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SPIRITUALISM AT THE CHURCH CONGRESS



By M. A. (Oxon.),

Author of "Psychography," "Spirit Identity," "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism," and various Pamphlets.

With Advice and Information for Enquirers.

PUBLISHED BY W. H. TERRY,
PROGRESSIVE BOOK DEPOT,
84 RUSSELL STREET, MELBOURNE.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE is abroad a spirit of enquiry into the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism, which has been stimulated by the recent discussion of the subject at the Church Congress. This leads to frequent search for some information as to the methods by which a man may see for himself what he hears so much about. I have for many past years received a great number of letters on these subjects, and have felt the difficulty of having no simple and short pamphlet to which I could refer my correspondents for the information which they asked. The late Congress seemed to give opportunity for remedying this defect. No apology, I hope, is needed for preserving in more permanent form the best thoughts elicited by that discussion, and the reflections to which they have given rise in a mind that views the subject from a different standpoint to that which Dr. Thornton and Canon Wilberforce occupied. It is well that a serious attempt on the part of the clergy of the Established Church to estimate one of the great Spiritual movements of the day should have a wide recognition. Spiritualists will not agree with all, or even with much of what was said, but they will agree, I think, in acknowledging that the claims of Spiritualism to serious notice were recognised, and that the old bad spirit of exclusive bigotry and sneering incredulity—what Canon B. Wilberforce called the “ecclesiastical pooh-pooh, which is the modern substitute for the ‘anathematism’ of less tolerant days”—was conspicuously absent. Enquirers will gather from this discussion a higher idea of the importance of the subject which they are investigating, and may be able to see how far some of the arguments employed will stand logical sifting.

To the end that the pamphlet may supply an answer to ordinary questions I have added to the Church Congress report some matter

that will be found useful to those who know little or nothing of Spiritualism. Such persons are very commonly possessed with erroneous notions as to the value of the so-called exposures of tricks, and imitations of psychic phenomena, which conjurers thrive by making. They do not discriminate between the real thing and the stage counterfeit. I have printed some opinions of experts which will throw some light on the value of these conjuring exhibitions.

Some uninformed persons regard Spiritualists as a curious body of enthusiasts, with much imaginative power and with small mental calibre. I have added a list of men who have looked into Spiritualism, and have found some, at least, of its phenomena to be real—the world respects these men as intellectually eminent—and of some whose social status shews that they have an important stake in their country, and cannot, therefore, be classed as mere reckless and enthusiastic innovators.

I have also specified a few good books out of the vast and daily increasing literature of Spiritualism and kindred subjects. In doing so I by no means wish to give undue prominence to any. I have been guided by a desire to pick out such as will be most useful to an uninformed student; and have necessarily omitted many that are of great interest and value.

Lastly, I have put together some hints as to practical investigation which are the result of experience, but which are mostly the conclusions of one mind, and are by no means uttered dogmatically. There are many rules and regulations in print; but I have preferred to leave them to a separate circulation, and print others which I hope may be useful.

“ M. A. (OXON.). ”

Spiritualism at the Church Congress.

THE Church Congress is an assembly of clergy and laity of the Established Church of England, held in various large towns from year to year. Any one can be admitted to its meetings by purchasing a ticket. It is, therefore, a widely representative religious gathering; and as such its opinions carry deserved weight. The meeting for 1881 was held at Newcastle-on-Tyne, under the presidency of Dr. Lightfoot, Bishop of Durham. At the evening session, on Tuesday, October 4th, a paper was read by Dr. Thornton, Vicar of St. John's Notting Hill, London, on "The Duty of the Church in Respect of the Prevalence of Spiritualism." He was followed by Mr. W. R. Browne, Canon Basil Wilberforce, and Mr. John Fowler. Other speeches were delivered, but those above-named are alone of permanent value; and I reprint them from the report which appeared in "LIGHT" of October 8th.

The Rev. Dr. Thornton

At the mere name of Spiritualism some will at once cry out, "Frivolous!" others "Imposture!" and others "Sorcery and Devilry!" Let me protest in the outset against all hasty, sweeping condemnations. No doubt in approaching the subject we find, (to use the words of Mr. Page Hopps, a friend of Spiritualists, though not one of them), that "the way has been defiled by fraud, and blocked up by folly." Gross absurdity and gross deceit have been exposed in the doings of pretended Spiritualists. But we must not rush to the conclusion that all Spiritualism is pure deception, any more than we must involve all statesmen and all ecclesiastics in universal censure, because there have been political and religious charlatans. And as to the charge of diabolical agency, I do most earnestly deprecate the antiquated plan of attributing all new phenomena which we cannot explain to the author of all evil. Far be it from me to deny that such agency is possible; on the contrary, I believe that Satan may enable men to possess themselves of unlawful knowledge and unlawful powers. But Galileo, and the ridicule with which we now speak of his persecutors, may teach us not to so mix up science and religion as to come to *a priori* theological decision upon matters of simple fact. As rational men—and

even more as churchmen, who trust in the presence with us of a guide to our reason—when the matters we deal with approach or enter the province of Faith—we are bound to accept facts, though we may decline the inferences which others draw from them ; to watch, to investigate, and so to come gradually to our own conclusions. For aught we know, these puzzling phenomena may be a new problem set by Almighty God, to be solved by the rules and with the aids which He has already given to His faithful children ; a trial of the reasonableness of their faith.

The doctrine of those who are said to profess Spiritualism is, if I do not misrepresent it, something of this kind : “ God is a Spirit and the visible universe is an expression to man of His infinite life. Man is a Spiritual being ; each individual Spirit is a part of a great Over-soul, or Anima Mundi. The Spirit is enthralled in a body during this life ; when released it at once enters upon the possession of higher powers and more extended knowledge ; and its condition is one of regularly progressive advancement. Disembodied spirits are able to hold converse with those in the body ; not with all immediately, but through the instrumentality of privileged or specially gifted persons called mediums, who are on occasion influenced, or as they term it, controlled, by the Spirits. Spirits can also apply force to physical objects, perform certain actions, such as writing and producing sounds ; they can sometimes show themselves in materialised forms, some of the material being borrowed from the medium. A new era is now dawning upon us. The old religions, Christianity included, have played their part and must pass away in face of clearer light. By intercourse with the Spirit-world man will advance as he never has advanced before, in knowledge, purity, and brotherly love.”

I may fairly, I think, speak of this teaching as opposed to the system of the Church. It sympathises deeply with what we hold to be error ; it ranges itself on the side of Arius, and Photinus, and Macedonius, and Nestorius. “ Every heretic ” says a Spiritualistic writer, “ of the church of all religions has been a pioneer in Spiritual discernment.” “ Priest-craft, hypocrisy, and cant,” their lecturers tell us, are characteristics of all existing Christian communities. “ The Church, says another writer, “ is a partial thing, so antagonistic in spirit to the higher worlds, so literal, so dogmatic, that he who feeds there is kept down from the lofty tone necessary for Spirit communion.” Nor is the Church the only object of censure. Mr. Spurgeon’s intellect is “ dwarfed and cramped,” “ he dogmatizes and plays the Pope in his own way.” Like all freethinkers, the Spiritualist is intensely dogmatic in his anti-dogmatism.

In dealing with opposing systems we must carefully observe two rules. The first is an inspired one : “ Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.” Find out, and make the most of, all you can approve and agree with in the teaching of those who differ from you ; a basis of agreement at least makes real points of difference clear, and may lead to a mutual understanding with the happiest effect. The second rule is : Bear in mind that every opposing sect,

or school of teaching, points to some weakness or shortcoming on the part of the Church; thus Presbyterianism is (or was) a reaction against Prelacy as distinguished from Catholic Episcopacy; and the Ranters warn us not too sternly to repress the impulse so many feel to express by outward acts their inward religious emotions.

Now there is much of the Spiritualists' teaching with which the Church can most cordially agree.

1. It is a system of *belief*, not of mere negation of all that is not logically demonstrated. Its adherents are not ashamed to avow that they hold, as true, propositions which are incapable of mathematical proof. They are at least Theists if no more; certainly not Atheistic.

