OBJECTIONS TO SPIRITUALISM ANSWERED

BY

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Author of "The Victory that Overcometh," "Mors Janua Vitae?" "Across the Barrier"

SECOND EDITION, REVISED

LONDON

G. BELL & SONS, LTD.

1916
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PREFACE
TO THE SECOND EDITION

ALTHOUGH this little volume was published more than twelve years ago I find little to alter now that a second edition is called for; more recent experiences and studies have not weakened, for me, the force of the arguments herein set forth. I would like, however, to add a few words with reference to the title, and to make clear in what sense I use the term "Spiritualism."

Sir William Barrett, in his book, "A New World of Thought," 1 quotes from the Spiritual Magazine the following definition of Spiritualism, "A science based solely on facts open to the world through an extensive system of mediumship, its cardinal truth, established by experiment, being that of a world of spirits, and the continuity of the existence of the individual spirit through the momentary eclipse of death." He adds, "I see nothing to dissent from in it, and, speaking for myself, I do not hesitate to affirm that a careful and dispassionate review of my own experiments, extending over a period of twenty years, together with the investigation of evidence supplied to me from trustworthy sources, compels my belief in Spiritualism as so defined." I wish to identify myself with this definition and this confession of faith which admirably express the sense in which I have used the term "Spiritualism" and "Spiritualist" in this book.

Spiritualism has been defined in much the same sense by the Editor of Light (the leading Spiritualist journal in this country) in the following paragraphs.

"Let us say again—apparently we cannot say it too often—that Spiritualism in its true significance embodies the idea of a spiritual world, of man as a spiritual being and of the possibility of communication between the man in the flesh and the man out of it—a sane and simple body of faith and knowledge. We do not blink the fact that on these fundamentals have been erected some strange and oftentimes fantastic creeds, involving occasionally doctrines that affront the reason and often degenerate into mere silliness. It would be marvellous if it were otherwise. Where is the religion or revelation that has not had to lament the existence of these things? . . .

"Spiritualism in its small phenomenal aspects should lead to Spiritualism in its high forms of a truly spiritual life and vision. . . . The very checks and defeats that attend all undue seeking after signs and wonders should teach them that our first concern is with the life and the affairs of the life we are now living. True, there are those whose vocation it is to "blaze the trail" from this world to the next. But the only evidences of that vocation are the uses to which the work is put in making this world more habitable for those who are to come after us."—Light, April 1, 1916.

This gives the significance attached to the term by those who first adopted it. The trend of development is always from the simple to the complex, and many elaborate theories and speculations have grouped themselves under this title. Some of these are interesting and valuable, some probably are true or approximately true, but cautious minds which seek to build their convictions only on well established facts will prefer to suspend judgment on many of these theories, and especially on the somewhat detailed accounts of a future state which are offered as "communicated" by spirits, often with very scanty evidence of their authenticity. Having first reached the convictions which I hold by the somewhat arduous path of Psychical Research, which trains the student to sift evidence and to examine critically the basis on which
claims are made upon belief, I still maintain the same attitude; I do not, however, for a moment wish to assume that others, who accept as truth views which to me seem insufficiently attested, may not be justified in their position or that I may not some day share their conviction.

Bare facts are sterile; all science is a blend of facts and conclusions drawn from the facts, which are more or less theoretical. Sir William Herschell has said:

"We ought to avoid two opposite extremes. If we indulge a fanciful imagination and build worlds of our own, we must not wonder at our going wide from the path of truth and nature. On the other hand if we add observation to observation without attempting to draw, not only certain conclusions, but also conjectural views from them, we offend against the very end for which only observations ought to be made."

To inquirers I would say, begin by laying carefully your foundations by studying well-evidenced facts, use your reasoning faculties to the full to sift the evidence and to coordinate the facts which seem to you proven, then reflect upon them in such a way as may enable you to recognise the truths which these facts reveal concerning man's present being and future destiny; and if on many points you remain uncertain, be patient, do not hurry your judgments, grasp firmly assured facts and the conclusions which you are convinced may legitimately be drawn from these facts, and be contented to suspend your opinions on less certain matters.

An additional chapter has been added to the volume (p. 96) which may meet a difficulty not sufficiently dealt with in the previous issue.

August, 1916. H. A. DALLAS.
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INTRODUCTION

Some fifty years ago what is known as "Spiritualism" attracted much attention: within the last ten years, however, interest in all psychic subjects has enormously increased. This interest is largely due to the fact that men of known scientific and literary ability have ranked themselves, if not as Spiritualists, at least as students of spiritualistic phenomena, and not a few have frankly avowed their belief in the reality of the manifestations which Spiritualists have so long affirmed.

To many religious minds this subject is very unwelcome, and indeed altogether distasteful, mainly because it is regarded as subversive of long-cherished beliefs, and also as morally and physically dangerous. On this account many of the most earnest and spiritual minds shun the subject and advise others to do the same. Briefly, they fear it. But is this attitude a justifiable one?

If these facts and these strange faculties exist in God's universe, they must exist in man's universe also; sooner or later each one of us must be brought into line with facts, must acknowledge their reality and include them in our mental survey. No scheme of the universe which man may conceive can permanently retain his belief, if it can only hold together and appear reasonable by dint of ignoring facts which exist in the scheme of the Creator.

I propose to consider in the following pages two charges brought against the study of Spiritualism, namely, that it is subversive of cherished beliefs, and that it is dangerous. I desire to show why the subversive character of the subject
need not seriously disquiet us, inasmuch as it is only a "removal of those things that can be shaken, in order that those things which cannot be shaken" may be the more firmly established; that Spiritualism is really a constructive, not destructive study, and that insufficient knowledge has led to exaggerated notions as to the extent to which it is subversive. I wish also to point out what are some of the dangers involved in the study, and to suggest how they may be avoided; also to deal separately with other objections felt by many seriously-minded persons with respect to the methods employed in the experimental study of Spiritualism.

Readers must not expect to find in this little book any arguments or evidence to prove the spiritualistic origin of either the communications or the phenomena referred to. This evidence must be sought elsewhere: it is quite beyond the scope of this small work to deal with it. My object is not to prove that these communications and physical effects have a supra-physical origin, but to remove, if possible, certain preliminary difficulties which hinder serious persons at the very outset from giving to the subject the attention which it deserves.

At the end of the volume will be found a prayer, written automatically through the hand of a well-known non-professional medium, which beautifully expresses the spirit in which the study of a subject of this sort should be approached by all who desire to know the truth, and through the truth to draw nearer to God Himself.
Experienced investigators will find nothing new in this book. Although the best solution, the only adequate solution, of difficulties is, of course, to be sought in study and experience, there are some questions which so long as they remain quite unanswered, stand in the way, and prevent the initiation of the study, and block the road by which experience might be gained and perplexities be removed. By personal intercourse, as well as by personal experience, one learns to recognise these difficulties, and sincerely to sympathise with those who are hindered by them from welcoming the psychic development which, they reluctantly admit, claims their attention and which they half fear has come to stay, but which seems to them so strange, so subversive of preconceived opinions that they are tempted to postpone to the very last the admission of its truth. It is for these I am writing, and not for those who having advanced in this study have already found that the subversion of their own imaginings has been but a preliminary step towards the discovery of "worlds not realised," and that they have exchanged a small, concise scheme of the universe for a glimpse into a stupendous, transcendently great one.
"The house is not for me, it is for Him;  
His royal thoughts require many a stair,  
Many a tower, many an outlook fair,  
Of which I have no thought and need no care.  
Where I am most perplexed it may be there  
Thou mak’st a secret chamber, holy, dim,  
Where Thou wilt come to help my deepest prayer.” ¹

Those who have not yet caught a glimpse of this, fear and shrink from the new channels to knowledge which the Great Evolver is making in and through the psychic faculties, and are utterly at a loss as to how to adjust the new thought to the old. *Adjustment*, that is what they feel the need of. Precisely the same sort of difficulty was felt when Charles Darwin sprang upon the world his new theory of creation by evolution. There was the same shrinking; there was a sense of repulsion, and much fear lest the theory of the origin of species was destined to lower man’s self-respect, to weaken his recognition of his own dignity as a spirit created in the Divine image. We remember how humorously Kingsley expressed this popular anxiety in "The Water Babies." The ape *could* not have an "hippopotamus major in its brain; if it were so, what would become of the faith and hope of millions?" Anxiety is now felt by many, scarcely less acutely. It seems to them that if the after-life is at all like what the messages which purport to come across the border indicate, and if communication can be held with the Departed by the methods which Spiritualists proclaim, then much that has been cherished as sacred can no longer be believed, and they fear the effect which this revolution of thought may have on "the faith and hope of millions."

It is true that the communications that come through

¹ George MacDonald.
the faculties of psychics do, in some degree, contradict the opinions that have been popularly held concerning the condition of souls after death; and in some other directions the teachings of Spiritualism alter the perspective in which truths have been hitherto seen, and modify prevalent opinions. This is hardly what we should anticipate if these teachings originated entirely subjectively, in the minds of the persons through whom they come. But if they are indeed messages from "beyond" it seems likely that they should contain surprises. Is it probable that further revelations should simply ratify the speculations of men concerning the future, and confirm all their opinions on matters of religion? The history of the past would not lead us to expect that it should be so. The revelation of the kingdom of God which came to Israel in Christ certainly revolutionised the previous conceptions of devout Jews. It was subversive of former expectations and ideals to an extent we can hardly realise.

Apocalyptic literature, as well as the teaching of the prophets, shows how grand an ideal of the Messianic kingdom was cherished by the Jewish nation. It was not merely an earthly kingdom of material splendour on which its hope was set, but a great divinely constituted kingdom, in which King Messiah, as vicegerent of the Almighty, should "rule in righteousness," not over Israel alone but over many peoples who should render to Him willing obedience, saying: "Come, let us go up unto the House of the Lord, and He shall teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths." "Sinners should be converted unto Him"; "the wicked should be deprived of power"; "the earth would be full of the glory of the Lord"; and the centre whence this glory would issue would be the beloved city, the seat of the house of David.
This wide-spread kingdom would be a Hebrew kingdom at the core.

It was a grand ideal; and Saul of Tarsus felt justified in making war upon all that seemed to threaten its permanence in the hearts of his countrymen. For was it not the best and highest ideal he could then see? And was he not filled with zeal for God when he concentrated his energies upon stamping out the new doctrine of the Nazarene which tended, as he believed, to subvert this ideal, and to alter its character? He truly thought that thus he did service not only to God but to Humanity; for the setting up of the throne of Messiah at Jerusalem was to be a blessing to the ends of the earth. But the day came when there "fell from his eyes as it had been scales," and he saw that the Hope of the world was a larger one than he had imagined and that the Messianic Kingdom was moulded on a greater plan than he had ever caught a glimpse of; and he obediently and joyfully accepted the thought of God instead of his own thought, and the way of God in place of his own way, even though this acceptance involved the crumbling to pieces of much that he had regarded as sure, and much around which his affections had entwined themselves.

If, then, we apply this past experience to the present, we shall expect to find that any new discovery of truth concerning the ways of God and the spiritual world, will involve the disturbance of many previous expectations, and necessitate the re-adjustment of our mental conceptions.

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ON THE OTHER SIDE.

The first thing that causes surprise to a new inquirer is the discovery that different views concerning religion, etc., are expressed in the communications received. This
is perplexing to those who have been wont to think of death as inaugurating, for the just at least, so great a change that faith would be “lost in sight,” and uncertainty on matters of this nature would be exchanged for certainty. The subversive character of this discovery, if it deprives us of a certain satisfaction, has a compensating benefit of great value; it affords a profound stimulus to spiritual endeavour, and teaches us not to depend on change of circumstance for that growth in knowledge which can only be effected by spiritual development.

If we consider the matter seriously, we shall recognise that the lack of continuity in human development which would be involved in a sudden exchange of ignorance for knowledge, and uncertainty for certainty, would render unnecessary the virtue of faith, and thus is not in harmony with the revelation of God’s ways in Nature. Our life here is so ordered as to bring into constant exercise this great virtue. The soul “lives by faith”; “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Is it reasonable to suppose that a spiritual quality which ennobles the soul so greatly, which it has been the work of a lifetime to cultivate, which is so carefully developed by the Divine Educator during this preliminary stage of existence, can have no further value after death, no scope and no exercise in the spiritual life beyond? The messages from the other side certainly do not support this notion. They indicate that the progressing soul triumphs there, as here, by the increasing steadfastness and growing perfection of its faith; so far from faith being lost in sight, faith is indeed the “substance of things hoped for,” making God and spiritual truths so assured to the trusting soul that it requires no further proof of their reality.¹

But faith is not perfected at once by the event of death;

¹ Heb. xi. i.
for faith, in its broadest sense, is that faculty whereby the things of the Spirit, the things of God, are known and apprehended, the faculty whereby truth is grasped by the consciousness, and fed upon by the affections and will. And when we consider that this is so, we must recognise that truth can only be gradually received by the soul, for the measure of apprehension of truth which each individual may have can only be in exact ratio to his own development. It is so in the physical sphere. No man can see more of his environment than his optic organ is fitted to receive. If that is defective in anyone, much which exists, and is seen by others, will be invisible to him; and the same applies to the faculty of hearing.

Herbert Spencer has defined life as the "adjustment of inner relations to outer relations." This definition is equally applicable to life in its higher phases as to life on the physical plane. The life, "which is life indeed," is a product of the adjustment of the inner spiritual faculties to the outer spiritual environment, Who is the Eternal Truth, in Whom we "live and move and have our being." It is not in line with the process of evolution to expect this adjustment to be effected by some abrupt incident in our history; by a mere shock or change of conditions. We always find that growth is gradual; a crisis may seem to produce a sudden change, but the change is always found to be the result of a gradual process which has been preparing the inner relations to adjust themselves to the outer. A birth is such an apparent crisis, but we know that it is really only the climax of gradual changes and that the new-born has previously passed, stage by stage, through "every phase of ever-heightening life." It is, therefore, quite in accordance with reason and with the revelation of God’s ways that we should find that the event of death does not, of itself, make truth obvious and
inform the soul that has been ignorant. Death introduces us into a new phase of existence, and doubtless that phase is full of possibilities of acquiring deeper and fuller knowledge. Our faculties will find abundant scope, but we can only apprehend truth by the growth of these faculties, and they will not be galvanised into spasmodic activity, they must develop within the soul by its own spiritual energising, by steadfast will and ceaseless aspiration; that is our part—to push our desires Godwards, out and up, intensely, but not impatiently, knowing that the greatest things always develop slowly. So wonderful a creation as the soul of man, a seed begotten of God in His own image, may take measureless time to come to maturity, since maturity involves nothing less than the complete adjustment of its inner capacities to the perfect capacities of the Infinite Being to whom it is related. We must not be impatient, since God waits.

Truth can only be known within the spirit. On the inner surface of the individual soul is a mirror on which is projected the Invisible Reality, the truth of God, Whom “no man hath seen or can see.” In the Kabbalah we are told that the soul possesses two kinds of powers (1) ordinary knowledge, and (2) extraordinary knowledge, which is called a “luminous mirror;” and when the soul “reaches that place which is called the treasury of life, she enjoys a bright and luminous mirror which receives its light from the highest heaven.” Until that luminous mirror is polished to give back perfectly those rays from “the highest heaven,” our knowledge of truth must be partial only, and different individuals will reflect it differently and in differing degrees. The mirror is not rendered capable of reflecting merely by some change of position, such as death makes, but by a long spiritual process which is begun, indeed on earth, but only begun,
OBJECTIONS TO SPIRITUALISM

and which is continued in the various stages of progress through which each soul wins its way to the perfection of God.

It follows from this that any teachings from those who have passed through death and who are still progressing, and are at very various stages of progress, must necessarily differ greatly, and can only be partial revelations of truth; they cannot claim to be final and complete.

If there is thus no infallibility to be looked for in these communications, are they then valueless? We do not ask this question concerning the teachers who speak to us on earth from pulpit or in lecture hall, and it is quite as unreasonable to ask it with respect to teachers from the other side. But the question, "Cui bono?" will often be suggested in the latter case when it would not be in the former. The messages from the other side must be estimated in the same way as the teachings we receive on this. When thus received they are instructive, they are stimulating; they give us occasionally glimpses of rare value into the conditions of spirit life, into the laws which govern spirit. These glimpses endorse the doctrine of the continuity of the Cosmos; spirit is spirit whether incarnate or discarnate; and these messages teach us gradually to apprehend the homogeneity of the universe. They give us intimations also as to the faith that abides and the opinions that alter, as to tendencies which persist unchanged, and conditions which may be deciduous and quickly disappear.

What is suggested in these communications is sometimes of more value than what is definitely stated; side lights are thus thrown on perplexing problems, and principles may be discerned of great educational value.

For instance, we gather from these communications
that those who in earthly life have cast their thoughts in a rigid mould, and have been indisposed to entertain new ideas, retain after death the thought-forms they have had in this life, and retain also the unreceptive, unelastic habit of mind. This has to be outgrown before, mentally, they can make progress. The soul may progress in moral qualities, but may long remain unprogressive in its mental apprehension of truth. We know this to be so by experience in this life, and the laws of spirit are continuous. On the other hand, a mind that has overcome its prejudices and opened free channels to knowledge in this stage of its education, may quickly gain after death the apprehension of truths which circumstances made inaccessible to it whilst in the body. This is an idea full of suggestiveness and full of hope; showing us how many that are first may be last and the last first—how the man whose circumstances made it well-nigh or quite impossible for him to be other than a heathen or an agnostic in this life, may, when access to further truth is brought within his reach, advance by leaps and bounds into the glory of a grander revelation; whilst the man who has been brought up in the very midst of a greater revelation may make little progress if he has encased his mind in a wall of dogmatic prejudice and rendered it unreceptive to new ideas.

"What He says to each one of us is, 'If thou wilt have any good, take it from within thyself.'" ¹

"To him that hath shall be given."

Which may be paraphrased thus: To him who has cultivated his receptivity and desire for truth, not his truth but God's truth, whether that truth be agreeable to his own opinion or not, upon him truth will shine; he will draw down no blinds, and close no shutters; thus

¹ Epictetus, quoted in Hatch, "Hibbert Lectures," 1888.
he will be ready to benefit by the new opportunities which change of circumstances may afford.

