

*Circular No. III.*

To Members and Associates of the Society for Psychical Research.

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19, BUCKINGHAM STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

*April, 1888.*

The Council of the Society for Psychical Research desire to express their gratitude to such of the Members and Associates of the Society as have up to the present date contributed evidence, attempted experiments, or otherwise aided in the several branches of work. At the same time they must express a strong desire that such help should be offered by a greater number of persons. The success of the Society's work must largely depend on the amount of collaboration received—on the number of centres of observation and experiment which can be established in this and other countries.

The Council have reason to believe that some persons, possessing evidence which would be of value to the Society, have lately thought it needless to proffer such evidence, supposing that the reality of thought-transference, for instance, or of apparitions at death, was now sufficiently proved, and that no further cases were wanted. The Council wish distinctly to state that their view is altogether different. In the first place, they hold that the value to be attached to the evidence already collected must largely depend on its continuous reinforcement by *fresh* cases of like kind,—observed with care and recorded without delay. In the second place, supposing that the general facts, say, of telepathy or of veridical apparitions, were even universally admitted, it would still be a matter of prime interest and importance to discover as much as possible of the *laws* which govern these strange phenomena, and it is therefore impossible to assign any limit to the number and variety of cases which should be collected and registered with this end in view.

It appears to the Council that on the one hand certain needful canons of evidence in these novel inquiries have now been so far laid down that it is now more easy than at first for informants to present their testimony with

the proper safeguards of accuracy, and that on the other hand the *personnel* of the Society now includes a large number both of men and women well fitted to render intelligent aid.

The experiments in *thought-transference* given in the *Journal* for December, 1887, and the experiments in *automatic writing* frequently published of late, may serve to show with how little of preparation or trouble (provided the work be done with complete good faith and care) results of value may be attained. Experiments in *hypnotism* require more caution; but here Mr. G. A. Smith, an experienced hypnotist, with whose name readers of the *Proceedings* have long been familiar, will be glad to give advice or instruction. Persons willing to experiment in any of these directions should communicate with the Hon. Secretary of the Society, Mr. E. Gurney, 26, Montpelier Square, S.W. Mr. Gurney will also be happy to call on members or their friends who may desire to communicate information by word of mouth on any of the subjects with which the Society deals. Written communications may also be addressed to the co-secretary of the Literary Committee, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Leckhampton House, Cambridge. The Council wish it to be distinctly understood that they solicit information not only on those points (such as apparitions at death) on which much evidence has already been forthcoming, but also on other points included within the range of their investigations, especially the so-called physical phenomena of Spiritualism. On this subject Professor Barrett, 6, De Vesci Terrace, Kingstown, Dublin, the Hon. Secretary of the Committee established by the late President, Professor Balfour Stewart, will be glad to receive communications, or accounts of cases in or near London may be sent to Mr. Gurney for immediate investigation. In conclusion, the Council would remind the members of the Society that they have from its first inception, foreseen and announced that an inquiry so novel, complex, and important must of necessity be a *prolonged* one, needing the combined efforts of many persons over a space of many years. While attaching great value to the results already published, the Council feel that those who sympathise with their object must be invited to fresh exertions, if a progress at once rapid and durable is to be made in a research whose very importance and interest increase the difficulty of conducting it with adequate circumspection, and with due minuteness of care.