2. It is in its very nature antagonistic to all Sadduceeism and Materialism. It flatly contradicts the assertions of the miserable philosophy that makes the soul but a function of the brain, and death an eternal sleep. It proclaims that man is responsible for his actions, against those who would persuade us that each deed is but the resultant of a set of forces, an effect first, and then a cause, in an eternal and immutable series of causes and effects, and that sin and holiness are therefore words without meaning. It tells of angels, of an immortal spirit, of a future state of personal and conscious existence.

3. It inculcates the duties of purity, charity, and justice, setting forth as well the loving fatherhood of God as the brotherhood of men, to be continued, with personal recognition, in the future life.

4. It declares that there can be, and is, communion between Spirit and Spirit, and so, by implication, acknowledges the possibility, at least, of intercourse between man and the Supreme Spirit; in other words, of Revelation, Inspiration, and Grace.

From the statement of these points of agreement I pass on to those on which I think Spiritualism warns the Church that her trumpet sometimes gives but an uncertain sound.

1. We habitually remind those whom we teach that they have an immortal soul." We too seldom convert the phrase, and tell them that they are really Spirits, and have a body which contains an immortal part, to be prepared for immortality. We make them look on the body as the true being, the soul as a sort of appendage to it; an error against which Socrates could caution his disciples ("Phædo," pp. 115, s. 64). No doubt, bodily existence is (in appearance) more of a reality to us in this life than Spiritual being, and thus, if I may venture on the allusion, nine out of ten people, when they hear the words Real Presence, understand bodily presence; they have not grasped the truth that to the spiritual only can the epithet "real" be justly applied even here below. Minds thus disciplined are easily led away to believe that the soul is only a certain phase of the bodily organism, and is dissolved with its dissolution. Those who have learnt with Socrates that the soul—or, more properly speaking, Spirit—is the essence of the man, could never suppose that the existence of the reality depended upon the existence of its instrument. We should have taught, more carefully than we have done, not that men *are* bodies and *have* souls, but that they *are* souls

and *have* bodies; which bodies, changed from the glory of the terrestrial to the glory of the celestial, will be theirs to do God's work hereafter.

2. Again, we are terribly afraid of saying a word about the intermediate state. We draw a hard and fast line between the seen and the unseen world. In vain does the Creed express our belief in the Communion of Saints; for if we hint that one who prayed for his beloved on earth may not forget them when, his earthly frame dissolved, he is removed nearer to the presence of his Lord, popular religion confuses such intercession with the figments of the Mediation and Invocation of Saints. Once again the bodily life, and not that of the Spirit, is made the true life.

3. Further, there is a wide-spread reluctance, even in the Church, to accept the super-human as such. I do not say this is universal, but it is very general. There are some, for instance, who abhor all Spiritual exposition of Scripture. The four rivers of Paradise (to use a Rabbinical illustration) have no meaning for them; they may accept two, but the other two, "searching" and "mystery" they cannot away with. Others do not like to hear of the work of the Eternal Spirit in His Church, or of things done in God's wisdom, otherwise than earthly wisdom would direct or conjecture. They acknowledge indeed some divine guidance, but shrink from Spiritual illumination, the ministry of angels, or the snares of the Evil One.

Here perhaps some one will say to me, "You seem half a Spiritualist yourself:" Well, I am just as much a Spiritualist as St. Paul was, when he wrote "I knew a man in Christ, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth,—such an one caught up to the third Heaven." As little as when he declared that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." There is a true Spiritualism and there is a false Spiritualism, just as there is a true astronomy and a false, that

"Girds the sphere
With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,
Cycle and epicyle, orb in orb—"

the true, that reduces all planetary movements under one simple mechanical law.

I proceed now to our great points of difference, to what it is that we cannot approve in Spiritualists teaching. They claim to hold intercourse with the Spirits of the departed. Now I am far from denying the possibility of such intercourse; on the contrary, I believe that in God's Providence it sometimes does take place. But I fail to see that the phenomena which they allege as proofs of spiritual agency and converse are by any means convincing. Strange knockings, we are told, are heard, which on demand are made to present the letters of the alphabet—frame mysterious words; musical instruments sail about the room, and utter unearthly melodies; sentences are written by unseen hands; shadowy forms are descried in the darkness; light touches are felt; indeed, one Spirit has

permitted herself to be kissed. The Spirits give their names; one of the most active calls himself John King; and we read and hear of "Ernest," "Pocha," "Irresistible," and others. One is reminded of the "Hopdance" and "Smolkin," which Shakespeare borrowed from Archbishop Harsnet's "Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures," and of Matthew Hopkins' Vulgar Pyewacket and Peck-in-the-Crown. Now supposing for a moment that these are real spiritual beings, one would see a great danger in the practice of conferring with them. How can we know their character? It is curious that they are considered to shrink from daylight in general. "Your light hurts us," they are represented as saying, though we read "God saw the light that it was good."

One Spiritualist (Mr. Brittain) declares that in 35 years he has never met with a Spirit who has told him a wilful falsehood, but it is confessed that there is a danger of becoming associated with low Spirits. Indeed we are told that on some occasions stones have been thrown by Spirits, so there would appear to be roughs or Fenians among the Shades. But we need not, I think, be under any apprehension. There is no sufficient evidence that the Spirits are at work at all. The so-called Spirit revelations seem to be limited by the intelligence and imagination of the medium. Just so with the dreams of the great Spiritualist Swedenborg (and I mention his name with profound respect, though I esteem him a visionary): it is almost amusing to remark that, when he wandered under angelic guidance through the stellar universe, he was not taken to view Uranus, Neptune, or Vulcan. The failure to visit the latter may be accounted for by what may be considered extremely probable, namely, that there is no such planet; but I fear that the others were left out, simply because he did not know of them. The Spirits gave him no new information on physical astronomy; and no Spiritual séances have as yet, as far as I can ascertain, made any addition to our stock of useful knowledge. Whence, then, all the strange phenomena? for, deduct what you will for delusion and deluded imagination, it is proved by the evidence of men of unimpeachable veracity and sound sense, non-Spiritualists as well as Spiritualists, that strange things *are* witnessed at the séances. I suggest that all are manifestations of a simple human force, which we may call as we choose, psychic, biological, odyllic, ectenic, whose conditions are as yet unknown (as those of chemistry were a century ago), but may, before many years, be as well known as those of heat, electricity, magnetism, and light, with which it is no doubt correlated; and may be perhaps represented as Biot proposed to represent the conditions of life, by an equation. This force was distinctly displayed in a series of experiments conducted a few years ago with the aid of the celebrated medium, Mr. Home.

A mahogany plank was made to rest with one end fixed on a solid table, the other end being attached to a spring balance with self-registering index. No ordinary pressure on the end supported by the table affected the balance in the least; but a touch from Mr. Home showed an effect at the other end represented by from 3½ lb.

to 50lb. The effect was produced when his hands were firmly held, so as to prevent his exerting any muscular pressure, and even when they were inserted in a vessel of water placed on the end of the plank above the table. Mr. Home asserted that he could not always produce the effect, and that when he did he was conscious of a force passing out from him, and at the end of an experiment he always exhibited considerable lassitude. The force which could in such a way influence a balance is certainly competent, with the aid of imagination, to produce any or all of the phenomena witnessed or believed to be witnessed by attendants at the sances, and I repeat what I have said before, that we are by no means compelled to infer the presence of Spiritual agency.

But farther, we cannot accept that degrading view of the body which seems to be an element in the highest Spiritualist teaching. It is represented, not as an instrument for the acquisition of knowledge, and as being, no less than the spirit, the work of God, and consecrated to His service, but as a foul obstructive. Vegetarianism, and of course teetotalism, are essential to every one who would reach the higher knowledge; his very residence must be a place where no blood is or had been shed. We find ourselves at once in the presence of the Gnostics, Bardesanes, and Tatian; and remember with horror how short and easy was the step from their stern asceticism to Carpocrates and the Ophites.