Death is a change of circumstances—that is all. Every soul whose inner faculties are developed will find in change of circumstances new opportunities, but an undeveloped and prejudiced soul does not know how to use opportunities either here or there.
CHAPTER II

IS SPIRITUALISM DANGEROUS?

This is one of the questions which confront many persons at the outset of their inquiries into this subject. "Is it not dangerous," they ask, "both physically and morally, to investigate Spiritualism experimentally?"

Certainly there are some dangers attendant on this investigation; all great developments have their accompanying risks. The development of psychic powers involves the exercise of new and untried faculties; and the evolution of new faculties, in the race or in the individual, is generally accompanied by a condition of nervous instability. Fresh developments are exciting and unsettling, and the individual, partly on account of inexperience and partly owing to the instability which accompanies growth, is liable to be controlled by, instead of controlling, these unknown forces. It is so in physical development and it is also the case in psychical unfoldment. The consciousness of power to exercise faculties and ignorance as to their true ends, or how to use them wisely, is always a dangerous condition and one liable to prove injurious. But if the danger signal is used too freely the result may be to paralyse action; and this also is injurious. Frequently persons do not scruple to produce spiritual timidity, although they would readily recognise that to stimulate physical timidity would be unworthy of their manhood. In physical matters we brand as cowardice the caution which would withhold a
man from taking advantage of opportunities to gain fresh knowledge, or to explore new territory, and yet it is not always recognised that to act in a similar way with regard to things spiritual may be equally unworthy.

If Spiritualism involves an exercise of powers inherent in the race, if it offers opportunity for development, if it opens a door for exploration into new realms of existence, to relinquish these prospects from fear of the possible risks involved, betrays unworthy timidity. That there are dangers I do not wish to deny; and it is not everyone who is justified in encountering these dangers, or is fitted to do so. Everyone is not called to open up fresh territory as an explorer, either in physical regions or psychical. I am not maintaining that psychic investigations should be pursued by all, regardless of their physical, and mental, and moral qualifications—very far from it, but I wish to emphasise the fact that every fresh development serviceable to man has been accompanied by dangers peculiarly its own; so that special risks have to be met in connection with fresh experiences; and they should be met courageously.

The crisis of birth is dangerous; falling in love is dangerous; the experiences of motherhood are dangerous; and of the partaking of sacraments it is written in the Book of Common Prayer that "the danger is great, if we receive the same unworthily." To secure ourselves against possibility of incurring danger would mean to stunt growth. If we are instigated by right motives to undertake this investigation, our duty is to put aside fear; and whilst recognising fully the possible risks, to meet them with discretion and, above all, with that serious sense of the greatness of life, with that high purpose and prayerful spirit which will enable us to pass unscathed through danger or temptation.
Anyone who from physical or moral infirmity is unable to grip himself, whose mental balance is not sound, is not in a fit condition to undertake his own psychical development. An investigator in this region requires a large fund of healthy common-sense; and must be able to exercise full self-control and a sound judgment: otherwise he may damage, not himself only, but the cause which his investigations should promote. A normally healthy person who has a firm will and is self-controlled, will, on the other hand, be likely to derive benefit himself, as well as to do good service in this work.

For work it is. Let no one suppose that his psychic gifts are bestowed mainly for his own pleasure. Their main end and object is not even to administer consolation to the bereaved—although that is one purpose that they may serve; the revelation of man's inherent capacities and the opening up of intercourse with another sphere of existence are destined to serve a larger purpose than this. In theological language that purpose would be called the “Glory of God,” a term often little understood, but one which includes the development of the human race to the full measure of the divine capacities with which it has been begotten of God. That man may know all that he is destined to know, may reach up to the height of his perfect stature, and thus by the exercise of every latent faculty may gradually become in full realisation all that he is capable of being—this, and nothing less than this, is the purpose for which every individual of the race holds in trust his various powers. To keep this purpose in view would be to obviate many “dangers.”

The objection that “it is dangerous” might with plausibility have been brought as an argument against the admission of the Gentiles into participation in the fellowship of Jewish Christians. It is difficult for us
now to do justice to the force of the reasoning which must have weighed with the Jewish Christians who were opposed to St. Paul's doctrine of liberty. When we remember that some of these new converts were citizens of Corinth, a city of such bad repute that "to Corinthianise" became a term denoting evil living; and when we note how the sins of the heathen were liable to reappear in the Christian community, we can hardly be surprised if some of the Jews, who had lived strictly according to the Mosaic law, regarded as "dangerous" this free admittance of Gentiles to intercourse and religious fellowship with those who had passed into the Christian Church through the severer moral training of Judaism. "Would not this intercourse prove dangerous to the young?" some Jewish parent may have anxiously asked. "Would not the Christian Church lose in purity and elevation of tone even if it gained in breadth and in numbers?" It must have seemed very doubtful wisdom to thus break down the barriers, and they might well have exclaimed: "Let the Gentiles become followers of Christ, but let them submit also to the discipline of the Mosaic law, which proved so good a schoolmaster to the Jew."

It was perhaps under the influence of some such reasoning as this that St. Peter separated himself from intimate fellowship with the Gentiles, when "certain Jews" came to Antioch from St. James. But St. Paul "withstood him to the face," and we are now reaping the benefit of the battle he so bravely fought for Christian liberty.

The dangers which this enlargement of intercourse would involve had to be encountered, for the barriers between Jew and Gentile were broken down by God, and St. Paul saw this clearly, and knew that any attempt to
raise them would be a futile resistance to the evolving purpose of the Eternal. The position has its parallel for those who believe that intercourse between the inhabitants of the Seen and the Unseen spheres of life is now becoming more widely possible; these dare not resist the evolutionary purpose of God through any fear of consequences.

Enlargement of the sphere of intercourse necessarily involves moral risks. It was the recognition of this which drove the hermits into the deserts: they sought to avoid both the responsibilities and risks of possible contamination, which must be met in the society of their fellow-men. The attraction of the monastic life has lain largely in the protection that it has afforded against the manifold temptations involved in extended intercourse. The child leaving home for school life; the man entering on a professional career; the traveller and the colonist, all have to face risks, physical and moral, consequent on widening their range of intercourse, and when a man begins to use his psychic faculties and to push his intercourse with his fellow beings across the border into the Unseen, it does not necessarily follow that he will be ennobled thereby. He enlarges his sphere of fellowship, and in doing so he increases his possibilities for good or for evil. The wider experience may prove to be a source of enrichment mentally and morally, or it may prove to be the reverse; for in that unseen region there exist spirits in all stages of development, as there do here. It is possible to get into communication with the elevated, the refined, the pure, and it is possible also to open up communication with the commonplace, the ignorant, and the immoral.

But as, in this world, a pure and loving soul may mix with the impure and the frivolous and, without personal contamination, become to them a salutary influence, so
any one who seeks to communicate across the border, whilst he desires the highest, should not on that account refuse sympathy to some unhappy soul who may desire to speak with him. To parley with such as these from curiosity may be very dangerous, but if we wish to influence them for good and help them up to higher life we need not be alarmed if some unhappy soul comes into communication with us. It should be borne in mind, however, that it is not every upright person that is fitted to do rescue work. Intercourse with those who are obviously on a low level should be very warily engaged in, and only by taking prayerful counsel with the Spiritual Guide who speaks within the soul to each individuality: "This is the way: walk ye in it." Two principles should rule our intercourse: love and strength. Without love and without strength also, the soul is never safe in any society, whether that society be incarnate or discarnate.

If the effect of Spiritualism is not to level up, it will level down. It is "set for the fall and rising of many." It may raise, it has raised, but if it is not used as a stepping-stone by which to rise to a higher level, it will prove a "stone of stumbling."

If a man or woman who exercises a lowering influence, and who is foolish and frivolous in social relations, attempts to open up intercourse with the spirit world, what result can be expected? Those who are likely to respond will be those who are in the same moral condition. This extension of intercourse can hardly be otherwise than worthless, and it may be positively degrading.

Sometimes a salutary warning from Beyond will be given, and wholesome truth will be spoken even under these circumstances, but it is not likely to be heeded by the recipient.
Those, however, who with serious purpose enter into communication with discarnate spirits, may find that all intercourse gains a deeper significance for them, since it may help them to realise that all intercourse is spirit intercourse; that the men and women we meet at entertainments or in business are as truly spirits now as those who have passed through death; that if it is a serious thing to talk with, and be influenced by, and to influence, the "Dead," it is not less serious a matter to be influenced by, and to exert this influence upon, those still in the flesh. "We are spirits clad in veils." Life is an earnest thing now: for now is in eternity. It does not require any artificial sanctity to make spirit intercourse a great and a noble responsibility. Christ came to reveal the sacredness of what we call common life; Spiritualism enforces this truth, teaching us that nothing is of itself "common or unclean," that "every bush is afire with God"; that if we would be worthy of the great gift of life, here or hereafter, we must ourselves cease to be commonplace. Blindness to reality, and a low estimate of the relations of life, this it is that causes spirit intercourse to be dangerous, whether that intercourse extend into the Unseen or is limited to the Seen.
CHAPTER III

"WHEREIN LIE THE DANGERS?"

Sir William Barrett has pointed out one of the risks which psychical experimenters should be on their guard against:

"Evil as well as good agencies doubtless exist in the unseen; this is equally true if the phenomena are or are not due to those who have once lived on earth. In many cases, granting the existence of a spiritual world, it is necessary to be on our guard against the invasion of our will by a lower order of intelligence and morality. The danger lies, in my opinion, not only in the loss of spiritual stamina, but in the possible disintegration of our personality, in the liability to lose that birthright we each are given to cherish, our individuality, our true selfhood. . . . Our life on earth appears to be, on the one hand, the upbuilding, strengthening, and perpetuating of our separate and distinct personalities; and, on the other, the awakening and development, in each, of the consciousness of an underlying Unity, which links each person into a larger personal life common to all, 'in whom we live and move and have our being'; in a word, the realisation of the fact that we are integral parts and members of one Body. In so far as Spiritualism aids or thwarts these objects its moral effect must be judged; like mysticism, I think it aids the latter, but is apt to endanger the former." ¹

Because there is this possible danger to the integrity of the personal ego, those who are deficient in self-control, and who know that their wills are weak, would do wisely to avoid experiment, and to concentrate their efforts

¹ "Necromancy and Ancient Magic in Relation to Spiritualism." By W. F. Barrett.
upon acquiring greater centralisation, and consolidating the too fluidic forces of their own personality; otherwise the passivity required for successful experiments may render them liable to "invasion." The attitude of passivity must be balanced by the force of a firm egoism (not egotism). The ego must be capable of asserting its own supremacy at any moment, in order to alter the conditions or to break off the experiment if need be.

A state of passivity need not preclude this vigilance of the will; the will may be functioning as a warden of the integrity of the personality, and may be also operating to maintain the condition of mental passivity necessary for the experiment.

In support of this statement I may refer to an article by Dr. Milne Bramwell,¹ in which he quotes a statement of Mr. Myers to the effect that in the hypnotic trance, "while the subject has gained increased power over his own organism he has not at the same time lost his volition," and he then proceeds to quote other authorities whose experiments indicate that the will of the subject does not cease to function in the hypnotic trance.

"In one of these," he says, "the patient refused to awake after a disagreeable post-hypnotic suggestion had been given. Another under similar circumstances, rather than fulfil the suggestion, passed from the alert to the deep stage of hypnosis." Dr. Bramwell states that his own experiences point to the same conclusion.

Hence we may fairly deduce that to be in a condition of passivity, even in trance, does not necessarily involve the impotency of the will. The degree in which the will is operative in the passive state will probably depend largely on the degree of its efficiency in the normal state. A person who does not normally exert his will, will

¹ "Proceedings" S.P.R., December, 1896, pp. 246-251
presumably be less able to exercise it in the passive state. Psychical experiment is a means by which the inner conditions of the personality are revealed—it does not create or determine those conditions.

A case in point may be found in a book called, "The Dangers of Spiritualism." It is the first case cited, and although ostensibly it is used to prove the dangers of experimental investigation, it shows, in my opinion, the benefit which may in some cases result from experiments, by proving that practical investigation may make a man aware of the source of influences, whose danger lies largely in the fact that their source is often unrecognised. In this case the subject, "P. F.", discovered by automatic writing that he was in contact with an evilly-minded discarnate intelligence, a man who, when in the flesh, had a grudge against him, and whose controlling influence was most undesirable. He learned, moreover, by the writing that for two years this personality had been connected with him:

"P. F.' declared that numerous incidents and occurrences throughout the past two years of his life, which had often puzzled him, were now fully explained. He told me that, contrary to his natural religious temperament and disposition, thoughts had occasionally rushed through his mind the malice of which had quite startled him, and that temptations to which he had all his life been a stranger had again and again been suggested to him. He freely admitted that he had not always resisted these temptations, that he had frequently neglected his accustomed religious duties, and that his moral tone (and all this his family subsequently admitted) had become decidedly lowered."

This intelligence wrote through his hand:

"I have tried all I could to gain control of him, and very nearly had possession. Do pray that I may become happier, and also that I may leave him. . . . I shall be losing my power when his own will becomes stronger. Keep a careful
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watch over him for a time, and do pray for me—a wretched sinner... I am unable at present to leave him entirely. He must exercise his power of will to resist me! Pray for me!"

After some further experiences it is added:—

"'P. F.' soon regained his good health and spirits, and now the memory only of these extraordinary occurrences remains with us."

I have cited this case at length because it illustrates the fact that the mind is liable to be invaded by evil influences quite independently of psychic experiments. There is no intimation that during the two years in which "P. F.," believed himself to have been under influence there had been any attempt at experiment; indeed, we are told that he had no definite knowledge whatever of spiritistic phenomena. It seems, then, that in this case the experiments were the means of showing to him both the weakness of his will and the source of the temptations that had assailed him. This instance might be labelled:—

The benefit of spiritualistic experiment," and it emphasises the valuable truth that it is only by individual self-control that anyone can avoid the dangers involved in normal existence; for normally we are compassed by a host of influences—good, bad, and indifferent—which are continually impinging upon our mental and moral atmosphere, and perfect safety in the universe is only to be found by keeping in touch with the Highest. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

Does this seem alarming? Ought life to make us afraid? Most assuredly it ought not. The burden of Christ's message, and the appeal of all God's great messengers, have ever been: "Fear not." It is "the fearful and unbelieving" who can find no resting-place
in the city of God. It does teach us, however, wherein consists the danger or the safety of the soul; that we cannot hope to escape danger simply by avoiding psychic experiment; and that the moral danger may be greater for the man who shuns investigation than for the man who seriously investigates.

The internal proclivities of the soul will determine the extent of its moral security or moral peril. External conditions may stimulate and co-operate with internal conditions; they cannot create or reverse them.

In the above instance there is reason to hope that benefit accrued from the investigation, not only to "P. F.," but also to his "control," who showed evident tokens of desire for prayer and for improvement. It seems as if the discovery of the bad effects which his influence was producing quickened some compunctions, since we are told that he begged them to pray that he might be able to leave his victim.

Another case given in this book is also instructive, and I will briefly refer to it.

The value of the story which is cited after that of "P. F.," depends on the credibility of the narrator, and as his mental condition was, on his own showing, abnormal and morbid, one feels that he is hardly a competent witness, and that considerable allowance must be made for the imaginations of an unhealthy mind. As it stands, however, the case contains its own moral. It is stated that after carrying on telepathic communication with a friend (still in the flesh) for a fortnight, he was startled to find his pencil suddenly writing language and making drawings of a shocking description. This continued for some time until, "after a while," he stopped it and retired to bed, where he was still haunted by the evil imaginations which had been suggested to him.
One naturally asks: Why did he not stop the writing when the first sentence of this kind was legible? Sound moral sense and common-sense would alike suggest this course of action. The man who could continue to let these suggestions express themselves unchecked, and only "after a while" put a stop to them, must have been lamentably deficient in both. Let anyone who is thus lacking beware of embarking on the experimental exercise of his psychic faculties; but let him beware of the perils that will beset the use of his physical faculties also.

A third case also carries with it the obvious lesson that excessive exercise of the psychic faculty is quite as deleterious physically, and perhaps more deleterious spiritually than other excesses. Excess in any direction, involving as it does overstrain and loss of self-poise, must be injurious. The results are often seen in professional life in a "break-down," sometimes accompanied by recourse to opiates and stimulants. Excess in the use of all or any faculty is a danger to the moral being as well as to the physical; whether this danger is greater in the use of the pyschical faculty than in the use of the intellectual and physical, is open to question. It is unquestionably true, however, that there is danger when these sensitive psychic faculties are unduly strained, and this point should be clearly emphasised by all who offer advice to beginners.

"Let him that striveth for the mastery be temperate in all things." Only by a temperate, moderate use of our forces can we become their master and make them serve a high and useful purpose.
CHAPTER IV

DO THE DEAD KNOW OF EARTH’S SORROWS?

COMMUNICATIONS from the Beyond force upon our notice the fact that death does not necessitate a removal from earth to such a degree as to prevent the discarnate from knowing a great deal concerning the life and doings of those still in the flesh. This, of course, is not at all a surprise to many, but in the minds of some it raises a difficulty. They say: “We do not wish to think that those we love can still be aware of what befalls us, for in that case they must know of our sorrows, and how then can they be happy?” That they do know of our sorrows is certain to those who accept the messages that purport to come from beyond as authentic; and more than this, it is obvious that our trials and our joys attract their active sympathy. If this is so it is hardly conceivable that they can be in absolute, unalloyed bliss whilst those they love are passing through mental agony or spiritual loss.

We do not, however, avoid this difficulty by supposing that they know nothing of our state, for it is only persons of undeveloped imagination and small sympathies who could find unalloyed bliss on account of simple ignorance of the conditions of those they love. Unless all memory of earthly life is abolished, the spirits set free from “the body of this death” must be aware that those left in the flesh are living in a state in which trial and temptation,
and possible suffering and sin, are inevitably present, and knowing this, if their love is still active, and even more active than on earth, how could it console them merely to be ignorant in detail concerning the kind of trials or temptations that beset their loved ones? What should we think of a mother, here on earth, who could declare herself absolutely happy whilst her son was engaged on active service, her peace of mind being due to ignorance as to whether, or not, he was at that time lying wounded on a battlefield? Could the mere chance that he might not be so cause her to be light-hearted? And if it did, would that not indicate poverty of soul and an absence of the quality of sympathetic imagination which would be pitiable, not enviable, a loss, not a gain?

