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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1881.

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SPIRITUALISM FROM A RELIGIOUS ASPECT.

Paper read by Mr. Morell Theobald, on Monday evening last, before the British National Association of Spiritualists.

The religious aspect of Spiritualism must, of course, include not only the outlook upon Spiritualism from Christianity, upon which I wrote in April, 1878, but must include, to be complete, that from any religion you may choose to select, such as Brahmaism, Buddhism, Mahometanism, Judaism, Roman Catholicism, &c. On the other hand, the aspect of Spiritualism from such various standpoints as indicated by reciting these names of religious bodies, is quite another matter: both sides of the subject would be interesting, and to-night I will endeavour in a brief way to combine the two. Is there anything common in the various forms of religious life which we may take as fairly representing a common consent in their judgment of Spiritualism? I think there is—or should be.

If for a moment we may look at Brahmaism as a feeling after an undiscovered infinite in which a mystic triple Deity—the creator, preserver, and destroyer—exists in the cloudland beyond; and Buddhism, its offspring, as recognising pain as the chief element of discipline and the necessity to liberate ourselves from it by *knowledge*, and to attain happiness by virtue; Mahometanism as expressed in the Koran, founded upon the belief in one God and His prophet; Judaism and Roman Catholicism, the one as looking for, the other as accepting, Christ; Judaism as the worship of Jehovah and an expected Messiah, Roman Catholicism, and indeed all the varieties of Christendom, as the worship of God and the Christ that has appeared,—we shall find that all the religious life, in these varied types, agrees in one point, that, namely, of appealing largely to the emotions, although a definite and coherent religious life must be based upon certain cardinal truths.

All religion, as such, is a mode of *feeling*, and in this respect is especially distinguished from theology or science, which is a mode of *knowing*. If there is no emotion there is no religion. But all emotion is not religion. What, then, is the distinctive quality of that emotion which we call religious? In one respect only it is invariable—it *leads to worship*. Now worship is the prostration of the individual Spirit before the felt presence of the Infinite. It is that sense of absolute dependence which a finite consciousness feels when it is in Spiritual contact with the Infinite, whether that Infinite is personal or impersonal. The varieties of religion depend upon the intellectual interpretation of this sentiment; i.e., on the answer to the question, *What is the Infinite?* Is it a personal presence with whom we may hold some sort of communion? Or is it a diffused law that only holds us in to embrace but does not exchange thought or feeling with us? All religious life, then, must be thus emotional: for it not to be evanescent, but abiding, these emotions must be based, as upon a rock, on eternal verities, so that ultimately the truths which remain must guide the religious life. If you accept this view of religious life—of course an incomplete one—you will at once see that Spiritualism must be classed with the sciences, in discovering to some minds and confirming to others the exact truth as regards the future upon which religious life may rest. No emotion is necessary to the Spiritualist,—even though it may create much, as all knowledge may. Spiritualism is applicable to all religions alike, and acts as a handmaid bearing a lamp to light the way to the

heavenly path. It is a light cast partly on the present, as related to invisible powers; and partly on the future, as tending towards an issue which is at present unseen.

Spiritualism is no new thing. It has existed since man walked

"Among the sunbeams, as with angels."

It can be traced as a silver thread throughout the ages in history—sacred and profane. Its phases have differed as have the phases of science. But what do we mean when we speak of Spiritualism?

Primarily we understand by it communication, in some form or other, between the denizens of the Spirit world and those in this—between Spirits disembodied and Spirits still united to the flesh. Modern Spiritualism has established itself by—

1. Simple phenomena, such as the movement of solid bodies.
2. By chemical phenomena, such as suspending the action of fire and modifying the solidity and interpenetrability of matter.
3. By direct writing, drawing, or painting; i.e., without any human intervention whatever.
4. By musical phenomena.
5. By the appearance of Spirit forms, and direct voice.
6. By Spirit photography—such photography being done when the ordinary photographic conditions have been absent.
7. It has appealed to Spiritualists through mental conditions in which automatic writing, trance speaking, impersonation, and healing have all played their part.

The whole group of phenomena thus briefly enumerated prove satisfactorily to Spiritualists that Spirit communion has actually been established; and this room contains proofs innumerable, both in its library and by Spirit productions obtained under test conditions.

The first effect of this revelation has been usually one of utter bewilderment. There is no place in modern thought for such facts, and it becomes necessary that we should reason from the facts themselves as a starting point instead of submitting them to the canons of ordinary experience.

Our men of science have slowly been forming theories, about life and death, and Spirit, and the laws of nature, apparently unassailable; in a moment they are found to be riddled through and through with flaws.

It is impossible, they say, for a solid body to pass through another. A book is passed through a locked drawer, and descends through a ceiling into another room, and *that* assertion is falsified. The law of gravitation forbids a man to float around a room within reach of a ceiling 14 feet from the floor, but *this* has been continually done, and has asserted a new power superior to the old law; and the impossibilities of science are remorselessly contradicted. Painting and writing have been done not only in the dark, but in an incredible space of time, and Spirit forms have now appeared, not only to seers, but to a whole company, some of whom have grasped the hand either to retain it, or find it *melting away* in their grasp at the option of the Spirit.

Have philosophers, then, been dreaming? Is the fabric they have carefully wrought all vanishing in the new light? Certainly not. But there is a *plus* power outside the sphere of their observations for which they have not provided, and to which their reasoning will not extend. Henceforth they must take cognisance of powers from the Spirit world and acknowledge them to be, at present, capable of achievements on which they had not reckoned. The effect upon philosophers must be a new departure upon new facts for which they have provided no place.

However, we are not all philosophers, nor so restricted to the narrow groove in which they reason that we cannot accept new facts when they arise and appeal to us to follow where they lead. When Jesus Christ proclaimed the completion of the Jewish dispensation, and announced the new reign of love, it was not the rulers who believed, but the common people, who

heard Him gladly. He brought Spirit power into view. Miracles which were a stumbling block to His foes became a proof of His mission to His friends.

What if Modern Spiritualism has stepped in to re-affirm this power to which He had appealed—to baffle Scepticism, and stem the maddening torrent of unbelief which domesticates itself among atoms and molecules, but discerns not the unseen hand behind them all? The common people have been so bewildered by the influence of recent science and its claim to a monopoly of the “potency of life” that they will hail as a deliverance these angel-visitants. Their lost ones return, and belief in the future is re-established, while *their* testimony to the “hand unseen” is more potent than all the reasoning which fails to grasp it. Establishing the continuance of being, and the duality of life, they soften the grief which the sundering by death had created. The family ties are again unbroken; those in the Spirit world are as real in their at present unseen presence (except to a few) as the visible loved ones whom they continually surround.

“The friends on earth and all the dead
But one communion make.”

This has been sung as one of the idyls of *Faith*: Modern Spiritualism registers it as a statement of *Fact*.

While Spiritualism thus steps in to establish the cardinal truth of the life beyond and somewhat of its nature, we cannot but see that its influence upon all the varied religions of the world will be immense. As yet it has swept away nothing necessary to religion as such, which theologians have taught, although it has assisted modern thought to demolish many cherished theories which had grown around Christianity, from we scarcely know where; and it has tended to support the value of prayers for the so-called dead, which Protestants have rejected. Spiritualism, while appealing to man's common-sense and reason, completely establishes much which reason has often rejected as obscure or unintelligible in the Bible. Belshazzar's writing on the wall has been reproduced in our own day; the three youths who walked in the midst of the fiery furnace did so because there was with them a fourth having Spiritual power over fire, such as is recorded by our venerable friend, Mr. S. C. Hall, who asserts that live coals have been placed upon his silvery locks to establish the golden truth of Spirit presence and Spirit power over the elements. The Apostle Peter was delivered from prison by a Spirit who possessed exactly similar power to that which has transported friends of our own from one house to another, quite disregarding of the known conditions of matter; in short, the whole Spiritualism of the Bible is re-affirmed by modern experiences under our own eyes and amongst us. Spiritual gifts—and gifts of healing among them—which have been so often explained away or relegated to the Apostolic age, are restored to us; and thus again the records of the Book, which has fought many a good fight and yet remains, are established.