But still worse, we find in Spiritualists' teaching a terrible degradation not of our own body only, but of the great Master of bodies, souls, and Spirits. And here it is that I call it specially antagonistic to the Church. Jesus in their system is but an adept, an early Jacob Böhme, who gained his adeptship by an ascetic diet, for "there is no evidence that he partook of any animal food except the flesh of the Paschal Lamb." Or he is a Psychic, a remarkable medium, gifted with an exceptional amount of Spirit-force, and a peculiar power of communicating with and controlling Spirits. Or he is an Essene, a leader of a Buddhist sect, of high rank indeed, but inferior to the great Goutama who preceded him. His life is nothing more to us than a grand example of purity and charity, his death only a noble piece of self-sacrifice. With such views it is hardly necessary to say that the personality of evil is almost contemptuously denied—the Scriptures displaced from the post of honour due to the written word of God. What, then, is the duty of the Church in respect of the prevalence of this Spiritualism, so beautiful in part, in part so terrible, as it were an angel face with a serpent train in its rear?

First let us guard carefully against rash argumentative assertions, and obstinate ignoring of facts, lest haply we deny, through imperfect knowledge, something that is, after all, a law in God's creation. Let us simply shew that phenomena which we cannot now fully explain need not necessarily be referred to the agency of Spirits, good, bad, or indifferent, but may well be manifestations of some hitherto unsuspected human force. Then let us try the Spirits (or the teachers) by the revealed rule: "Every Spirit that professeth

not Jesus Christ come in the flesh is not of God." Where the mystery of the Incarnation is explained away or denied, we can have no doubt about the judgment we are to pass. Let us tell of the true dignity and true ministry of the bodies of the regenerate members of Christ, and of the Spiritual body, whose seed is in the natural body, to be quickened in his time. Let us thankfully acknowledge the truths of Spiritualist teaching, as weapons which we are too glad to wield against Positivism, and Secularism, and all the anti-Christianisms of this age of godless thought. Let us lay to heart the hints given as to our own shortcomings. But let us all the while remember that our Gospel is a final revelation till the Lord come, and boldly reply to those who would supplement or supersede it. "Though an angel from Heaven preach unto us any other Gospel than that which has been preached unto us, let him be accursed." Let us tell of the only true brotherhood, the only real unity; not that of a society whose bond is an intercourse, through self-asserting mediums, with questionable denizens of a Spirit-world, but that of the one Church, the one Faith, the one Baptism, the one Bread and Chalice of the Lord. Let us preach more consistently and more clearly, by our lives as well as with our lips, with all apostolic zeal and all evangelistic fervour, with the emotion of true Spiritualists, and yet with the calmness of true children of the Catholic Church—the Incarnate God, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Mr. W. R. Browne.

Mr. Browne having spoken at length on Secularism (the subject of an earlier paper), said that, passing to the more special subject of Spiritualism, his minutes on that subject would allow him to give only a series of facts, and to draw from them conclusions, and from these conclusions to point out what, as it appeared to him, was the duty of the Church with respect to Spiritualism. The facts were these. Some years ago several men of the very highest culture agreed together to investigate the phenomena called Spiritualism. The name of one of them he was at liberty to mention—a name that stood as high as any amongst the scientific men of England, or indeed, of Europe—Lord Rayleigh. For a period of some two or three years these scientists spent a considerable part of their time in attending séances, in holding séances at their own houses, and in doing everything in their power to get at the bottom of it, and to make up their minds on the cause of such phenomena. The remarkable feature which he wished to place before their notice was that at the end of the time they were unable to come to any final conclusion on the subject, or to make up their minds as to whether the claims of Spiritualism were true or false. From the fact he was compelled to draw the conclusion that they must not pooh-poo Spiritualism. They must not say that it was an imposture, all nonsense and that no sensible man could spend his time in attending to it. If these men with all their experience and all their skill, could

not settle the matter, there must be something in it. That was the first conclusion. The next conclusion was that the belief in the reality of these phenomena was not a mere hallucination, a delusion, which was a theory that certain medical men had very strongly put forward. He knew no one less subject to hallucinations than the distinguished man of science whose name he had mentioned, or some of his friends. It was absurd to suppose that over the period of two or three years they should be subject to hallucinations at the moments during which they were investigating this subject, and at no other time. Thirdly, they must adopt the view that the cause of these phenomena was a very difficult scientific problem, and that it must be solved by scientific methods; that, firstly, there must be either a supernatural cause, as the advocates of Spiritualism said; or, secondly, that there were certain natural laws of mind and matter which were not as yet understood, such as the power of reading thoughts; or, thirdly, that Spiritualism was a mere extension of the ancient and well-known science of conjuring. Looking at the subject from the point of view of these conclusions, what should be the duty of the Church? It appeared to him, in the first place, that the investigation of the phenomena was beyond their province. In the second place, while that subject was *sub judice*, they must be careful to treat it as an open one. Thirdly, they must be careful not to imply that these phenomena were incredible because they were supernatural. The Church was founded on the belief of supernatural events having occurred at least 2,000 years ago. Therefore it would not do for them to say in the next breath that these things were supernatural. As a previous speaker had said, he did not believe in attributing the phenomena to Satanic agency. It was most deplorable that the Church should say with a sneer that every new light and every new discovery should be set down to the high priests and emissaries of the devil. It might be that there was an enormous amount of imposture, and a vast quantity of trickery, in these manifestations. Therefore, those who felt that they believed in them were sure of finding themselves in very questionable company, and mixing up with questionable folk. On the other hand, they were almost sure of not finding out what the truth of the matter was, because experience showed that the discovery of the trick required an amount of patience, skill, and knowledge which very few persons were likely to possess. Those were the points which he wished to put before the meeting as to the attitude which the Church should have towards Spiritualism; and he would only further say that whatever Spiritualism was, at least it was not Materialism, and that it was Materialism which at the present day was the great danger that the Church had to face. Thus it was that Materialists like Bradlaugh were inimical to Spiritualism, because to prove that Spiritualism was true would be to put a final extinguisher upon all their doctrines. Therefore he thought the Church might fairly hold herself in suspense in the matter, ready to welcome what truth there might be in the phenomena, assured that they could not do harm; but at the same time recognising the

great amount of imposture that accompanied them and the very considerable likelihood that that which was not in itself corrupt might turn out something conducive to that character.

Rev. Canon Wilberforce.

The Rev. Canon Wilberforce said: In the *Griffiths* necessarily allotted to readers at a Church Congress, it is impossible to enter adequately upon the history of the origin and development of those peculiar phenomena which would be more correctly described as "Psychism," but which are generally known as "Spiritualism." It may be briefly stated that the signs and wonders of Modern Spiritualism, which are now undoubtedly exercising a potent influence upon the religious beliefs of thousands, originated in the village of Hydesville, State of New York, in the year 1848; and amongst the men of science and learning who investigated the subject in America, in order to refute its pretensions, may be mentioned the names of Dr. Hare, Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania, and the Hon. J. W. Edmonds, Judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal in the State of New York. The former became convinced of the Spiritual nature of the manifestations, and published the results of his investigations under the title of "Experimental Investigations of the Spirit Manifestations, demonstrating the existence of Spirits and their communion with Mortals;" and the Judge and some members of his family, became mediums of some considerable power. He has published in two large volumes a narrative of his investigations, visions, and Spiritual communications; also a record of the mediumistic powers of his daughter, who, in the trance state, could converse freely in languages which she had never learned. In the year 1854, the phenomena, which in America had been witnessed by thousands of people, many of whom were of the highest credibility, and whose testimony no one would think of impeaching in a court of law, began to attract attention in England when the visit of an American professional medium—Mrs. Hayden—brought the subject prominently before the public. Among many who investigated at the time was Robert Dale Owen, the Socialist advocate, who became convinced from what he witnessed of the spiritual nature of the phenomena, and through them of the existence of a future state, and of the truth of Christianity. From that time the movement began, and continued to spread in England and on the Continent, although more slowly than in America. In July, 1869, the first noteworthy attempt at public investigation was made by the London Dialectical Society, which appointed a committee "to investigate the phenomena alleged to be spiritual manifestations, and to report thereon." The committee held 15 meetings, at which they received evidence from 33 persons, who described phenomena which, they stated, had occurred within their own personal experience, and written statements relating to it from 31 persons. They invited the attendance