Thus, the difficulty, if it is a difficulty, is not obviated by assuming that the departed are ignorant of our conditions. Those who assume this would probably believe that mankind is not without the ministry of angels, and many of them would acknowledge that Christ knows our sorrows; so the same difficulty must confront them in relation to Christ and the angels, if they refuse to consider it in relation to the departed. How is it to be met?

First, by recognising that to be in a state of joy is not incompatible with consciousness of sorrow. In words it seems to be so, in fact it is not. Christ on the eve of His passion, when the shadow of the Cross loomed dark before Him, so that He exclaimed, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," could yet bestow upon His friends, with deep significance, His own peace, and tell them that His desire for them was that they should have His joy in them. "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may be in you" (lit. "The joy that is in Mine") "and that your joy may be fulfilled." God Himself participates in our sorrows, and yet joy is the very atmos-
phere of the Divine life, and we are told that the "joy of the Lord is our strength."

These things are only to be understood by experience, not by reasoning: but the fact has to be stated in language, for it affords the clue to the perplexity we are here considering. The higher the spirit, the more it approaches to the likeness of Christ, the more will the note of joy vibrate through all its experiences. The growth of faith and hope and love in the soul involves necessarily the growth of joy. And that joy is the strength of the soul. It affords a strength great enough to enable the spirit to participate, by sympathy, in the sorrows of those who are yet in the valley of shadows, to feel their sorrows as its own, and yet to rejoice in the great Goodness and Love in which it apprehends that all things are working together for good. "To those who are good to Me, I am good, and to those who are not good to Me, I am good: and thus all get to be good."¹

Those who live in this belief are strong in "the joy of the Lord."

But over on that other side there are, as has been pointed out, souls in all stages of progress. Many have not yet reached to this height where joy is strength, and these are probably more liable to be disturbed by their association with the sorrows of those they love on earth. But if they do feel our sorrows as shadowing in some degree their own possibilities of happiness, this is doubtless a further discipline for them, and a means of spiritual purification and progress, and it should also be to us a motive of incalculable force urging us to shun all that could cause them pain, and to control the mourning at their departure which is too much concerned with our own seeming loss, and too apt to make us forget their gain. It surely would do much

to produce a healthy, holy peace in the hearts of those who have closed the bodily eyes of their loved ones, if they believed that by abandoning themselves to grief they were disturbing the peace of the souls they love; that by lifting up their hearts in the assurance that there is no death, that their friends are alive as ever, even more alive when free from the bondage of the flesh—that by embracing this assurance the bonds that knit the souls that love each other are riveted tighter, and that by sympathy in the glad experiences of the newly liberated spirit, we can indeed pass beyond the veil and be with them in a communion far closer than is possible to those who allow their spiritual energies to be absorbed in grief.

"I do not bid thee now farewell—
A prayer unmeet for life like thine;
With thy beloved in heaven I dwell,
And thy beloved on earth are mine:
My heart with them and theirs with thee,
How canst thou, dear one, distant be?" ¹

But if it is still felt intolerable to conceive of the departed as affected by the sorrows and sins of those on earth, one can but reflect that much may seem to us intolerable and very different from our desires, which is nevertheless in God’s scheme of human development, and a necessary part in our training. If we had been consulted as to the government of the universe we should have eliminated all possibility of the innocent suffering for the guilty, both in this state of being and in every other. But our ways are not God’s ways; and even our purblind eyes can see that the world would have lost by this omission its most potent means of apprehending the solidarity of the race and its most divine expression of the beauty of love. For it is because we are so welded together as inevitably to

¹ Anne Letitia Waring
affect each other for good or for evil, that sympathy and self-sacrifice are possible. The sacrifice of our Master Christ is the highest product of the working of this law. It is a law which governs the whole universe as far as we know, but is more particularly manifest in the higher states of evolution, in the development of human spirits. If we find that it is also in active operation in the unseen sphere where the soul is educated after death, what are we that we should cavil at the ordinance of God, or dispute the wisdom which by these means has produced such an ideal character as Jesus Christ, and who is bringing into the perfection of His beauty countless sons of God by the working out of the same great law?
CHAPTER V

DO THEY TELL US ANYTHING NEW?

One of the objections most frequently advanced against the spiritualistic explanation of communications that pur­port to come from beyond, is that they do not contain statements of anything which is altogether new. It is urged that if a departed spirit be permitted to return to communicate with those on earth, it is reasonable to expect that it will reveal to us new truths, whereas these messages, at their best, do but enjoin upon us duties already known, and speak of God and of the spiritual world in terms already familiar; moreover, the spirits do not give us any very definite description of their present en­vironment and mode of life. If they would describe the future life to us, or tell us some great truths hitherto un­dreamt of, or would instruct us how to remedy some of the great ills of life, then belief in the value of these communi­cations would be justified.

This fairly represents the objection which is felt, not by beginners only, but by those who have for some time been conversant with this subject.

The demand that communications from a higher sphere should necessarily contain new truths is, in my opinion, based on a fallacy. I am not now arguing that the com­munications do, or do not, contain new teaching, the point I desire to emphasise is that it is not a necessary qualifi­cation of a true and valuable revelation that it should impart altogether new facts.

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Precisely the same objection has been brought against the Christian revelation. Christ's teaching, it has been said, contains nothing so new that it cannot be paralleled in the writings of other great teachers. His name for God is the name under which the Divine Spirit was worshipped by our Aryan forefathers thousands of years before His advent. "Dyaus-Pitar," or the Heavenly Father, was adored and trusted by the writers of the Vedas long before Jesus Christ taught His disciples to say "Our Father which art in Heaven." Jesus could find no better or newer name than this by which to call the God He claimed to reveal. His great gospel, "One is your Father: and all ye are brethren," was not new in the sense that it had never been taught before. His "new" commandment, "That ye love one another," had been enjoined by Buddha five hundred years before: "Religion is nothing but the faculty of love;" "Let goodwill without measure... prevail throughout the world." Christ's sacraments were the appropriation and adaptation of customs already prevalent.

And yet those who have felt the force of the influence of the personality of Jesus Christ will be prepared to maintain that although He taught no new precept, and uttered no obviously novel truth, He has "made all things new" by irradiating old truths with new light, by bringing a greater sense of contact with God, and by spiritualising our perceptions. He has instilled a new and deeper significance into the words Love, Fatherhood, Sonship, Brotherliness, Communion, not by saying new things about them, but by realising them in His own experience, and by revealing them in Himself.

If anyone regards this sort of effect as of lower value than the imparting of new facts, it is not worth while to argue the point. Spiritual values must be spiritually
discerned; if the perceptive faculty is undeveloped no argument will supply the deficiency. It may be stated, however, without fear of contradiction, that the criterion by which the genuineness or value of a revelation should be estimated is not the question whether it does or does not introduce us to altogether novel ideas. If it can be shown that the teaching illuminates familiar conceptions so powerfully that they become alive with a new potency, and touch the souls of men into fuller and more earnest life; if it imparts a greater sense of worth to existence, and awakens a profounder consciousness of the dignity and responsibility of the human soul, and of the significance of its relation to God and to the universe; then we may fairly claim that it satisfies the requirements of a great revelation far better than if it merely announced some hitherto unheard-of fact. We have not yet half apprehended and assimilated the truths already imparted; what we chiefly need is "more light—more light," that we may possess ourselves of that which is already given.

I am not claiming for a moment to place the revelations of spirits on an equality with the revelation in the Christ, but I do claim that this development is a part of the whole process by which the hidden counsels of God are being revealed to mankind, and by which the human understanding is being educated to know and understand the truths in which from the beginning it has been rooted, but which we can only apprehend by the gradual unfolding and training of our spiritual faculties.

But some will assert that we might, at least, expect some definite information respecting the conditions of the future life from those who have passed into that state of existence. Those who have studied the messages carefully will admit that the hints concerning the conditions of that life which these messages contain are often
very valuable and suggestive, and do, in a large degree, alter the aspect both of the life after death and of our present relation to the departed. A marked, but subtle and almost inexpressible, change comes over our outlook; the proportion of things is changed; our intercourse with our fellows, our relation to the material world, our present as well as our future, are transformed by the new light that dawns on the student of these messages. The sense of newness is quite incommunicable; it has to be experienced to be understood. He who has experienced it knows that never again can the world, and death, and the Beyond wear for him the aspect they once wore. And yet it is quite true that no very definite statements or details about the other life are imparted in the messages. But the same might be said of the Gospel of Christ. The risen Master, when He stood visibly among His disciples, revealed no details concerning the life beyond. The very fact that He stood in their midst full of the same sympathy, with the same knowledge of their needs, and the same urgent desire that they should be the agents of His Gospel to the world, promising them His constant presence—this of itself reveals much to a thoughtful student concerning the conditions of the spiritual life of those in the Unseen; but He gave us no details. And many of us become quite content to accept what is imparted and to wait for further details when they can be intelligibly received. It is probable that if they were told to us now they would only be misleading; the conditions of that life must necessarily be in many respects very different, and it would probably be at least as difficult to give us an adequate description of the spirit spheres as it would be to explain to a South Sea Islander the character of the occupations and interests of a European philosopher or scientist.
It is, probably, for this reason that so much use is made in spirit communications of symbolism. The passage in which Mr. Myers deals with the use of symbolism in automatic messages, in his work on "Human Personality," ¹ should be studied in this connection. He points out that there is "no a priori ground for supposing that language will have the power to express all the thoughts and emotions of man." And if this is true of man in his present state how much more does it apply to man in another and more advanced state. With reference to automatic writings he says: "There is a certain quality which reminds one of a translation, or of the composition of a person writing in a language in which he is not accustomed to talk."

I quote these passages because they indicate more than one reason why it may be impossible to impart to us any very definite ideas of the character of the life beyond. The communicators are dealing with conditions for which human language, inadequate even to convey our present conceptions, is no fit channel, and they are communicating by a method which for them, in their present state, is abnormal and foreign; they are hampered by a difficulty akin to that felt by a man who should endeavour to translate his thoughts into an unfamiliar tongue. No doubt the latter difficulty can be largely overcome by practice, but the former cannot; therefore the communicators have recourse to symbolism to convey to our minds what words are inadequate to express. In using symbolism they appeal (as Mr. Myers points out) to the same faculty to which art appeals. The faculty is not, as we know, the intellectual faculty alone, but a blend of intellect with emotion, for which we have no exact definition; hence a larger part of our

¹ Vol. I., pp. 99, 100.
nature is invoked to interpret the language of symbols than is required to interpret the language of words.

With regard to the objection that communications from the Unseen might be expected to give us a panacea for the ills of life, a little careful reflection will convince us that God's method of education for man has always been adapted to stimulate his own efforts, not to supersede them; that discoveries, although doubtless often (perhaps always) inspired by the co-operating influence of discarnate intelligences, have always been the result of the output of the personal energy of the incarnate. We are being continually taught and influenced, and suggestions are constantly operating from the Unseen upon those in the seen world; and it is by this interaction, as Spiritualists believe, that so many discoveries have been made, and so many ills have been remedied. Occasionally some personal assistance is afforded, some knowledge imparted which helps us materially. When this is so we may accept it gratefully, but if we would derive the fullest benefit from it we shall value it, not chiefly for its material effects, but as a token of an immaterial blessing, as an outward sign that "the invisible world with us has sympathised," that we are loved and watched by unseen guardians who help us to help ourselves and to help others. When material assistance is thus given and received as a pledge of the conservation of spiritual sympathies, it serves its highest end.

But any discovery from the spirit world which would be calculated to render our own efforts and our own strenuous search for truth unnecessary, would be anything but a blessing to the race. The mystery of human solidarity is great. To St. Paul it was astounding to discover that the fellowship was so extensive that it
embraced the whole world, and that spiritual interaction and co-operation was a racial fact, not a national one only. To us it is astounding to realise that the race includes the great unseen majority; that we are mutually progressing, mutually helping or hindering each other's development; that our oneness is so complete that they cannot work for us without our co-operation, that we cannot go forward without theirs. St. Paul probably realised this, but for the most part we have lost sight of it. When we grasp this fact of human homogeneity, we shall not expect some divine or angelic interposition to do for us what we, by the divine grace and with angelic co-operation, must learn to do for ourselves. "The help that is done upon earth He doeth it Himself." We are "limbs of God," we are members one of another. When God moves He moves through us and in us, not instead of us; and His messengers work as He works, with us, through us, not instead of us.

1"Each one of us is, as it were, a limb of God with the potentiality of perfection, and gradually, through the experience of multiform error to be developed into the full exercise of spontaneous and joyous activity."—R. W. Corbet.
CHAPTER VI
PURPOSELESS PHENOMENA

There is a difficulty in connection with this subject which may be stated as follows:—

If the spirits of the departed manifest to those on earth, they can only do so by permission of Almighty God. If it is by Divine permission that this manifestation from the super-sensual breaks in upon the natural world, how is it that the phenomena are often so apparently meaningless and purposeless, and the messages so trivial? For instance, sometimes we are told that a spirit is seen in a particular locality by someone wholly disconnected with it, and the spirit appears to have no interest in showing itself to this person, and no result ensues of any consequence. Sometimes an event altogether without significance is foretold as about to occur, and it does occur, but seems too trifling to be worth notice; sometimes "messages" purporting to come from the spirit world are so ordinary that it is difficult to associate them with belief that the communications come by "Divine permission"; sometimes furniture is moved and physical actions are performed which seem below the dignity of spirit agents. How can these things be compatible with faith in a super-terrestrial existence and the action of a Supreme Ruler of the world?

I have stated the difficulty, not as I should have myself expressed it, but as very many feel it, and as
nearly as possible in the language in which I think they would wish it expressed.

But having done this for the purpose of showing how thoroughly I recognise their point of view, and understand the aspect the problem presents as seen from that point of view, I must take exception to the manner in which the words *natural* and *supernatural* are so often employed. The distinction, in my opinion, rests on a fallacy. Many a fallacy has been a necessary rung in the ladder by which we climb up out of the mists of illusion. This is such a rung: until we can recognise that the Spirit is all in all; that the Divine is the One and only reality, we must needs distinguish, if we are not materialists and if we believe in a spirit world at all, between the natural and the supernatural; when, however, the glorious truth of the Unity of God, and consequently the unity of His operations, ceases to be merely a theological dogma, passively accepted, and dawns upon the mind, as a light, illuminating and quickening consciousness, then the terms "natural" and "supernatural" drop out of use as having no longer any meaning. The method of God's operations which are not those most familiar to us we call *super-normal*, meaning that to us they are not normal, but recognising that they are wholly in accordance with Nature; for Nature is but the phenomenal manifestation of the Divine Order, the expression of the Wisdom who rules the Universe, not arbitrarily, but with perfect justice and order; the Wisdom who "passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness, . . . who, being but One, can do all things, . . . who reacheth from one end to another mightily; and sweetly doth order all things." ¹

It is essential to recognise this homogeneity of Nature,

¹ "Book of Wisdom." Chapter vii. 23, 27; viii., i.
and to include in Nature both the normal and the supernormal, if we are not to remain completely baffled by the questions I have here stated. If we do so, we then feel justified in interpreting the unknown by the known, the supernormal by the normal; and when we recognise in normal phenomena certain principles of the Divine working which, whilst they may be beyond our complete comprehension, are not contrary to our rational understandings, we can legitimately apply these principles to the interpretation of supernormal phenomena.

I will illustrate my meaning by a particular case.

Botanists are familiar with the phenomena which they term "freaks" in plant life. It will occasionally happen that the part of a flower which ought to develop as a stamen will become a petal, and vice versa. In a rose it is not unusual to see the staminal stem tipped by a pink petal instead of the usual pollen-bearing terminal. This "freak" is by "Divine permission"—necessarily so, for God is "all in all." The freak could not have occurred apart from the operation of that law which is His mode of working. The law by which the freak is possible is a significant and beautiful one: it shows us the essential unity of the life of the plant, since it proves that the parts are mutually convertible; and this unity of the plant-life is a miniature expression of a greater unity. One life is shown to be coursing through the organism of the plant, and to be capable of adapting and altering the functions of the various parts by virtue of its pervading energy.

In this fragment of Nature we catch a glimpse of the Oneness of the Unseen Life immanent in the Great Whole, converting, transforming, adapting and binding all together by participation in One Spirit. Tennyson must have felt something of this when he wrote:—
"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What are you, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

Freaks in Nature are not, therefore, useless and purposeless occurrences; they occur by "Divine permission"; they are the product of the One Life which is working out by law its own self-manifestation. But if we do not regard them from this larger scientific standpoint, freaks in Nature are difficult to reconcile with any theory of Divine permission. It would seem trivial to suppose that a particular mandate, independent of the ordinary working of the Divine Will in the order of Nature, determined the transformation of a stamen into a petal. This would indeed seem a purposeless exercise of Divine control.

Belief in the homogeneity of Nature justifies us in applying this reasoning to much of the phenomena of Spiritualism. Many of these, which seem purposeless when viewed from a narrow basis, fall into place and are instructive when regarded as the bye-products of the operation of certain psychic laws, at present little understood.

It may be quite unintelligible to us why an apparition should appear to certain persons, or why a trifling event should be foreseen, or why some objective physical occurrence should take place, but the fact that these things do occur may be regarded as evidence of the existence of some law of being which we are at present too ignorant to understand. They may be gradually and progressively revealing methods of Divine activity and principles of Divine government which, when once they have been apprehended by our intelligence, will so
widen the horizon of our knowledge and enlarge our view of the Universe, that we shall practically become inhabitants of a new heaven and a new earth.

These considerations prepare us to weigh patiently the evidence for occurrences for which we can find no intelligible interpretation. But it must not be supposed that continued study leads to a blind alley; that experience, comparison, and reflection leave the inquirer as baffled as before. This is not so; further knowledge removes many difficulties, and the thoughtful student gets many a glimpse into the raison d'être of phenomena which at first seemed purposeless. I am, however, at this point confronted by a difficulty. For although it is possible to put into intelligible language certain views at which one has arrived as the result of prolonged inquiry, it is impossible to produce upon the minds of those who have not made this prolonged inquiry, and have not been brought into immediate personal contact with the experiences referred to, the same effect which this inquiry and contact directly produce. Experience teaches as no other agent can teach. We can testify that experience has taught us, but we cannot transfer what experience has taught us, except in part and in a much less forcible degree. Experience is living; it is by living that we learn; the reflected effect of a living experience is feeble in comparison with the direct effect.