Are we, then, to see Spiritualism becoming a buttress to religious life—Christian life? Most assuredly we shall, while it teaches some of those truths of which Christ said, “Ye cannot bear them yet.” If Spiritualism cannot claim to be itself a religion, it reveals with an authority Divine—for it is truth—the intense connection between the present and the future life; it shews *as fact* the gradual unfolding of moral and Spiritual life going on *unbroken* by death; it provides a place which our reason accepts for progressive soul-life, and establishes the fact of the ministry of Spirits constantly about us. In the recent Church Congress, at which Spiritualism, which is usually tabooed by religious bodies, met upon the whole with a fair discussion, Mr. John Fowler said:—

“The Church is based upon a certain number of cardinal truths, among which we find a declaration of the immortality of the human soul; this is the most essential fact in the Christian system of faith.”

He might have added it was also essential in *all* religious systems, and certainly in those I have in the outset of this paper enumerated. He did add, with an emphasis which is incontrovertible—

“If man be not immortal the Church spiritually is useless and a fraud. . . . Yet the weakest point, in a scientific and philosophical sense, which the Church has, is its affirmation of the immortality of man.”

Precisely so! and sadly has it been probed by modern science; and one would imagine the Church would receive us Spiritualists with open arms, if, with all our many theories and curiously commingled company, we could only bring this *one* fact proven before them. But no! As yet the Church relies

upon Faith alone, and shrieks when you attempt to bring a Ghost to prove a fact—though it be one necessary to its very existence. Secularism and Atheism never before this age so flaunted themselves and boldly attacked the Holy Church as they do now, thanks chiefly to those “cramping creeds” which have grown up like deadly Upas trees, unpruned even, but, therefore, now rotting at the core. The Church shall remain, believe me; but not without a sweeping purification.

In the great conflict going on in our own day between religion and Agnosticism, Spiritualism steps boldly in to reconcile their differences; claiming belief for nothing but what can be clearly demonstrated, she meets the scientist on his own ground, claiming at the same time to have proved the reality of a future life, upon which, as we have shewn, religious life rests. It removes also the fear of death and shews it as the portal to the flower-laden land of the hereafter, thus restoring poetry and purity into daily life, and angel visitors to the home fire-side. For—

“How pure at heart, and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead!”

For when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates—
And hear the household jar within.”

To-day Modern Spiritualism is one of the series of convulsions that have so repeatedly shaken the strata of the human mind, in the end clearing the way for new conditions and new departures in thought. For as Professor Barrett recently well put it—

“Every Materialist, and especially every Positivist, is bound to inquire into the truth or falsehood of Spiritualism. What is affirmed is always worth listening to, what is denied is seldom of importance, for it leads no further.”

Some can reach by faith in Christ to the highest Spiritual truths, truths that can never be found in the phenomenal or even in the psychical (that is, the simply intellectual) plane.

“We cannot blind our eyes to the fact that there is a lower as well as a higher region in the Spiritual world; the former drags us down to the phenomenal, thus leading us back to Materialism under a new name; the latter teaches us self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and self-surrender to a higher ideal, until we gain a vision of God. It is dissatisfaction with Spiritualism as the goal of faith that will in time lead Spiritualists to find in Christianity that which it cannot give.”

The paper recently read here by Miss Ford struck me as a remarkable hungering for fuller light from the Spiritualist's side of the question. It was, it appeared to me, a recognition of the need of Spiritualism even to a religious and devout nature. It was as

“An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry” —

Yet with a wonderful perception was the wail uttered; as though actually discerning what we have all along contended for, *viz.*, —that even if Spiritualism can conduct you to truth it will fail to satisfy the immortal craving. Even so, some natures are evidently too Spiritual to be satisfied with Spiritualism; but let such use Spiritualism as a handmaiden to light their steps on the road, and they will be conducted to that inner shrine where Faith from the religious side also leads, and where the soul bows down to worship. The new hopes shall not “replace despair” (as she suggests may be), but shall guide through Materialism (if she be pleased so to call it) to the life beyond—and to progressive soul-life.

That there is a ministry for Spiritualism among the Churches appears to me never to have been put with more emphasis than in a recent work of our Poet Laureate's, who in his poem called “Despair” has, like the true poet, caught the keynote of his age and fixed it in words that ring in the ears of his fellows. A man and his wife have their reason unstrung from attending on the teaching found in one of those narrow sectarian churches which are now happily waning before fuller light. They resolve to drown themselves and end their misery. The woman dies, but the man is rescued by the minister of this narrow sect. Cruel wrong of fate! He

“Who had bawled the dark side of his faith and a God of eternal rage—
Till he flung them back on themselves, and the human heart,
and the Age.”

No wonder when a man is thus flung back on himself, his faith in God the Father eclipsed by “cramping creeds,” and having no such light as Spiritualism or true faith brings, the poor soul is

maddened into despair, and he refuses to *think out* his own true judgment, when he says,

"The God of Love and of Hell together—they cannot be thought."

Had Spiritualism come to such a man it must have won him back to a sound mind and shewn the creeds against which he is revolting to be pure figments of man's invention, or, as "M.A. (Oxon)" well puts it :—

"If he is to be won back from Nihilism it must be by proving to his mind by scientific methods of demonstration, that this life is not the end of all : that mind, intelligence, can exist apart from a body : that men live on after they are dead ; and that these facts can be proven. This is the mission of Spiritualism, and when it is purged of all that defiles it will take its place as the great religious purifying element—uniting science and religion as exponents of truth."

To both, as we have shewn, Spiritualism comes as with a lamp brilliant from the "Eternal Light."

In its very first and simplest form, Spiritualism, in its tiny raps, resounds upon the coffin of Materialism ; for once establish the fact that such are of Spirit origin and the whole fabric of Materialism crumbles into the dust. But Spiritualists have claimed more than this ; they have claimed unwisely for Spiritualism all the authority of a new revelation.

Have they forgotten that it is no new revelation at all ? Have they read history so blindly as not to see that Spiritualism has always been used to establish truth and not to teach it ? We can understand many who had not any settled belief in Christ and His noble teachings, yet yearning for a higher life, now clinging to Spiritualism as a glorious truth (as it undoubtedly is), and imagining they have now found a sure resting place. So it is, *for a time* ; but it will ever point to the land immortal, and beckon onwards to that as its home. The Spiritualist will be led on to feel that there is a Deity. He will have actual sensations of Him. His experience will thus concur with his reason ; and so fact and faith by different paths conduct to the same home of the soul, where religious life begins its immortal life of progression. It is easy to see how Spiritualism and Religion have been thus in the outset intertwined and confounded, running together often upon the same lines ; but a little reflection will shew how far beyond Spiritualistic facts Christianity will conduct us ;—how a Spiritualist may be an inquirer without emotion, or how he may be a scientist without religious feeling of any kind whatever.

