association, to be held at Quebec Hall on Tuesday and Wednesday next.

The *Cornubian* of June 1st contains a long poem by the "Cornish Exile," entitled "The May Queen's Message: A Modern Séance." There are many touches in it of singular beauty and pathos.

BISHOP BOWMAN ON SPIRITUALISM.—This American prelate recently gave utterance to the following:—"I am not a believer in modern Spiritualism and do not believe that spirits upset chairs and move tables, but I can say that I have never been able to account for many remarkable experiences I have had during my life under different circumstances. We are much nearer the spirit-world than we think, perhaps, and the spirits of the departed dead, I believe, have a certain influence over our minds."

LECTURES AT LANGHAM HALL, 43, GREAT PORTLAND-STREET, W.—The attention of friends is requested to the announcement in our advertisement columns of the third lecture to be given in this hall on Tuesday evening, June 12th, at eight p.m. Mr. Thomas Shorter, the editor of the old *Spiritual Magazine*, and also well known as the author of several standard works on the subject, will lecture on "An Answer to the Inquiry: What is the Use of Psychological Science?" The Rev. W. Miall, M.A., will take the chair.

THE PROOFS OF SPIRITUAL AGENCY.—"The essential question is this: What are the proofs of the agency of departed Spirits? Although I cannot say that I yet feel the sure and firm conviction on this point which I feel on some others, I am bound to say that the higher phenomena, recorded by so many truthful and honourable men, appear to me to render the spiritual hypothesis almost certain. . . . I believe that if I could myself see the higher phenomena alluded to I should be satisfied, as are all those who have had the best means of judging of the truth of the spiritual theory."—Prof Gregory, F.R.S.E.

We have been asked to announce that the next monthly conference of the London Society for the Abolition of Compulsory Vaccination will be held on Monday evening, June 18th, at 7.30 o'clock, at the Society's Rooms, 114, Victoria-street (adjacent to St. James's Park Station, District Railway), when an address will be given by Mr. Thomas Shorter, on "What is the Real Question at Issue?" Discussion will follow the address, and the committee hope that members will endeavour to secure the attendance of their medical friends, members of Boards of Guardians, and others.—William Young, secretary.

CONFERENCE AT NOTTINGHAM.—To the Editor of "LIGHT." Dear Sir,—Will you kindly give a place in your columns to the following "call" to Nottingham Spiritualists, and oblige.—Yours very truly, E. W. WALLIS. A Conference will be held in the Morley Club House, Shakespeare-street, on Sunday, June 17th, to which all sympathisers are invited. Order of arrangements: Morning, 10.30; chairman, Mr. E. W. Wallis. Subject, "How best to Promote Unity of Action amongst Spiritualists of the Town." Speakers allowed a quarter of an hour. Afternoon, 2.30; chairman, Mr. Waine. Paper on "Organisation" by Mr. E. W. Wallis, to be followed by arrangements for future work. Evening, 6.30; chairman, Mr. W. Yates. Public meeting. Among others the following are expected to give their best thoughts and inspirations: Mrs. Barnes, Mrs. Haines, Mrs. Wallis, Mr. Waine, Mr. Haines, and Mr. E. W. Wallis. Collections at the close, morning and evening.

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN PSYCHOLOGY.

Notes of an address delivered in Langham Hall, Great Portland-street, on Tuesday Evening, May 29th, 1883, by T. P. Barkas, F.G.S. Joseph Cowen, Esq., M.P., in the chair.

Mr. Joseph Cowen, who presided, said, in opening the meeting, that he would not stand between them and the lecturer more than a couple of minutes, and for two reasons—first, because he knew little of the subject, and had no opinion upon it; second, because public duties would shortly require his attendance elsewhere, and he wished to hear Mr. Barkas as long as he could. He would say this, however, that he had known Mr. Barkas for thirty-five or thirty-six years; that that gentleman had given close, continuous, and intelligent consideration to Spiritualism and cognate questions; and that anything he had to say was well worth their attention, whether they agreed or disagreed with it. The experiences he would recite were the experiences of a careful observer and a trustworthy man.

## MR. BARKAS' LECTURE (abridged).

The facts I propose to place before my audience this evening are so antecedently improbable to the great majority of educated persons, that I feel as if some apology were necessary in introducing them to those ladies and gentlemen who have honoured me by their presence.

They are, however, as the results of several years of sceptical inquiry, so manifestly true to my mind, that improbable, if not impossible, as they may appear to the vast majority of those who hear me, I feel justified in giving public expression to them and vouching for their genuineness.

I am free to acknowledge that, apart from personal investigation, I fear the evidence of mere testimony of the most credible kind would not have removed my doubts of their reality and genuineness; and, with Horatio, I might exclaim:

“Before my God, I might not this believe  
Without the sensible and true avowals  
Of mine own eyes.”

I am free, therefore, to grant the widest range for scepticism short of dogmatic denial without investigation.

Scepticism towards the phenomena I am about to relate is a proper and becoming attitude for every intelligent inexperienced inquirer, who has been trained in the ordinary schools of science and theology, but dogmatic denial in view of the marvels and antecedently improbable discoveries of modern science, is in the last degree illogical and unbecoming.

Facts somewhat resembling those I propose to adduce this evening, have, during the present century, been vouched for by myriads of competent observers, among whom I may enumerate Dr. Elliotson, W. Howitt, Dr. Robert Chambers, Judge Edmonds, Epes Sargent, Professor De Morgan, Professor Crookes, Mr. A. R. Wallace, Lord Rayleigh, Professor Barrett, and many other equally competent, credible, and unbiased investigators.

The more improbable the facts testified to, the greater the amount of evidence required in order to justify their acceptance.

