

Spiritualism in Its Relation to Theosophy

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"Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice"

[Page 3] You will see, by the motto I have chosen for this paper, that I shall endeavour, in treating of this subject, to be fair to all sides. And I lay particular stress upon this because I know first, how beset with difficulties the subject is in itself, and secondly, because I myself stand in a peculiar relation towards it. This relation has one great advantage attached to it and one equally great disadvantage. The advantage, as all my Spiritualist friends (and I hope there are some here tonight) very well know, is that having been for about five years officially connected with the National Association of Spiritualists, as the chief Society was then called, and for some four or five years before that intimately associated with some of the leaders of the movement, I had ample opportunities both of investigating its phenomena during what I may call its most phenomenal stage, and of observing its influence on those who practised it; and also the tendency of its teachings on the minds of those who tried to get at the force behind the phenomena, and to explain those phenomena by means of evidence culled from all parts of the world. These I call advantages.

My disadvantage may be considered by some to lie in the fact that, being now no longer in sympathy with all the explanations accepted by my Spiritualist friends, I may be a little inclined (though I have always carefully guarded against that position) to underrate the reasoning which seems to them, and once seemed to me, to be so cogent and all-sufficient to meet the difficulties of the case.

I must apologize for speaking so much of myself, but to those who do not know me, I think it better to justify my attitude towards this subject, and to account to them for what may seem a bold step in taking it up at all. I want them to understand that I am not speaking from hearsay or from second-hand information, but from actual knowledge [Page 4] founded on personal experience and personal contact with the facts and individuals concerned. I also want, if possible, to point out some things which seem to me to be unnecessarily dividing two classes of students who ought to join hands in a more friendly manner than they do at present, for I think the division between them is a good deal owing to a mutual misunderstanding of each other's position. There is much in common between Spiritualists and Theosophists, and I don't see why there should be now any antagonism between them.

In stating what I hold to be the truth about the whole matter, I shall doubtless (and unavoidably) say some things distasteful to both sides — but to heal a wound you must probe it to the core, in order to remove any matter which is an obstacle to healthy growth. I hope that I shall not give any unnecessary pain, and I hope that at the conclusion of my paper our Spiritualist friends, should there be any here present, will

speak their minds freely and criticize my remarks on this important subject.

Now, on first coming face to face with the phenomena of Spiritualism, the effect they are likely to produce on the mind depends greatly on the experience that lies behind the investigator. In this paper I shall assume that he is honest himself and has to deal only with honest and honourable persons, and that the facts before him are real, and not fraudulent. The case of fraud or otherwise in mediumship is not before us tonight; it is an unsavoury subject and need not here be considered. All that we need postulate is that the same care and caution are brought to the investigation as would be brought by any earnest student to experiments and research into other natural (so-called) physical phenomena — perhaps rather more. Take a man of trained mind — Mr. William Crookes, for example. After a sufficient number of trials under the strictest test conditions, electrical tests and others devised by himself, the *séances* being held in his own house, he was forced to the conclusion, which he nobly maintained in face of the ridicule of the Scientific Society of which he was even then the greatest ornament, that there is at work a force not hitherto taken into account by the world of Science at large (modern Science, of course) to which he gave the name of Psychic Force, governed by an intelligence, though he gives no opinion as to its nature. To this position I believe he still holds; publicly at least he has never gone back from it.

I pass over such fugitive experiments as those made by Professor Lankester and Dr. Donkin, which led to the celebrated Slade trial, which trial resulted, from the nature of the evidence given, in a complete victory for Spiritualism. Among the followers of Crookes was [Page 5] Serjeant Cox, founder of the Psychological Society, which died with him and was revived in the Society for Psychical Research, of which no more need be said.