But, as I shewed at the outset, religious and emotional life must rest upon a substratum of fact, and where such facts cannot be apprehended through the avenue of Faith, Spiritualism comes to the rescue and leads us even through Materialism to the shrine of the Eternal ; by her light we decipher many dark or well-nigh obliterated traces of ancient life ; and as she becomes purified from claims which belong not to her, she will re-establish the old, well-nigh lost, Spiritual life which she is well calculated to inaugurate, but can never without a further factor—which we call Religion—lead beyond herself. She has not come to destroy but to fulfil. In full faith of this mission we sing again with Tennyson—

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be ;
They are but broken lights of Thee ;
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

THE DIVINE HUMANITY OF JESUS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As I am generally a careful reader of the "Spirit Teachings" given to M. A. (Oxon), I was sorry to see in the last series a denial (or what seemed such) of the Divinity of Christ. All I can say is that my Spirit teachings have all, or almost all, declared the truth of that doctrine ; and that from the beginning of my development till now, a period of ten years, I may say it has been, and is, the greatest comfort to me to be able to truly believe in the Divine Humanity of Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, and in all the troubles of this transitory life to realise that blessed fact. Away from a belief in this doctrine I can find no happiness or inward joy ; and I think that until Spiritualists find this out and take Christ for their Divine Master, Leader, and Guide, they will go astray as they are doing now, building their house on sand that the next advancing tide will obliterate and destroy for ever.—Faithfully yours,

A. PERY.

The White House, Cottingham, Leicester,
December 13th, 1881.

CONFIRMATION OF SPIRIT MESSAGES.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As Miss Ford has very properly raised the question whether Spiritualism is of any use to those who are already sure that there is another life, permit me to send the following. My mother belongs to that class to which Miss Ford refers ; so it may interest some to know of what use it was to her on one occasion.

On my return from Melbourne some four years ago, I learned that the ship Brechin Castle, which my brother was in, was overdue. On reaching home I found my mother in a state of great anxiety and distress—in fact, in that state of despair best understood by those who have experienced it. I prevailed on her to sit with me at a small table ; and my sisters and two cousins also sat with us. Conditions were good ; questions were asked as to the safety of the ship, and the following answer was given in the usual way : "Brechin Castle has arrived at Trinidad. All well. You will hear of her on Friday week." As the mail was not due until the week following we thought this must be a mistake, and so the question was again asked, and "Friday week" was again given, and we were also assured that there would be a letter by the first mail.

This was good news for all of us, especially mother, who though unable to understand the method by which it came, felt very grateful for it ; and in the end her grief became joy. Friday came round, and in the morning issue of the *Glasgow Herald* we found the following telegram : "Brechin Castle arrived at Trinidad, W.I., on the 1st, and sailed for Calcutta on the 8th." Thus the first part of our message was verified, as was also the other by our receiving the promised letter by the first mail.

About a month afterwards I was at home for a day, and so we sat again. I asked the position of the ship, and after some delay, "3 deg. north lat. ; 23 deg. west long." was given. But as the ship should have been by that time a long way to the south-east of the Line, I thought this a mistake. The question was accordingly repeated, and "3 deg. 23 deg." was again given.

The explanation was not forthcoming for some time. It came in this way. I left Scotland a day or two afterwards, and on our arrival in Melbourne (Australia), I received a letter from home bringing the news that the Brechin Castle had taken fire after crossing the Line, and on the discovery being made the ship was put back, *re-crossed the Line*, and ran for one of the Cape Verd Islands, before the fire had done much damage. Thus, the ship being to the north of the Line a month after leaving was accounted for ; and the apparent mistake of our Spirit friends became a serious fact.

It is but proper to add that I sent an account of the first incident in this letter to a friend in England ; so some of your readers may have seen it. I never heard whether he made use of it or not.

With best wishes for the prosperity of "LIGHT,"—I remain,
yours faithfully,

JOHN COWIE.

3, M'Clellan-place, Dumbarton,
11th December, 1881.

PROPOSED SCOTCH REUNION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

DEAR SIR,—Will you kindly allow me, through the medium of your valuable columns, to inform your readers that Mr. Alexander Brown and myself intend arranging a Scotch soirée or reunion about the end of January, and that we shall be pleased to receive offers of assistance from any friends who are willing to aid us ? We will announce further particulars as soon as arrangements are made, and trust our friends will kindly bear the occasion in mind.

All communications to be addressed to Mr. Alex. Brown,
208, Copenhagen-street, N., or to yours very truly,

26, Penton-street, N.,
December 19th, 1881.

FRANK EVERITT

MR. THOS. EVERITT will read an address before the members of the B.N.A.S., 38, Great Russell-street, on Monday evening, January the 9th, in which he will give an account of some of the very interesting personal experiences with which he has been favoured during many years past. Mrs. Everitt is one of the best private mediums in Great Britain, and Mr. Everitt has, therefore, had unusual opportunities of studying Spiritual manifestations under a variety of forms ; so that he will be able to satisfy inquirers who may be disposed to put questions on difficulties which have arisen in the course of their own investigations.

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 séances.

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.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post free to any address within the United Kingdom, or to places comprised within the Postal Union, including all parts of Europe, the United States, and British North America, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

ADVERTISEMENT CHARGES.

Five lines and under, 3s. One inch, 4s. 6d. Half-column, £1. Whole column, £2 2s. Page, £4. A reduction made for a series of insertions.

Cheques and Post Office Orders may be made payable to EDWARD T. BENNETT, at the Chief Office, London. Halfpenny Postage Stamps received for amounts under 10s.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"LIGHT" may be obtained direct from our Office, and also of E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and all Booksellers.

ENLARGEMENT OF "LIGHT."

At the urgent entreaty of many of our readers we have determined to enlarge "LIGHT." With the beginning of the New Year the number of pages will be increased from twelve to sixteen.

We have yielded to the solicitations of our friends because we have felt that the representations which they have made to us have been such as to commend themselves to our own judgment. For want of space the contents of "LIGHT" have necessarily been of a less varied character than we could have wished; and many valuable contributions we have been under the unpleasant necessity of excluding because they were too long.

The numerous commendations of our efforts with which friendly correspondents have kindly favoured us, have been the source of no little gratification and encouragement; and with the extension of our opportunities, which the enlargement of our journal will give, we look forward with confidence to a great increase of the satisfaction with which "LIGHT" has been so generally received.

But the new step which we are about to take will bring also increased responsibilities. In view of these we appeal to our readers to be generous with their literary help. We ask them to supply us, as often as occasion offers, with reports of well authenticated facts and phenomena, and also to use our pages freely in the courteous discussion of the questions of interest which arise from time to time. And we ask them, too, to aid our efforts by doing all they can to extend our circulation. The enlargement of "LIGHT" will materially increase the cost of its production, and that our work may be adequately sustained, the number of our subscribers must be greatly extended.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

The present subscribers to "LIGHT" who intend to renew their subscriptions for the coming year should do so at once, or the supply will be stopped.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

The *Journal of Science* in its current number quotes the notice in "LIGHT" of Miss Fancher's case as illustrative of that of Mrs. Croad. In another Note, the same magazine says:—"One of the most curious phenomena of the age is the recrudescence of Asceticism, which seems to be forming an alliance with Spiritualism, as is but too plainly manifest in the organs of the latter. Thus Dr. G. Wyld in the *Psychological Review* recommends 'occasional reasonable (sic!) fasts.'" It has always been a dream of certain enthusiasts that innate psychic powers can be strengthened by rigid fasting, meditation, and seclusion; and I am far from denying that such is the case in a certain degree: though I believe the effect so produced is by no means identical in all cases. I have observed that the psychic powers of a physical medium are frequently intensified by food. When the bodily powers have been lately stimulated by what our American friends call "a square meal," not unaccompanied by exhilarating adjuncts, the medium frequently displays a psychic activity quite in excess of what would be obtained under reverse conditions. But these are manifestations of a purely physical character. The higher Spiritual phenomena are, no doubt, favoured in development by a judicious "subduing of the flesh to the spirit." But Spiritualists have by no means, as a

body, made any ascetic alliance, nor do they, as a rule, seek for the higher developments of Spirit at the cost of personal sacrifice. It would be well if they would cultivate the religion of the body as the shrine of Spirit, and consider of what character the manifestations to which I have alluded are likely to be.