I cannot, therefore, hope to do more than suggest certain considerations which may so far commend themselves to readers as to induce those who, as yet, have had no personal psychic experiences, and who are at the very outset of inquiry into this subject, to suspend their judgment, to be patient when they encounter what seems to them meaningless, and to wait for further light. I cannot hope to convey to them just what I have myself
learned. Nor do I for a moment intend to imply that prolonged study will necessarily remove all difficulties. We are at the beginning of a new science—*new* we may call it, because until within the last fifty years these psychic phenomena have not been treated as a science, or studied methodically at all. It is the most *patient* who will gain the deepest insight.
CHAPTER VII

THE METHODS EMPLOYED

The chief use of Spiritualism is that it may promote the progress of mankind. It meets us on the plane of materialism, and places a ladder at our disposal whereby we may mount to the plane of spirituality. Some people, when they have mounted, push down the ladder as of no further use to them: this is a mistake, for if we have mounted by the ladder it is our duty, not to push it aside, but to steady it from above, that others may use it the more safely to mount also, and in so doing we shall probably learn much that we cannot afford to miss. To discover the existence of a world of discarnate beings, and to hold intercourse with it, will not, \textit{per se}, enhance human happiness or promote individual progress. If it is to do this it must first raise and deepen spiritual life. These considerations will help us to answer the questions so frequently raised as to whether it is good for the Departed to encourage intercourse through physical channels. Do these methods drag them down to earth? Do they tend to materialise them?

The answer to these questions is based on the recognition of the fact that, if means are used as they are intended to be used, they partake of the quality of the end for which they are used. A most material action becomes spiritualised if it is undertaken with a worthy aim and is guided by a loving intention, and we may be very sure that when a spirit is prompted, by the impulse of friend-
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ship or pity to signal by sound vibrations, or in some other equally material fashion, to his flesh-imprisoned comrades, no thought or fear of degradation is likely to disturb or hinder him.

Those spirits who carry on the physical phenomena of the seance-room are likely to be hindered in their spiritual progress, however, if the circle of incarnate spirits whom they meet are vulgar, mercenary, self-seeking, or merely curious and frivolous. The morally elevated would not be likely to be drawn to such a circle, and those who would be attracted to it, being on the same low moral level, would be particularly liable to be adversely affected by the influence of the sitters.

We cannot too earnestly remember that, whilst it is true that we on earth are largely open to be influenced by the discarnate, it is also true that we are capable of influencing them. This is too little considered: seances are too often attended in order to be entertained by phenomena, not with the recognition that we are on these occasions sharing in an act of social intercourse entailing on us, as all such acts should, obligations to those we meet, and involving the responsibility of mutual influence.

If a circle is formed, composed of persons animated by this sense of respectful consideration and meeting as genuine investigators, with a human feeling of kindly sympathy for those who are co-operating in the work, then we need have no fear that the act of moving tables, or making audible sounds, or assuming temporarily a material form, will drag down in any way those who, to serve us, produce the phenomena. It is no more degrading for a discarnate being to manipulate the matter of which the Creator has formed this wonderful world than it is for an incarnate spirit to do so. The Christ has taught us that the soul of man cannot be defiled or
degraded by contact with any external substance; it is the thoughts of the heart, the motives, the character, which, being spirit-products, alone can affect spirits for upliftment or degradation, for cleansing or defilement.

There is, however, another objection felt by many with regard to the physical phenomena of Spiritualism. Those who are already believers in a spirit world, or at least desire intensely to believe in it, shrink from recognising any fact which seems to them derogatory to the dignity and beauty of spirit existence. They have their own conceptions of what such a world should be, if it exists; they are idealists, and beauty and symmetry are essential constituents of their ideal, and they are loth to admit into their scheme of the spirit universe anything that seems clumsy. The moving of pieces of furniture, and the production of sounds (sometimes unintelligible), appear to them decidedly clumsy and commonplace.

Before offering a suggestion on this point, it is necessary to remind those who raise this objection that the man who is willing to face all facts, determined to let slip no item of truth even though it costs him the loss of his own preconceptions, may be yet more profoundly an idealist than the man who clings so closely to his own ideals that he cannot do justice to facts which seem to contravene them. The profoundest Idealist is the man who believes with all his soul in the beauty of Truth, who believes that the discovery of ultimate Truth will completely satisfy the craving for Beauty. The man who is convinced that perfect Truth and perfect Beauty are identical, that the Truth when fully manifest is beautiful, and that the Beautiful is the true, can afford to let go his own theories of existence and to learn from the facts, without anxiety, knowing that all facts are notes in the great chorale of the Cosmos.
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It will help us to accept occurrences which, when viewed as isolated facts, strike discordantly upon our imagination, if we try to see them, not as isolated, but as associated facts. If we can see that methods of communication which to our notions seem clumsy, have a distinct scientific cause, and are the result of the orderly working of Nature's laws, we shall be reconciled to their acceptance. It is difficult to see this connection between phenomena and the laws of Nature at the outset of a study. We may have to be students for a long time before we get even a glimpse of the facts in this relation, and even then we shall often be obliged to content ourselves with partial vision only, with some tentative hypothesis which, by co-ordinating unfamiliar phenomena with familiar phenomena, may strengthen our assurance of the continuity of Nature and our faith in the order and meaning of the Universe.

Such a hint as this, when it flashes upon the mind, impels to patience and humility, convincing us that what appears to our limited faculties as disorderly or meaningless, is so only because it has its place in a larger order than our minds can at present apprehend.

As an illustration I would recall the perplexity caused to the first students of geology by the discovery of fossils of animals embedded in the rocks, and the almost grotesque theories by which this phenomenon was explained. It was even stated that these fossils were inserted in the rocks by the Creator on purpose to try man's faith. The presence of these organic remains seemed an incongruity which could not be accounted for by the orderly working of Nature, and could not be fitted into the scheme of the Universe at all, except by some such theory as this. The puzzle is now felt no longer, simply because men have learned, through the recognition
of facts which at first seemed incongruous and inexplicable, to enlarge their own conceptions of the plan of the Universe and of the methods of Divine operation. The facts which seemed so perplexing have been a means of education and have led mankind into truer and grander conceptions. Let those who feel anxious and distressed by the phenomena of Spiritualism take courage by consideration of the lessons of the past. Those who feel that "spirit rapping," as it is commonly called, is a disorderly manifestation, unworthy of the dignity of spirits, would probably cease to feel this if they could see a reason in natural law why communication from the other sphere should so often assume this seemingly clumsy form.

The following suggestion is merely offered tentatively, as a hint which may perhaps afford a clue to the law which governs this phenomenon and causes its frequency. When the sounds are intelligible, or a sentence is spelt out in response to our inquiries, the *raison d'être* of the phenomenon is more or less obvious; but we frequently hear of "hauntings" which are recognised as such by steps being heard, or noises which convey no intelligible information; frequently also we are told that simultaneously with the death of a friend raps and loud bangs have been heard, which, but for the coincidence of their occurrence in association with a death, are without meaning. M. Flammarion cites several cases of this sort. The following will serve as an illustration. It will be found on p. 178 of "L'Inconnu et les Problèmes Psychiques." It is signed E. Deschaux. The latter relates that his grandfather "was awaked one evening at 11 p.m. by three very distinct raps on the door of his room. Astonished, he arose, lit the lamp, opened the door, but saw no one. Supposing that some trickster
had been the cause of his disturbance, he returned to bed grumbling, but again three knocks were rapped on the door. He got up quickly, intending that the culprit should pay dearly for his untimely joke, but in spite of careful search, both in the passage and on the staircase, he could not discover where this mysterious culprit had disappeared to. A third time, when he was again in bed, three raps were audible on the door. This time the grandfather had a presentiment that the sound was caused by the spirit of his mother, although nothing in the tidings he had previously received from his family incited him to this supposition. Five or six days after this manifestation a letter arrived from his own country announcing the death of his mother, which had occurred precisely at the hour at which he had heard the noise. At the moment of her death his mother, who had a particular affection for him, had insisted that a dress, which her 'boy in Paris' had some time before sent her as a present, should be brought and placed on her bed."

M. Flammarion, in the work just mentioned, "I'Inconnu et les Problèmes Psychiques," has collected a large number of cases of manifestations of the departed, and it is noteworthy that in a considerable number of these cases the experience is one of sound: the greater number of collective physical impressions associated with a death, i.e., impressions received by more than one person, are impressions of sound. When we are dealing with phenomena governed by laws of which we are almost completely ignorant, a slight coincidence of this sort should not be ignored, it may afford us a clue to what such laws may be.

In an earlier chapter of his work M. Flammarion tabulates the rates of vibration per second produced by various forces such as sound waves, light waves, electrical waves, etc. This table shows how very much slower are the
vibrations which produce sound than those which produce light and electricity. The ethereal vibrations which produce light he states to be from 400 to 756 trillions per second; whilst the atmospheric vibrations which produce sounds are from 32 to 32,768 per second. These figures suggest that, since a far higher rate of vibration is requisite in order to affect the optic nerve than is required to affect the auditory nerve, it is not improbable that a spirit, desiring to manifest to the senses of an incarnate person, may find it easier to do so through the sense of hearing than through that of sight. His effort to make his presence known would naturally take the course of least resistance, and it might well be that the easiest course would be the only one open to him. If sound can be produced with less expenditure of energy than vision, it is coherent and comprehensible that manifestations by sound should be of more common occurrence than other modes of manifestation; and we should expect that the first attempts of a discarnate spirit to communicate would frequently produce audible results.

Of course we must get rid of the notion that spirits operate by some supernatural method subversive of natural laws. Those who communicated through Home made no such claim. "All these phenomena," they said, "only show our superior acquaintance with natural laws, and our power over material substance." ¹ We must also, if possible, get rid of that obtuseness which causes the familiar phenomena of Nature to lose dignity in our estimation by reason of their familiarity. Sound is a mystery and a wonder; it is a common phenomenon only in the sense that it is in common use. Our wisest scientists cannot explain to us the mystery of sound, or tell us how it is that so immaterial a thing as thought should be able

¹ "Experiences in Spiritualism," by Lord Adare, p. 68.
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to transmute itself into vibrations and to travel, first as an atmospheric vibration, then as a nerve vibration, until it reaches the brain; or why, when it reaches the brain, it should produce on our consciousness the sensation we call sound. The thought of the dying mother\(^1\) apparently produced this series of wonderful effects, and it is difficult to see why it should be regarded as derogatory to dis-carnate spirits to create these vibrations when it is not considered derogatory to those in the flesh. If we were not so encased by the sense of familiarity we should move always reverently and with awe among the facts of Nature; and we should recognise the wonder of every sound we make, even though it were but the sound of a rap on a door, as a token to the inmates of the house that we are present and waiting for admittance and recognition.

If these things are undignified and common in our esteem the reason may be in our own materiality. If we cannot be always awake to the wonder of the Universe, if we must perforce forget it at times\(^2\) and concentrate our attention upon the practical uses of Nature, let us at least recognise that this is only a concession to our weakness, not an

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\(^1\) See page 59.

\(^2\) The recognition of our inability to live habitually in the realisation of the spiritual wonder of what we call natural phenomena is very beautifully put in Mr. Joseph Le Conte's interesting work, "Evolution in Relation to Religious Thought." At page 303 he says:—

"According to this view, the phenomena of Nature are naught else than objectified modes of Divine thought; the forces of Nature naught else than different forms of one omnipresent Divine energy or will. . . And science is the systematic knowledge of these Divine thoughts and ways. . . . It may, indeed, be that we cannot live and work in the continual realised presence of the Infinite. It may, indeed, be that we must still wear the veil of a practical materialism on our hearts and minds. It may, indeed, be that in our practical life and scientific work we must still continue to think of natural forces as efficient agents. But, if so, let us at least remember that this attitude of mind must be regarded as our ordinary work-clothes—necessary work-clothes, it may be, of our outer, lower life—to be put aside when we return home to our inner life, religious and philosophical."
indication of our superiority. The physical phenomena of Spiritualism will do us good service even if they do nothing further for us than cause us to reconsider our estimate of the normal phenomena with which we are in daily familiar contact.
[Before embarking upon the subject of this chapter, I wish to guard myself from possible misunderstanding. I am aware that there are communications, both by automatic writing and through trance utterances, which may be free from the confusion to which I am about to refer. Some minds are clearer channels, and offer more passive conditions than others, and even minds which are not habitually passive mediums have their moments of calm lucidity, and at these moments messages may be passed through them almost or quite without confusion. Causes of confusion may be overcome, moreover, by communicators as they gain experience, and learn how to transmit their messages. The suggestions which follow may not be applicable to all cases, but it is desirable, nevertheless, that all who seek communication through mediumistic channels should recognise the existence of these causes of confusion, and should bear in mind that they are liable at any time to interfere with the messages that may be received.]

Mr. F. W. H. Myers has given students this wise counsel, to "follow fearlessly wherever truth may lead, and beware of preconstructing, from too few factors, their formula for the Sum of Things." This principle should be applied to lesser formulæ as well as to greater. In making tentative suggestions towards the interpretation of facts, we must be on our guard against permitting ourselves to entertain too readily an assurance that our own interpretation is correct, and we must resist the temptation to ignore those facts which do not fit into the hypothesis.
which commends itself most strongly to us, since those facts may be essential factors in the problem, and must on no account be overlooked. Those who impose upon themselves this "self-denying ordinance," and try to face all the facts with fairness and sincerity, will find that the path they are compelled to take is often a steep one, and requires courage. They will sometimes lay themselves open to adverse criticism from those with whom they would fain be in agreement, by whom they may be regarded as mere theorists who have lost their way in abstruse speculations. A theory of some sort, however, everyone must have; the simplest explanation of facts is a theory, and those who most deprecate the spinning of theories do nevertheless adopt some theory of their own. I do not wish to deny that theorising may be carried too far, or that acute theorists may sometimes "darken counsel by words without knowledge," but I wish to remind those who throw aside impatiently theories which they do not need, that a more extended acquaintance with the problems requiring elucidation might entirely alter their point of view, and cause them to recognise thankfully that the truths which they have grasped without the aid of these theories are established the more securely by means of the very arguments which they were inclined to discard or contemn.

The spirit hypothesis must rest upon a base broad enough to sustain other facts besides the fact of communication from the departed, otherwise by building on too narrow a foundation we render the stability of our belief in the hypothesis itself insecure. In his work on "Human Personality" Mr. Myers has founded his belief in the facts of survival and communication with the departed on a very broad basis, and he therefore, necessarily, deals with other facts besides survival. It is this which makes his
contribution to the subject unique of its kind, and gives the work an influence possibly unrivalled in extent by any other book on Spiritualism.

In one of his communications through Mrs. Piper, a spirit called "George Pelham" denotes the discarnate mind as a *tabula rasa*. The passage runs thus:—

"After the Ego (which goes to make up the material organism) leaves the material organism, it goes on existing just the same as in the material, only is much more free, and can express itself in a much clearer sense than when in the material. Man's mind or soul is a *tabula rasa* here for a register of thought." ("Proceedings," Part XXXIII., p. 431.)

This term is, to some extent, applicable to incarnate minds also, *i.e.*, the incarnate mind (more particularly in the case of those whose mediumistic faculties are developed) functions also as a register for thoughts not self-originated. It is because it has this capacity that messages can be transmitted from discarnate intelligences. Obviously, however, this fact opens up the possibility of telepathy from other incarnate minds also, and hence arises one of the chief preliminary difficulties of investigators—the difficulty of ascertaining the real source of the communications received through mediums.

There is, moreover, another complication, which is due to the fact that whilst the human mind may be described, in certain conditions, and to a certain extent, as a *tabula rasa*, this is not a strictly accurate account of it; the passivity of the medium who receives these impressions is by no means always undisturbed. The medium's mind, even in trance, is not an inanimate mirror upon which other personalities can easily cast the impression of their thoughts; it may rather be compared to a sea moved often by internal currents and ruffled by external winds.
Except, perhaps, in the deepest trance state the activities of the medium's own mind are liable to form a very disturbing element and must always be taken into account by the receiver of messages. We may understand this better by reference to our experiences in the sleep state. It should be understood, of course, that I am not maintaining that the state of trance is identical with the state of sleep, but only that they are so afar akin that from the latter we may learn better to understand the former. We know that in sleep people are occasionally made aware that they must have been in contact with other minds, and that they have derived from that contact knowledge of facts normally unknown to them, but this true impression is often blended with ideas which they recognise as originating in their own imagination or memory. It seems as if in sleep a split occurs in the personality; and dreams sometimes appear to be like the reflection, on what one may call a lower surface of the consciousness, of matters experienced on the upper surface. This would account for a curious quality which is found in some dreams. These dreams embody true and valuable ideas in symbolic or dramatic forms, sometimes in grotesque forms, sometimes in unusual language. The character of these dreams is that of a translation—a translation of ideas into some more concrete shape. In the passive state of mediumistic receptivity we find the same characteristic. If we recognise that the message (usually at least) is not dictated by the communicating intelligence, but that, as received, it has gone through a process of translation in the mind of the medium, and has been translated from ideas into

1 Dr. Van Eeden says: "All will readily agree when I maintain that the trance world of a medium and the world of dreams are not far apart." (See report of sittings with Mrs. Thompson. "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research, Part XLIV., p. 86.)
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phrases—the ideas originating in the mind of the communicator and the phrases in the mind of the medium—then we are prepared to allow for errors of translation, and for phraseology which would be inappropriate as coming from the person purporting to communicate. Sometimes the translation will be more accurate, sometimes less so.

In Mrs. Piper’s case the controls allege that the above-mentioned sources of confusion are largely eliminated. Dr. Richard Hodgson thus describes the stages of trance into which she passes. Of the earlier stages he writes:

“In this stage she is apparently dreamily conscious of the sitter and dreamily conscious of 'spirits.' She seems to be partly conscious, as it were, of two worlds. This stage, as she passes into it, is usually very brief and changing.”

Some mediums, probably, do not habitually get beyond this stage.