I could with ease quote the evidence of hundreds of trained and truthful observers, but in the brief time at our disposal this evening, I prefer placing before you selections from my own experiences, in order that you may not only have the testimony of a living, present witness, but an opportunity of questioning and cross-questioning the witness to any extent you may deem desirable.

To quote my own experiences, in preference to those of equally, probably more, competent observers, may appear egotistical, but as books and distant persons can only give the information they have to convey in a stereotyped form, I think you will agree with me that in any inquiry into a subject so momentous and so commonly unbelievable as that we have met to consider, it is very desirable to have a living witness to cross-examine, who may be able more fully to explain the phenomena for which he has vouched, and at once to remove the difficulties that may have presented themselves to the minds of his hearers.

I wish to-night to confine myself, as far as is practicable, to a statement of facts, rather than to the propagation and defence of theories.

If the alleged facts be really established, theories respecting them may be allowed to take care of themselves. My sole object, then, is to shew that phenomena frequently occur of an occult and not generally accepted character, which cannot be accounted for by reference to generally received physical and psychological laws, and which seem to indicate the existence of intelligences other than those with which we are familiar in embodied human form.

The phenomena I propose to select are both physical and psychological, and all of them have a strictly intelligent psychological basis, from whatever source that intelligence may emanate.

Beyond the expression of my own opinion as the result of an inquiry extending over nearly half-a-century, I do not intend to go; it is that the phenomena are not produced by recognised physical laws, that they are, with the exception of the first fact I propose to relate, not produced voluntarily or involuntarily by embodied human beings, but are produced by beings of some

kind possessing human intelligence and more than embodied human power.

At the present time we have much discussion respecting thought-reading, clairvoyance, and volitional transference of impressions.

The more recent experiments appear to me to be much inferior to those that were commonly practised and known about half-a-century ago, in the days of Spencer Hall, Dr. Darling, Captain Hudson, Mr. Adair, Dr. Elliotson, Mr. Lewes, and several other prominent mesmerists, with the majority of whom I was familiar.

In corroboration of this statement, permit me to place before you a typical illustration of experiments that forty-five years ago were almost of daily occurrence.

[The lecturer then went on to illustrate his arguments by relating several well-marked instances of the volitional transference of thought, of writing inside closed books and slates tied in various ways, and also on an empty slate held by himself and the medium, in the latter case the execution of the writing being instantaneous. He then proceeded to sum up his experience as follows:—]

I. I have witnessed motions of furniture when such motions could not be produced deceptively.

II. I have heard responses to questions that could not be accounted for on the theory of coincidence.

III. I have had a musical instrument played in my own hand in good light.

IV. I have seen articles of furniture obey unspoken requests.

V. I have seen tables rise from the floor notwithstanding the fact that by considerable pressure I endeavoured to prevent them from rising.

VI. I have seen apparently living human forms grow up in the middle of a room from apparent nothingness. I have witnessed those forms move about the room, shake hands with the sitters, shew signs of affection to those who were present, and then in the open room gradually decrease in size and become invisible.

I have heard similar forms speak and sing. I have seen them walk, sit, write, and lift heavy objects. I have felt their hands, feet, and pulses, and have ascertained on various occasions that their hands and feet were sometimes pleasantly warm, and at other times icy cold with a corpse-like, clammy chilliness. I have gazed in their faces in good light and have had as much proof of their real though only temporarily visible existence, as I have of the existence of any person with whom I am familiar.

Two living forms; a young woman and an old Quakeress have appeared in an open room, Mrs. P., the medium, sitting visible in the room.

VII. I have for many hours and on many occasions sat with an automatic sensitive, apparently in her normal condition, that is, without any signs of trance or unconsciousness, and have seen her reply in writing to questions I had personally asked in almost every department of physics, physiology, biology, and metaphysics, in a manner which was utterly beyond my own ability either to equal or imitate, and far beyond the capacity of any one present in the room—the sensitive herself being a very ordinarily educated woman, and entirely ignorant of every branch of physics, biology, and psychology.

[Mr. Barkas then proceeded to describe the method of conducting the experiments, and quoted several instances of the actual answers given as examples of the style of reply obtained. A complete account of these sésances was published in the *Psychological Review* for October, 1878, pp. 215, 242. He then concluded as follows:—]

I have endeavoured, as concisely as is compatible with clearness, to place before you some of the more salient phenomena of an occult and psychological character that have come under my own observation, during a period of inquiry extending over little less than half a century.

My investigation of mesmeric phenomena began in early youth, and my inquiries into what are termed spiritual phenomena, commenced thirty years ago, and have proceeded with, more or less, continuity until the present day.

I have taken advantage of almost every available opportunity for witnessing commonly inexplicable phenomena, and have arrived at the conclusion, that whilst there may in some instances have been deception, yet the vast majority of them are genuine, but of so extraordinary and unexpected a character, that I am not at all surprised at the incredulity with which recitals of them are generally received, and I repeat with Dante in his “Inferno,” when relating the wonders he professes to have seen (p. 217):—

“If, O reader, now  
Thou be not apt to credit what I tell,  
No marvel, for myself I do scarce allow  
The witness of mine eyes.”

And yet, with Shelley in his “Queen Mab,” I say:—

“Let us see the truth whatever that may be.”

The non-recognition of these phenomena by the great mass of mankind, and especially by the more highly-trained specialists in science and theology, does not surprise me. We know from experience, that all discoveries in astronomy, geology, physiology, biology, and indeed every department of science, have had to fight their way through barriers of learned prejudice

and conservative immobility; and on the other hand, utter indifference to marvellous phenomena in physics and psychology is too much characteristic of the mass of mankind.

The marvels of astronomy are a closed book to the great majority of the race, although

"Heaven calls,  
And round about you wheeling, courts your gaze  
With everlasting beauties."