The *Nonconformist* has a notice of a book called "The Mystery of Miracles," in which some remarkable admissions as to the importance of Spiritualism are made. "We are persuaded that no investigation of supernaturalism can be satisfactory that does not investigate, in a perfectly calm, free, and unbiassed way, the phenomena of modern Spiritualism." . . . "The true philosophy of the supernatural will never be elucidated by those who are hide-bound by traditional orthodoxies." With the concluding remarks of the *Nonconformist*, every mind that values truth as opposed to any form of opinion, and free thought as opposed to any form of dogma, be it orthodox or heterodox, will cordially sympathise. "We do not ourselves profess at present to pronounce on the value of these modern experiences. Those who believe in the supernatural for one age will, one would think, find it antecedently probable that it should be diffused with approximate impartiality through all ages. But we claim, in the interests of honest investigation and free science, that no great question of this kind should be prejudged and shut out of court."

That is the true scientific method, and I rejoice to find it in a journal where, at first sight, it is somewhat of a surprise to meet with it. But the *Nonconformist* has always been honourably distinguished from many organs of theological opinion by candour, fairness, and absence of petty bigotry.

"God and the Man," a romance by Mr. Robert Buchanan, is a work of great power, as well as of deep psychological insight. To the student of psychology it is a most interesting book. The way in which the devastating power of hate over a man's mind is depicted is most powerful. The whole narrative is one of extreme literary power; and the moral conveyed is one that is specially enforced by the teachings of Spiritualism. The man who gives rein to any passion becomes its slave: he loses his chance of development: he becomes brutalised by indulgence in his vice, or dominated by its intensity, until he debases his Spiritual nature, and develops that which is low and brutal. Mr. Buchanan admirably enforces this truth. His book should be welcome to Spiritualists.

The idea of God as propounded by some "heated pulpiteers" of this enlightened age is too monstrous for credence. With an apology for the shock that such words must administer to every rightly constituted and decent mind—my excuse being that by no other means can average readers be made aware how far we have drifted from the noble simplicity of the theology of the Christ—I quote from a sermon delivered at Wakefield by "the popular Wesleyan preacher and lecturer, the Rev. Peter Mackenzie," the following words:—"How grand a thing it is to have an invisible God made visible, a distant God brought nigh, a God that filled everything condensed so that you could shake hands with him." *A condensed God!* Surely such a piece of ludicrous profanity was never heard before. After this, is it not high time that some stern purification of popular Christianity, such as the Higher Spiritualism would supply, were set about? This piece of profane vulgarity, shocking as it is in its bald indecency, is but a coarse presentation of a dogma which has grown and been developed during many centuries. Men have discussed it, defined it, improved upon it, elaborated it, till we have this "popular Wesleyan" bringing it down in these words to the level of an intelligent audience, who received it and the rest of his comic remarks "with shouts of laughter." I desire no more striking proof of what I have often said, that man debases the idea of God until the day dawns when a nobler conception can be revealed, and the old bad, dishonouring notion be swept away. That was the mission of Jesus Christ. He did for Judaism what some new Teacher will do for modern Christianity. Surely the night must be very far spent when such ideas of God can be propounded, and the day must be near. All signs point to it; and the Rev. Peter Mackenzie is at any rate a conspicuous sign-post pointing in the same direction.

The premises of the B.N.A.S. will be closed for the Christmas holidays from Monday to Wednesday next inclusive. The members' free séance will be held as usual on Thursday evening next, at 8 o'clock.

INSTANTANEOUS COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LONDON AND CALCUTTA.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It gives me great pleasure to be able to report the safe arrival of Mr. W. Eglinton. He reached this city on the 17th inst. in capital health and spirits, and has already given a few of our citizens pretty convincing proofs of Spirit power. I do not care to trouble your readers with an account of the ordinary manifestations that have taken place, as they are already familiar with such from other contributors to your paper, but I think the following account of what happened on the very first Sunday after his arrival may prove of interest. On Sunday evening, 20th November, Mr. Eglinton and myself had been to dine with Colonel and Mrs. Gordon, returning home about half-past ten. Before retiring to rest, Mr. Eglinton asked me to come and sit in the verandah with him, as he felt impressed that something was about to happen. After sitting together for a short time, Mr. Eglinton was entranced, and when in that condition asked me to bring him a book from the room behind me. I did so, taking the first that came to hand. Mr. Eglinton took the book from me and placed it on the chair beside him. He then took my two hands in his, gave two or three convulsive shudders, and then asked me to open the book and take what was in it. *Please note that with the exception of taking the book from my hand and placing it on the chair, Mr. Eglinton did nothing whatever with it.* I opened the book, and inside the cover found a letter written that same afternoon in London. The letter was from a very intimate friend of mine, who is also a powerful medium, and with whom I have corresponded constantly since my return to India two years back. My friend's handwriting is as familiar to me as my own, and the subject matter of the letter was such that it could not, by any possibility, have been written by any other person. In the first paragraph of the letter, my friend states that "Ernest," Mr. Eglinton's Spirit guide, was waiting for the letter, and would bring it to me direct. Thus a letter written in London on the evening of Sunday, the 20th November, 1881, was put into my hands, in Calcutta, nearly 8,000 miles off, at 11 p.m. of the same day, so that, taking into account the difference of time between London and Calcutta, the transmission must have been well-nigh instantaneous.

Since this occurrence "Ernest" has told me that he will try and take a sheet of paper, previously marked by me for the purpose of identification, to London, and bring back the same piece of paper with a message in my friend's handwriting. If this is successfully done I will advise you further.

Trusting that I may be able to chronicle the spread of truth in this part of the world,—I remain, yours truly,

Calcutta, November 26th, 1881.

J. G. MEUGENS.

THE FORMATIVE POWER OF SPIRIT IMAGINATION AND WILL.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In the last number of "LIGHT" "M. A. (Oxon)" calls in question the correctness of my views on this subject as on two former occasions expressed by myself in your pages. To prevent ambiguity I will very briefly recapitulate my views:—

1.—I believe in the power of external Spirits to create solid objective bodies, either in their own likeness or in any other likeness, according to their imagination and will, just as I believe in the power of any artistic Spirit in the flesh to create his own portrait or the portrait of any other individual, mechanically.

2.—I believe that many individuals in the flesh can project their own Spirits as visible objective doubles, and that these doubles can present themselves to third parties and operate as physical identities.

3.—If so, then the Spirits of entranced mediums, being external to the body, can do likewise, and assume any form and perform a variety of physical work.

4.—Individuals in a condition of reverie or half entrancement can, by imagination, produce forms objective to themselves, and can "biologise" others present so that these objects become to them as solid objective realities.

"M. A. (Oxon)" has so much knowledge and experience on this subject that one cannot safely differ from him except very cautiously, but I think he will not dispute my present statements.

While believing this I do not dispute the belief that the vast majority of Spirit forms are produced by external and rational Spirits.

My position is, that the Spirits of living bodies can, under certain conditions, enter the Spirit world and act in all respects as if they were external Spirits finally emancipated from the flesh.

—Yours respectfully,

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

EVENINGS WITH MR. MORSE.

Another "Evening with Mr. Morse" was held on Wednesday, 14th inst., at 38, Great Russell-street.