But there were others, men of equally trained minds, of European celebrity, who could not rest in this hypothesis, but found themselves constrained to connect these phenomena with intelligences independent of the medium, basing their conclusions equally on long experiment and research, and pursuing the subject with equal earnestness. Among these were Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Mr. Cromwell Varley, F.R.S., Dr. Perty, Professor of Natural Science at the University of Berne; Prof. Hoffmann, of the Würzburg University; Dr. Boutlerof, Professor of Chemistry at St. Petersburg; Prof. Zöllner, of Leipzig, author of *Transcendental Physics*; Camille Flammarion, Astronomer Royal of France; Professors Hare and Mapes, of the United States, and numbers of others. All these were driven to accept the theory generally understood as "Spiritual", as the only one which covered the facts with which they had become familiar.

I do not now stop to consider the third class of believers, namely, the great mass of Spiritualists *par excellence* — not that I think their evidence unworthy of acceptance, but because I am concerned tonight more with classifying theories than with bringing forward individual witnesses. Their testimony may be found in innumerable writings. Among the best are those of Mr. W. Stainton Moses, on *Psychography*, or direct writing; Mr. Epes Sargent, a retired schoolmaster of Boston; Mr. Wm. Howitt, Mr. S. C. Hall, Mrs. de Morgan, whose book, *From Matter to Spirit*, published in 1863 and now out of print, opens with a preface by her husband, sometime President of the Mathematical Society of London, and a recent work by Florence Marryat, entitled, *There is no Death*; also in the pages of the *Spiritualist* newspaper and of the *Spiritual Magazine*.

The names I have mentioned are sufficient guarantee that the Spiritualist theory was not adopted merely

by the ignorant, the unintellectual, or the untrained; still there were some among them who, not being altogether satisfied as to the source of the phenomena, and being scandalized, or, rather, saddened by the low-class character of certain manifestations, and the deterioration of character among public mediums, began to look around for some new light on the whole subject, and were thus ready to welcome the doctrine which was soon to be given to the world. For it is matter of history that the Theosophical Society drew the chief of its first adherents from the ranks of Spiritualism. In New York Colonel Olcott, the author of *People from Another World*, [Page 6] and widely known as a pronounced Spiritualist, was chosen, doubtless, by "those who know", to be one of the founders and the President of the whole Society; Mr. A. E. Newton, at that time President of the Spiritualist Society of New York, was also one of the original members of the Theosophical Society; likewise Mr. C. C. Massey, and, for a time, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten. In England, four out of five of the original group were members of the British National Association of Spiritualists, as well as the first two presidents, Mr. C. C. Massey and Dr. George Wyld. During the first year of its existence, the English Theosophical Society continued to be recruited almost entirely, if not solely, from the Spiritualist ranks (Mrs. Edwin Ellis, Madame de Steiger, Miss Arundale are names which occur to me at this moment). After that time the outside world began to make inquiry and to join the Theosophical movement.

The reason for this is not far to seek, for there can be no doubt that Spiritualists, in consequence of their familiarity with the phenomena so largely commented on in *Isis Unveiled*, brought to the study of occult matters a certain preparedness of mind for the reception of the new teaching; while the materialist, on the other hand, had many a hard nut to crack before he could admit the reality of the marvels of Theosophy. But in the majority of instances a contrary effect was produced among Spiritualists, and for reasons which I will try to show.