So with the phenomena, a brief record of which I have endeavoured to place before you this evening, they are everywhere pressing for investigation, and yet men generally close their eyes to the facts, and meet them with the bitterest scorn, and most stubborn prejudice.

I ask not belief of my record of facts, but I certainly ask for some inquiry prior to their entire and supercilious rejection.

### OUR SPIRITUAL GUESTS.\*

HOW THEY BECOME VISIBLE AND TANGIBLE.

By S. B. Brittain. M.D.

Having admitted the reality of the phenomena, and also the agency of spirits in their production (which we have never doubted), we are now to institute a philosophical inquiry into the essential nature of the facts, and the particular modes of manifestations. Do spirits so clothe themselves with the elements of matter as to be perceived through the ordinary avenues of sensation? Do they really extemporise bodies possessing all the chemical constituents and organic parts belonging to the corporeal forms which they occupied during their rudimental life on the earth? Or by what other means and methods do they shew themselves to mortals?

And here I cannot omit the observation that many persons who set out in their investigation of Spiritualism by disputing all former revelations, especially the marvels recorded in Jewish and Christian histories, frequently run wild, in their extravagant assumptions, to the opposite extreme of unreasoning credulity. It is quite common for such people to express their contempt for the elder prophets and seers, and to ridicule the just claims of inspired Apostles; at the same time they are ready to swear to the infallibility of their own chosen medium. These novices talk of freedom and liberality while they take their place

"With bigots, who but one way see,  
Through blinkers of authority."

The most improbable views are often accepted with the utmost favour. Theories of the phenomena under discussion obtain currency which are believed to be at once inconsistent with the laws of nature, the decisions of enlightened reason, and the discoveries of science. . . . A few critical observations may suffice to give our minds the right direction. In contributing my suggestions toward a philosophical exposition of the facts, I only presume to speak for myself and so many of my readers as may find their own ideas voiced in what I have yet to communicate.

As a further preliminary to the proposed analytical and philosophical exegesis of the facts under review a brief statement of several methods, whereby spirits may and do reveal their forms to our senses, will be of consequence in a more particular classification of the phenomena. One of the spirits of "The Golden Age" defines philosophy to be "facts seen in their right relations." This is the way we would look at the facts in this case. How then do spirits reveal their forms to us, and how do we perceive them? I apprehend by at least four several methods, which I will endeavour to briefly explain.

1. The conscious spirit in the body has its external and internal channels of communication. The senses open outwardly through all the physical organs to the whole realm of external nature, and inwardly to the immeasurable sphere of all spiritual realities. As a rule, during the life on earth the interior avenues of perception are closed and men are blind on this spiritual side of their natures. But when—by the normal process of our spiritual growth or by other means—the dark curtains are removed from those windows of the soul which open towards the heavens, our interior being is illuminated. Then we see spirits as they really exist in their own sphere, we see them as they see one another, and as naturally as we behold the objects of the material creation. The cases which answer to this description are never numerous. Society, whether savage or civilised, is too sensuous to discern spiritual things. The common life and thought of the people are too external to admit of the frequent development of such examples. When, how-

ever, these interior avenues of perception are thus opened in a human being in this world, spirits require no clothing of material elements to make their presence visible. When the forms of spirits are distinctly revealed to us in this way they appear to be in all respects as real as the most tangible bodies in this world; and still there is no material substance in such a visible form that would arrest the motion of the most delicate chronometer. Spirits, whose natures are refined, readily pass through closed doors; and whenever they offer no voluntary resistance, very ponderable bodies may pass through them as through shadows, illuminated clouds, or the vapour from a steam-pipe. It will be perceived that when the senses are opened on the spiritual side of human nature, the appearance of spirits in visible forms does not, to say the least, necessarily depend on any materialising process. If such examples are scarcely more numerous than summer flowers in wintry weather, they are not so rare as Christian charity.

2. It is to be observed that the mind—whether in or out of its earthly tabernacle—has power to present an endless succession of psycho-electrotypes, or psycho-physiological pictures which have every appearance of outstanding realities. This is done by acting on the subtle agent that pervades the sensory nerves of the subject in such a way as to reflect an image upon the sensorium, the process resembling that by which light throws up an image or picture of the object from which the rays are reflected on the sensitive plate in the camera. Doubtless all ordinary sensation is the vital motive power of animal and human bodies. It is a great mistake to suppose that these sensorial impressions can only be produced by material means, or the presence of the objective forms of the physical world. This is ascribing to the elements of matter a pre-eminence over the faculties of the mind which I am not willing to concede. On the contrary, it has been experimentally demonstrated that the various impressions occasioned by the ordinary objects and agents of nature on and through the organs of sensorial perception, can be produced with similar precision and with equal force by the action of a positive mind on a sensitive subject. A strong imagination and vigorous will may thus multiply the mental images of everything in nature of which we may be able to form a definite conception. Every form that passes before the vision, every sound that breaks the silence, the aromatic flavours treasured up in the autumn fruits, and every precious perfume that is borne on the "wings of the wind," may all be made to come to us in the absence of the natural objects which contain these essential qualities—and all through the agency of the human mind, acting agreeably to psycho-physiological laws on the subtle forces of the nervous system. All these effects have been produced in this way thousands of times, and they are daily repeated by minds in the body and in the spirit. Many cases of the alleged "materialisation of spirits" are obviously phenomena of this class. Under this psycho-sensorial operation what really appears to be a solid body may be merely a *sensation*, this impression of tangibility being made through the nerves on the sensorium.