“In the next stage it is as though her own personality held much the same relation to her organism as 'Phinuit' or other 'spirit' controllers of the voice. . . . She seems then to possess, not the dreamy consciousness of the previous stage, partly aware of two worlds, and in a dream-like relation to both, but a fuller and clearer consciousness—we may call it her subliminal consciousness—which is in direct relation, however, not so much with our ordinary physical world, as with another world.”

In this stage the personality of the medium’s own mind would be still liable to project its own images on the lower stratum of consciousness.¹

“In the next stage this consciousness also disappears; it seems to be withdrawn from any direct governance of the body,

¹ Sir Oliver Lodge pointed out in an address to the Society for Psychical Research that the term ‘supraliminal’ is not altogether an appropriate one by which to denote this more ordinary stratum of consciousness, inasmuch as it is not ‘supra’ in the sense of being superior in quality to the subliminal, but quite the reverse.
the upper part of which becomes inert and lifeless . . . the body seems to be no longer under the control of any consciousness. The upper part of her body tends to fall forward, and I support her head upon cushions on a table. About this time, or shortly afterwards, there arises a very slight disturbance in the upper part of the body, which becomes less inert, and which appears to have come to some extent under the 'control' of some consciousness, and at the same time, or frequently earlier, sometimes before Mrs. Piper's consciousness has completely disappeared, sometimes before even her supraliminal consciousness had disappeared, the right hand and arm manifest a control by what seems to be another consciousness, and begin to make movements suggesting writing."

This paragraph in Dr. Hodgson's report ("Proceedings," Part XXXIII.) is very suggestive and instructive. It shows that there are certain remarkable features in Mrs. Piper's trances. There seems to be a substitution of one personality for another, and not merely the operation of one personality through another. Between this "substitution" and the telepathic mode of communication there are many differing degrees of condition, in which "control" in the sense of substitution is blended with "control" in the sense of mental suggestion, and in which the causes of confusion due to the medium's personal involuntary interference are more or less present. On this point Mr. Myers says:—

"In the case of Mr. Moses the control of the mind or body by discarnate spirits seemed to vary in degree at different times, and the medium's own pre-conceptions seemed to form an important factor in the communications he received, and it is obvious that in Mrs. Piper's case also the control must be limited by the idiosyncrasies of the medium. But we must continually bear in mind the impossibility of distinguishing the different elements that may enter into so complex a phenomenon. . . It seems probable that when a spirit can control a sensitive's organism, the sensitive's own subliminal
self may be able to do the same. The transparency which renders the one possession possible facilitates also the other. This may be one reason for the admixture seen in most trance utterances—of elements inspired from without. To this source of confusion must be added the influence of the sensitive's supraliminal self also, whose habit of thought and turns of speech must needs appear whenever use is made of the brain centres which that supraliminal self habitually controls. . . . The sensitive's own previous ideas may go on developing themselves during the trance which may thus be incomplete. The result may be a kind of mixed telepathy between the sitter, the sensitive's spirit, and the extraneous spirit. I believe that sometimes during one and the same access of trance all these elements are in turn apparent." (Vol. II., p. 250, "Human Personality.")

Even in cases of deep trance the communication may, therefore, be more or less confused. Also the capacity of the communicator to concentrate thought, and to control the brain of the organism he is using, will be a very considerable factor in determining the result. We know how far from easy it is when we are normally using our own organism to concentrate the mind, and order and control thought; how much harder, then, must it be when the organism is not our own. Any agitation, moreover, on the part of the spirit communicating would increase the difficulty. Sometimes it happens that the spirit desiring to communicate is quite unable to overcome the difficulties, and has to send his message through an intermediary. In that case the message is liable to further possibilities of miscarriage, as it may be misunderstood by the intermediary.

If the thoughts of several communicators reach the medium's mind simultaneously, they will mutually obstruct one another. This occurs sometimes, and the communicators seem to be unaware of the confusion they are causing. It is very desirable that some strong and
experienced spirit should take chief control of the medium, and should prevent this combination of influences on the other side from invading the psychic's conditions. In the case of Mrs. Piper this preventive control seems to have been established, to the great advantage of all concerned. If mediums realised the importance of this, they might themselves do something to further it; they might use their own wills and urge upon the communicators the desirability of finding some capable and experienced guide on the other side. They might not always succeed in obtaining this; but, on the other hand, they might succeed sometimes, at least. It should also be borne in mind that this mode of communication across the gulf is an experiment on both sides, an experiment of which we see the conditions at one end and they at the other, and in which, therefore, we must co-operate by suggesting improvements of method the need for which is apparent to us, as they suggest improvements of the method for which the need is apparent to them.

To sum up:—The causes of confusion which have been already touched upon, are: 1. The fact that thoughts telepathically received from those still in the flesh may blend with, or be mistaken for, messages from the discarnate. 2. That the thoughts of the medium, whether in trance or out of trance, may also blend with, and be mistaken for, messages from the discarnate. 3. That the intelligence desiring to communicate may be unable to concentrate his mind sufficiently to control the medium's brain, and may have to use an intermediary, who may fail to receive the message correctly. 4. That several spirits may attempt to communicate their thoughts to the medium at the same time, and may interfere with each other without being aware that they are doing so. 5. The eagerness and possible agitation
of the communicating spirit; and to this may be added
the fact (6) that the very act of controlling another brain
apparently causes partial oblivion. Perhaps the common
experience of forgetting a name when we are particularly
desirous of recalling it may be a somewhat analogous
experience. We say, "I shall remember it if I don't
try to think of it." The effort to concentrate thought
upon it seems to produce partial anaesthesia in those cells
of the brain where this particular memory is stored.
Communicators frequently state that experiences, familiar
to them at other times, cannot be recalled, or can only
be recalled with difficulty, whilst attempting to com-
municate through a medium's brain.

These causes of confusion should be borne in mind by
all who seek experimentally to get communications from
the Departed, whether they do so through automatic
writing or through trance mediumship. The failure to
remember and recognise these facts has often resulted
in disappointment, and also in the acceptance of com-
munications as messages from Beyond when they are
really nothing of the kind, but originate in the medium's
own brain, being unrecognised by him as the product
of his own mind working automatically. In this way
much that is of an entirely mundane origin is attributed
to a supermundane source.

From the above considerations it should be obvious
that to follow blindly advice given through mediumship
is very unwise. If advice is given it should be acted
upon only if the judgment of the receiver recognises it
as sound. Men in this life are intended to learn wisdom
by the exercise of their own faculties of observation and
judgment. If one asks the advice of another on this
plane he uses his judgment in the choice of a counsellor,
and takes the advice received because he has reason to
believe that the counsellor has experience which qualifies him to give an opinion; but those who seek advice through mediumship are often quite uncertain of the identity of the spirit purporting to give it, or if they have reason to think they can identify the spirit they often do not stop to consider whether they have reason to suppose that this personality has any special qualifications which would fit him to be a judge of the matter in question. The result of this seeking of advice, through mediumship, by which to guide conduct and action, irrespective of the qualification of the communicator and without taking up the responsibility of personal judgment on the part of the inquirer, is sometimes disastrous in its consequences, and must always be debilitating to the character. If advice is asked or given, let it be weighed as fully as it would be if it emanated from some incarnate source. If the giver of the advice is known and trusted, still the personal judgment should be brought to bear upon the counsel given, for personal responsibility can never be eliminated except in the case of children or the insane.

The wisest spirits always urge this exercise of personal judgment, and refuse to supersede it.¹ Let a man beware of any influence that would supersede the exercise of individual judgment, and would tend to keep men and women in leading strings. If mistakes are made (and

¹ The following statement was published by Mr. Stainton Moses himself (in "Light," 1883). He says: "I had found it hard to get any automatic writing; and as I wanted direction I forced on what I regarded as a communication, but which was in point of fact only the communication of my own thoughts. It was a most instructive experience, and I never repeated the experiment."

"You are mistaking your own thoughts for our guidance. We do not influence you in your decisions as to associating yourself with others. . . ."

"What do you advise?"

"Nothing; we do not meddle. . . . It is for you who know circumstances to decide."
we all of us make mistakes), it is far better that they should be made in the honest attempt to use the faculties God has given to us than that they should be made because we wrapped up our talent in a napkin, and gave ourselves up to be guided by the judgment of another, whether that other be a spirit discarnate or incarnate. I am not urging wilfulness, or that any man should refuse to consider counsel when he gets it from either sphere; but only that he should realise that it must be intelligently received, with the recollection that the final arbiter of his own conduct and destiny is within the man who receives it, and not in any other.

There is one mode of communication which, whilst it cannot be appealed to as scientific evidence for survival, is in reality the most intimate and the highest phase of spirit communion, the most far-reaching in its effects, and the least liable to be marred by these confusions. Communication, as commonly understood, necessitates the use of language, but Influence can be communicated without language. The influence of spirits is something far more potent, far more subtle, than any spoken word; its potency consists in being; it is real, not phenomenal.

Phillips Brooks says: "Some people seem to have almost exactly the influence of music. It is an inarticulate influence. It does not communicate ideas, but it creates moods." And again: "Some men are events; it is not what they say or what they do, but what they are that moves the world." To be in communion with souls who by their loving influence refresh, invigorate, stimulate, enlighten—this is far more important, far more helpful, than to receive messages, however clear and good they may be.\footnote{Many persons are unaware that whilst Mr. Stainton Moses knew by personal experience all the various phases of mediumship, his guides}
character may open the door to this better thing by removing barriers of doubt. Many who call themselves Christians and profess to believe in the life everlasting do nevertheless sorrow as if they were cut off from all real communion with those they love when they die. If they can be convinced by evidential messages that their friends are not only alive but watching over them and able to know when they turn to them in thought, that they are not removed to some far distance but are indeed with them, then it becomes possible to put faith into exercise; faith, I say, for knowledge does not supersede faith, rather it gives faith a sure ground to rest upon. And how should they put faith into exercise? In the quiet of the heart they may speak to some loved soul, appealing in moments of special need for help and sympathy, as they were wont to do when together in bodily presence, and often response will come swiftly, not audibly to the outward ear, unless they are gifted with the faculty of clairaudience, but by tokens unmistakably clear and deeply consoling. They will know that intercourse is not broken off, that love bridges the way between the

taught him to regard all as subordinate to this highest experience and as means to promote it, not as ends in themselves. In "Light," April 21st, 1883, we find the following passage in his automatic writings. Mr. Stainton Moses interrogated "Imperator" as follows:—

"I want to be sure that I understand what you mean. You seem to imply that your influence was exerted over me unconsciously all my life; that there came a period when it was made manifest in objective mediumship; that the period of physical mediumship gradually gave way to mental, i.e., automatic writing and trance; that these are now waning and are giving place to the more interior mediumship, which consists more expressly in the exercise of the powers inherent in one's own spirit, but dormant in most persons. In short, complete control is giving place to advice and personal guidance; and abnormal to normal mediumship. If I am right in this I want to ask how far the cultivation of such an interior state is compatible with my work."

"You have rightly understood. We have already told you that the cultivation of this state in such measure as is at present possible is not incompatible with the discharge of your duties."
two states of being. The event of death will no longer be to them an appalling darkness and a cruel divider.

Communion is inspiration; communication is as a means towards the deeper realisation by each individual of the privilege of communion and the reality of influence; to substitute the one for the other can but lead to profound disappointment. Both have their value, but the values are not equal. To the man who stands in doubt of whether there are any souls to influence at all, and whether death is not the final climax of existence, it is of no use to talk about the blessedness of spirit communion. One little test of identity through a medium will be to him more satisfactory than any hope and assurance of influence which may be held out to him; let him once prove to himself that the dead are alive, he will then have taken the first step into the Kingdom of the Spirit; but let him not rest contented with this first step, but follow on to higher attainments.
CHAPTER IX

WHAT THE COMMUNICATORS THEMSELVES SAY

I PURPOSE making a few quotations to show that the communicators themselves recognise the causes of confusion to which I have already referred.

In the report of Dr. Van Eeden's sittings with Mrs. Thompson there is a paragraph which illustrates the confusion which may result from the employment of spirits as intermediaries on the other side. He was trying to get a name from "Nelly," Mrs. Thompson's child, who acted as her control:

"Nelly: 'It is like Schovelt. It's difficult. They have to say the word and tell Mrs. Cartwright' (a discarnate spirit who also controls Mrs. Thompson), 'and she tells me.'" ("Proceedings," Part XLIV., p. 98.)

In this case the message had to be transmitted through two intermediaries.

In his earlier attempts at communicating through Mrs. Piper, "George Pelham" refers to this cause of confusion as follows ("Phinuit" was the intermediary):

"'I could not speak to Dr. Scliville' (i.e., Phinuit, who has always given his last name as Scliville), 'to make him understand what I wanted him to say, so I tried to tell the medium just as she was coming into her body again, and I hope she told you the test you asked for. Please answer me, did she tell you?' ('Yes, she gave us the name.') 'That is all you asked me for. I will now explain. I had so many things in my mind about ... and other things which you had asked me to do for you. The fact is I really had no time
or strength to tell you anything about anybody else. . . .
I knew Pierce at once but could not make Dr. Scilville understand the propriety or good of your wanting me to give
his name to him for your benefit. . . . Tell Mr. Pierce I did
not want to slight him or shuffle about, but was so busy with
other things, and besides talking to Doctor when in the
medium’s body . . . read it . . . it is more or less con­
fusing and I cannot give it so clear.’’” (“Proceedings,”
Part XXXIII., p. 308.)

The broken sentences show sufficiently plainly the
difficulty G. P. found in making his explanation. Again
further on he repeats:—

“‘Do tell Pierce how I tried to tell the medium, but I
don’t know you got, whether you got it or no.’ (‘We got
it.’) ‘Good,’ You see I saw her spirit just as she was going
in and, as I could not tell Doctor, I took that chance.’”

Having failed to convey his thoughts successfully to
Phinuit whilst the latter was in possession of Mrs. Piper’s
organism, G. P. appears to have attempted thought trans­
ience upon Mrs. Piper’s spirit before it regained the
control of her body.

Another difficulty arises from the fact that mediums
and their controls not infrequently receive impressions
as pictures, and these pictures are liable to be mis­
interpreted. Mrs. Verrall writes in her report of her
sitting with Mrs. Thompson:—

“Merrifield was said to be the name of a lady in my family.
The name was given at first thus: ‘Merrifield, Merryman,
Merrythought, Merrifield; there is an old lady named one of
these who, &c.’ Later ‘Nelly’ said: ‘Mrs. Merrythought,
that’s not quite right, it’s like the name of a garden’; and
after in vain trying to give her name exactly, she said, ‘I
will tell you how names come to us. It’s like a picture; I
see school children enjoying themselves. You can’t say
Merryman because that’s not a name, or Merrypeople.’
‘Nelly’ later on spoke of my mother as Mrs. Happyfield or

On one occasion, through a relative of my own, a description was given, clairvoyantly, of a person whom she had never seen, and who was recognised by someone present. Among other things she mentioned particularly that his hair was parted in the middle. It was quite unknown to her that the person whom she thus described had had a very strong dislike to seeing a man's hair parted in this way. The spirit was possibly trying to impress the medium with the idea of his characteristic aversion, knowing that it would help his friend to identify him, but as the idea was received as a picture, if the friend had not been quick to understand and interpret, the attempt to identify himself in this way would have stultified itself.

Most people have experienced in their dreams something analogous to this picture-method; it is not uncommon to find an idea or a fact taking shape as a symbol or picture in a dream.

Communicators allude not only to the difficulty of conveying their thoughts but also to the difficulty experienced whilst communicating, of receiving clear and true impressions of those with whom they communicate. Dr. Hodgson in his report dwells at length on the partial loss of consciousness caused by the effort to communicate; and in Professor Hyslop's valuable record of his experiences with Mrs. Piper it is frequently intimated that the communicator was obliged to break off contact with the medium from time to time, in order to clear his own thought:

"'I am anxious to speak plainly to you and for you... I know everything so well when I am not speaking to you.'"

("Proceedings," Part XII.)

In this connection G. P. says:
"‘In order for us to get into communication with you, we have to get into your sphere as one like yourself, asleep. This is why we make mistakes as you call them, and get confused and muddled. . . . You see I am more awake than asleep, yet I cannot come just as I am in reality, independently of the medium.’’’ (Part XXXIII., p. 362.)

Mrs. Piper’s earlier control, Phinuit, thus describes the difficulty of seeing into our physical condition under these circumstances:—

"‘It is like looking through a keyhole into a room and trying to find out about the people passing backwards and forwards.’’’ (Part XXXIII., p. 309.)

George Pelham, one of the clearest controls, says:—

"‘Now I can see you, my friends. I can hear you speak. Your voice, Jim, I can distinguish with your accent and articulation, but it sounds like a big brass drum. Mine would sound to you like the faintest whisper.’’’ (Part XXXIII., p. 301.)

"‘I am determined to transfer to you my thought, though it will have to be done in this uncanny way.’’’

"‘Your material universe is very exacting, and it requires great patience and perseverance to do all I want to say to you.’’’ (P. 304.)

Another communicator says in reply to a request to rewrite the last words, which were undecipherable:—

"‘No, I can’t—it is too much work and too weakening. I cannot repeat—you must help me and I will prove myself to you. I cannot recollect my thoughts; I repeat sentences to you. I am not away from you but right at your side; welcome me as you would if I were with you in the flesh and blood body. . . . You see I cannot tell myself just how you hear me and it bothers me a little. . . . How do you hear me speak, dear, when we speak by thought only? But your thoughts do not reach me at all when I am speaking to you, but I hear a strange sound and have to half guess. . . . How strange you look, my dear, yet I do know you and hear. . . .’’’ (‘Don’t you see me at other times?’) ‘Oh yes, dearest,
and much better than I do when I try to speak, dear, consequently have to go by what I hear from—— ——’”

These broken sentences are very suggestive; they indicate how various are the degrees of clearness with different communicators. G. P. could see and hear, though somewhat abnormally, those whom he addressed through Mrs. Piper; this lady could not either hear or see distinctly, and was dependent on the assistance of some one on the other side to enable her to understand what was said, this confusion being only due to the effort to communicate. Another control called “Rector” says of a communicator:

“He can tell me distinctly only when I am not speaking to thee, friend.”