and co-operation of scientific men who had expressed opinions favourable or adverse to the genuineness of the phenomena; also of persons who had publicly ascribed them to imposture or delusion. But while successful in procuring evidence of believers in the manifestations and their spiritual origin, they almost wholly failed to obtain evidence from those who attributed them to fraud or delusion. They then appointed six sub-committees to investigate by personal experiment. All of these sub-committees sent in reports, some attributing the phenomena to the agency of disembodied human beings, some to Satanic influence, some to psychological causes, and others to imposture or delusion. The later phases of alleged Spirit manifestations which have been developed since the report of the Dialectical Society may be summed up as follows:—Open vision, more or less continuous; photographs of recognised departed friends of the sitters; religious impromptu addresses and poems on subjects suggested by the audience—the medium being in a state of trance; and, most remarkable of all well-attested manifestations, the materialisation of Spirits, through the physical bodies of mediums. (See a remarkable pamphlet by the Rev. T. Colley, late Archdeacon of Natal, published by Burns, 15, Southampton-row) The exact position claimed at this moment by the warmest advocates of Spiritualism is set forth ably and eloquently in a work by Mr. J. S. Farmer, published by Mr. Allen, and called "Spiritualism as a New Basis of Belief," which, without necessarily endorsing, I recommend to the perusal of my brethren. Those who are following Spiritualism as a means and not an end contend warmly that it does not seek to undermine religion, or to render obsolete the teachings of Christ; that, on the other hand, it furnishes illustrations and rational proof of them; such as can be gained from no other source; that its manifestations will supply deists and atheists with positive demonstration of a life after death, and that they have been instrumental in converting many secularists and materialists from scepticism to Christianity. In corroboration of this statement may be appended the remarkable testimony of Mr. S. C. Hall, the founder and editor of the *Art Journal*. "As to the use of Spiritualism" (he says), "it has made me a Christian. I humbly and fervently thank God it has removed all my doubts. I could quote abundant instances of conversion from unbelief to belief—of some to perfect faith from total infidelity. I am permitted to give one name—it is that of Dr. Elliotson, who expresses his deep gratitude to Almighty God for the blessed change that has been wrought in his heart and mind by Spiritualism." When this is the standpoint of the believer in the higher aspects of Spiritualism, it is obvious that we have to deal with no mere commonplace infatuation, which can be brushed aside with indifference or contempt, but rather with a movement which is firmly established and the influence of which is every day extending. Appealing as it does to the yearnings of the soul, especially in times of bereavement, for sensible evidence of the continuity of life after physical death, belief in Modern Spiritualism continues rapidly to increase in all ranks of society. No real

or alleged exposures of simulated mediumship, or manifest self-seeking on the part of mediums, have any permanent effect in arresting its progress ; for its real strength does not lie in the claims or powers of professional mediums, or in advocacy by means of the press or the lecture room, but in the thousands of private homes, in which one or more of the family has mediumistic power. But, it may be asked, is there no evil in Spiritualism? Assuredly there is, especially as caricatured and misrepresented in the lives, sentiments, and language of many professed Spiritualists. The effects have been summed up by Professor Barrett, of the Royal College of Science, Dublin, who is convinced by painstaking investigations of the supernatural character of the phenomena, in the following words:—(1) A morbid, unhealthy curiosity is excited; (2) the mind is distracted from the pursuits and present duties of daily life; (3) intellectual confusion is created by uncertain and contradictory teaching; (4) moral and spiritual confusion is created by anarchic manifestations; (5) the will is subjected to the slavery of an unknown power, and the spiritual nature of man may be preyed upon by unseen parasites; (6) it offers a demonstration which is the negation of facts, much so-called Spiritualism being merely a kind of inebriated Materialism. "All these points," continues the Professor, "I can verify by actual cases; and, as a rule, I have observed the steady downward course of mediums who sit regularly; moral obliquity is the first symptom, then they become wrecks. This applies to mediums for physical manifestations chiefly. Indeed, is it not impossible to have a purely phenomenal presentation of any high Spiritual laws?" In view of the spread of Spiritualism in its modern aspects, and of the consequences resulting from it, it becomes a most important question what ought to be the attitude of the clergy of the Church of England towards believers in the alleged manifestations. That they are affecting and will still more affect the Church is certain, and has made itself manifest here in Newcastle. Dr. T. L. Nichols, writing of its results in America, remarks that—"There can be no question about the marked effect of Spiritualism upon American thought, feeling, and character. Nothing within my memory has had so great an influence. It has broken up hundreds of churches; it has changed the religious opinions of hundreds of thousands; it has influenced, more or less, the most important actions and relations of vast multitudes. Immense numbers of those who, a few years ago, professed a belief in some form of Christianity, or were members of religious organisations, have, under the influence of Spiritualism, modified such profession. Great numbers, perhaps, who doubted or denied the existence of a future state, have found as they think, incontrovertible proofs of its reality." Just, then, recognising that the general teachings of Spiritualism are inimical to almost every organised body of professing Christians, I would, with much deference, suggest that we must shake ourselves free from the conventional unwisdom of the ecclesiastical "pooh-pooh!" which is our modern substitute for the "anathematism" of less tolerant days. We must abstain from

contemptuous reference to Maskelyne and Cooke, remembering that these inimitable conjurers have more than once been publicly offered a thousand pounds if they would, *under the same conditions*, imitate the most ordinary Spiritual phenomena in a private house; but they replied that, as their apparatus weighed more than a ton, they could not conveniently accept the challenge. We must call to mind the fact that such eminent scientists as Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace and Mr. William Crookes, the discoverer of the metal "thallium" and of the "radiometer," the latter through his investigation of Spiritualism, have both declared that the main facts are as well established, and as easily verifiable, as any of the more exceptional phenomena of nature which are not yet reduced to law. The movement is here, in the providence of God, whether by his appointment or permission; and through it He calls upon us to do what lies in our power to control and regulate it for those who are or may be affected by its practice and teaching. If from Satan, we ought not to be content with ignorance of his devices. Whatever danger may result to those who from mere idle curiosity venture where they ought not, duty calls on us to brave them courageously, as a soldier or physician hazards his life for the welfare of society. Spiritualism may be, and probably is, a fulfilment of the Apocalyptic vision of the Spirits of demons going forth to deceive the nations. It may be that the manifestations, mixed as they confessedly are, are part of the dark clouds which have to appear and be dispersed before the advent with His saints to bring in a true Spiritualism. In the meantime, even regarding the fact in its worst light, we as watchmen and shepherds, sustain a relation towards it which involves important duties. We need have no fear for any truth of Christ's Church, for, as if He had foreseen attacks from the invisible borderland between earth and heaven upon His Church, He has promised that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Resting on its true foundation, the Church of Christ is assuredly safe from all assaults; but there may be so much hay and stubble of our handiwork in it that many outward organisations may suffer the loss of the corporate existence. Secondly, we should realise that the sole strength of Spiritualism lies in the knowledge, partial and imperfect though it be, of the future life. The weakness of the Churches as opposed to the strength of Modern Spiritualism is in the ignorance of that life, and in misapprehension of Scripture teaching concerning it. Some good may have been done in this respect in the distinction made in the Revised Version of the New Testament between Hades and Gehenna—a distinction, slight as it may appear, which gave the Roman Catholic Church in the minds of Spiritualists an advantage over Protestant Churches. While no one can be advised to give up or modify any sincere conviction, whether founded on rational or merely authoritative grounds, it may be confidently affirmed that the result of Spiritualist teaching and propagandism will be a gradual and perpetual separation of the people from all churches and congregations whose ministers maintain and teach the endless duration of torment or punishment in the case of any one