3. This classification of the facts calls for specific mention of the examples of *transfiguration*. In these cases the spirit takes such possession of the medium as to change all the facial lines and the expression of every feature so completely that the medium seems to have disappeared and the spirit alone is recognised. In such examples the powers of the spirit are sometimes so great that with the transfiguration the subject is partially transformed. Daniel D. Home and several other mediums have, it is confidently affirmed, been made at least apparently much larger or smaller, and by actual measurement, several inches shorter or taller, by this effort of the spirit to represent its own earthly proportions. The facts of this class have often been the means of exposing honest mediums to unjust suspicions, from which they should be conscientiously defended. When the spirit withdraws and the phenomena of transfiguration disappear, leaving the form, features, and expression peculiar to the medium, the observer who is mainly watching for some deception is liable to deceive himself and wrong the innocent object of his suspicion. How much the indwelling spirit may change the form is suggested by these lines of the poet.

"For of the soul the body form doth take,  
For soul is form, and doth the body make."

4. There is still another method by which a spirit may become visible, regardless alike of all physiological powers and susceptibilities, and of the opening of the interior avenues of sensation. He may attract to himself and condense about the spiritual body certain sublimated elements from the medium, from

\* From "Battle Ground of the Spiritual Reformation." By S. B. Brittain, M.D. Boston: Colby and Rich. (See page 263 of this issue of "LIGHT.")



other human bodies and from the earth's atmosphere so as to form a visible material covering, thus revealing the outline of the spiritual presence to the natural senses of the observer. Precisely how much matter may be required in the production of such forms is a question we will not undertake to settle. It may be more or less, according to the measure of the spirit's power, the proper materials at his command, and the results intended to be produced. But even the small substance of a summer cloud would be quite sufficient to render the spirit visible to all observers. While such forms may be more substantial than the momentary spell of the psychologist, their superficial aspects do not enable us to determine either their chemical composition or their specific gravity. We know that at the pleasure of the spirit such a form may be made as to resist the contact of ponderable bodies, and the action of physical forces, otherwise it may admit of being so penetrated that an arrow may pass through it as freely as it would make its way through the morning mist that hides the mountains.

Now would it be proper to say of an example belonging to this class that "*the Spirit is materialised*"? If the term is not applicable in this case it would seem to be out of place in any other. It must be obvious, I think, that when the spirit becomes visible by the opening of the senses, or the interior plane of perception; or the phenomena are produced by the spirit acting on the sensory nerves of mortals, the case is never, in any philosophical sense, one of materialisation. Does the term properly represent the facts which belong to the fourth division of this classification? The cases in which the spirit is enrobed with material vestments? Let us see. According to Webster, to materialise is "to reduce to a state of matter;" "to regard as matter;" "to consider or explain by the laws or principles of matter;" "to cause to assume a character appropriate to material things." Does the spirit, *per se*, undergo any such change as is indicated by this comprehensive definition? No. Is the spirit reduced to a material state? Is it to be regarded as matter? No. Are its voluntary powers subordinated to the laws of matter? No. Is it in a condition that its nature and functions must be explained on the principles of physics? No. Is the character of the spirit changed in any important particular, or are its attributes essentially modified? I apprehend not. If, on the contrary, *the change is in matter*—if the spirits develop the facts by their own subtle and powerful agency in directing the faculties of mind and the forces of the physical world, why should we infer that the "*spirit is materialised*"? This assumption is a significant indication of the tendency of the popular mind. It does not distinctly recognise spirit as the active and controlling agent in the business. It is a virtual affirmation that the potencies of the universe belong in a most essential sense to matter; and that the spirit is brought down from its own high estate to the lower level of material things. If the active forces employed in the production of the phenomena under discussion really belong to the spirit world, it would better accord with the intrinsic nature of the facts to say that *matter is spiritualised*.

WHITHER ARE WE TENDING?—Forms social, political and religious are everywhere decaying, but humanity is in its youth; it has to develop into maturity before advancing to the realisation of its divine destiny. For our children's children we may foresee a social organisation in which, cruel contentions ceasing, the reign of goodness and truth, of love and wisdom, will commence, when the God of Humanity will be adored, and when the good of each will flow from and harmonise with the good of all. Let us try to draw our brethren out of the mists of materialism; those whose sincere aspirations are towards a more perfect social order will feel that such order cannot grow out of decaying material forms.—*Lamartine*.

SECULARISM AND PSYCHOLOGY.—In a recent number of the *Secular Review* are two letters, one questioning the possibility of ghosts, and one from "C. H. G.," affirming their objective reality. The great secularist organ, the *National Reformer*, has an able contributor, "D.," whose standpoint has hitherto seemed to be that Spiritualism would die out if let alone; but, a few weeks ago, it contained a long paper by him about it, or rather, roundabout what Mr. St. George Stock and others wrote about it. When at Mr. Barkas's recent lecture, the esteemed Mr. G. J. Holyoake, the original leader of the Secularists, was seen to readily take the chair on Mr. Cowen being called away, it occurred to us that, putting these several things together, our Secularist friends begin to see that Psychology is no longer to be "severely let alone." If so, let us hope they will begin on the ground of facts, not words and phrases.

## SPIRIT TEACHINGS.

### SECOND SERIES.

This series of Spirit-Teachings, like the former, is made up of selections from a great mass which have been automatically written during a series of years. They are selected on no other principle than that of printing what has been valuable to the person for whom they were originally given, in so far as this can be done without trenching on what is merely of personal and private application. The latter consideration excludes a great mass of what would otherwise be interesting and valuable matter. The phraseology has been preserved, as far as possible, intact, names only being omitted. The series follows directly on the first, from which, indeed, it is separated only by the accident of its publication in another journal, and after some considerable interval of time. The publication is resumed in deference to many repeated requests.

M.A. (Oxon.)