H. P. Blavatsky had, by the publication of her great work, *Isis Unveiled*, driven, as it were, a wedge into the very heart of the Spiritualist movement, by which it was split into two opposing camps. There were those who had either never been satisfied or were beginning to be dissatisfied with the Spiritualist theory of the return of their departed friends; the extraordinary development of the "materializations" — first, hands only, then faces and heads, lastly the full forms, such as those of "Katie King," so amply attested by Mr. Crookes, the "Lenore" of Miss Showers and others, in England, not to speak of the countless mediums in the United States — this development had reached its culmination in the home of the Eddy Brothers in Vermont, where Madame Blavatsky first met with Colonel Olcott, as related in his book above mentioned. To him was first given the explanation that the beings acting behind these masks were indeed "people from another world", but that they were by no means those whom they represented themselves to be. They were but the Kama-rupic dregs, or cast-off lower principles, of former men and women, helped by certain elementals to utilize the vital forces of the medium, [Page 7] masquerading as the personalities of such departed friends as the persons assisting at the *séances* desired to invoke. This was proved to Colonel Olcott by the fact that from the moment Madame Blavatsky appeared on the scene, the so-called "spirits" of Cossacks, Kalmucks and various Russian or Tartar tribes likewise appeared in all the bravery of their national costumes, too correct and too extraordinary to have been conjured up by the imagination of the farmer's wife and her sons at Chittenden. Madame Blavatsky also explained to him that she had by her knowledge of the forces at work, and by the exercise of her will-power that certain spirits should appear, actually caused their appearance, and that many other persons unconsciously bring about that which she had consciously performed. Once this theory was made known, it acted as a spark to a train of gunpowder. Those who could not see its reasonableness, nor how completely it fitted the facts that lay so plentifully to hand, and to which no former explanation had ever fully sufficed, were roused to furious anger against one who came amongst them as a stranger, with her

new-fangled teachings about masks and shells and false personalities, robbing them of their cherished beliefs and the hopes they had founded on too insecure a basis. The mothers who believed their little ones to be waiting for their arrival in the Summerland, and that they came rapping round on the tables and chairs in the home-circle, dear and familiar as ever, told H. P. B. that no woman would ever believe in her. Spiritualistic professors scoffed at her as a played-out medium, they would have none of her. The clamour and discussion that were raised now seem incredible, and from that moment to this their echoes have never died away. The wise were thankful that the dangers attendant on mediumship were pointed out to them, and even those who persevered in its development learned to be more cautious, but did not any the more acknowledge their indebtedness to Theosophic explanations; they had learned, they said, from their *own* experience, which was partly true.

I must admit that there is some excuse to be made for these people. It *is* annoying when you think you have made a new discovery — and it *was* new or had a new awakening as a systematic development in the West from the time of the Rochester rappings and the experiences of the Fox girls — it is annoying when you have worked patiently and doggedly at some new thing, when an unknown person from an unknown land and with an unknown past, suddenly drops down amongst you and declares that it is all as old as the hills, and that she knows how it is done. And just because some of the deepest feelings of human nature are involved in these matters, and [Page 8] because their truth or falsehood is of such deep and vital import, just as in religious controversy, the fiercest passions are quickly aroused, and the world is set ablaze in a short space of time.

All these results were anticipated by H. P. Blavatsky, and in *Isis Unveiled* she makes various statements to this effect (e.g. vol. 2, page 637).

But there were also those who, having applied the Theosophical key to the phenomena in question, and being convinced of its efficacy and truth, found themselves once more at the parting of the ways, and in danger of pointing out the road to others on which they dared no longer travel themselves. Such was my own position. When I looked round and saw the injury resulting from "physical *séances*" as they were called, to the mediums, both here and in America; when I saw them breaking down, some physically, others morally, all going sooner or later to ruin, it became to me impossible to continue on the same lines as before. The argument that these manifestations were necessary to break down the wall of materialism and thus to benefit humanity at the sacrifice of the mediums, seemed to me no more justifiable than the argument for vivisection. In fact the vivisectionists had the best of it, their work being on the physical plane only, while in the case of the mediums, higher parts of the nature are concerned; we were, in fact, dealing with souls. And so I felt bound to sever my five years' official connection with the Spiritualist Association at Great Russell Street, and a much longer one with some valued friends, and to break down as far as possible the bridge which had borne me over the rising tide of materialism, but which I dared not recommend others to cross. This is perhaps not the place to make an *apologia pro vita sua*, but I cite my own case, partly because my action was greatly misunderstood at the time on account of attendant circumstances, and partly because that case was typical of others, who being in a less prominent position in regard to the movement, their withdrawal from it was less remarked. Some again, remained in a dilemma out of which they did not see, and never have seen, the way to extricate themselves, and this partly for reasons the consideration of which brings me to the second part of my subject.