The first control spoke in continuation of the subject taken up on the previous occasion—the difficulties besetting an inquiry into Spiritualism. He proposed to speak principally on the action attributed to evil Spirits in influencing messages. In the first place, he thought it was unreasonable to suppose, as many persons did, that the majority of Spirits met with were evil, mischievous, or malicious. Such is not the case with mortals in ordinary intercourse. The majority of Spirits are as good as the men and women they come to, not worse, probably not much better. Death does not change the character of the individual; the average level is about the same. An explanation of the contradictory communications which are often received may be obtained upon some other hypothesis. The cry of evil Spirits is partly a reflection from early theological training. The majority of Spiritual communications come from those with whom you have been intimate in earth-life, and to suppose that they would deliberately say what is not true is not to be imagined. You are asked to believe that these good friends are ousted by foreign powers. This may be so in certain cases, but the cause of the confusion is generally to be found in the mental and spiritual constitution of the circle. The first practical safeguard is in the attitude of the sitters; as are the conditions of the circle, so will be its success. Some of the circle may have been in unsuitable circumstances or surroundings. Certain things act almost as a barrier to all that is good and useful. Purity of bodily life is equally essential with earnestness of soul. Spiritualists have been apt to attribute far too much to the power of evil Spirits. In the way some are disposed to look at it, it becomes a cloak for wickedness and a premium on wrong-doing. "The Devil tempted me" of the ancients is replaced by "an evil Spirit tempted me" now-a-days. We will not allow the Spiritual world to be fathered with the wickedness of your world in this way. The responsibility rests entirely on the human side, and the penalties men suffer must teach them that this is the case. It is a sound principle to attribute all actions to mundane causes first, not to Spiritual ones; and only to Spiritual causes last of all, when others fail. On the other hand, we have heard Spiritualists say that they are always under the influence of good Spirits. This is simply ridiculous, and shews want of thought. It is as idle to say that all the virtue comes from the Spiritual world as to say that all the wickedness does. There are some who consider a Spirit evil who does not agree with their particular ideas, who does not teach teetotalism or vegetarianism or some particular theory, or, what is still worse, who does not agree with some religious dogma which they may happen to hold. There is as great a difference of opinion on all these matters in the Spiritual world as there is in the earthly. But as to the idea that evil Spirits, as such, play a prominent part in the development of Spiritualism, we do not believe it. And we also believe, taking public and private Spiritual communications as a whole, that the majority of the communicating intelligences are good, wise, and thoughtful.

The question was asked: Would the controlling Spirit kindly define the difference between obsession and possession?

Obsession is where an individual has become wholly subject to the influence of any Spirit; where, so to speak, a Spirit infests the life of an individual. The magnetism of the Spirit holds the two together, and the individual is always more or less under the influence of this foreign presence. This may end at last in temporary or permanent insanity. The controlling Spirit went on to say: The case before you is one of possession. After the temporary purpose is served the control is rendered up again.

How is obsession to be prevented or overcome? was inquired.

It can only be prevented by the individual himself. BE YOURSELF. Cultivate a positive attitude of mind. Thus will you lock the door. By gradually cultivating the will, you will guard against the danger.

Ought a good Spirit to be perfectly sure of the medium's consent before controlling him?

Such would be the rule we would lay down. We have no right to take possession of any person without his consent.

How does a Spirit make itself acquainted with the movement of thought in this world?

In one way, by the incoming of the inhabitants from your

world. We can also, to a certain extent, *sense* the thought of a nation or a community.

The "Strolling Player," on assuming control, solicited questions from the meeting.

The question was asked: What evidence have we that the intelligence that is speaking is not that of Mr. Morse himself in an abnormal condition?

To this question, which is being constantly asked me, only one simple reply can be given—so simple that I have had it stereotyped! The answer is—None. You can only judge yourselves, from seeing and observing Mr. Morse in his ordinary state, and under our control.

What can be said as to the evidence for inspiration?

Oh, dear! What a wide question! This can be said simply in the first place:—If inspiration is 2,000 years old, it is Divine—true! If it is of to-day, it is diabolic—false! The expression of inspiration is determined by the quality of the person inspired, by the susceptibility of his nature. The inspiration that can flow through an individual is not only dependent on his normal powers and on his development, but it is also dependent on the latent powers—on the possibilities that lie hidden and undeveloped. Here, again, the Spiritual is analagous to the physical. If you are pursued by a mad bull you can perform feats of strength and activity which would be impossible under ordinary circumstances. Your latent powers are drawn out. Thus it is also with your higher nature. In what is called inspiration, some are inclined to attribute too much to the Spiritual world and not enough to the individual himself.

A question was asked as to Spirit substance—whether it was compound or simple; whether there were many Spirit substances or only one.

The control replied that he had never found oneness of substance in any *composed* world. The world which he inhabited was a *composed* world, as the earthly one was. It is possible to analyse the substances of the Spiritual world. He believed that there was one substance which was the base of both the Spiritual and the material world, but that it was capable of an infinite variety of developments. But Spirit is the base of all things.

[The next "Evening with Mr. Morse" will be held on Monday, January 2nd, at 7 o'clock.—Ed.]

MR. STUART CUMBERLAND AT NORWICH.

The following letters have appeared this week in the *Eastern Daily Press* (Norwich):—

To the Editor of the "*Eastern Daily Press*."

SIR,—My attention has been called by Mr. E. Dawson Rogers to an issue of your paper in which it is stated by Mr. Stuart Cumberland that he had accepted my challenge on no less than five different occasions. The challenge was made through the Bishop of Liverpool, who assures me that he has heard nothing from Mr. Cumberland since, and I personally can vouch that I have never received an acceptance of my challenge from him. I leave the public, therefore, to form their own conclusions.

Thanking you in anticipation for the insertion of this disclaimer,—I remain, yours truly,

JOHN FOWLER.

Sefton Park, Liverpool.

To the Editor of the "*Eastern Daily Press*."

SIR,—I see that Mr. Charles Garner—who recently, by advertisement in the *Times*, assumed the high-sounding name of Charles Stuart Cumberland—has been giving exhibitions in Norwich with the professed purpose of exposing Spiritualism and of demonstrating that what are known as Spiritual phenomena are simply the tricks of conjurers. As a Spiritualist myself, and as one who is well-known in Norwich and still retains an interest in the old city, I appeal to your sense of justice for permission to say a few words on the other side of the question.

I have carefully pursued the investigation of Spiritualism for many years, and I unhesitatingly assert, as the result of personal experience—hundreds of times in my own home—under conditions which precluded every possibility of trickery, that the alleged phenomena are facts. Public professional sêances I say nothing about, as they seldom afford opportunity for satisfactory observation. But what has occurred in my own house, with no stranger and certainly no "conjurer" present, I do know to be genuine—Mr. Cumberland's absurd travesties notwithstanding. Under these circumstances, and in full light, I have seen articles of furniture and various material objects move about the room without being touched by any person visibly present; and I have heard raps, often as loud as if given by a heavy stick, upon the table, upon the floor, upon the walls, upon the ceiling—anywhere, in fact, according to

request. And I have conversed often for an hour at a time with many dear departed relatives and friends, who have spoken in an audible voice loud enough to be heard in adjoining rooms, this voice being certainly not the voice of any person present in the flesh, and communicating facts just as certainly unknown to them. I am perfectly well aware that ignorance and prejudice will say that this is all illusion—but surely those who have had the personal experience will be far better judges than those who know nothing about it. In reality there was no illusion in the matter. The evidence was as perfect as for any ordinary experience in life. Every person present heard the same raps, saw the movement of the same objects, and heard the same voices; and very frequently several of those present have joined in the same conversation. Similar testimony can be given by thousands of persons—of the highest social, literary, and scientific standing—who, like myself, have had the same experiences in their own homes with no strangers present.