This indicates that the spirit when speaking through an intermediary is also brought into conditions which are confusing. Although the contact with the medium is not as close as that of the controlling spirit, it is sufficiently so to produce some disturbing effect. This is intimated in the context of the passage in Professor Hyslop’s report from which the last quotation is taken. (“Proceedings,” Part XLI., pp. 393, 394.)

Yet another cause of confusion remains to be touched upon. It is one which I freely confess I am loth to recognise. I should prefer to believe it to be non-existent, for if this factor in the problem could be eliminated it would be far simpler I believe, however, that it cannot be excluded, and, therefore it must not be ignored. It must be fairly recognised and truly stated. I refer to what M. Delanne in his book “Recherches sur la Médium-nité,” speaks of as the manifestation of “fictitious personalities.” What Mr. Myers calls “pseudo-possession” is the same phenomenon at a more advanced stage. (See “Proceedings,” Part XXXVIII., p. 384.)
M. Delanne devotes some pages of his work to the consideration of the question of "fictitious personalities" created by auto-suggestion.

We are aware that in dreams fictitious personalities are thus created—personae which seem so real that some people may be inclined to doubt the applicability of the term "fictitious" to these dream people. Undoubtedly the personalities of whom we dream are sometimes real entities, and sometimes the veridical character of our dreams proves that we have received a telepathic impact from other minds; and if this is occasionally verifiable it may often be true when it is not possible to verify it; but no one would venture to maintain that all our dream personalities are real things. During sleep, imagination seems to have free course, and to be fertile in the production of "fictitious personalities," who, for the time, seem to the sleeper to be actually existing.

Sometimes the sleeper identifies himself with one or other of these and personates them. Those who have an aptitude for inventing stories are aware that as tales develop in the imagination of the narrator, the personalities become to him almost alive, and the plot as it develops has for him the interest of an independent narrative; his own relation to it at times seems to be rather passive than active, it forms and unfolds in his brain, he knows not how. In the waking state he finds no difficulty, however, in distinguishing between the real and the imaginary; he knows that these personalities are not alive, that events did not so happen; but to distinguish between the real and the imaginary in dreams is not always possible, only occasionally can it be done with confidence.

As already pointed out, there is similarity between the dream state and the mediumistic state; and if we would squarely face all the conditions of the mediumistic problem
we are bound to recognise that the evolution of fictitious personalities, and personation by the medium of these fictions, sometimes occur in the passive mediumistic condition. To recognise this is no more to discredit the reality of spirit control than to recognise the occurrence of fictitious dreams is to discredit the occurrence of telepathic dreams. But it must be admitted that the existence of this factor increases the complexity and difficulty of the problem. I say the existence of the factor increases the difficulty; I do not say that the recognition of it does this; for the failure to recognise every factor that really exists will always be a fruitful source of perplexity. We can never gain by ignoring facts; the facts may seem bewildering, but our only hope of ever arriving at an understanding of the true significance of Spiritualism lies in the patient effort to fairly and fully recognise all the constituents of the problem it offers. It is not likely that this effort will be entirely successful in the course of one generation or perhaps of many generations. Emerson says:—

"I should not ask for a rash effect from meditations, counsels, and the hiving of truths. I should feel it pitiful to demand a result on this town or country, an overt effect on the instant month and year. The effect is deep and secular as the cause. It works on periods in which mortal lifetime is lost. . . . There never was a right endeavour but it succeeded. Patience and patience; we shall win at last."

Some communications are stamped with the characteristics of the personality from whom they purport to come, and carry with them satisfactory evidence of their authenticity. But there are many communications which are not thus clearly authenticated, and these cannot be claimed as spirit messages with equal assurance.

Others again bear all the tokens of being dream fictions
and cannot reasonably be ascribed to any other origin. The first and last class of communications need not cause much perplexity, but with regard to the intermediary class there will always be room for difference of opinion; and concerning their nature and origin Spiritualists must agree to differ. Many of those whose spiritualistic origin cannot be proved do doubtless emanate from the spirit world. Slight indications and the circumstances under which they come should be weighed carefully, when considering their origin. When, however, personal opinion is fairly satisfied on that point, we should still be on our guard against imposing our own conviction on others as valid for them, when the actual evidence of the case is not strong.

Some will accept, as actual spirit entities, "controls" which to others will appear to be fictitious. It is of first importance that those who are workers in the cause should be tolerant and patient with each other, and abstain from contemning those whose beliefs, in detail, they cannot entirely share; and on the other hand that they should not undervalue the caution of him who "guards the purity of his belief with a very fanaticism of jealous care, lest at any time it rest on anything unworthy."

Let us also bear in mind that recognition is largely effected by intuition, and that the assurance which springs from intuition may be the soul's immediate response to reality. Although this intuitive assurance cannot be appealed to as affording ground for conviction to those who have not experienced it, it may be in itself more satisfying than more circumstantial evidence could be to the person who has experienced it.

Having safeguarded myself from appearing to deny the genuinely spiritualistic source of many communications whose origin cannot be demonstrated, I wish briefly to revert to the production of "fictitious personalities"; for
it is of serious importance that the claim made upon intelligent people that they should recognise the reality of spirit control should not be weakened by indiscriminately making the same claim for every chimera which may evolve from the mediumistic stratum of consciousness.

I once heard a control state through an entranced medium that the medium was "dreaming and her dreams get in my way." The "fictitious personalities" which counterfeit real controls are of the nature of dramatic dreams. Unfortunately it sometimes happens that these dream personalities embody the weaknesses and flatter the vanities of the dreamer. His natural ambitions and conceits take shape in the assumption that he is in immediate intercourse with celebrities of past days.

Again, I desire to guard myself against misapprehension. There is no inherent impossibility that men and women who in earthly life achieved fame should in spirit life find delight in serving and teaching the lowliest child of God. Greatness in the spirit world is estimated by a different standard from that which prevails on earth. "Whosoever will be great among you shall be your servant." This is the standard of the Master. It is, however, true that we should watch with some suspicion the tendency to believe that our "controls" are kings, queens, great authors, or great statesmen, for the tendency may be traceable to an undue sense of our own importance and to latent personal egotisms of which we ourselves are scarcely aware.

The question will arise: How are we to distinguish false from true, fictitious from real? No infallible criterion can be suggested. If we would learn to distinguish, our faculties must be brought into harmonious exercise: calm reason, judgment, intuition, and moral sense must be brought to bear on our experiences. Of these, moral perceptiveness is perhaps the faculty that is most
indispensable, but it must work with the faculties of reason and judgment, not by ignoring them.

"Try the spirits whether they be of God," was the advice of the Apostle. The surest indication of whether an influence is of God or not, will be found in its effects on character. If the influence which purports to come from the spirit world makes us both more loving and more humble; teaches us to think less of ourselves and of our own importance and more of our work and of the interests of others; if it makes us more lovable in our homes and more welcome in the society of our fellow-men, then, whether we can identify the "control" or not, we may safely trust the influence that works in us as emanating from a Source which is pure and good and intended to advance our soul's development.
CHAPTER X

IMPERSONATING SPIRITS AND FRAUDS

What the mediumistic mind may sometimes do in relation to "fictitious personalities," it may also do for real personalities, i.e., the medium may quite unintentionally simulate a person whose name and characteristics are known. If we recognise this possibility, it is reasonable to suppose that the occurrence of this contingency is not limited to incarnate intelligences; it may sometimes happen that a discarnate intelligence, in attempting to communicate under the difficulties referred to in the last chapter, may transfer to the medium's mind another name and may even appear to assume the rôle of another character, and this without having any intention to deceive; the cause of the error may possibly be due to the fact that the name adopted and the character associated with it are prominently present to the mind of the communicator, or are strongly in the mind of the medium. Most people who have had any personal experience of mediumship will recognise the reasonableness of this suggestion, and will be able to recall cases in point. I will mention one which occurred within my own knowledge.

On that occasion a name was given and was immediately corrected. The real name, however, was not supplied instead of the one which it was alleged had been erroneously given; the communicating spirit was apparently sufficiently clear to know that the wrong name had been
transferred, but was not clear enough to give the right one. If this had been a case of intentional personation there would have been no reason why the correction should have been made. The name already mentioned was one known to those present, and would have been accepted. If it had not been corrected from the other side, and if the mistake had, later, been discovered on this side, this occurrence would possibly have been classed as a case of impersonation. There may be numberless instances in which this sort of confusion occurs: it may be that the use of well-known names ought frequently to be thus accounted for, and it is not improbable that the style and thought of some other personality may in some degree be thus unintentionally adopted and transmitted. In this life one frequently meets persons who are naturally unconscious imitators; persons who to a certain extent alter their style of speech and manner according to the company they are in. We have all known people who have this habit, who are, perhaps, unaware of it themselves, and who certainly have not the smallest fraudulent intention, but who imitate very readily the manner and even adopt the ideas of the people with whom they are thrown. These possibilities may equally exist in the unseen societies of spirits, and should make us pause before we assume that our communicators are wilful deceivers.

Moreover, it is definitely stated in some auto-writings that in the other life there are groups or bands of spirits, and that sometimes a communicator will not give his personal name, but the name of his group. In a book by Mrs. Underwood ¹ the term "banded universalities" occurs in connection with the idea of groups. Let us imagine, for a moment, that communication with America

¹ "Automatic or Spirit Writing." By SARA A. UNDERWOOD.
were as difficult to carry on as is communication between the incarnate and the discarnate, and let us suppose that the inhabitants of the United States, although they knew something of Browning, were unaware that he had died, or that a "Browning Society" had ever been formed in England; if, under these circumstances, a member of that society were to attempt to transmit the ideas contained in some of Browning's writings, and were to give the name of Browning as a reference, New Englanders might either suppose that the message came from Browning, or that they were being imposed upon.

Of course there are cases which these considerations will not adequately explain, but it seems to me that it is desirable to weigh every alternative before having resort to the hypothesis of deliberate fraud. It cannot be denied that there are fraudulent spirits and fraudulent mediums, but there is something very unhealthy in the readiness with which the theory of fraud is adopted as the solution of every perplexing circumstance that may arise in connection with this subject. We must bear in mind that the constant assumption that deceit exists may engender it. The persistent suspicion of fraud in those with whom we deal is a canker which may breed fraud in the sensitive media of consciousness.

I am very far indeed from wishing to suggest that credulity should be substituted for caution, or obtuseness for acuteness of observation, or weakness for the virility of an open mind; I would only plead that open-mindedness should be real and observation extended, and that the most obvious explanation of facts should not be accepted necessarily as the most probably correct; but that other possibilities, based on a profounder analysis, and a more careful comparison of facts, should be duly weighed.
A friend lately told me that on one occasion two spirits were communicating by raps or tilts of the table at the same time, and upon inquiry it was found that neither of them was aware of the fact that the other was communicating. When the reason for this was asked the reply was that the two spirits were in different states, and that this, in the spirit world, was equivalent to difference of locality on earth. Confusion thus caused might easily appear to be impersonation.

Finally, if impersonation occurs, let us always remember that the impersonator is a fellow-being, and reclaimable. A spirit who thus mischievously enters into communication has, nevertheless, a claim upon us. "All souls are mine, saith the Lord"—and if God's then ours. If we meet a deceiver as Christ would meet him, we may succeed in turning him into a friend. Kindly persuasion has been used effectually in these cases. Force can do nothing, and fear will do worse than nothing, but love is the power which can never be exerted without results, though they may not always be apparent to us.

It is not so much the danger of being deceived by discarnate spirits, however, as the danger of being tricked by fraudulent mediums, which daunts inquirers.

Undoubtedly there is this danger: dishonest mediums exist; so also do dishonest legal advisers, dishonest doctors, dishonest parsons, dishonest tradesmen, dishonest M.P.'s, but this is not a sufficient reason for discrediting the entire legal profession, or the medical profession, or the ministry, or any other calling which is in itself respectable. The answer to this will probably be an assertion that, in mediumship, frauds are so much more frequently to be met with than in any of the above-named callings. This assertion is open to question: it is often based on a false premiss. It is assumed that all
who claim to be mediums should be reckoned in making the comparison, whilst the quacks who advertise their nostrums, and the advisers, whether on legal matters or religious, who are not regularly enrolled and recognised members of the legal or ministerial professions, are not counted. The result of this unfair method of comparison is, of course, to the great disadvantage of mediumship. I see no reason to suppose, if the comparison was made on an equal basis, eliminating all those who are not really possessors of psychic gifts at all, that more underhand dealing would be found among mediums than among men of other callings. The difficulty of finding out who are genuine mediums and who are not is greater, because the same sort of examination tests cannot be as readily applied. If a man belongs to the medical profession it is at least certain that he knows enough about his work to have satisfied examiners: but there is no such criterion for mediumship, and therefore each one has to test for himself the reality of the claim to mediumship which may be made, or accept the evidence of reliable witnesses.

It is evident, therefore, that a beginner is liable to make mistakes, and to accept as mediums those who have no more claim to the name than have many of those who advertise quack medicines a claim to be regarded as belonging to the medical faculty. Among mediums, as among men of other callings, there are also a certain number of fraudulent persons, who will pretend to more power than they possess, or will supplement genuine exhibitions of psychic force by occasional trickery. This is bad. To assert that this kind of dishonesty is probably not more prevalent among mediums than among men of other professions, is not to excuse it.

The doctor who, in order to hold a practice together, will assume the possession of knowledge beyond what he
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really has; the minister of religion who, solely in order not to offend his congregation, will preach what he does not himself altogether believe, or withhold truths which he does believe; the solicitor who, to gain or retain clients, will use methods of which he is secretly ashamed; and the medium who, knowing that abnormal phenomena do frequently occur in his presence, condescends to secure that his clients shall not be disappointed by artificially producing them when they do not spontaneously occur, are alike tarred with the same brush, and are equally to be distrusted and shunned. But they are also to be pitied: for sometimes their temptations are in each case severe.

Take the case of the medium, for instance. If he is poor, and has resorted to the use of his psychic powers as a means of gaining a livelihood, the knowledge that he cannot always command results, and that, if his clients get nothing for their money, they will either grumble or may even demand it back,—these considerations may prove a great source of temptation. If he is a man of high principle, the notion of satisfying his clients by trickery, if he cannot do it by the production of genuine phenomena, will not be so much as contemplated, but mediumship and principle are not always found in conjunction. There is no more reason why we should expect that they should invariably be so found than with other gifted persons. The fact that a man is endowed with physical, mental, or artistic powers offers no guarantee that he is moral or religious, and mediumistic powers are equally independent of moral qualifications. Let us be clear on this point. The value of all gifts and powers is only fully appreciated when their use is dignified and ennobled by moral and spiritual aims: but the possession of the gifts does not ensure the co-operation of high principles in the possessor. It is the more necessary to make this
statement in the case of psychics because the term "spiritualist" by which they are often denoted is somewhat misleading. It suggests at once a spiritually minded person, but that is not necessarily what the technical term implies: among psychics there are the spiritually minded and there are also the unspiritually minded. Psychics, as a class, are very much like other classes of people, some good, some bad, some high-principled, some worldly and self-seeking. Investigators ought to make it plain to the medium whom they may visit, that they do not expect a definite quid pro quo: that they recognise that although the medium desires to satisfy his client, he cannot determine the results, and if they should be nil the investigator ought to let it be clearly understood that he is neither mistrustful nor displeased. To approach a medium in any other attitude than this is unwise and injurious; sitters often put a premium upon fraud by urgently demanding phenomena.

There is another consideration in connection with this question of fraud of which the value will probably not be appreciated by any one at an early stage of inquiry into this subject, but the great importance of which will be recognised as the student gains more experience.

It is often stated that, if the medium is discovered doing normally at a seance something which might, had he not been seen, have passed as abnormal phenomena, then there must be trickery either on the part of the medium or of the controls. It is, however, unnecessary to assume this explanation if we fully recognise that whether the abnormal phenomena are due to the subliminal powers of the medium or to the action of some discarnate intelligence, in either case the operation is primarily a mental one and is accomplished by suggestion.

Assuming for the sake of argument that a discarnate
intelligence is operating through the medium (as I believe to be often, though not necessarily always the case) to move some object through the air, the mental force of the intelligence will be directed upon the person of the medium. If the intelligent operator is skilled and has complete control over the force which he is using, the object will be moved without contact of the medium's body, but not without the co-operation of some force residing in the medium. Presumably the brain of the medium will be affected. The volition of the discarnate intelligence and the volition of the medium will blend as one force, the medium having received from the former the suggestion to effect a movement of this object. The normal result of volition on the part of the medium would, of course, be muscular action, but this has to be prevented, and the whole force has to be used without exercising the muscles. When this is accomplished successfully there are still, often, indications that the normal result of the functioning of the nervous centres has been with difficulty inhibited; the contractions and motions of the body show that the muscles have felt and responded to some mental message which has reached them by the accustomed channels.

It may happen, however, that the discarnate operator is not perfectly skilled, and cannot wholly control the force he is using; in that case the chances are that the suggestion of motion, received and transmitted by the brain, will take effect normally upon the muscles, if it fails to produce the abnormal result desired; or nearly normally, for the fact that the cerebral activity of the medium is controlled and reinforced by another intelligence, might, in all probability, render it more than ordinarily difficult to prevent the automatic response of the muscles to this duplicated suggestion.
The medium, in a passive state, readily responds to any suggestion which reaches his brain. Some careful investigators, doctors, and other professional men, after a series of experiments with Eusapia Paladino, in July and August, 1902, made a report\(^1\) stating their conviction that many of the phenomena which occurred with her were incontrovertibly genuine. Referring to actions which seemed to be produced directly and normally by the medium herself, they said: “We are not, however, prepared to state whether these effects should be regarded as voluntary tricks or as unconscious impulses. It seems more probable to us that the latter hypothesis should be, in some measure at least, admitted.

“We have observed that when movements had to be produced at a distance there was a correlation between the attitude of the medium and the contractions of her muscles on the one hand and the movements of the objects on the other.

“We all, even the most obdurate positivists, carried away from these seances an impression that the phenomena deserve the most serious attention on the part of scientific men, who, instead of denying them from prejudice, would serve more usefully the cause of science by studying them with perseverance and impartiality.”