The Spiritualists felt, as a body, and I believe I am expressing what many of them feel today, that the explanations of Theosophy, however well they may have fitted the facts of the physical phenomena, do

not explain a very large body of facts of a different and a higher order. And some of these are on that debatable ground which may be said to lie between Spiritualism and Theosophy. It is useless, nay more, it is unjust to tell Spiritualists that the facts which have primarily [Page 9] brought light and knowledge to them, and actual consolation to many, are all the work of spooks, elementaries and elementals. Some of them have arrived at similar conclusions, in regard to certain phenomena, partly from their own experience and partly by the light borrowed from Theosophy. They have learned to distrust the Astral plane, which they have discovered to be not spiritual in the highest sense, and some have found out the delusiveness of much of that spirit-identity, on which such great stress was formerly wont to be laid. They know now that the Astral sphere with which they have had such long dealing and with which they are so familiar, is an illusive sphere, and they are far more cautious in their instructions to inquirers than in the days when all were invited to form spirit-circles in their own homes, and to investigate for themselves. But I take it, in common with my brother Theosophists, that they are not yet fully alive to the dangers of opening the door to astral influences, for that door once opened, the more malign among their astral visitors will take good care not to let it close again, and will in proportion as "conditions" are favourable continue to "infest" rather than to visit the mediums, to the great detriment of all concerned. I would gladly see all our Spiritualist friends resolutely closing those doors, and I cannot help thinking that if they would study some of our Theosophical literature a little more assiduously, with the advice derived from Adepts with ages of experience in the subject, they would see ample grounds for the views held by the Theosophical Society.

And here I must make a remark which I hope will be forgiven me by my fellow-Theosophists, to the effect that I believe the attitude which some amongst them have taken up with regard to Spiritualism has kept back many from making further inquiry into the true explanations of Theosophy. They have applied what has been said about physical and low-class manifestations to the whole range of Spiritualistic phenomena, and by setting up their crude, second-hand opinions against the matured experiences of those older, and at least as well educated as themselves, have deeply wounded some and have made themselves ridiculous to others.

On the other hand there is amongst Spiritualists too much tendency to imagine that Theosophy is founded on the opinions of Madame Blavatsky; whereas her teachings are merely the outcome of the wisdom of generations of Adepts, with some of whom she came into personal contact, and from whom she received the knowledge she has endeavoured to transmit to the world in her writings. These are there for all to study; they can read, judge and form their own opinions, if [Page 10] they so prefer — but they should not judge without either reading or studying.

And now, as to the other class of phenomena I have mentioned above. Clairvoyance I need scarcely speak of, as probably all are agreed that it has many degrees; that some mediums in a state of trance see but dimly and confusedly in the Astral Light, and therefore tell the sitters partly right, partly wrong, or that seeing things truly, they interpret them falsely, especially when helped by so-called "Indian spirits" which are probably some class of elementals, nature-spirits, entering into the aura of the medium and reading off in the Astral Light the records of those who come for instruction or amusement. It is not so easy to understand the case of those who treat patients medically with success, giving prescriptions which are written down by the sitter and made up at a chemist's, as for instance is done by Mrs. Olive, now Madame Greck, under the pseudonym of Dr. Forbes. I have wondered whether the medium may have herself been a physician bearing that name in a former incarnation, because some of the cures that have been made by mediums in this way are undoubtedly genuine and sufficiently remarkable, and I

should like to hear the opinions of both Spiritualists and Theosophists on this subject.

Take next the more remarkable among the mediumistic writers, whether by *planchette* or other mechanical means, either purely passive or by mental impression. Of course a great deal of rubbish has been given in this way, and masses of written matter were brought to me for inspection at Great Russell Street, of which I could only say, "I would not sit for anything of this kind". Much of it would be signed by names of "high spirits" who certainly when on earth would have produced writings of an order far superior. But apart from these there still remains a class of writing giving valuable teaching on the nature of spiritual things, and enunciating truths certainly not then generally given to the world. Of such a nature were the writings given to Mrs. Edward Maitland, Dr. Anna Kingsford, the late Mrs. de Morgan, whose book *From Matter to Spirit* I have already mentioned, the poetic writings of Mrs. Watts, the daughter of William and Mary Howitt, of Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, and others too numerous to mention. Another remarkable case is that of Mrs. Louisa Lowe, the present leader of the lunacy Law Reform, who was taught the genuine doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation by means of passive writing, in the year 1868, in a remote country village, before the systems called Spiritualism or French Spiritism were known to her to exist, and for practicing which [Page 11] writing Mrs. Lowe suffered incarceration in a lunatic asylum for the space of fifteen months.