soul. Except on this question the teachings of alleged Spirits and believers are as varied as those of men on earth ; so much so that very many mediums and believers, in despair of certainty, have become members of the Church of Rome. Yet most of those who have gone over to that Church, and multitudes who are Churchless, would gladly have remained in their respective denominations if their teachers could have dealt kindly with them, and given rational grounds for the doctrines taught, and maintained an enquiring and conciliatory spirit towards the doubts and opinions of their hearers. The suggested attitude of the clergy towards Spiritualists may be thus summed up :—1st. As careful an examination of the facts as time and circumstances admit, that we may not condemn in manifest ignorance ; remembering the words of Solomon, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." 2nd. A frank admission of facts, and a conciliatory rather than hostile or dogmatic attitude towards believers. 3rd. A rational presentation of Christian doctrine, so far as to shew that the truths revealed are in harmony with the nature of man in his filial relation to the Father, and his fraternal relation to the Son, and in accordance with the infinite love of Almighty God. 4th. While frankly admitting any good in its teaching or influence which may be fairly claimed for Spiritualism, it is also our duty to shew from the abundant written testimony of eminent Spiritualists that great dangers, physical and mental, frequently result from a too eager and unreserved submission to psychical control. 5th. To shew that in the Christian religion, rightly understood, is to be found all, and more than all of important truth that any Spirit has ever taught from the beginning of the world. ::

Mr. John Fowler.

Mr John Fowler said : As an organisation, the Church is based upon a certain number of cardinal truths, amongst which we find a declaration of the immortality of the human soul. This is the most essential fact in the Christian system of faith. If man be not immortal, the Church spiritually is useless, and a fraud ; but if man be immortal, and the nature of that immortality be influenced by the acts we do here, it is most important that the Church should set forth the true purpose of life. The weakest point, in a scientific and philosophical sense, which the Church has, is its affirmation of the immortality of man. The record alone is appealed to to prove this great fact ; but men die, disappear, and are lost sight of to us, and the unbeliever challenges the believer to demonstrate by natural fact, a natural and theological truth—that the soul lives when the body dies. The authority of the New Testament is assailed, and the influence of the Church, by a growing number, is unrecognised. Secularism and Atheism never had so large a following in this country before. The most intelligent amongst professional men have long ago ceased to believe the doctrine of immortality, and a large number of intelligent working men laugh in scornful in

credulity at the stories which are narrated and the doctrines taught from the pulpit. Every man must observe the present indifferent state of the intelligent public to the service and doctrines of the Church. Those who have had opportunities of observing the intellectual state of the country say that infidelity is on the increase. Now, what does the Church propose to do in this matter? Of its seriousness proof is offered by the fact of this discussion. Until the facts of spiritual existence have been demonstrated, like Peter, who denied his Master, we want evidence, and, like Thomas, we want to put our fingers into the prints of the nails. If demonstration was needed to establish the faith in the hearts of the disciples, demonstration is as much needed to-day, to establish its claims in the experience of the present generation. The fabric cannot be maintained. It will fall to pieces without the interior leavening power of the Spirit. Narrow creeds and ceremonies cannot impose on and influence for ever the minds of men. Therefore, Modern Spiritualism has appeared as a Divine necessity of the times. It does not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to establish that which came aforetime, and to make the possibilities of spiritual growth and strength in the heart of man more possible. The extraordinary gifts of healing, of speaking, and of prophecy which the founders of the Church exercised, displayed the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal world. The blind were made to see, the sick were made whole, and the dumb did speak. The volume of heaven's wonders was revealed to us by the inspired speaker. These spiritual gifts, so extraordinary and marvellous, were promised to be continued to the Church. Christ said to His disciples "Greater works shall ye do, because I go to My Father." There is nothing inconsistent in the claims of Modern Spiritualism and Christianity. One is the expression and the development of the other. That which was phenomenally possible in primitive Christianity must be as needful and as possible now. Nowhere are these gifts declared to be withdrawn from the Church. If the Church had them in the beginning, they are retained till now. The Church did not bestow them in the beginning, and the Church cannot take them away, Healing the sick, and the marvellous works which were done of old, were done in harmony with the Divine plan, and if men would only subject themselves to the same conditions, the miraculous vitality of the primitive Church could be resumed by us. These extraordinary phenomena to which the Spiritualist lays claim are of the same nature and character as those which were witnessed in the early Church, and they are calculated to meet the growing scepticism of the age by a complete defeat. The Church should not stand aloof, and denounce Spiritualism as a fraud. It will prove the Church's best friend. It will defeat the Atheist, the Secularist, and the Materialist—the three formidable foes of modern faith. If nature comes to the aid of faith, and establishes by phenomena the immortality of the soul—if it come to be written in scientific books as a truth demonstrable—there can be no room for fear or doubt. Every man will stand upon the hallowed ground of a realised fact,

and upon the strength of that fact will his devotion be pure and his piety constant. It will add certainty to faith and resolution to hope. Men will look into the shoreless expanse of eternity, and see the hand of the Creator leading him to the goal of his immortal being. Fear and doubt are the strongest enemies to the believer's life in the sanctuary and in the closet. The anxious enquirer ponders the problem, and cries in his soul for some objective evidence of the truthfulness of the Church's teachings. Without Modern Spiritualism the Church affords not this invaluable succour. It stands helpless before the onslaughts of the infidel. Time will not permit us to-night to detail the nature of Spiritual phenomena, as it is presented in your midst to-day. However, we may be permitted to testify to a few facts. We have known reliable and experienced men and women, bitterly opposed to the subject, have evidence presented to them of a most convincing nature. Departed friends have presented themselves and given undoubted evidence of their identity by a narration of experiences only known to themselves. Fathers have met children, and children have met fathers, and have exchanged unmistakable proofs of a personal continuance of life. They have been recognised in the phenomena of materialisation. Their presence has been made known by the remarkable power of clairvoyance. Entrancement has developed a power of inspiration as beautiful as any which distinguished any age of eloquence. The healing art is practiced with success to-day, and could be easily developed in usefulness if the Church applied itself to the study of the spiritual force of human nature. The inherent capability of the human organism for removing or alleviating suffering would be recognised as a source of stability to the Church itself. We do not say that there is anything miraculous or contrary to the laws of nature in these phenomena. Man, originally, from the beginning, has remained the same. The marvellous works which were done by the Apostles can be done now. But nothing can be done now which is not in harmony with natural law. The sooner the Church brings itself to recognise this truth the better able will it be to struggle with its outward foes. We have in our midst now sensitive persons who can be operated on by spirits, and made to do the will of an invisible intelligence. By acting upon the vital fluid of a sensitive, a Spirit can control a medium. A medium is a person who is more or less susceptible to the will and control of another, and this susceptibility is increased by repeated and frequent exercise of the power. Mediums are not all alike. Some have the gift of healing, some of speaking, some of writing, some of clairvoyance, and some even of speaking with tongues. Manifestations of these Spiritual gifts are very widely spread over England. Thousands could bear testimony to its truth. The subject is and has been investigated by men of note in every walk of life. Scientific men, noblemen, literary men, and men of all classes distinguished for ability and learning, after a full investigation have, without hesitation, attested the genuineness of the manifestations which took place in their presence. Therefore, we say that a case has been made out on

behalf of Modern Spiritualism to be recognised and utilised by the Church itself, that it may become strong to defeat its own doubts, and, in the full reliance of its hopes, do battle with the hard foes which deny the immortality of the soul. If Spiritualists do not universally retain their allegiance to the doctrines of the Church of England, it matters but very little. The Church, by fairly and squarely investigating the alleged facts, will bring together into one focus philosophers and thinkers who otherwise might have remained outside the pale of the Church. To shelve the question by saying that Spiritualism is an imposition displays either presumption or ignorance. All that we ask of you is to fairly and squarely investigate the subject without prejudice or partiality, and we doubt not that soon the Spiritual world, with its millions of happy Spirits, will help on with enthusiasm the labour of Christian unfoldment, and give you those needful assurances so necessary to the Christian to do battle with the internal and external foes of everlasting truth.