Mr. Cumberland—who is but a third-rate conjurer after all, and is simply imitating the performances of his *quondam* friend and associate, Mr. Irving Bishop—would have you believe that this is all conjuring. As I have said, the experience of thousands of private family circles is utterly incompatible with such a theory, as is also the testimony of numbers of eminent scientific men, who have carefully and patiently investigated for themselves. Mr. Cumberland cites the names of some able men who are disbelievers, but surely negative testimony goes for nothing. Those who do not believe are those who have never patiently examined. What say those who have? Mr. Crookes, the eminent chemist, a member of the Royal Society, discoverer of the metal Thallium and of the radiometer, spent years in the investigation and decided in favour of the facts, as recorded in his work, "*Researches in Spiritualism*." Professor Zöllner, of Leipzig, the eminent physicist, spent months in testing the phenomena occurring in the presence of Dr. Slade, and finding them to be genuine gave all the details of his experiments in his "*Transcendental Physics*," one of the most intensely interesting books ever published. Alfred Russel Wallace, the distinguished naturalist, after years of examination of various Spiritual phenomena, arrived at the same conclusion. And Professor Barrett, of the Royal College of Physics, Dublin, has pursued the inquiry for years, and has been so satisfied of the truth and value of Spiritualism that in a letter which appeared in "*LIGHT*," on the 29th of October last, he used the following remarkable words:—"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." I might mention scores of other men, eminent in science, literature, and social position, who have investigated the subject with a similar result; but I forbear, and refer your readers to a list of such, which is given in "*LIGHT*" every week.

On the evidence of such men Spiritualism, then, is not conjuring; and, if it were, who should know so well as conjurers themselves? Mr. Cumberland pretends that it is—but what say the great masters of the magic art, besides whom Mr. Cumberland is but as a rushlight to the moon? *Licht, mehr Licht*, in its number for May 16th, 1880, published 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. Robert Houdin, the great French conjurer, investigated clairvoyance with the sensitive Alexis Didier, and unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. And Bellachini, the renowned conjurer to the Court at Berlin, made a declaration, on December 6th, 1877, before a Notary and witnesses, in which he said:—"The phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, and I have not in the smallest degree found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus, and any explanation of the experiments which took place under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining by any reference to prestidigitation is absolutely impossible."

And yet in the face of this testimony a number of influential citizens of Norwich—who probably never saw anything whatever of Spiritualism and are, therefore, totally incapacitated from judging—are led by Mr. Stuart Cumberland into the delusion that Spiritualism and conjuring are one and the same thing.

But I thank God for the evidence that all are not so easily deluded as the good people who at Norwich gave their "moral support" to a conjurer. The discussion at the recent Church Congress shewed that there is a widespread acceptance of the facts of Spiritualism amongst the clergy; and I have, personally, the very gratifying proof that this acceptance is growing every day. The clergy are beginning to recognise the uses of Spiritualism. To one of these uses I have already referred in the words of Professor Barrett. I will only add the testimony of Mr. S. C. Hall, for many years the able and highly respected editor of the *Art Journal*. "As to the uses of Spiritualism," says Mr. Hall, "it has made me a Christian! I humbly and fervently thank God it has removed all my doubts. I could

quote abundant instances of conversions from unbelief to belief—of some to perfect faith from total infidelity.”

There is much more that I should like to say, but I must have regard for your space. Had Mr. Cumberland received the “moral support” of the Materialists only, or of people who do not wish to believe in the existence of life after death, I do not think I should have troubled you at all. But I confess that I did feel grieved when I saw men whose names I respect—ministers of religion and Christian gentlemen—in this age of growing Materialism backing a conjurer against those who seek to demonstrate the reality of a future life. Such a spirit would have backed the magicians against Moses.—I am, dear sir, yours respectfully,

E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Rose Villa, Church End,
Finchley, London, N.

MESSIANIC PRETENDERS.

By William Oxley.

In the *Medium and Daybreak* of October 3rd, 1879, I published an article on this subject, in which I referred to seven or eight “claimants” for the honour of Messiahship. That these claimants are all wilful impostors, I am not at all inclined to believe. To many, or perhaps most, minds the theory of “obsessing Spirits,” may present itself as the solution for these extraordinary delusions; and possibly this may be the right one. The history of the past has recorded the appearance of such people, but it has been only occasionally and at rare intervals; and as will result with the present competing list, so in the past they and their pretensions sank into the oblivion from which they emerged. I believe there are several in America, besides others of whom I have not the particulars, but, as under, I give three more. If there is any meaning in the phrase “signs of the times,” surely such a cluster of Messianic pretenders appearing at the present time is not without its significance.

In January of the present year “the New Dispensation” was formally inaugurated in Calcutta by the consecration of a flag—a crimson silken banner, mounted on a silver pole, fixed on the open space of marble pavement in front of the pulpit in the Church of the Brahmo Samaj. The ceremony was imposing in the highest degree, accompanied by music, flourish of trumpets, incense burning, lighted lamps, &c. Under the more modest claim of “an Apostle” there can be little doubt that a higher claim is intended, viz.: that of Avatarship, or Messiahship. This is by no less a personage than Keshub Chunder Sen, the present leader of the Brahmo Samaj (although disowned by some who have withdrawn from the movement under his direction, and who have formed different branches). The occasion seems to have been the anniversary of the Brahmo Samaj, which was founded by the late Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, a Ravhee Brahmin, who died in England, 1833, and which Church or system was founded upon the broadest and most Catholic basis, and aimed at a reformation of the present caste and ecclesiastical systems of India. It was a Theistic Church, closely allied to the principles of Unitarianism, acknowledging the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Many will remember the visit of Keshub Chunder Sen to this country some years ago, during which he preached on many occasions, chiefly in Unitarian pulpits. But I believe that Mr. Sen has lost the sympathy of the Unitarian body by reason of certain things connected with the marriage of his daughter to one of the native princes; and which it is not necessary to narrate in connection with the present article.

Keshub Chunder Sen unquestionably has completely altered and deviated from the teachings and ceremonials of the Brahmo Samaj, as originally instituted by its founder. In the anniversary services referred to, Mr. Sen, in words, protested against being taken as a prophet or mediator between God and man, yet at the same time he announced himself and certain of his associates as “*The Apostles of a New Dispensation*, chosen and commissioned to usher it on its conquering career;” and in speaking of the work he said: “I say it stands upon the same level with the Jewish Dispensation, the Christian Dispensation, and the Vaishnara Dispensation, through Chaitanya.” Again: “I say this Dispensation is equally divine with Christ’s Dispensation. Assuredly the Lord of Heaven has sent this New Gospel unto the world.” And again: “Here you see God’s special providence working out the redemption of the land through the instrumentality of a complete Dispensation, with its full complement of apostles, scripture, and inspiration.”

What will the Catholic Apostolic Church (the Irvingite Church) say to this, which Church was founded about 40 years ago by the election of 12 Apostles, chosen to seal 144,000 souls in Christendom, and which were to form the Church to whom the Lord Jesus Christ should come in person; and which event it was proclaimed should take place before all the Apostles should be called away by death? Eleven out of the twelve are dead, and the surviving one is a very feeble old man, who, except under extraordinary circumstances, cannot be expected to continue many more years. It is a strange fact, but nevertheless true, that this movement, inaugurated and developed in India by Keshub Chunder Sen, is almost a copy

of that of the Catholic Apostolic Church; the rituals and ceremonials of each have a striking similarity.*

When in London a fortnight ago, I was going to Bow in a tramcar, and there came in a man with a large bundle of papers. Opening the same he handed a pamphlet sheet to each of us. He was a man of medium height, dark complexion, and with very long, flowing black hair hanging over his shoulders. The paper proved to be “*The Watchman’s Warning to the House of Israel*.” It was a continuous string of Bible texts from various parts, all tending to the one point, viz., that “the man with hair twenty inches long” was specially called and commissioned by God to warn Christendom in general, and England in particular, that God is only waiting a little while before pouring out the vials of His wrath upon the people. In italics is printed, “*This is the Prophet the Jews are waiting for, a King, a Judge, and a Priest for ever—a Messiah.*” This Watchman, Prophet, and Messiah is a Mr. E. W. Mannooch, whose photograph can be had of G. Threadwell, photographer, 288, High-street, Stratford, London, E., so that the claimant himself is no myth.