It is, moreover, probable that controls are often unaware or only partly aware of the effects they are producing. We know that this is the case with some of Mrs. Piper’s controls. One of these said: “I do not know how you hear me when I am only thinking.” This communicator did not apparently know that her thinking was moving Mrs. Piper’s brain and muscles to write. Dr. Hodgson often had to explain to the controls in what manner their messages reached him. Probably, therefore, actions which

\(^1\) Reprinted in “Light,” June 13th, 1903.
are ascribed to fraud, either on the part of the medium or the controls, are often due, not to fraud at all, but to some suggestion which has miscarried, producing effects which were not intended.
CHAPTER XI

TELEPATHY

As the fact of telepathy is often cited as an obstacle to belief in mediumistic communications having any other than a mundane origin, it is desirable to add something further on this point.

It should be borne in mind that the word *denotes* a fact but does not suggest an interpretation of the fact. The fact denoted is that thoughts can be conveyed from one mind to another by some method other than the usual channels of sense. Those who know little about psychical experiences sometimes assert that no information is conveyed through mediums that was not already known to those present. This is quite erroneous; it is frequently the case that the statements made by mediums refer to matters unknown at the time to those who receive them; they have to be verified afterwards and are proved to be correct. In these cases thought transference from any one present cannot be a factor in the interpretation of the experience. But when direct telepathy of this sort is out of the question it is still argued that the information may be derived by thought transference from some mind at a distance. To disprove a theory of this description is difficult; statements which cannot be verified are of course valueless, and in order to verify them the contents of these statements must as a general rule be known to some one still living on earth. I will, however,
give one instance in my own experience in which information was given which was not known to any one on earth. Before doing so I should like to remark that the theory of universal, selective telepathy is not scientific, for there is no evidence for such an hypothesis.

Dr. James H. Hyslop has repeatedly pointed this out. He says:—

"It involves the possibility that the mind of the psychic can have access to all living consciousness and subconsciousness, that it can select the right person, and that it can select from his or her subconscious [mind] the right facts to impersonate a given deceased person. . . . But there is not one iota of evidence for any such selective process." ("Psychical Research and Survival," p. 110, Bell and Sons.)

He further adds that the selective character of statements which claim to establish the identity of a communicating spirit, and the unity of personality and consciousness manifested in these communications (sometimes for years in succession) afford a striking argument on the side of the spirit hypothesis, as against a theory of unlimited capacity for thought transference between embodied minds.

The experience to which I have above referred is the following:—

In June, 1903, although I was then practically convinced that some cases could only be explained by the spirit hypothesis, I was very desirous to have some personal experience to which the theory of thought transference could not be applied. Whilst this was in my mind the idea came to me to visit a clairvoyant whom I had seen once or twice before; I put the idea aside at first, but as it seemed rather insistent I eventually wrote for an appointment with him.
In the course of the interview he described to me an elderly gentleman whom I recognised as my uncle. He then looked into a crystal and said, "I get the word uncle." This I immediately attributed to thought transference from my mind. He went on to ask whether he had helped me to arrange any papers before he passed over. I replied that he had helped me to draw up my will. The clairvoyant then said, "I get incorrect, so strongly." This surprised me, and I asked whether he meant that my uncle wished me to alter my will. He said, "No, the basis of it is all right; but there is something incorrect and I think that if you see it he will impress you as to what it is."

When I returned home I wrote to my solicitor for my will, which I had not looked at for some time. When I read it the only impression I was aware of was that I did not clearly understand the legal phraseology; so I sent it to a legal friend, a judge who had recently retired. In a day or two I received the following reply:—

"The will as drawn appears to me to contain a bad blunder which would defeat your intentions to some extent." He went on to explain what the blunder was, but as it was a technical matter I did not entirely understand his explanation. This shows conclusively that the idea which reached the mind of the medium did not emanate from me. Whom can it have come from? Not the solicitor; my correspondent told me that he had found similar blunders had been made by other solicitors, and as there was no benefit accruing to anyone by the error, only confusion, neither the solicitor nor I can have been aware of the mistaken wording. One person was likely to be interested in giving me this information, and that person was my uncle. He had been also my guardian and
had looked after my money matters for me as long as I was under his care and afterwards he had given me, from time to time, his advice and help. If he found out after death that he had made a mistake in his drawing up of my will he would wish to set it right. Moreover, I think that he may have had another object in view. If he was aware that I was anxious for some good evidence that messages which came to me were not merely the reflection of my own thoughts he may have found this way of satisfying me. Altogether the incident seemed to me characteristic of his solicitude and of his intelligence. As this uncle has been described to me repeatedly by various clairvoyants I have additional proof that he is still closely connected with me and able, in all probability, to know my wishes.

I will add one other incident related by a personal friend of my own; in this case the information given was not quite unknown to any one, but it could only be verified by some one living in another country.

After stating that she had had a very good interview with a well-known clairvoyant in London, my friend says that he described to her an old gentleman whom she did not recognise; she was told that he was the father-in-law of her sister who lives in South Africa. The message he gave was "that it was not his fault about the money, he was influenced by others." She continues, "As I knew nothing about his affairs (nor did my sister for he died before her marriage) I wrote out to South Africa to ask her to find out from her husband whether this message was at all a likely one to come from his father. In course of time (some six weeks or so) I had the reply that her husband thought it strangely appropriate as his father had lost all his money by being influenced to lend it to others."
These incidents suffice to show that the objection sometimes brought forward, that messages which claim to come from the departed always give information already known to some one present, is not valid, but is due to ignorance.
CHAPTER XII

MATERIALISATIONS

There are many who, whilst they are willing to accept communications by raps, or writing, or through trance utterances, object strongly to materialisations. Their reasons for objecting are various. They sometimes do so on the ground that (1) they consider that this method is injurious to the Departed, inasmuch as it associates them again with this material plane; (2) that it is a retrograde experience for us, because it substitutes sight for faith; (3) that it makes an excessive drain upon the forces of the medium; and lastly, (4) many shrink from it for personal reasons, because this abnormal mode of manifestation is altogether uncongenial and unsatisfactory, and rather than see a beloved face under these unusual conditions they prefer to wait in patience, and content themselves with inner vision, which is more consoling to their affections.

The personal equation should not be allowed, however, to sway the judgment on the larger question. If the three objections first stated are not valid, then the fourth must be recognised as being, what it is, a matter of personal feeling only, and as such it must take a back seat. It may influence our personal relation to the phenomenon, but it should not be allowed to override the judgment as to the value and import of the phenomenon itself.

For, in the first place, those who are convinced that materialisation actually occurs, are bound to respect
the fact because it is a fact. It happens: therefore we must assume that it has a meaning and a purpose, and that we can learn from it; and in the second place, experience proves this assumption to be correct. It does effect certain results, it does teach certain important truths, and its significance becomes apparent to the thoughtful investigator, who learns to put aside his own likes or dislikes, and to view the matter from the impersonal standpoint.

The phenomenon of materialisation meets materialists on their own ground. A thorough-going materialist will only accept the testimony of his senses. The appearance of a departed spirit in a materialised form appeals to the testimony of the senses in the most complete manner, and if the spirit is also recognisable, as one known in earthly life, the evidence thus afforded is of a kind difficult to put aside. We know that a sceptical mind can find methods of explaining away even this evidence, but given sufficiently good conditions, if the materialised form appears in light, and in a private house, or under circumstances in which fraud is impossible, it must be acknowledged that the fact is difficult to explain on any materialistic principle, and that in many instances it has conclusively convinced open-minded observers of intelligent action, which cannot be explained as "the result of the molecular forces of protoplasm." ¹ It is the most material mode of proof conceivable, and the most valuable for certain minds to whom this kind of evidence will alone appeal.

This is the primary value of the phenomenon of materialisation, but it has a further value in the fresh

¹ "All vital action may be said to be the result of the molecular force of the protoplasm which displays it." "Physical Basis of Life," Lecture III. By Professor Huxley.
light it throws on the nature of matter: or perhaps I should say, because it instructively negatives our sense perceptions of matter. This *Matter*, which to an ordinary man seems so substantial, assumes a very different aspect when he has had convincing proof of the possibilities of materialisation. The shifting and pliable phenomena of this material plane take their true place as thought-creations, spirit manifestations, and thought and spirit are recognised as the only substantial and abiding realities.

The philosopher and the mystic may claim that they knew this of old, that materialisations are not needed to assure them of the fact, but mankind is not composed entirely of philosophers and mystics. The majority of mankind are lacking in spiritual intuitions, or if they are not wholly devoid of them, they are soon submerged beneath a weight of sense perceptions, and yet this majority are as dear to the Heart of Being as are the elect souls of philosophers and mystics. The latter are tempted to leave the majority to pursue their course along the lower and material plane: not so the Parental Wisdom; the Spirit of Love descends to meet His feeble, undeveloped offspring on the plane of matter, and by various methods leads them to apprehend the illusory character of sense perceptions and the reality of spirit. Because God is infinitely wise and all-embracing He uses methods which the wise of earth are tempted to despise and to ignore: and since He uses them, if we are truly wise, we shall use them too.

It is inconsistent for a Christian to belittle the value of material phenomena as demonstration of survival, for the Christian believes that after death Christ gave His disciples material proofs of His resurrection. He asked for a broiled fish and honeycomb "and did eat before them." St. Peter insisted on the importance of this
evidence afforded them of the reality of His presence among them in bodily form. He said, "Him God raised up the third day and showed him openly . . . even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts x. 40, 41). The message of life and immortality which was proclaimed with so much power by the first Christians was enforced by a proclamation that they had themselves seen, and touched, and heard with their physical senses a Man who had died and returned from the dead to bring them assurance and peace; may not one reason why the Christian gospel is less effective now be the fact that the appeal now is only to an event which occurred nearly two thousand years ago and that events of modern occurrence, to which in the providence of God the attention of the world has been called by reliable witnesses—often trained scientific observers—these events have been ignored by the Christian Church and treated as of no account. History repeats itself. "God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen."

Frederic Myers has said:—

"I venture upon a bold saying; for I predict that in consequence of the new evidence, all reasonable men will, a century hence, believe the Resurrection of Christ, whereas in default of the new evidence, no reasonable men, a century hence, would have believed it." ¹

He referred to the evidence as a whole, not to materialisation phenomena, but it must be obvious to all students that if these phenomena are established they afford strong corroborative evidence of the records in the New

Testament of the great historic event on which the Christian religion rests.

In the production of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism the operators seem often to be discarnate spirits who have not spiritually advanced beyond the material plane. Thus does God use the undeveloped to help the undeveloped. The further a spirit advances the less contact there seems to be between it and merely physical things; but many thousands who pass out of the flesh are still very little advanced spiritually, and for these the manipulation of matter (by means at present incomprehensible to us) is a very suitable and useful occupation. It seems probable that although more advanced spirits do not, as a rule, themselves act as agents in the production of physical phenomena, they do occasionally, for a purpose, manifest themselves with the assistance of these more material operators. (Of these questions we can only speak tentatively, however, recognising that we know but little about this difficult region of discovery.)

When we consider how material and how undeveloped are many who die, we ought to be thankful to learn that there is useful work on the material plane that they can still do, that there is room for all energies in the Great Universe of God, and that those who are willing to devote themselves to the service of mankind can find work to do even though they are spiritually undeveloped.

It is these who seem to be the main operators in producing physical phenomena, and those who long to bear witness to some loved friend of the reality of their survival avail themselves sometimes of the opportunity which is afforded by the conditions which a physical séance supplies, in order to manifest themselves visibly. It surely cannot be injurious to them so to do, provided
the motive is not the love of things material, but the desire to be of service, and provided those they thus strive to serve meet them in the right spirit. It is the motive and tone of the materialising spirit and of those to whom he manifests, that will determine the influence of the act of materialisation, and cause it to be either helpful or the reverse. In this connection I would refer to the remarks made in the chapter, "The Methods Employed." The objection that for us to witness a materialisation is a retrograde step, because it is a substitution of sight for faith, is one that is likely to be raised only by those who have had no actual experience of this phenomenon; those who have had such experience will know that the transitory vision of a materialised being is far too fleeting to render the exercise of faith no longer necessary. What is faith? It is something more than knowledge: it is a vital output of energy, by which that which is known to exist is apprehended and appropriated. Evidence of the existence of a spirit world offers a basis for faith; but it does not, and cannot, supersede the exercise of that function by which knowledge becomes incorporated into life.

It is true, however, that there may be some danger of growing dependent on the constant repetition of these evidences of spirit action; the manifestations are meant to enable us to realise the realities which are not habitually seen, and their purpose is frustrated if the soul of man does not learn to walk by faith, and, having received the sensible demonstration he desired, fails to consider what this demonstration really signifies. This risk accompanies all life whilst we are living in a phenomenal world. It is open to us to use the phenomenal, or to abuse it, to see through it, or to let it obstruct our sight. We must not suppose, moreover, that materialisations show
us the actual present appearance of spirits, or the mode of their embodiment in their own sphere. They do not do so: we do not see them as we should see them were we, too, discarnate like themselves. A materialisation seems to be a thought-moulded appearance, and the success or non-success of the effort to materialise seems to be mainly dependent on the capacity of the agent to remember, and to vividly reproduce, in thought, his appearance whilst on earth. This thought image is the main factor in producing the result, but not the only one; the thought-form is moulded in a subtle form of matter which is drawn partly from the circle but mainly from the physical medium. This seems to be what occurs; but we know so little about the modus operandi that one cannot state anything concerning it with certainty. One can only suggest a working hypothesis. The degree in which the consciousness of the spirit is focussed on this material thought-form seems to be variable. If the consciousness is strongly concentrated upon it, the materialisation will be more completely developed, and the spirit who materialises will be conscious of physical sensations; for instance, the temperature of the room or any touch from those in the circle will produce effects on the consciousness of the spirit similar to those experienced by the incarnate. An injury inflicted on the materialised form would be registered on the consciousness of the spirit materialising, and subsequently the medium would probably be conscious of it also, and might even retain the mark on his body, for the matter with which a spirit builds up a visible form is withdrawn from the medium. Possibly the consciousness of the two beings is more or less blended, and the spirit of the medium co-operates with the discarnate spirit to produce the results.
The materialised form is often very different in size and build, and is sometimes of another sex, to that of the medium, but sometimes they are more or less alike. This fact points to a close connection existing between the two entities, the incarnate and the discarnate. Of course, at first, this will arouse suspicion; and the fact that the phenomenon of materialisation is so often produced in the dark, seems to warrant this suspicion. It is most desirable that mediums should be developed in a subdued light. Although the vibrations of white light hinder the phenomenon, the red and green rays are not similarly obstructive. Dr. Maxwell\(^1\) states his conviction that if light were habitually used the psychic force which, with some mediums, is at present only emitted in darkness, would be emitted equally in light. Habit, we know, is potent. Nature responds to conditions which are habitually enforced. If the medium supposes that darkness is necessary, and habitually insists on it, the habit thus formed may become so persistent that for this medium darkness will be really a necessity; but it need not become so.

It is most urgently to be desired that all mediums should recognise that, in order that mankind should derive from physical phenomena the full benefit which they are calculated to produce, development under the most favourable conditions for observation should be encouraged. The physical phenomena of the seance room are of little value if they occur under conditions which are to sceptics unevidential, as it is for sceptics that these phenomena are mainly valuable. We want the hearty intelligent co-operation of all physical mediums in the Cause, in which their abnormal powers may be so serviceable. There are mediums who fully recognise the

\(^1\) "Phénomènes Psychiques." By J. Maxwell.
importance of making the conditions under which their mediumship operates as evidential as possible, and who, on this account, themselves prefer that it should be observed in light; others, however, although perfectly honest, do not feel the essential importance of this. It is earnestly to be hoped that they will assist the work to the utmost of their power in this direction.

The fourth objection which is urged against materialisations is the fact that they exhaust the medium considerably. If the exercise of this kind of physical mediumship necessarily produced serious injury, this objection would be, in my opinion, insurmountable, but I do not think the facts favour this conclusion. It is desirable, however, that physical mediumship should be much more carefully guarded and much more sparingly exercised than is usually the case.

The full form materialisations of course take up a great deal of energy, and if there were not instances in which this phenomenon has been produced without the medium incurring any permanent ill effects, objectors might reasonably claim that this kind of phenomenon cannot be obtained without excessive use of psychic faculties; but these instances do exist. And therefore one may conclude that it is the regulation of the phenomenon, not the cessation of it, which should be insisted on.

Those who employ mediums often fail to realise the responsibilities which devolve upon the circle at a seance. The medium's organisation is a peculiarly sensitive one, and liable to be injuriously affected by any violent action; or by antagonistic or disturbed thought. Those who think they are justified in seizing a medium in order to test the reality of the phenomena, are by so doing endangering the health, and even the life, of a genuine medium; the rough action, at a moment when the
conditions are peculiarly unstable, may produce a shock by which the medium may be permanently injured. Anxious, or inimical, thoughts in the sitters register themselves on the sensitive plate of the medium's mind, and often may considerably affect the results obtained. All who take part in seances should do so with quiet and prepared minds, and with sufficient knowledge of the conditions necessary not to entail hurt to the medium and failure to the seance as a whole.
CHAPTER XIII

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF SPIRITUALISTS

The truths of Spiritualism have a threefold relation to mankind:—(1) They appeal to the senses. Certain phenomena occur, and, impressing us through the channels of sense, claim our observation. (2) They appeal to the intellect. We recognise that the facts demand a reasonable interpretation, and in so far as we respond intelligently to this demand we grow in understanding, or, where we fail to understand, we find the process of attempting to do so of highly educative value. (3) They appeal to the moral nature and to the will. It is in this connection that the true significance and highest results of Spiritualism will be found. To stop short in our response here is to miss the main value of the study; it is also to miss the best test of the truth of the conclusions to which the study leads us.¹ "Social conduct," says M. le Conte, "is the art corresponding to our philosophy of life, and therefore, is the surest test of truth. . . . Whatever is really true will surely vindicate itself by its beneficence, if we will only wait patiently for

¹ If any one is inclined to dispute this statement I would recommend him to read Chapter I., Part III., of Joseph Le Conte's work, "Evolution in Relation to Religious Thought." The subject of Spiritualism is not mentioned in this work, but the principle laid down in this chapter in connection with the discovery of fresh truths is equally as applicable to Spiritualism as to Evolution, and the whole of this latter portion of the book will repay the careful consideration of those who are fearful of the consequences of discovery, and of its possible effect on religious belief.
But we must remember that those who believe in the facts of Spiritualism have to do something besides waiting patiently for results, they must be themselves the factors in producing those results. The facts must "vindicate their beneficence" in the lives and conduct of those who accept them; it is only thus that their reality and worth will become assured to mankind.