Writings of the class here alluded to are sometimes given out by the medium in a state of trance, and written down by some other person present, and often proceed from the speaker's own *Higher Ego*, which being liberated by the partial catalepsy of the body, is enabled to rise to a higher plane, from which it can still control the brain and speech of the medium. This may happen also in a lesser degree without the speaker losing his brain consciousness; such is probably the condition of what are called inspirational speakers, ecstasies and men of genius, and those who see visions and hear voices on another plane. These conditions were well understood by the ancient Theosophists, and are treated of in many Theosophical works.

Yet we cannot blame those who, receiving these various communications with the signatures of their departed friends, and finding the matter good in itself, believed that they really came from the source they claimed. When Mr. Cromwell Varley, F.R.S., the first electrician to the Atlantic cable, heard for the first time his wife in trance speaking in the first person plural and telling him many strange things, he asked, "But why do you say 'we' ? Who are you thus speaking?" the answer came, "We are the spirits of your departed friends, come to tell you that we live, that we know and watch over you, and love you still". This I heard from Mr. Varley's own lips.

Can we wonder that those who, stranded from the broken vessel of a decaying faith on the barren rocks of materialism, hailed as gladly as the shipwrecked mariner some sign from the far-off land, from the home of the blest, where the beloved ones were waiting for them, and which they too might reach at last? And if some signs were deceptive, if, after much waiting and watching, and trying and testing and investigating, some found themselves obliged to modify their belief in all the details presented to them, there still remained the great fact of some unknown, unexplained force, nay more, some "intelligent operator at the other end of the line", as Mr. W. Crookes called it, weird, quaint, under certain conditions undoubtedly evil, but still voices from behind the veil, the dead weight of solid matter lifted, riven asunder, the light shining through — that was enough for some, the burden of this life seemed lighter; if there were life beyond, this was yet worth living, if all did not end here.

And deny it who will, interpret it as we may, there was at that time undoubtedly a mighty spiritual influx pouring down upon the world. In various guises it came; some recipients were deceived, some were [Page 12] blest, yet come it did. And whence did it come? Why did so many all at once hear voices, see visions, dream dreams, write writings, hear rappings, converse with strange visitants, pass into trances, speak of that which they knew not before? What was the meaning of that strange rush of manifestation above, or at least, beyond the order called "natural"? Who or what was at the back of it? Was it, like John the Baptist, the precursor of that which was to come, and which, when the world had been sufficiently astonished, was to set all these strange things in order, to give their right interpretation, and to point out the safe path to follow in regard to them?

We can hardly expect all Spiritualists to acknowledge this; yet many have done so, and yet are not ungrateful to that which first arrested their attention and proved to them the existence of spiritual forces — forces functioning apart from gross material mechanism, mental force even, acting independently of the brain which was supposed to generate it.

But to return to what I may call the grievance of the Spiritualists, that their favourite theories, or shall I say conclusions, based on many years' patient experience, should be all set aside and ruthlessly wiped out by the *ipse dixit* of Madame Blavatsky. Is it to be wondered at that a feeling of antagonism appeared in some quarters towards Theosophy, especially when H. P. B.'s teachings were echoed by her younger disciples who had little personal knowledge of the phenomena and less discrimination as to its various phases?

But have either Spiritualists or Theosophists taken sufficient note of what Madame Blavatsky has really said on the subject? True it is that her condemnation is great, and justly so (and here all the more thoughtful Spiritualists, I believe, agree with her) of that class of phenomena known as physical, and especially the "materializations" or "form manifestations", particularly in *séances* held by public mediums.