Availing myself of an opportunity which presented itself while on a visit to a friend in the neighbourhood, I paid a visit to the so-called Shaker Settlement near Lymington, Hants. In company with a young friend, through whose kindness I obtained an introduction, I first saw one or two of the male principals, with whom I conversed, but finding I took them out of their depth, they said I had better see their “Mother,” Mrs. Girling, who would answer any question I might put. We then went into their meeting-house,—a miserable wooden shanty, covered over with a leaky canvas. It was service time, and we found about 60 people, chiefly females, and, for the most part, young, who were singing, and Mrs. Girling standing amongst them. While the singing, with music from a harmonium, was going on, three females rose up, apparently in a trance, or semi-trance, state, and commenced dancing round Mother Girling (who is a woman of strong features and great determination of character, about 50 years of age, as I should judge). I noted that these females bowed themselves to the ground—in fact, worshipped Mrs. Girling, and in a half-singing tone addressed her thus: “Holy, holy, holy, art Thou, O King, for Thou, who wast dead, art alive again; and we worship Thee as the Lord our God;” and much more to the same effect. The reason for their bowing down to her feet appears presently. At this point I asked Mrs. Girling why she allowed the women to prostrate themselves before her, and we held a conversation for fully half an hour. The substance and pith of her statement was that as to her personality she was no longer Mrs. Girling. Said she: “I am not Mrs. Girling that am speaking to thee, but the Lord Jesus Christ: I am a man in the body of this woman.”

W.O.: Do you mean to say that you conceive yourself to be the veritable Jesus, the Christ?

Mrs. G.: I am He that came in flesh nearly 2,000 years ago, and was then crucified, and ascended into Heaven; but I am now come again, and am re-incarnated in the body of this woman. I bear upon my body the marks of the wounds of the nails which I received on Calvary.

W.O.: Am I to understand that there are literally corresponding nail marks on your feet? If so, it’s a case of stigmata.

Mrs. G.: Certainly, there are actually and literally the marks which were left on my feet more than 1,800 years ago. Believe me! For I am the Alpha and the Omega: the first and the last, and there shall be none other after me.

W.O.: Excuse me calling you into question; but the world is sick of pretended Men Saviours. They have developed only the masculine principle, and the result has been nothing but fightings and contentions. What the world of humanity now wants is a Woman Saviour, i.e., a religion of love, which can tame the contending and warring factions based upon creeds, faiths, and the like. I, therefore, meet you on your own ground, and declare in your hearing that most certainly you are not the last. For, as in Creation it was not good for the man to be alone, and to meet this, woman was evolved; even so, in redemption, it is not sufficient for the Man Saviour to be alone; the Woman Saviour must be evolved; and the last shall be first. But are you aware that there are others beside yourself making the same claim? You are about the *twelfth* that I have come in contact with, either directly or indirectly, and who is to decide between you all as to which is which?

Mrs. G.: It was prophesied that “false Christs” should come, and all others are false, for, “besides me, there is no Saviour.”

The conversation then turned upon the doctrine of celibacy, &c. Finding herself taken upon such unexpected ground, Mrs. Girling was nonplussed, and I felt that she had received more than calculated for.

I do not suppose that, in consequence of what I said to her, she will abate her pretensions; but I think some of her followers, who listened with breathless attention to our conversation, will have received an idea which will enable them to overcome the mesmeric spell under which Mrs. Girling evidently holds them; and to which power they are, or have been, quite passive. Whatever may be the impelling force, there is little doubt that Mrs. Girling and her followers are strong in their faith that Jesus Christ has actually made His Second Advent.

* For full details of this extraordinary work see the *Theosophist*, published in Bombay.

Many will treat this, and all other similar claimants, as cases of simple madness and blasphemy. It may, or may not be so, but one thing is certain, and that is, there is a "method in the madness," and, after all, it is not more astounding than that rational people should profess to expect a literal fulfilment of the statement that "Christ shall come in the clouds and descend from the skies with thousands of angels, &c." How could such an event occur, and for "every eye" to see Him, when the earth is a solid sphere? For, in this case, if the descent were to take place to England, to the Australians the event would be invisible.

MR. FOWLER'S CHALLENGE TO CONJURERS.

REPLY BY MR. IRVING BISHOP.

Mr. Irving Bishop has sent the following reply to the challenge recently issued by Mr. John Fowler, of Sefton Park, Liverpool. We believe that this reply was sent to the London daily Press, but its insertion was declined. We, however, gladly give to Mr. Bishop all the advantage that is likely to accrue to him from its publication in our pages.

SIR,—My attention has been called to what purports to be a challenge addressed to the Bishop of Liverpool, and emanating from Mr. John Fowler, of Sefton Park, Liverpool, which has appeared in the London Press. Mr. Fowler offers to give £500 to the Seamen's Hospital and £500 to any other Charity the Bishop likes to name, in the event of anyone producing in the light the manifestations which he claims are done by the aid of the Spirits of the dead. In the event of failure on the part of whoever accepts the challenge, the loser is to pay £100 to certain charities to be named by Mr. Fowler. Now I have waited to see whether this challenge would be accepted by the parties to whom it was more particularly addressed, but as no action has been taken by them, and as I was the first to expose the pretensions of the better known Spirit mediums, so-called, it seems not out of place in this juncture for me to intimate my ready acceptance of this widely heralded challenge. As the question is one of vast importance to many people, I would suggest that the tests imposed be conducted in such a way that hereafter none may doubt their reliability. Personally I propose not only to meet the challenge, but to meet it in a more generous way than the challenger has cared to put it. As there appears to be no provision for inducing the best mediums to undertake the work, I am prepared to give, in addition to the £100 in case of failure, the sum of £500 to any medium who is able to produce in my presence, if necessary, three consecutive times, any manifestations which I cannot hereafter reproduce and explain upon purely mundane principles, or which I am unable to duplicate on the basis of my own experiments. I trust that this acceptance will lead to some definite result, and that a committee of scientific gentlemen may be appointed to carry out the requisite arrangements.—I am, your obedient servant,

W. IRVING BISHOP.

Charing Cross Hotel, Strand, London.

Mr. Bishop is certainly an adept in the art of deception. That is his profession. But he must have an inordinate amount of confidence in his power to mislead if he thinks that the public will be foolish enough to regard this letter—as he evidently wishes them to do—as an acceptance of Mr. Fowler's challenge. It is in truth an artful evasion of it. Mr. Fowler offered to pay £1,000 to certain charities if any conjurer produced before a committee and "under the same conditions—all in the light—the same phenomena which are produced in the light by Spiritualists." Mr. Bishop replies by offering £500 to any medium who is able to produce in his presence three consecutive times any manifestations he cannot hereafter reproduce and explain on purely mundane principles. Why hereafter? Why three consecutive times? Why explain on purely mundane principles? All these are so many cleverly arranged loopholes through which to make good his escape. The challenge is plain and direct enough—then and there to do the same thing under the same conditions as will be done through a Spiritualist medium. We trust that Mr. Fowler will hold him to these simple and straightforward terms. In dealing with a professional conjurer it is only prudent to be cautious, even to suspicion.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received a large number of communications on various matters of interest, but have been unable to find room for them. Some stand over for future use; others, we fear, will have to be omitted altogether.

MRS. HARDINGE-BRITTEN'S WORK.—By the desire of the friends of Spiritualism in the North of England, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten announces that she is engaged to speak as follows:—December 25 and 26, Batley Carr.—Mrs. Britten can still form some week evening engagements, but her Sundays up to the third Sunday in January next are all promised.—[Adv.]