### No. XXXIX.

*In writing a review of "Ghostland" you led me to make some very serious reflections as to the outcome of Spiritualism and Occultism. I have since been thinking of them, and wondering how far you can throw more light on them. I wish you would do so, for there are others who need it as much as myself.*

May the blessing of the Supreme and All-wise be upon you. It may be well for you if we say what we only impressed you to hint at. The time is hardly yet come with the world at large when it is a matter for consideration whether the pursuit of truth in connection with spirit intercourse is for them fraught with danger. They are too much occupied as yet with the very externals. But for you, and for all who act as you do with reference to us, it is well to ponder. We are used, as you know, to select seasons for so causing you to ponder. We will use the present for presenting to you thoughts which you will do well to make your own. That which you call Spiritualism presents itself in divers aspects, but, so far as we wish now to view it, under two grand divisions, the Esoteric and the Exoteric: by the latter of these being popularly known. Taking the broad view that Spiritualism means the recognition of, and communion with, the world of spirit, it is the first business of those whose commune to find out what the world of spirit is. Most judge it by its effects, and these are gathered from the popular knowledge on the subject. The public records tell of many communications, many of them untrue in fact, and immoral in principle. The statements put forth revolt the judgment, and are plainly untrue. The acts are equally foolish and unmeaning. Men will not remember that the manifestations which are produced are the work of spirits corresponding to the mental states of the sitters. They take what they see, and judge it harshly. Accordingly, to the superficial eye the whole area of spirit manifestation is crowded with imbecility, immorality, and fraud. The observer sees plenty of this, and little else. And even then his eye does not see, cannot take in the real condition of things. If it could, he would shrink back in horror, as from an accursed thing.

By this standard Spiritualism is judged, and the verdict is a severe one, justly deserved. Who, it is said, are the agents here? devils, surely. We have told you before, good friend. Spirit is of all grades, and the fate of Von Marx is no paradox or parable. It is literal fact that the spirits who frequent circles from which the spiritual element on your side is absent, are unprogressed and undeveloped spirits attracted by the dominant temperaments of the sitters; earth-bound spirits who love to bewilder and perplex, or to lure to vice and sin, and, worst of all, those malignant spirits who, having passed through incarnation without progress, have now gravitated below your sphere, and are embodiments of their own evil, base, and sensual natures. They do not merely bear with them an atmosphere of evil, of vice, of impurity, of spiritual disease. They are embodied evil, incarnate vice, subsisting vampire-like on your emanations, and saturating your systems with their foul pollution. Bethink you, friend, these are not the speculations of a theorist; they are so much of truth as one who sees and knows it may declare. You are beginning to awake to the reason for our forbidding you to frequent such meetings, save when protected and guarded by our power: you are beginning at last to estimate at their real value the risks that beset the communion with spirit in unlicensed ways; you have experienced enough, in your own nightly visitations, to make you appreciate what we have told you. It is the only way in which you can learn, and now that you have so far learned, ponder on the lesson.

Think of the philosophy of spirit intercourse, what it is intended to be, and what it has been degraded to. The pictures are far different. The circles which gather

together all and any who may come, without preparation, without spiritual perception, without purity of heart and intent, without any spiritual instinct or desire, with no other wish but to gratify a whim, or make an experiment, or waste away an hour, or, perchance without knowing it, breathe a congenial atmosphere, these are they who seek communion with the spirit world. They use for the instrument one, perchance, whose body has become saturated with the influence of the depraved and debased spirits who throng around them; one whose vital forces have been sapped, whose health has been ruined, whose moral nature has too often been depraved, and whose spirit is the prey of the possessing fiends who have marked him for their instrument. Drained of all that supports life, he flies to debauchery and drunkenness as a relief from thought, and to stimulate the jaded strength which day by day grows less. Haunted by the vicious and depraved spirits who enthrall him, he is their prey, their slave, their helpless instrument, till when his wretched life is over, prematurely shortened by vice and sin, he goes to join their company, to be in turn a possessing spirit, and drive some wretched being to despair. Or, if the medium be not sunk to this depth, he is dominated by the undeveloped, his moral character is vitiated, or his bodily health impaired, so that, through his means, the spirits with whom you desire to commune cannot reach you. We speak from the plane of knowledge to you when we tell you that it is impossible for anyone to allow himself to be made the vehicle of spirits who are attracted to open circles without sinking sooner or later to their level: without mental, moral, and physical deterioration. We tell you that the company who gather in such circles, whether in the body or out of the body, are such that you may not frequent them without risk.

Moreover, we tell you that you will not meet there the wise and pure whom alone you should desire to meet. You may meet spirits who have sunk so low as to be almost as material as your materialists, and who will act on gross matter almost as easily as yourselves. You may meet the spirit who is so gross as to make himself readily visible to your eyes. But you will find in them all the absence of what for want of a better word we call Honesty. You will find every manifestation accompanied or followed by fraud and deception, so that you search in vain for evidence which perpetually eludes your grasp. You will never gain satisfactory proof there. For, good friend, proof must be found in an atmosphere of sincerity and truth; and there you have neither. The evidence most satisfying to you is upset the next moment, and you are forced to see and confess that you are dealing with a power that you cannot control, and with one on which you cannot rely. And meantime that you have spent your pains for nothing. You have drunk in the pernicious atmosphere of these depraved and deceitful spirits; you have imbibed the infection of their depravity, and have done your best to infect yourself with their vice. And if you are protected in the risk you run, you have no claim to incur that risk again and again save in the discharge of duty. You go to a pest house and expect to escape free; but one day you find you have gone too far; a vampire has fastened on you, and for the rest, you are possessed by a loathsome fiend whom you must emancipate yourself from by laborious purification, or to whom you must become victim. You know it, yes, but how long is it since we first told you, and what effect did it produce upon you? You, or your race, usually disregard a thing because it is not palpable to their rude senses. And yet they know that germs of disease are equally invisible. Only they have found out that infection of fever is surely caught in certain places. When will they learn that there is a more subtle poison which attacks the spirit, and that that poison is generated, and that infection propagated, where men meet to invoke the presence of spirits who are full of uncleanness and vice and moral and spiritual disease? Until they learn so much, the popular idea of Spiritualism will always be that it is a base and unholy thing. When they have learned so much they will be prepared to go deeper and learn more. We trust you have learned that Von Marx's warning was one that is not rare. They who spend their time in attempts to reduce spirit to material lines do in the end debase it so far that it is half-material, and satisfying themselves so far, they sink to the plane of the elementary and the undeveloped. They cannot gain spiritual enlightenment so: they cannot develop one grace in their own souls or win one truth that can make them nobler or better. Even the material evidence they can gain is illusory, and they end