NOTES BY THE WAY.

THE NOTES which follow are reprinted, with some corrections and additions, from "LIGHT," of October 15th, 1881, to which journal they were contributed by me.

I am so accustomed to an unfair, superficial, and abusive treatment of the claims of Spiritualism that I confess I turned to the discussion at the Church Congress with but languid interest. I thought I knew the probable course that the discussion would take. I anticipated that much would be made of the Great Enemy luring souls to ruin; of the delusions of these latter days; and of the blasphemous pretensions so freely made by Spiritualists to the possession of many of those gifts and graces which the Church in early days claimed as the sign of her Divine mission. I expected a display of holy horror, solemn warning, and comminatory invective. I am thankful to confess that my anticipations were not realised. I say unreservedly that I am very thankful to find the Church rising to a sense of its grave responsibilities in this matter, and recognising the duty incumbent upon it of dealing with Spiritualism as a great fact. This was repeatedly insisted on, and forcibly pressed home on the Clergy in weighty sentences which must bear fruit hereafter:—*The Church of England, in her greatest and most representative assembly, has recognised her duty as a teacher, in respect to Spiritualism as a present fact.*

It is interesting to inquire what has induced this change of attitude. A very few years since the subject would have been met with scornful denunciation. The Clergy would have branded it as the work of the Devil without taking the trouble to acquaint themselves with its real nature. That they now deem it worthy of more sane and patient consideration is attributable, I believe, to the recent setting forth of the bearings of Spiritualism on prominent religious questions of the day. So long as the *bizarre* phenomena, records of

which found their way into print from time to time, were all that reached them, the Clergy did not feel called upon to meddle with the matter seriously. But by degrees it was found that behind the phenomena was a philosophy, and that this had a direct religious bearing, impinging on the sphere of religious teaching. Writers pointed out that Spiritualism was in no sense antagonistic to the teachings of Christ, and that it contained a Divine answer to a human want. It was claimed that the parallel between the close of the last great epoch and the present phase of the world's history was precise and instructive. Such writers have done much to still the fear felt in many pious minds that Spiritualism was, as a movement, anti-Christian. They have demonstrated, on the contrary, that there is no finality in the revelation of God, and that truer ideas of Him are being made known now just as they are called for by the spread of infidelity. Realising this, the Church awoke to find its own ground invaded by a powerful rival of whom it must needs make friend or foe; whose existence, at any rate, it was no longer politic to ignore, and against whom Spiritualism was the best ally. Though the old fears of diabolic agency could not be put aside of a sudden, *I believe that the recognition by Spiritualists of the religious aspects of Spirit teaching has drawn the favourable attention of the Church to that which, in its merely phenomenal aspect, would not have attracted its notice, save, perhaps, as a subject for anathema.*

There is another reason manifest throughout the discussion. The Church has found itself face to face with a most determined and dangerous enemy, which assumes various forms, and which in this discussion appears as Secularism (in the paper of the Archbishop of York), Agnosticism, Infidelity, Scepticism, Materialism, and like designations. This ubiquitous foe to Spiritual truth has assumed proportions which are calculated to inspire profound alarm. Speaker after speaker rose to confess its prevalence, and deplore its development. Mr. Browne said: "Whatever Spiritualism was, it was not Materialism, and Materialism was at the present day the great danger that the Church had to face." Dr. Thornton named, as one of his points of agreement with us, the fact that ours is "a system of *belief*, not of mere negation of all that is not logically demonstrated." We are "Theists, if no more; certainly not Atheistic." We are naturally "antagonistic to all Sadduceeism and Materialism." Against this enemy the Church finds itself to a great

extent powerless. Mr. Fowler pointed out, in what seems to me the most striking address delivered in the discussion, that this is the deplorable condition in which the Church finds herself. The Church, he said in effect, teaches the immortality of the soul. If man's soul be not immortal, her occupation is gone. If it be, her function as a Teacher is rightly claimed as of imperial importance. But this is just the weakest point in her argumentative defence. Men die and disappear, and scepticism challenges the Church to produce evidence of their continued existence. At no time had Atheism "had so large a following in this country," The challenge was never so direct, so loudly uttered. What is the Church's answer? Until the facts of Spiritual existence have been demonstrated in the way that is alone acceptable to a scientific age, she has none. She appeals to Faith! The sceptic smiles. To her records! He denies their authenticity. To her venerable inheritance of Truth! He declares it to be for him neither venerable nor true. What is her reply? *She has none that will touch him, except that which Spiritualism furnishes, and it is her truest wisdom, her one resource, to utilise and avail herself of it.*

This is to my mind a perfectly true, though by no means new view. In my "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism," I traversed much the same ground; and Mr. Farmer, in his "Spiritualism as a New Basis of Belief," to which Canon Wilberforce alluded, has pointed out that Spiritualism, rightly understood, is the complement and development of Christianity. Once demonstrate that life may be perpetuated after bodily death, which is what is roughly meant by immortality, and "you add certainty to faith and resolution to hope." Without Spiritualism the Church cannot do this. "It stands helpless before the onslaughts of the infidel," "Therefore, Modern Spiritualism has appeared as a Divine necessity of the times." It cannot be other than a matter for deep thankfulness that an argument such as this should have been heard with attention, and have been accepted without serious attempt at refutation. It points to a new conception of duty, and is an omen full of blessing for the future. If the discussion had only brought out this one point—that *Spiritualism is the legitimate helpmeet of Christianity*—it would be great gain.

But, in truth, the discussion contains abundance of matter eminently worth notice. Dr. Thornton's paper was a serious and honest

attempt to appraise the value of Spiritualism as a factor in the religious thought of the age. His argument, as a Cleric, with its creed, as a standing protest against Agnosticism and Materialism: his recitation of some of the salient points of its teaching "inculcating the duties of purity, charity, and justice; setting forth as well the loving Fatherhood of God as the brotherhood of men, to be continued with personal recognition in the future life;" his vindication of its "expressed belief in Revelation, Inspiration, and Grace," are refreshing indeed to a mind that has despaired of inculcating any higher view of Spiritualism than that conveyed by the unseemly disarrangement of furniture, or the curious antics of some Spirit whose power over Psychic Force is superior to his intellectual and Spiritual development. His warning to his brethren to insist that man *is* a Spirit, and *has* body; to dwell much on the intermediate state, in which so large a share of human interest is centred; and to accept the super-human as by no means strange to a Church founded upon a recognition of it in ages past, was alike wise and timely. The Church, as Canon Wilberforce pointed out, must recognise that the strength of Spiritualism lies in the knowledge, partial and imperfect though it be, of the future life;" and must condescend to substitute for her literal rendering of Eastern allegory and hyperbole the practical knowledge of the Spiritualist.

Dr. Thornton's arguments against our position naturally seem to me the weakest part of his paper. A somewhat varied experience has made me familiar with most that can be urged against my faith. I know the objection that the intelligence of the communicating Spirit is conterminous with that of the medium. The objection is specious, but by no means exact. In very many ascertainable cases the reverse is true. Facts have repeatedly been communicated which were unknown to the medium, and sometimes in a tongue of which he was ignorant. I know, too, the theological objections that the Divinity of Christ, the Personality of the Devil, and the Verbal Inspiration of Holy Scripture are doctrines not universally accepted by Spiritualists. It is impossible and quite unfair to fix any definite creed on Spiritualists as a body. They entertain various beliefs; and most of them decline to assent, or refuse assent, to the creeds of antiquity, as explained by the various Christian Churches. They are occupied chiefly with the newer developments of to-day; and a large number of them find in Spirit-teaching a grand and sublime confirmation of the eternal truths that 1,900 years have not sufficed to improve on, though they have been able to dim and cloud their

radiance by overlaying them with human error. But this is not the time nor is it the place for theological disquisition. I pass to two objections that are, I confess, both new and strange to me. Spiritualism is said to inculcate a degrading view of the body, as "a foul obstructive." As treated by the sensualist, or by the man who spends all his care on it, to the starving of his spirit, no doubt it is converted into an obstacle to Spiritual progress. And in daily life the higher teaching of Spiritualism points, no doubt, to the necessity, affirmed in olden time by no less an authority than St. Paul, "of keeping under the body and bringing it into subjection." In such a sense, though neither vegetarian nor teetotaler, as Dr. Thornton thinks every Spiritualist must needs be, I am, to borrow his own apt words, "just as much a Spiritualist as St. Paul was," and just as much as the Church of England is when she recognises the duty of "subduing the flesh to the spirit." I see no degradation in that, and I presume Dr. Thornton will agree in the very simple truth that if the body be not an aid to Spiritual development it must needs be a hindrance and a bar.