Here the Kama-rupic entities have full play, and the subsequent exhaustion and shrunken form of the medium sometimes seen inside the cabinet in deep trance, are sufficient proof that the life-force is drawn from his or her body, at the probable risk of life, certainly of health. The want of intelligence of these beings further showed the low order to which they belonged, and no warning was too strong as to the danger incurred by all who participated in invoking them. And it was not only in the *séance* that the danger lay. The constant haunting of spooks and diabolic influences would continue until it became habitual, and mediums became possessed or obsessed, sometimes for [Page 13] life. Madame Blavatsky herself predicted that many, to fly from these dangers, would shelter themselves in the Church of Rome, which literally came to pass.

But with regard to some other classes of manifestation, let me read you an extract from *Isis Unveiled*, the work which was supposed by some to be an attack upon Spiritualism.

"But in this daily-increasing torrent of occult phenomena, that rushes from one end of the globe to the other, though two-thirds of the manifestations are proved spurious, what of those that are proved genuine beyond doubt or cavil? Among these may be found communications coming through non-professional as well as professional mediums, which are sublime and divinely grand. Often through young children and

simple-minded ignorant persons we receive philosophical teachings and precepts, poetry and inspired orations, music and paintings that are fully worthy of the reputation of their alleged authors. Their prophecies are often verified and their moral disquisitions beneficent, though the latter is of rare occurrence. Who are those spirits, what those powers or intelligences which are evidently outside the medium proper, and entities, *per se*? These intelligences deserve the appellation, and they differ as widely from the generality of spooks and goblins that hover around the cabinets for physical manifestations as day from night". [Vol. 1, Page 53]

So far Madame Blavatsky. Where, then, is the quarrel between her and Spiritualists? She pointed out the nature of certain dangers which these had already discovered, and for which they were at a loss to account. "She further said that unless Spiritualists set about the study of ancient philosophy so as to learn to discriminate between spirits", these various evils would follow, and the whole of her writings were directed towards the teaching of that very philosophy.

This is the *crux* of the whole matter, and this is the point that so many of our Spiritualist friends have failed to apprehend, and to which I would fain hope that my feeble voice may this evening draw their attention.

In the *Key to Theosophy* the distinction is again drawn. It is there stated (p. 151) that the apparitions seen about the time of a friend's death, when some important word had to be said or some warning given, that these are undoubtedly the spirits or souls of the departing, and of these there are hundreds, if not thousands, of well-attested cases on record. Theosophy does not take away the belief in the spiritual nature and the spiritual world; on the contrary, it is there to prove it — it is, indeed, the whole burden of its teaching. But from the [Page 14] study of that spiritual nature of and *in* man, it shows that much which may be and has been loosely attributed to spirits out of the flesh can be accomplished by spirits in the flesh. I use the word "spirits" to make myself intelligible to my Spiritualist friends; Theosophists would use other terms — the double, astral form, thought-form, higher Ego, etc., according to the phenomenon presented. I do not propose tonight to go into details — time will not admit of it — but take as an example the well-known slate-writing phenomenon. It does not require a spirit from the dead to perform what can be done by the astral hand of the medium — unconsciously it is true — but then what is a medium? He is a person whose principles are so loosely welded together that his astral form can be easily separated — dislocated from the gross physical body, and coming into contact with other entities in the Astral sphere can be played upon by them without the cognizance of his physical brain. Various experiments with both Slade and Watkins, the famous slate-writing mediums, go to prove that the willpower of the sitter can have a direct influence on the words written. Instances of this are chronicled in Mr. Stainton Moses' book on *Direct Writing*, as the later edition of his *Psychography* is called. The fact is, confusion in judging of these things has in great part arisen from the misuse of terms and from ignorance of true psychology. If the tripartite division of man only were better understood, and being taught by St. Paul, ought at least to be accepted by all professing Christians, a great deal of misunderstanding might have been avoided. St. Paul speaks of body, soul, and spirit; Theosophy makes the same division with other subdivisions, and attributes many of these unusual phenomena to the action of souls or Astral bodies. The spiritual essence returns after death to its own sphere, in Biblical language, "to God who gave it". It is the soul, *psûche*, the *anima bruta*, the ethereal double of man, that figures in the manifestations unfortunately called spiritual. If the word "psychic" had not, also unfortunately, become the badge of a party inimical to Spiritualism, it would have been a good one to adopt; but the word "Astral" has no such disqualification.