as Von Marx did by assimilating themselves to the spiritual plane on which their experiments were conducted. There is a deep spiritual truth involved here which you can only dimly see. Jesus proclaimed it when He said "Where the carcase is there will the vultures be." Where a man's tastes are there will be his spirit. Where a man voluntarily places himself there will be his future state, as you call it. A man selects his plane; and they who do as we have warned you above, do select and lower themselves to the plane of the elementary and undeveloped, instead of raising them to their own higher plane, and aspiring to communion with the noble, the pure, and the progressed.

*What you say is very awful: and does not apply in its full hideousness to anything we know of in this country.*

Hardly: yet the worst is not here, nor yet. We have told you of what is going on elsewhere. The wave has not yet reached you.

*No. We apparently get our wave of influence from that land which is the Judea of modern Spiritualism.*

Be warned in time.

+ IMPERATOR.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

#### The Preparation of Inquirers and the Production of the Phenomena. To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It is with much diffidence that I venture to contribute a letter to your columns on the above subject, but the fact that my name and opinions have been quoted in relation to the general question, I thought might be a sufficient excuse for my so doing.

I am no controversialist—I only claim to be a sincere and humble worker in a much-loved cause, labouring zealously and indefatigably, and in perfect harmony with all my brother and sister Spiritualists, of whatever grade, name, or opinion.

From the commencement of my work in this movement, I have carefully endeavoured to avoid anything savouring of oracular or dogmatic judgment in the expression of my opinions, or of doing injustice to any other workers in the field. "To every man his own work;" "What is that to thee? follow thou me," is the voice which every worker should heed. I have invariably maintained an attitude of profound deference toward all those workers and teachers whose experience and ability and wisdom so far transcend my own.

Hence, it was with something like pain that I found in "LIGHT," of May 19th, my humble opinion quoted in apparent opposition to the views of so eminent an authority and worker as Mr. T. P. Barkas; and my present object in writing is particularly to say how thoroughly I appreciate the calm and courteous letter of that gentleman in last week's "LIGHT," and how fully I agree with the sentiments and judgment therein expressed.

Surely the author of "Outlines of Ten Years' Investigation of Spiritualism" (which I have now by my side) need not be supposed to "discountenance the presentation of records of phenomena to friends and the general public;" whilst Mr. Barkas' real design, viz.: "to shew that advanced physical phenomena should not be hastily and miscellaneously submitted to public and personal inspection," I cannot imagine being seriously taken exception to; certainly it will not be by any one who has had anything worth calling "experience" in this matter.

In the concluding paragraph of his letter, Mr. Barkas says:—"Long experience has shewn me that the great majority of mankind are unfitted for observing the higher developments without preliminary training in the observation of more elementary phenomena;" and I would add, that not only long experience, but even a little experience, will shew this.

I beg to say, however, that my idea of preparedness and fitness relates chiefly to the spirituality, i.e., the moral character and disposition of persons, rather than to their intellectual status. I lay stress upon the word *disposition*, because there are hundreds who profess religion and knowledge who exhibit a shockingly bad disposition. They are influenced chiefly by conceit, prejudice, and bigotry, and I contend that these are an insuperable obstacle to their reception of the *truth*. These do

indeed need a "preparation," and a stern, severe training, before the beautiful angel of truth can dwell with them.

But I contend that a person of good disposition and character is prepared for anything, either in Spiritualism or out of it. A person of a *right spirit* may be safely introduced to any, even the "most advanced," phenomena. He may be filled with *wonder*, but he will surely also *ponder* seriously and thoughtfully over what he has seen. If Spiritualists will let this determine their selections, they will never have any difficulty. I repeat, that a person of *pro er*—i.e., of humble, sincere, teachable, benevolent spirit, disposition, and character, may be safely introduced to any circle or any phenomena. It is those of opposite character that are unfit and unprepared; and here, indeed, is our great field of work. It is the *personal spiritual training* that is needed, and if the present writer aims at anything it is this.

Taking this view of the case, the most serious matter is, in my opinion, the utter unfitness and unpreparedness of many so-called Spiritualists for this great cause of Spiritualism. In my opinion there is no greater obstacle to the spread of Spiritualism than the unspirituality and selfishness of so-called Spiritualists.

Everyone, it is true, may not be directly called upon, as has been the case with myself, to surrender and sacrifice everything dear, advantageous, and desirable in life for this cause, and devote himself, soul, life and all, aye and more than all, to it; but I have been utterly astonished to see to what an extent Spiritualists treat Spiritualism as a *plaything*, and how few are willing to forego the slightest personal pleasure or indulgence for the sake of this great cause.

I will conclude this letter by saying that my own work is based upon the principle that *a knowledge of the truth and its practical influence in the life, is the preparation required for actual intercourse with the spirit world*; and the world being what it is, what a field of work is here! The rest, I think, we may confidently leave to the spirit world, which surely knows better than we how much or how little to give to inquirers.

We may rest assured that it would give unstintingly to those who are worthy; those who are not will get just as much as they deserve.—I remain, sir, truly yours,

CHARLES WARE.

11, West View-terrace, Exeter,  
May 26th, 1883.