Dr. Thornton's other objection to a Spiritualism of a certain type has provoked in my mind some amusement. He thinks that the phenomena with which he is acquainted do not necessarily involve the presence of Spirits. This is the old psychic force theory, and will not, I think, commend itself long to any careful investigator of facts. But, if there be Spirits, says Dr. Thornton, of what kind must be the Pochas and Irresistibles, that we read of? How can we know their character?" In no other way than we know the character of the embodied Spirits with whom we come into relations, "By their fruits shall ye know them." If the fruits be bad, I, for one, will join Dr. Thornton in avoiding "the appearance of evil." But to what is serious argument come, when I read further, "It is curious that they are considered to shrink from daylight in general. 'Your light hurts us,' they are represented as saying, though we read, 'God saw the light that it was good!'" The clerical habit of quoting texts is a very dangerous one, What has the Divine encomium upon light, according to the book of Genesis, to do with a special manifestation of Spirit power any more than with the development of a photographic plate? In either case the light is *not* good, and that is a scientific fact that we cannot help,

I am not disposed, however, to insist on points of difference, or to spend time in answering objections. If the spirit which inspired the Congress be permanent, the objectors will soon find answers to their own objections. An honest search after the truth will convince any fair-minded man that he is investigating a problem which is not affected by the chicaneries of the vulgar impostor any more than it is solved by the cheap and easy method of the scientist or the conjurer, who divide the human race exhaustively into knaves and fools, reserving for themselves only a place amongst the wise. Mr. Browne drew from Lord Rayleigh's professed inability to make an all-round theory that would explain the facts, the ingenious conclusion that there must be something in them to puzzle one so scientifically wise. There *is* something in them, and it greatly depends on the mental calibre of the investigator, and on his methods of investigation, what fruit he bears away.

It is, as Mr. Fowler said, "a proof of presumption or ignorance to shelve the question by saying that Spiritualism is an imposition." It is not to be successfully treated in any such off-hand manner; and the attempt will assuredly involve the man who makes it in ridicule and contempt. It is a subject that merits and demands the profoundest thought, and the most careful treatment. On the one side it challenges the attention of the Physicist. On another it affords the fullest scope for the speculations of the Metaphysician. It calls upon the Psychologist to study the workings of his own spirit, and to leave for awhile his morbid investigations in the field of mental disease. It affords to the religious mind, weary and worn out with attempts to derive sustenance from the systems that have had their day, and are outworn or coated with error, a nourishment that is to be found nowhere else, and a rest that no uncertainty can give. Its study may lead the student to mark the dealings of the same God with ancient races in ancient times, and to marvel at the close parallel that the records of Buddhistic and Egyptian lore furnish him with. It is a happy result of this Congress that an impression will go forth that the most educated of the Clergy are ready to do something to meet and face this great question, and to welcome Spiritualism as their natural and legitimate assistant in the work they have to do. I trust that their example may be followed by their brethren of Nonconformist Churches, and that the leaven may in the end "leaven the whole lump."

One other point only, among many on which I should like to touch, I must notice. Canon B. Wilberforce quoted from a letter of Professor Barrett's some words which seemed to convey a very serious condemnation of the practice of Spiritualism altogether. Admitting the reality of its facts, the Professor alleged that the pursuit of it was fraught with serious risk to mind and health, especially in mediums. I read those words with regret, for they seemed to me to contain a half-truth more dangerous than a positive falsehood. It seems, however, from a letter since published, that Professor Barrett is by no means fairly represented. He is indeed cognisant, as all of us, I hope are, of the dangers that attend on any such investigation as this, but he is also possessed with a clear view of the blessings that it brings. He says, "I know and rejoice in the blessing Spiritualism has been to my own faith, and to that of several dear friends of mine. Moreover, I cordially recognise the fact that in bereavement and deep distress, numbers have been cheered and consoled by the hope that Spiritualism has set before them." He urges the necessity laid on honest men to investigate the claims of Spiritualism before adhering finally to Materialism and Positivism. He expresses a strong opinion that no earnest seeker after truth has ever failed to find an answer in the affirmative to the question whether "an intelligent and personal existence is possible without our present bodily organism;" and he looks to Spiritualism, as I do, confidently and with full conviction, as the handmaid and helpmeet of the pure teachings of the Christ.

"M. A. (OXON.)."



ADVICE TO ENQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really the mass of jugglery and imposture that it suits some people to say that it is, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you may rely, ask him for advice; and if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one, that you may see how séances should be conducted, and of what nature the ordinary phenomena are.

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

From a circle of from four to eight persons, of whom half, or at least two, should be of negative, passive temperament, and preferably of the female sex. The remainder may be of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance by fresh visitors, 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. It is not important that the hands of each sitter should touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

It is important that attention should not be too fixedly concentrated on the expected manifestations. To this end 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.

Avoid anxiety and fidgetiness of all kinds. If you have a medium in your number, results will follow in due time, and you cannot hasten though you may impede them. 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, break up the circle and form a fresh one. You will probably be able to guess at the reason of your failure, and can eliminate the inharmonious elements and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful séance.

If results are obtained, the first indication usually is a cool breeze passing over the hands, accompanied by 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 objective reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

Table-tilting is more common than rapping. 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 its surface. Do not, however, try any such experiment until the movement has become thoroughly assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one person 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.

If you are satisfied that a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, request that directions may be given as to the 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 at first, ascribe it to the difficulty that undoubtedly exists in directing the table movements at first with exactitude. Patience will eliminate the source of error, if there be a real desire on the part of the communicating Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an intelligence that is separate from that of any person present in the circle, you will have gained a great step.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and as they become thoroughly established, ask that they may be made on the table, floor, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means. Avoid, how-

ever, 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 with the sitters to a very great extent 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 at once. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced enquirer. It will be found that increased light will check noisy and unpleasant 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 serious and solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Endeavour to be animated by 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.

The Literature of Spiritualism.

The periodical literature of Spiritualism has been represented in the past by the monthly magazines, *Human Nature* and *The Spiritual Magazine*. At the present *The Psychological Review* is an excellent monthly. The journals are "LIGHT," *The Spiritualist*, *The Medium*, and *The Herald of Progress*, the latter a Newcastle publication; the rest published in London. "LIGHT" (weekly) will furnish a reader with a clear notion of what is going on in the movement. It is the accredited organ of the chief Spiritualist Society, which has an excellent library and good reading-rooms at 38, Great Russell Street, London, W.C. There every information may be had, and every periodical in the movement may be seen. The library is the best and completest to which access can be gained in England. "LIGHT" and *The Psychological Review*, besides

original matter, give a full summary of the periodical literature of Spiritualism in various countries, and are, therefore, commendable to enquirers.

The following is a list of a few books that will be useful :—

Miracles and Modern Spiritualism	<i>A. H. Wallace.</i>
Researches in Spiritualism.	<i>W. Crookes.</i>
From Matter to Spirit	<i>De Morgan.</i>
The Debateable Land.....	<i>Dale Owen.</i>
Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World.....	<i>Epes Sargent.</i>
The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism	" "
Report of the Dialectical Society	
Zöllner's Transcendental Physics.....	<i>Translated by C. C. Massey.</i>
Psychography	<i>(M.A., Oxon.)</i>
Spirit Identity.....	"
Higher Aspects of Spiritualis m.....	"
Judge Edmonds' Letters and Tracts	
Primitive Christianity and Spiritualism...	<i>Crowell</i>
New Basis of Belief in Immortality	<i>Farmer.</i>
Hints for the Evidences of Spiritualism...	<i>M. B.</i>
Theosophy and the Higher Life	<i>Dr. G. Wyld</i>

Eminent Men who attest some or all of the Phenomena of Spiritualism.