Herein lies our responsibility. We are students of a science of spirit which stands on its trial before the judgment of men; we are convinced that it is indeed a science, i.e., that we are dealing with facts which can be proved to be an integral part of the scheme of the Universe, and governed by laws (although these laws are at present unknown to us), and believing this, we maintain that we cannot afford to shut our eyes to them, and that to recognise and try to understand them is an imperative duty which must have profound and far-reaching results for the world. What, then, ought to be our personal attitude towards this subject as intelligent moral beings?

This cannot be better expressed than in the words of Phillips Brooks: "We must despair of growing great, unless we can feel that we are given to the Cause to work for it, and not it to work for us." If this were actually the aim of everyone calling himself a Spiritualist, who can doubt that the world would soon recognise the importance of this subject?

Let us consider what exactly is the Cause for which we are called upon to work. It is something more than belief in man's survival, though this faith is included in it. The Cause itself is the furtherance of Truth, and more particularly the revelation of the kingdom of Spirit. I cannot find a better term by which to denote the discovery of the reality and potency of spiritual forces
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and immaterial beings. This realm of spirit is eternal, and has ever been intuitively apprehended by those who have been led by the Spirit, but to those who have made sense perceptions alone the basis of their reasoning, the truth that "there is no real efficient force but spirit" has been obscure and hard to accept. It is this truth which is now in process of being scientifically demonstrated by psychic manifestations. The great value of these manifestations is that they lead to the recognition of the world of Spirit as the world of Causes, and of the material world as only the phenomenal mode by which spirit expresses itself. Everyone who studies these manifestations may contribute his quota of service towards the wider acceptance of this truth, and towards the final abolition of the false homage that has been paid to the illusory world of appearances.

Many Spiritualists realise the greatness and the privilege of thus working for this Cause, but there are others who are interested in Spiritualism mainly as a means of self-development, or as a curious subject of inquiry, as a gratification of personal ambition, or as a means of increasing wealth, or perhaps from the worthier, but still self-centred motive, that they find in it consolation under bereavement. It may be all this. It should afford consolation, it should tend to self-development; there is a sense even in which it may satisfy a legitimate ambition, the ambition to make the very most of our gifts and powers; but if we have no higher aim, and if we see no more in Spiritualism than this, we are using "the Cause to work for us," and not giving ourselves "to work for the Cause." We are not great, we "must despair" of ever being great, until we can aspire to a higher aim. If we do thus aspire, what will the aspiration involve? It will involve the suppression of egotism, to which I have
already referred as a special danger accompanying the possession of psychic gifts, and it will involve the suppression of our special idiosyncrasies, and also of our personal predilections and prejudices whenever these are obstacles to our service in the Cause.

Further, there is the responsibility of imparting to others the knowledge we have gained, and of sharing with them the benefit of our privileges and gifts. Maeterlinck says: "Every soul in its sphere has charge of a lighthouse for which there is more or less need." It is so: but we must be very careful how we impart our knowledge, and to whom. We must not injure our Cause by inopportuneness, or by forcing our subject upon unwilling ears; neither must we present it in such a crude way as to do it injustice. We must bear in mind Mr. Stainton Moses' wise warning not to state abnormal facts for public acceptance without offering sufficient evidence to justify our doing so. Many Spiritualists seriously hinder the spread of conviction by neglecting this warning. The passage in his book, "Spirit Identity," pp. 142, 143, is so valuable that I will quote it at length:

"We should consciously remember that no man ought to be asked to assent to such facts and truths as we propound for public acceptance—facts new and strange, and not only that, but transcending, and, in some cases, reversing previous experience—save on the most exact and complete evidence. It is an insult to intelligence to expect belief on any other basis; and the converts, let me say, that could be so obtained are not of the highest order of mind. . . . It is not only inexpedient and wrong to publish inaccurate and loose records but it is not always wise to print—still less to recount, with all the emphasis of enthusiasm—even exact records of very extraordinary phenomena, unless they can be attested by such a weight of testimony as to make it impossible for a fair mind to reject the record. I believe that it is not wise to force too strong meat on those who are not prepared to digest it.
Let me not be mistaken. I mean exactly what I say. I do not think it wise to tax the belief of those who are not familiar with the subject. It is all so strange, so subversive of previous experience, that I counsel discretion. It is within my knowledge that much harm has been done, on many occasions, by injudiciously forcing on unprepared minds what seem to them monstrous narrations of unexplained and inexplicable occurrences.

There are probably few of us who do not feel that we must cry, "peccavi!" in respect of this counsel. It is true that since "Spirit Identity" was first published the facts of Spiritualism have become more widely recognised, and, therefore, we more frequently meet with prepared minds, but it is also true that as Spiritualists become more and more familiar with what was once so startling to them, they are apt to forget their former state of incredulity, and, forgetting also that the majority of those they meet are quite ignorant of the mass of evidence which testifies to the reality of those abnormal occurrences, they sometimes ride rough-shod over the doubts of inquirers with a needlessness that is neither discreet nor kind. It is incumbent upon us to respect incredulity when it is not obstinate, wilful, and impertinent. The man who holds back from giving his belief to things which appear to him insufficiently attested, but who is willing to weigh evidence and to accept facts when the evidence seems to warrant his doing so, is one to whom we should give all the sympathetic and reasonable assistance in our power in order to help him to obtain the evidence he desires.

A Spiritualist should be noted as markedly sane, rational, and pleasant to live with, otherwise his personal idiosyncrasies will be liable to be imputed to the Cause he desires to serve. Spontaneous originality is refreshing, but studied peculiarity is annoying, and it is possible to
mistake the one for the other. Further, he must not be so absorbed in the study of occult powers and of the unseen sphere of being that normal powers are neglected, and the seen world undervalued. We believe that this world also is a manifestation of spirit; that we are spirits here and now, though temporarily clothed with atomic bodies. To serve and save and commune with incarnate spirits is as important as to hold intercourse with the discarnate; indeed, in a sense, it is more important, because it is the duty which lies nearest, and for the fulfilment of which we have been incarnated. If we miss the purpose of our present mode of existence and the duties involved in it; if we fail to recognise the beauty and worth of the manifestations of spirit to which we are visibly related, we may equally fail in the next stage; and failure here and now may seriously hinder our progress hereafter. It is by fulfilling the functions of our present condition, by exercising our already developed faculties, by taking a full draught of the cup of life which contains our allotted portion of opportunity and experience, that we can best become fit to enter upon that future stage which is meant to be the orderly and symmetrical outcome of the present.

It is needless to say that I do not for a moment mean to endorse the common interpretation of the saying: "One world at a time." That can have no meaning for a Spiritualist, who knows that the other world is interpenetrating this, and that we are living (if fully alive), and are meant to live, in two worlds at once. The two states blend like the warp and weft in a loom; if we neglect either the loss will be our own.

There is a very real peril for anyone who ardently pursues a fascinating study, that he may become a man of one idea only. Professor James says: "Spiritual
excitement takes pathological forms whenever other interests are too few and the intellect too narrow.” (“Varieties of Religious Experience.”) Let us take warning, and enrich the temple of the spirit by building into it whatsoever things are worthy of our attention, and by keeping our minds awake to as many different interests as we can. Particularly we should be on our guard that it may not be justly said of us that we are indifferent to social evils and uninterested in social reforms, which are as really spirit operations as are any direct manifestations from the discarnate.

There is one of these progressive movements which has a special claim upon the consideration of Spiritualists. I allude to the strenuous effort which the Human Race is now making to free itself from dependence on the artificial stimulus of alcohol. I purposely use these words to denote what is commonly called the temperance movement because I think they indicate the real significance of the movement, and also show why it so emphatically claims the co-operation of those who call themselves Spiritualists. There are some who will question the fact that this strenuous effort is actually discernible; because, as is always the case in evolution, the van is led by a minority; it is the minority who are breaking away from this bondage and leading up the Man-Soul into higher conditions. When Nature trained the creature to abandon the use of its fore limbs as supports, and to stand erect on two, setting free the other pair for higher achievements, she did not enter upon this new stage of development with a majority, but with a minority, probably a very small minority indeed. As in physical, so it is in mental and ethical evolution. He who would catch a glimpse of the teleological significance of the evolutionary process must watch the trend of persistent minorities:—
"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent—flooding in—the main."

The drinking bouts which in former generations men, claiming to be honourable gentlemen, indulged in without scruple and without loss of prestige, are things of the past. Excessive drinking is not a thing of the past, as we all know; but drinking to intoxication for mere pleasure is now generally regarded as a thing to be ashamed of. This fact proves that the ethical standard in this respect is advancing. Why then does the national drink bill increase? I venture to maintain that the increase is not due to increased sensualism in the nation, that it is not mainly in its appeal to carnal appetites that the danger of alcohol lies, but that the explanation for the most part lies in quite another direction. It is the high pressure at which men and women live, the strain of life and the strain of work, the large demands now made on nervous energy and on brain power, which drive so many to resort to the use of stimulants. The temptation is not on that account less perilous, but more so, because it is more subtle, and because it reaches natures that would be quite impervious to it in its grosser form.

The man or woman who becomes enslaved by this bad habit may have been a real hero in the work of life, and we dare not for one moment class a man like this with the man who has made bodily pleasure his main interest in life. Between the two there is a world of difference; and yet to both alike Nature may assign the same penalty. At first sight this seems cruelly unjust. In the sight of the Righteous Judge there must be an eternal distinction between the two characters, and if, nevertheless, Nature
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treats both alike, we may be very sure that there is some profoundly important significance in the fact that she does so. Nature does not judge motives, Nature judges actions only. In the realm of physical law she judges with inexorable justice according to the standard of fitness which is the law under which evolution is being worked out. To evolve a Race of beings fitted to accomplish the highest ends of existence is the ideal Nature has in view; any individual who opposes by his actions the achievement of this ideal in the Race suffers the severest penalty. The penalty works out automatically. Nature makes no excuses, or exceptions; it would be bad for the Race, it would be fatal to the perfecting of her scheme, if she did so. There is a larger order of existence than that of physical nature, an order in which motive is of chief account, and where fine distinctions are made with unfailling accuracy and precision. The brave soul who, in the struggle to force his worn-out brain or exhausted energies to do work for which they were no longer equal, has yielded to the temptations of alcohol, will find that his Judge, who is the Searcher of Hearts, can safely be trusted to do justice to his noble aims and to recognise

"How far high failure overleaps the bounds
Of low successes."

But he will none the less incur the full penalty of his mistaken action, for it is an action in direct opposition to the upward trend of the Race, and for opposition to the evolutionary trend Nature's retribution is inexorable.

The consequences which we see constantly resulting from an excessive use of stimulants, offer a clear indication as to the direction in which the upward pressure of the Race must make itself felt. Man must learn to be able to work without dependence on alcoholic stimulants. Since we see that dependence on the use of stimulants pro-
duces serious deterioration, moral, mental, and physical, the Human Spirit must free itself from this bondage, for it can never fulfil its higher destiny or realise its capacities until it does so.

Psychic work, particularly certain phases of it—the work of a materialising medium and in some cases the work of a healer—is exhausting work; it is therefore in work like this that abstinence from alcohol is more particularly desirable; it is here that the temptation to resort to stimulants will be specially experienced. It is expedient for the Race, it is more especially expedient for all whose work involves a large expenditure of nervous energy to discourage in themselves and others the use of alcohol. The best way to discourage it in others is to abstain from it oneself.

If we agree with M. Maxwell, who, in his recent work on "Phénomènes Psychiques," maintains that psychics are advanced types of humanity, "des êtes précieux, comme les avant-coureurs du type futur de notre race," we shall estimate them and their work at a very high value. Being jealous for the honour of our mediums, we shall scrupulously protect these specimens of our evolving humanity from any condition which may tend to deteriorate them. We shall recognise gratefully that, by consenting to develop their powers, they are choosing a life of difficulty, and open to its own special temptations, and we shall do our best to prevent the strain upon them from becoming more severe than they can bear, remembering that in mediumship, as in many other human faculties, it is quality rather than quantity that is of importance. If the strain proves too strong, and they succumb to the temptations of their life, it should be our part to pity and to restore them again by sympathy and fair and merciful judgments, and specially we should carefully avoid making their temptations
more severe by offering them stimulants when we invite them to our houses for our benefit.

We have responsibilities towards mediums which can only be fulfilled by those who recognise as a life principle the noble utterance of the prophet Micah: "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." If we will be absolutely just, invariably and wisely kind, and if we will make room in our souls, by self-suppression and humility, for the growth of insight and consideration for others, "sensitives" will have a better chance of developing their powers without detriment to themselves and for the real advantage of the Race.
APPENDIX A

[The following prayer, which is referred to in the Introduction to this volume, was written "automatically" through the hand of the Rev. W. Stainton Moses ("M.A. Oxon.")]

"The exalted intelligences who have been permitted to manifest to you have commissioned me to write for you a prayer, which we have composed for you as the expression of the wishes and aspirations of our spirits, and as a fitting model for the frame of mind in which you should join us in approaching the great God. It is well that you attune your devotions to the adoration of the angels:—

"Eternal Father, Supreme, All-mighty Lord! Pour down on these Thy waiting children the spirit of Thy Love, that they may be in harmony with Thee and with Thy holy angels and ministering spirits. Grant them, Thou God of Truth, the spirit to follow on even to the end the pursuit of Truth, which comes from Thee, and is of Thee.

"Unchanging, Eternal Lord! Grant them the spirit of zeal and earnestness, that they may with unwavering purpose reach onward and upward to Thee, the Fountain of Eternal Light. Thou Pure Spirit! keep them unspotted and unstained. Cleanse their thoughts, purify their motives, elevate their desires.

"Spirit of Wisdom! Make them to grow in wisdom and in knowledge, and still to thirst for more.

"God of all graces! Shower on them the plenitude of those gifts which Thou seest to be profitable for them. Eradicate error, strengthen love of truth, inspire knowledge, infuse
charity, and increase progression, that each in some sort may join with us Thy ministering angels and spirits in the harmonious anthem of ceaseless praise.

"Glory and honour and adoration be to Thee, Supreme, All-loving, All-holy God.

"I. S. D., Rector, and many others.

"These spirits have been concerned with others in composing for you the prayer which I have written. Meditate upon it, and use it as a model for your own devotions. Ye know little of prayer as we know.

"The Supreme keep you.

"I. S. D."
APPENDIX B

The following "Advice to Inquirers," by "M.A. (Oxon.)" will be helpful to those who wish to investigate for themselves.

"Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type. Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

"If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held over, but not in contact with it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages. Let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated, at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

"When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this ask who the Intelligence purports to be,
which of the company is the medium, and such relevant ques-
tions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that
exists in directing the movement at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this.

"The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same
code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they
may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they
are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but
avoid any vexatious imposition of restriction on free communi-
cation. Let the Intelligence use its own means. It rests
greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating
or frivolous and even tricky.

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

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

To the above I would add a few further suggestions:—

1. Avoid experimenting too frequently. If attempting
automatic writing, two or three experiments a week with
intervening days is sufficient. For physical phenomena, materialisations, etc., this would be too frequent.

2. As a rule, abstain from experimenting when health is not good, or the body exhausted; and particularly if the nervous system is out of order. Psychical development should not be attempted unless the nervous system is healthy and the brain orderly.

3. Do not attempt experiments in a casual way. Have a fixed day and hour, limit each experiment to a definite time, usually about an hour, and keep to the limit determined upon.

4. If told to stop by the guides, do so at once; to prolong experiments after the usual controls indicate that they should cease is very unwise, as the psychic force, no longer directed by those who have proved themselves capable controls, may then be utilised by irresponsible, and possibly mischievous, spirits if the opportunity is still given for communication.

5. Avoid experimenting in public buildings, which are the resort of all sorts of people, and where the influences may be very mixed.

6. Do not join a circle for development without knowing something of the characters of those who form it.

7. Begin every experiment in a prayerful spirit, desiring protection, guidance, and the blessing of the Highest; and try to maintain a quiet mind.

8. Try to find out who are the guiding spirits most closely associated with you, and seek their protection and help. They will protect you from undesirable spirits who may otherwise intrude; they will sometimes advise you on details, such as telling you the persons you should invite to your circle, and the frequency of these gatherings, etc.
BOOKS RECOMMENDED FOR BEGINNERS

1. "The Society for Psychical Research."
2. "Twenty Years of Psychical Research."
3. "Automatic Speaking and Writing."

Three books by Ed. T. Bennett, late assistant Secretary of the S.P.R. (W. Rider & Son. 1s. net. each.)

"Psychical Research." By Sir William Barrett, F.R.S. (Home University Library. 1s. net.)

"Psychical Research and Survival." By James H. Hyslop. (Bell. 2s. 6d. net.)

"The Survival of Man." By Sir Oliver Lodge. (Methuen. 1s. net.)

"Raymond. A Treatise on Life and Death." By Sir Oliver Lodge. To appear this autumn (1916). (Methuen. 10s. 6d. net.)

"Can Telepathy Explain?" By Minot T. Savage. (Putnam. 3s. 6d.) A short and interesting introduction to the subject.

"New Evidences in Psychical Research." By J. Arthur Hill. (W. Rider & Son. 3s. 6d. net.)


"Our Self after Death." By the Rev. Arthur Chambers. (Charles Taylor. 1s. net.)

Treats the subject of the next life admirably from the point of view of a Student of Scripture, and also of Psychical Research.

"The Life and Experiences of Edmund Dawson Rogers." (Office of "Light," 110, St. Martin's Lane, W.C. 6d. net.)

"Spirit Identity, and Higher Aspects of Spiritualism." By "M.A. Oxon." (Office of "Light." 3s. 6d. net.)

"Mors Janua Vitae? A discussion of certain communications purporting to come from F. W. H. Myers." By H. A. Dallas. (W. Rider & Son. 2s. 6d. net.)

"A Guide to Mediumship." By E. W. and M. H. Wallis. In three parts. (Office of "Light." 1s. each.)

"Human Personality." By F. W. H. Myers. 2 Vols. (Longmans. 42s. net.)

A standard work of unique value to students who wish to pursue the subject scientifically. An abridged edition is also published in one volume, 10s. 6d. net.