#### The Rev. John Page Hopps's Lecture.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Though much admiring the lecture of the Rev. J. Page Hopps, "On a Scientific and Spiritual Basis of Belief in a Future State," I must venture to comment on some of its closing words. His version of Romans vii. verse 24 gives to that text a meaning widely different from what is conveyed to my mind either by the old, or the recently revised translation. *This death-like body* implies quite another idea, both of death and the body, than what is expressed by *the body of this death*; an idea which I think Mr. Page Hopps must import into Bible words before he can draw from them any reason for believing that "our easily besetting sins will probably disappear when kindly earth receives the body."

If there is the *body of death*, there must surely be an *anterior spirit* that caused such external manifestation as our dying bodies are. What can dissolution do towards healing a spirit whose phenomenal life is full of weakness, suffering, and various tendencies to evil?

When undressing a diseased body cures pain or cools fever, death may rid us of our besetting sins; surely not before: for much as the body fetters the will by imperfect organisation, it is the slave of the will, and the will cannot die with the body.

It is such soothing and unguarded sayings as these which close Mr. Page Hopps' admirable address, that encourage the madness of suicide, and the almost equal madness of habitual self-indulgence. Without any sort of qualification, he says, "*Death is an advancement.*" And just before he had said very truly that "the dusky veil of the flesh hides a thousand times more than it reveals." Is it rational to take it for granted that only delights, only pleasant, rejoicing facts are thus hidden? The testimony of many an unhappy spirit, craving for the prayers of those still shielded by this fleshly veil, gives rather a different view of *post-mortem* existence; and on this point, I think too many of them would be ready to add their protest to mine.—Yours, &c.

A. J. PENNY.

#### Papal Bulls.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Illness alone has prevented me from noticing your reprint of a Papal Bull of excommunication supposed to have been recently published in Spain. That the document is not genuine, in as much as it does not in any way resemble any form of excommunication I ever saw, I am convinced. Secondly, there is no necessity for its existence, for without any such Bull the Archbishop of Santander or any other Romanist Bishop could at any moment place any person in his diocese under the major excommunication; for practising *mesmerism, magnetism, table-turning, Spiritualism*, or any form of divination by the *Planchette*, *clairvoyance* or otherwise. This power the Romanist Bishops have possessed since the 30th July, 1856, on which date a decree

or rather an encyclical letter emanated by order of the Pope from the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Inquisition by which *mesmerism, Spiritualism, &c.*, were pronounced to be heretical; all persons aiding or abetting such practices, or reading or composing literature on such subjects were therefore pronounced to be liable to all the penalties of excommunication under the provisions of the well-known "*Bullæ Cæneæ*." A sentence of excommunication is not infrequently inflicted, but is rarely published—as certainly in all Protestant and in some Roman Catholic countries such publication is in law a libel. A sentence of excommunication runs usually somewhat as follows:—"To all the faithful throughout the world. Whereas A. B. has been guilty of certain grave offences, namely, heresy, &c., &c., contrary to the decrees of the Church and in subversion of good morals. We, C. D., by the grace of God and favour of the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of ———, do hereby pronounce upon the said A. B. the sentence of the major excommunication with all the pains and penalties attached thereto, and we do pronounce the said A. B. to be anathema." Then follow the place, date, signature of the Bishop and his seal.

The encyclical letter of the Sacred Congregation is very long; but if you think it of the slightest interest to your readers, I will send you a translation of a duly authenticated copy.

A QUONDAM ROMANIST.

### SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON.

#### METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51 AND 53, MORTIMER STREET, REGENT STREET, LONDON.

The evening of Sunday, the 3rd inst., at these rooms, was devoted to "Question and Answer." The inquiries submitted covered the following topics:—

The manner of approach and retirement of the controls, with a general description of their home and personal surroundings in Spirit-land.

The nature of the present occupation of the "almost infinite number" of exalted and advanced spirits.

The theory of guardian spirits and their duties towards individuals in the flesh.

Whether the work and mission of Christ were fully accomplished during His earthly existence or are being yet developed, and whether those who regard Him as their leader are rightly called Christians, and should pray for His help and guidance.

The best way to prove the immortality of the soul.

Whether a Spiritualist would be justified in taking orders in the Church.

The possibility of defining God to the satisfaction of the Spiritualist and the acceptance of the materialist.

The method of powerful utterance and of imitation of most exquisite whistling peculiarly associated with a departed relation, by invisible unmaterialised spirits in the light, when to all appearance the organs of the medium were not used.

The facility with which spirits seem to acquire the capacity to speak in languages foreign to their experience in earth-life.

An explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity, with finally an appeal to the controls to say "what was the date of the Council of Chalcedon and who was condemned in it."

After a cordial expression by the meeting of grateful appreciation of the answers given, the president appealed to *c'airvoyants* present, if there were any, to say, as a matter of evidence, whether, during the proceedings, they had observed any spirit forms near the medium. In response one lady and one gentleman voluntarily certified, the one that she had seen and recognised the control known to her as the Chinese philosopher, and the other that he had seen the form of an old man in flowing white hair and with other special features that he described: whereupon Mr. Morse explained the origin and very palpable reality of the presence of his control, and the circumstances connected with the production of a drawing of him, some years ago, by an entranced artist in America.

The incidents of the evening seemed to make a profound impression upon the audience. If a sufficient number of applications for a verbatim report of the "Questions and Answers" are immediately forwarded to the secretary of the Lyceum at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, E., the Council will cause the same to be printed in pamphlet form, in continuation of the series, which already includes Nos. 1 and 2, now on sale.

In conclusion, the sympathies of the audience were directed towards the efforts, now in progress at the East End of London, for giving the very poor and feeble children of that locality an opportunity for change of air and moral treatment, by a residence of two or three weeks in the country. It was stated that, in reliance upon the active co-operation of their friends, the Council had already remitted the sum of £8 to the promoters of the movement, and that that sum would suffice to liberate twenty-five little ones for a week, or a proportionately smaller number for a longer period.