In compiling for publication a list of persons eminent from their social, literary, or scientific position, who have investigated psychic phenomena, it is evident that many names must be omitted, and that the term Spiritualist is not applicable to the whole of the list. With infinitely divergent theories and opinions, those whom I name have this in common. They have personally investigated some of the phenomena called Spiritual, and have found them to have a real existence. Very many have given public testimony to the fact.

Science.—*In Great Britain.*—Lord Crawford, F.R.S., Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., W. Crookes, F.R.S., C. Varley, F.R.S., Mr. A. R. Wallace, Professor W. F. Barrett, the late Professor de Morgan, Dr. Lockhart Robertson, F.R.S., Dr. Elliotson, F.R.S., Dr. Herbert Mayo, F.R.S., Dr. Gregory, F.R.S.E., Dr. Ashburner, Mr. Rutter, &c., &c., &c.

Abroad.—Professors Zöllner, Fechner, Scheibner, and I. H. Fichte, of Leipzig. Professor Hoffman, of Würzburg. Professor Weber, of Gottingen. Professor Perty, of Berne. Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of Petersburg. Professors Hare and Mapes (the late), U.S.A., &c., &c., &c.

Literature.—*In Great Britain.*—Archbishop Whately, the late Lord Lytton, the late Lord Lyndhurst, Dr. Chambers, F.R.S.E., W. M. Thackeray, Nassau Senior, T. A. Trollope, S. C. Hall, Gerald Massey, Serjeant Cox, W. Howitt, &c., &c., &c.

Abroad.—Hon. R. Dale Owen, Hon. J. W. Edmonds, D. Lyman, all of U.S.A. Victor Hugo, C. Flammarion, Baron du Potet, of France, &c., &c., &c.

Social Position.—The late Emperors of Russia and France, Presidents Thiers and Lincoln, H.I.H. Nicholas Duke of Leuchtenberg, Prince Emile de Sayn Wittgenstein, Baron de Guldenstübbe, Baron and Baroness Von Vay, Hon. Alexander Aksakof, Imperial Councillor of Russia, &c., &c., &c.

Conjurers on Psychic Phenomena and Legerdemain.

The following conjurers testify that the phenomena are not within reach of their art. The so-called exposures bear no more likeness to real psychic phenomena than a bad half-crown does to a good one. They deceive only the ignorant and prejudiced. Canon Wilberforce stated at the Church Congress that Maskelyne and Cooke "have more than once been publicly offered a thousand pounds if they would, *under the same conditions*, imitate the most ordinary Spiritual phenomena in a private house, but they replied that as their apparatus weighed more than a ton, they could not conveniently accept the challenge." The medium has no apparatus of any kind, and is frequently stripped and searched before a séance.

ROBERT HOUDIN, 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.—*Licht, mehr Licht*, in its number of May 16th, 1880, gave a letter from the well-known professional conjurer, Jacobs, to the Psychological Society in Paris, avowing himself a Spiritualist, and offering suggestions for the discrimination of *genuine* from spurious manifestations.

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER AT BERLIN.—"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 bed-room, 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. 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 6, 1877.



In Addition to all the Works Recommended on p. 31 (except "Matter to Spirit," and "Dialectical Report," which are out of print,)

W. H. TERRY

Has the following Useful Books and Pamphlets in Stock :—

- Arcana of Spiritualism, by Hudson Tuttle. 5s. 6d.
- American Spiritual Magazine, edited by Rev. Samuel Watson, D.D., vols. 1, 2, & 3; each 8s. 6d.
- Agassiz on Spiritualism. 1s. 3d.
- Biographical Sketches of Prominent Spiritualists. 1s. 3d.
- Concerning Spiritualism; Gerald Massey. 2s. 6d.
- Child's Guide to Spiritualism. 1s. 3d.
- Communications from Another World, Colonial reprint of E. Sargent's "Planchette." 1s.
- Clergyman on Spiritualism; De Clericas. 1s. 3d.
- Clairvoyance; Adolphe Didier. 6d.
- Claims of Spiritualism; by a Medical Man. 1s. 3d.
- Christ, the Cornerstone of Spiritualism, Peebles. 6d.
- Death and the After-life; A. J. Davis. Paper 2s. 6d., cloth 3s. 9d.
- Defence of Modern Spiritualism; A. R. Wallace. 1s. 3d.
- Death in the Light of the Harmonial Philosophy. 9d.
- Gist of Spiritualism. 2s. 6d.
- Heaven Opened, or Messages for the Bereaved from Our Little Ones in Glory. 1s. 3d., paper 9d.

- Is Materialism True, and eleven other lectures. Cora L. V. Richmond. Cloth 3s. 9d., paper. 2s. 6d.
- Immortality Proved by Facts, Debate between James Burns and Charles Bradlaugh. 1s.
- Leaves from My Life ; J. J. Morse. 3s. 6d.
- Mediumship, its Laws and Conditions. 1s. 3d.
- Mediumship, its Nature and Varieties. 6d.
- Materialisation Phenomena. 2d.
- New Pilgrim's Progress. paper 2s., cloth 5s.
- Proof Palpable of Immortality ; Epes Sargent. 5s.
- Phenomena of Spiritualism ; W. Crookes, F.R.S.. 6d.
- Psychic Facts ; M.A., Oxon. 5s. 6d.
- People from the Other World ; Olcott. 7s. 6d.
- Phenomena of Death ; Morse. 2d. Philosophy of Death ; A.J. Davis, 3d.
- Real Life in Spirit-land. 3s. 9d.
- Religion of Spiritualism ; Rev. Saml. Watson. 6d.
- Religion of Spiritualism ; Eugene Crowell. 9d.
- Rationale of Spiritualism. 6d.
- Rational Spiritualism ; S. B. Brittan, M.D.
- Relation of Spiritualism to the Churches ; Dr. Mueller. 6d.
- Spirit Invocations. 6s. 3d.
- Spiritualism, a Narrative ; P. P. Alexander. 2s. 6d.
- Spirits Before Our Eyes ; Harrison. 6s.
- Spiritualism ; Two Prize Essays. 1s. 3d. Spiritualism, What It is. 2d.
- Spiritualism Defined and Defended ; Dr. Peebles, 3d.
- Stray Thoughts on Spiritualism ; Peary Chand Mittra. 1s.
- Spiritual Spheres ; Four Lectures given through trance mediumship of Mrs. Cora Richmond. 9d.
- Spiritualism as a Science and as a Religion. 3d.
- Scientific View of Modern Spiritualism. 6d.
- Spirit Manifestations of Ancient and Modern Times. 6d.
- Spiritualism and Insanity ; Dr. Crowell. 3d.
- Spiritualism, Is It a Savage Superstition. 6d.
- Spiritualism Vindicated ; Britten. 6d.
- Spiritualism Vindicated ; Tyerman. 1s.
- Six Inspirational Lectures, by Mrs. Cora Richmond. 2s.
- Spirit Works Real, not Miraculous ; Putnam. 1s. 3d.
- Spiritualism in the Bible, 3d. Spirit World Described ; Edmonds. 1s.
- Theodore Parker in Spirit-life. 3d.
- The Key : Communications bearing on the Spiritual Philosophy 1s.
- Views of our Heavenly Home, A. J. Davis, cloth 3s. 9d., paper 2s. 6d.
- Visibility Invisible, and Invisibility Visible, a Tale Founded on Fact. 1s. 3d.
- Where are the Dead ? Or, Spiritualism Explained ; Binney. 3s. 6d.
- What of the Dead ? Morse. 2d. What is Death ? Edmonds. 2d.
- Why am I a Spiritualist ? Angell. 6d.