The Greeks understood well this distinction when they depicted Hercules dwelling as a shade in the realm of Pluto, while at the same time his immortal spirit had been received among the gods on Mount Olympus.

With regard to communications which are *really* spiritual, they can of course be received, but in a spiritual manner — that is, by the higher mind, the spiritual, *divine* part of man, and that not by "spirits" coming to us, but by our rising to their sphere or state.[Page 15]

"The living have more part in the dead than the dead have in the living". These are the words of a Master.

Spiritualists have complained that Theosophists are cold, and deal too much in abstractions. That is only an appearance, deceptive, like too many others. We are absorbed in work, it is true; we know that the time is short, that the day is far-spent (for some of us), and we know that there are many who need help. The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few. But we say to the Spiritualists: You are always welcome; come and work with us. If you have more love, bring it to us in exchange for our light, if so be you should find any amongst us. We have faith enough in common, we both believe in the spiritual world — it is wide enough for many explorers. You have led the van, you have stood in the breach, you have opposed a brave front to Materialism. Come and climb with us the heights of Occultism, and, getting a wider view and clearer light, all clouds will vanish and all difficulties will be cleared away. Above all, we stand on the common platform of Universal Brotherhood. We honour many that you honour, we believe in help from above. Let us make common cause against the enemy, or rather, let us work together for the good of all men, treading together the *Path*; and, having found that Path for ourselves, let us labour unceasingly to point it out to others, and thus lift some of the Karma that oppresses humanity.

In the course of the discussion which followed it was remarked that the main point at issue had not been sufficiently worked out. That point was, Do the spirits of the dead communicate, or no? If a single case of the kind could be established, then the Spiritualist position remained unchanged. But it was shown that if the majority of the phenomena could be accounted for, as Theosophy maintains they can, by the action of entities, supra or sub-human, but to which it declines to give the exalted epithet, *spiritual*, there is a difference between the Theosophist and Spiritualist positions. Theosophy says the Ego of the departed can and does communicate, in rare cases, at the time of, or shortly after, the decease of the body. But it does not approve of holding *séances* for the purpose of facilitating such communications, because as the Ego, after death, seeks for rest and should be suffered to depart in peace, it is a profane act to try to draw that Ego back into earthly conditions by setting up currents of will-force with that intention. It is, in fact, an act of black magic. The Church [Page 16] rightly prays: *Requiescat in pace!* may the soul rest in peace, and Theosophy enjoins that it should pass on undisturbed. The chief agencies in the production of phenomena were stated to be four: (i) Astrals of the departed still remaining in Kama loca, or the Astral sphere, and retaining a reflection of their former intelligence; these become vivified by the life-forces of the mediums and sitters, and also act in concert with elementals. (2) Astrals of the living. (3) Egos of the living, freed by the trance, partial or entire, of the lower faculties. (4) Living Egos inspired by living Masters, Adepts, or Nirmanakayas, *i.e.*, those who have passed into a higher state of existence, but are still in connection with the earth-sphere.

With a few exceptions, which may be ascribed to the Egos of the departed previous to their entering into rest, these four theories, which may of course be described at much greater length, and vary endlessly in detail, cover to the Theosophist the whole ground. There is, however, room for a much longer discussion than was possible after the reading of the paper, and it is proposed to throw open the columns of *Lucifer* to some kind of debate on the subject, in the hope that the ground of agreement between Theosophists and Spiritualists may be made plain to all, and the accentuation of difference be, if possible, diminished.