Contributions of any amount, for the general work of the Lyceum, including unsectarian charity, will be thankfully received by the secretary at the address quoted.

The subject of the lecture by the controls of Mr. Morse, on Sunday, the 10th inst., will be "World Gods."

S. B.

## TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

The following is a list of eminent persons who, after personal investigation, have satisfied themselves of the reality of some of the phenomena generally known as Psychical or Spiritualistic.

N.B.—An asterisk is prefixed to those who have exchanged belief for knowledge.

SCIENCE.—The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President R.A.S.; W. Crookes, Fellow and Gold Medallist of the Royal Society; C. Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, the eminent Naturalist; W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E., Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Dr. Lockhart Robertson; \*Dr. J. Elliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; \*Professor de Morgan, sometime President of the Mathematical Society of London; \*Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., sometime Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; \*Dr. Ashburner, \*Mr. Rutter, \*Dr. Herbert Mayo, F.R.S., &c., &c.

\*Professor F. Zöllner, of Leipzig, author of "Transcendental Physics," &c.; Professors G. T. Fechner, Scheibner, and J. H. Fichte, of Leipzig; Professor W. E. Weber, of Göttingen; Professor Hollman, of Würzburg; Professor Perty, of Berne; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of Petersburg; Professors Hare and Mapes, of U.S.A.; Dr. Robert Friesse, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, Astronomer, &c., &c.

LITERATURE.—The Earl of Dunraven; T. A. Trollope; S. C. Hall; Gerald Massey; Captain R. Burton; Professor Cassal, LL.D.; \*Lord Brougham; \*Lord Lytton; \*Lord Lyndhurst; \*Archbishop Whately; \*Dr. R. Chambers, F.R.S.E.; \*W. M. Thackeray; \*Nassau Senior; \*George Thompson; \*W. Howitt; \*Serjeant Cox; \*Mrs. Browning, Hon. Roden Noel, &c., &c.

Bishop Clarke, Rhode Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, U.S.A.; Professor W. Denton; Professor Alex. Wilder; Professor Hiram Corson; Professor George Bush; and twenty-four Judges and ex-Judges of the U.S. Courts; Victor Hugo; Baron and Baroness von Vay; \*W. Lloyd Garrison, U.S.A.; \*Hon. R. Dale Owen, U.S.A.; \*Hon. J. W. Edmonds, U.S.A.; \*Epes Sargent; \*Baron du Potet; \*Count A. de Gasparin; \*Baron L. de Guldenstubble, &c., &c.

SOCIAL POSITION.—H. I. H. Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; H.S.H. the Prince of Solms; H.S.H. Prince Albrecht of Solms; \*H.S.H. Prince Emile of Sayn Wittgenstein; Hon. Alexander Aksakof, Imperial Councillor of Russia; the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Lisbon; M. Favre-Clavairoz, late Consul-General of France at Trieste; the late Emperors of \*Russia and \*France; Presidents \*Thiers and \*Lincoln, &c., &c.

## Is It Conjuring?

It is sometimes confidently alleged that mediums are only clever conjurers, who easily deceive the simple-minded and unwary. But how, then, about the conjurers themselves, some of the most accomplished of whom have declared that the "manifestations" are utterly beyond the resources of their art?—

ROBERT HODDIN, the great French conjurer, investigated the subject of clairvoyance with the sensitive, Alexis Didier. In the result he unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. See "Psychische Studien" for January, 1878, p. 43.

PROFESSOR JACOBS, writing to the editor of *Licht. Mehr Licht*, April 10th, 1881, in reference to phenomena which occurred in Paris through the Brothers Davenport, said:—"As a Prestidigitator of repute, and a sincere Spiritualist, I affirm that the *mediumistic facts demonstrated by the two brothers were absolutely true*, and belonged to the *Spiritualistic* order of things in every respect. Messrs. Robin and Robert Houdin, when attempting to imitate these said facts, never presented to the public anything beyond an infantine and almost grotesque parody of the said phenomena, and it would be only ignorant and obstinate persons who could regard the questions seriously as set forth by these gentlemen. . . . Following the data of the learned chemist and natural philosopher, Mr. W. Crookes, of London, I am now in a position to prove plainly, and by purely scientific methods, the existence of a 'psychic force in mesmerism and also the individuality of the spirit' in Spiritual manifestation."

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER AT BERLIN.—I hereby declare it to be a rash action to give decisive judgment upon the objective medial performance of the American medium, Mr. Henry Slade, after only one sitting and the observations so made. After I had, at the wish of several highly esteemed gentlemen of rank and position, and also for my own interest, tested the physical mediumship of Mr. Slade, in a series of sittings by full daylight, as well as in the evening in his bedroom, I must, for the sake of truth, hereby certify that the phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, including the table, and that I have not in the smallest degree found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus; and that any explanation of the experiments which took place under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining by any reference to prestidigitation is absolutely impossible. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butler off, in St. Petersburg; to search for the explanation of this phenomenal power, and to prove its reality. I declare, moreover, the published opinions of laymen as to the "How" of this subject to be premature, and, according to my view and experience, false and one-sided. This, my declaration, is signed and executed before a Notary and witnesses.—(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI, Berlin, December 6th, 1877.

## ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By M.A. (Oxon.)

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct sances, and what to expect.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament, and preferably of the female sex; the rest of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestations. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential; and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. Guess at the reason of your failure, eliminate the inharmonious elements, and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful sance.

The first indications of success usually are a cool breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitching of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held over but not in contact with it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this, if there be a real desire on the part of the Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means; if the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous, and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, or by means of form-manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. Increased light will check noisy manifestations.

Lastly—Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning Spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your Reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.