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PROSPECTUS

FOR THE FORMATION OF THE

PSYCHIC INVESTIGATION ASSOCIATION,

TO BE COMPOSED CHIEFLY OF MINISTERS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS, SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS, PROFESSIONAL MEN, AND DISCIPLES OF DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY, CO-OPERATING FOR THE SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

SIGNERS OF THE CALL.

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE UNITY CHURCH, BOSTON
REV. EDWARD A. HORTON SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BOSTON
REV. R. HEBER NEWTON ALL SOULS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NEW YORK
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B. O. FLOWER, EDITOR "ARENA," BOSTON
REV. T. ERNEST ALLEN FOURTH UNITARIAN SOCIETY, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

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gratis

ATTITUDE OF THE SIGNERS.

It is not intended by the formation of this new association to ignore or depreciate the work of the Society for Psychical Research. We only propose to concentrate our efforts on the narrower field of Spiritualism, pure and simple.

That Modern Spiritualism has votaries in all parts of our country and that it has the power to influence the thought and action of those who believe its teachings, are indisputable facts. Is the movement founded upon fact or delusion? Does the world know? And if it does not know, is it not time for a few truth-loving persons, approaching the subject in a serious frame of mind, to investigate it, guided by purely scientific method? Is it not in the best interest of humanity that this matter should be settled, if possible, once for all? If it be delusion, the contagion has spread quite far enough and done damage enough already. If there be truth in it, the world will be benefited by the knowledge. With this feeling, the signers have decided to issue this appeal, asking you to join with them in carrying on the work of the Psychic Investigation Association.

PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION.

The purpose of the Association is to institute a critical investigation of Modern Spiritualism, applying vigorously the scientific method, with a view to determining the facts and the laws and the most probable hypothesis which will explain the facts and laws.

Bringing together the conditions under which psychic science must exist, as far as they can be known *a priori* and provisionally, upon the one side, and logic, the scientific method and psychology upon the other, we shall seek to formulate the method of psychic science. This, at first, may be comparatively defective, but as

we apply it to the subject matter of the science and observe from different points of view, we shall receive more light and improve our method.

It is believed that many species of phenomena, such as slate-writing and table tipping, are to such a large extent so strictly physical in character, reducible to motions in time and space, as to bring them clearly within the most conservative lines of scientific observation. The attempt will be made to begin with the simpler phenomena, where test conditions can be most satisfactorily imposed, reserving the more complex species for later treatment. We hope that the value of our work can be increased by following in the footsteps of Prof. Robert Hare and others by using apparatus. It seems probable that in some cases the "personal equation" of the medium can be entirely eliminated, reducing him, perhaps, as truly to the rank of a piece of apparatus as are the chemical balance and the galvanometer in the hands of the experimenter in physical science. We believe that no work of the society will be more important than the invention and construction of apparatus which shall exclude legerdemain — *always* to be guarded against — and afford opportunities for observations which shall discriminate between rival hypotheses. All experiments proposed will be carefully planned and submitted to the society with all of the conditions to be imposed, that all may have a chance to criticise them. By these and other means it is hoped to make the results obtained of great value — to make every step count.

Wherever it is believed that they will be sufficiently helpful through suggestion or otherwise, monographs will be prepared covering a species of phenomenon, and these will be carefully discussed as to method pursued by the investigators, the competency and trustworthiness of the witnesses, etc. The great emphasis is to be laid upon actual experiments with mediums; every other line of work will be subordinated to this.

MEMBERSHIP.

We wish to enlist as members: —

First, ministers of all denominations, because of the intimate connection of any truths discovered with theology and the gen-

eral welfare of humanity, and because, occupying the generally acknowledged position of conservators of morals, they are committed not to approve anything immoral should such be shown to constitute an integral part of Spiritualism.

Second, professional men: doctors, lawyers, civil engineers, mechanics, chemists, physicists, and others, and trained specialists in philosophy, logic, psychology, biology, and other departments, because we want the valuable assistance which they can render in criticism, on account of the different points of view from which they will be led to look at the subject as the natural consequence of a widely divergent special training. We wish the phenomena under consideration to run such a murderous gauntlet that only those vitalized by truth can emerge at the end of the line.

Third, we want members who are disciples of dominant schools of philosophy, and others who are advocates of the spiritualistic and of every other hypothesis that is held at the present time to be an explanation of the phenomena. Throughout all the work of the society, experimental and historical, we wish these advocates to point out wherein the data presented confirm their views and oppose those of their antagonists.

With such a membership, the society, while doing a positive work, can be eclectic, representative of the greater world of thought outside. To carry this out successfully calls for men who place truth always uppermost, who love fair play. Then the very logic of events, as the work proceeds, will, in the end, tend to convert all members to the hypothesis most in harmony with all of the facts. At the same time, also, the considerations which destroy the defective hypotheses within the society will be sufficient, as a rule, to destroy them in the public mind.

We shall exclude no one from membership on account of belief or non-belief in any theological or philosophical dogma or system, nor on account of holding any or no hypothesis as the explanation of psychic phenomena. Let us repeat; we shall welcome as members: First, those who feel satisfied, to a greater or less extent, that there are facts, loosely classified as belonging to the domain of Modern Spiritualism, whether best explained by the spiritualistic hypothesis or not, which ought to be studied.

Second, those who, whether from hearsay, or upon account of the large number of avowed Spiritualists, feel that there may be facts beneath all, worthy of investigation. Third, those who recognize that Spiritualism has adherents all over the United States, whether deploring the fact or not, but believe that the one word "delusion" explains it all.

We feel that if the only outcome of the work were to demonstrate that the phenomena are all delusions, pure and simple, and to state them, species by species, in terms of morbid physiology and psychology, that our work would have been very valuable to humanity. Every Christian minister, no matter to what denomination he belongs, should be interested in this movement by virtue of his office, if for no other reason. If there be truth in Spiritualism, the Church falls woefully short of having a full equipment for its work, without all of such truth. If it be all delusion, the minister should know the fact and its explanation, that he may protect the people from its baneful influence.

Joining the association commits no one to any statement of fact or theory; it is tantamount to saying that he thinks there is something that needs to be investigated, that is all. The thought is to build up this association upon a fresh foundation, with no connection whatever with any Spiritualistic society, to enable ministers and others to discover for themselves what is true and what false in Spiritualism. We are exceedingly anxious from the start to have all details managed in such a way that no person shall ever be placed in a false position. To this end, during the progress of the investigations, majority and minority reports will be signed by members *as individuals*, so that no member will ever justly be accountable for the observation or inference of another.

This prospectus is the first paper which has been prepared for distribution. We earnestly request suggestions and criticisms from every person who receives it: we would like to know whether you feel to co-operate with us in clearing up the great mystery of the age or not. Speak candidly and freely. After we have sifted the answers received, steps will be taken to organize the association, and all interested will receive further information.

Trusting that you will favor us with your views, we are,

Fraternally yours in the interest of Truth and Humanity.

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