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON AND THE PROVINCES.

GOSWELL HALL.

On Sunday morning last the final step was taken towards the formation of a society at this hall. The name by which it will be known is the Central London Spiritual Evidence Society. In accordance with the rules passed on Sunday last, the choice of officers was proceeded with, when the following were elected:—President and Treasurer, Mr. J. Swindin; Vice-President, Mr. Brown; Corresponding Secretary, Mr. R. W. Lishman; Financial Secretary, Mr. W. Towns; Auditors, Messrs. F. Guy and J. White; Committee, Messrs. J. N. Greenwell, J. Bowman, W. Bowman, and J. King; Trustees, Messrs. Swindin and Towns. A large number of names were taken, and subscriptions paid for the first quarter, which will date from January 1st. In the evening Mr. W. Wallace occupied the platform and delivered a short address on "Religion," after which he invited questions from the audience, and a good many were propounded and replied to in an evidently satisfactory manner. Next Sunday being Christmas Day, there will be no services in this hall.—VERITAS.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—On Monday, December 13th, Miss Wood gave a séance, at the rooms of the N.S.E.S., to Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten and a few friends. The tests were of the usual nature as also were the phenomena which transpired. Although a fairly good séance, we have seen better through Miss Wood's mediumship and wish more had been accomplished for the sake of the distinguished lady for whom the séance was held. One form when weighed registered 33lbs., another one 23lbs. Miss Wood was weighed before being fastened in the test closet, and weighed 105lbs., and again on the conclusion of the séance, when she could only draw 103½lbs., thus shewing a loss of 1½lb. If such a material loss is a fact, mediums may well complain of exhaustion after form séances. We were pleased to see this careful attempt to ascertain facts, and think it would be better if the officers of the Society would take the hint and do likewise. Simply ascertaining the weight of the forms is not sufficient. Will they endeavour to find if this loss of weight is constant, or variable. If the latter, does the change of persons attending affect it?—Weir's Court presented a lively appearance during the evenings of last week. Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten having been announced for some time to lecture on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, December 13th, 14th, and 15th, each of the meetings was largely attended by an appreciative audience, who greeted her most able and eloquent lectures with marked approval. Her deep sympathies, the clear and precise arrangement and delivery of her facts and illustrations held the minds of her hearers.—On Sunday evening last, Mr. Ashton, of Byker, gave a short address, in which he attacked organisation in connection with our movement. He likewise censured Spiritualists for their opposition to the sects, believing it would be better to cultivate a friendly feeling. But strange to say, Mr. Ashton followed these remarks with an onslaught upon some of the popular doctrines. If error exists, it must be fought. Truth first, we say, and peace afterwards.

GATESHEAD.—Our Gateshead friends, on Sunday evening last, had their platform occupied by several speakers, selected from their own society. The chairman, Mr. H. Burton, gave a few clear and practical thoughts upon the ever continuing struggle of the human soul to fathom the truth. He shewed how man had instituted successive theological systems for that purpose, all of which had been reformed, and re-reformed, from time to time, and eventually superseded as the requirements of the races demanded higher and wider unfoldments of thought. All the old systems, he contended, whatever they had done, failed in the light of modern knowledge and research to satisfy the mental and spiritual thirst of man. Therefore, as every fresh demand produced its equivalent and satisfactory revelation, so, in this age of growing doubt and the decadence of creeds, Spiritualism lifted up its head. He was followed by Mr. G. Gillespie, who read a fine poem of Mrs. Hemans'; afterwards Mr. Bruce and Mr. Stephenson gave some interesting experiences in Spiritualism; and Mr. Dawson delivered a short but spirited address upon this all-important subject, his remarks meeting with the warm approval and marked appreciation of the audience. The committee of the G.S.I.S. desire to express their thanks for gifts of books to their library from Jno. Scott, Esq., Belper; James Bowman, Esq., Glasgow; Mr. J. J. Morse, London; and Mr. Thomas Blyton, secretary to the B.N.A.S., who besides a gift from himself, has forwarded a fine collection of works upon Spiritualism received from several friends of the cause.

WREKENTON.—On Sunday afternoon and evening Mr. J. G. Grey, of Newcastle, discoursed to the friends of this district upon Spiritualism. Both meetings were well attended and the lecturer succeeded in gaining the appreciation of his hearers. The Spiritualists in this district are doing a good work for the cause.—NORTHUMBRIA.

It is observed, that the most censorious are generally the least judicious; who, having nothing to recommend themselves, will be finding fault with others. No man envies the merit of another who has enough of his own.

WHO ARE THESE SPIRITUALISTS ?

The following is a list of eminent persons, who, after careful investigation, have fully satisfied themselves of the reality of some of the phenomena of modern Spiritualism :—

Archbishop Whately; the late Lord Brougham; the Earl of Dunraven; the late Lord Lytton; the late Mr. Serjeant Cox, President of the Psychological Society of Great Britain; the late William Howitt; the late George Thompson; Gerald Massey; T. Adolphus Trollope; S. C. Hall, F.S.A.

The late Abraham Lincoln, President U.S.A.; the late W. Lloyd Garrison; the late Hon. R. Dale Owen, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Naples; the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, sometime Minister of the U.S.A. at the Court of Lisbon; the late Hon. J. W. Edmunds, sometime Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York; the late Professor Mapes, the eminent chemist, U.S.A.; the late Dr. Robert Hare, Professor of Chemistry at the Medical University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.; Bishop Clarke (Episcopalian), of Rhode Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, of the Treasury Department, Washington.

William Crookes, editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, Fellow, Gold Medallist, and Member of the Council of the Royal Society; Cromwell Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, F.R.G.S., the eminent naturalist, sometime President of the Biological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; W. F. Barrett, Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., Professor of Physics in the University of Cambridge; the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President of the Royal Astronomical Society; Dr. Lockhart Robertson, F.R.S., long one of the editors of the *Journal of Science*; the late Dr. J. Elliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; the late Professor de Morgan, President of the Mathematical Society of London; the late Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; the late Dr. Ashburner; the late Dr. Robert Chambers, F.R.S.E.; Professor, Ch. Cassal, LL.D.; Captain R. F. Burton, the celebrated traveller.

The late Emperor of Russia; the late Emperor Napoleon; President Thiers; the Hon. Alexandre Aksakof, Russian Imperial Councillor; the late Prince Emile de Sayn Wittgenstein; His Imperial Highness Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; the late Baron L. de Guldenstübbe; Count A. de Gasparin; the Baron and Baroness von Vay; the Baron du Potet; Mons. Léon Favre, Consul-General of France; Victor Hugo.

Professor Friedrich Zöllner, of Leipzig, the eminent physicist, author of "Scientific Treatises," "Transcendental Physics," &c., whose recent researches in this subject have attained a world-wide fame; Gustave T. Fechner, Professor of Physics in the University of Leipzig, also the author of many volumes bearing on the general subject of Psychology; Professor Scheibner, the renowned teacher of mathematics in the University of Leipzig; W. E. Weber, Professor of Physics in the University of Göttingen, and known as one of the main workers in connection with the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy; Immanuel H. Fichte, Professor of Philosophy at Leipzig; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of the University of St. Petersburg; Dr. Maximilian Perty, Professor of Natural Science in the University of Berne; Dr. Franz Hoffman, Professor of Philosophy, Würzburg; Dr. Robert Friesé, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, the well-known astronomer; and many other members of learned societies in this and other countries, and a vast number of persons eminent in literature, science, and art, and in the ranks of social life, whose names we are not at liberty to mention.

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 ?—

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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.—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 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. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butleroff, 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, Dec. 6, 1877.

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