

That the address was out of place was clearly demonstrated by the fact that the chairman had hardly sat down before he had to call a gentleman to order who alluded to one of the logical deductions from what he had just listened to.

P. W.

[We have also a letter to the same effect, signed 'A Spiritualist of more than Twenty Years' Standing,' but as the writer does not give us his name and address, we regret that we are unable to print his communication.—Ed. 'LIGHT.']

SIR,—I have just read with very mixed feelings of sympathy and regret the letter addressed to you by Miss Katherine Bates in last week's issue of 'LIGHT.' Miss Bates says that 'On the last day of the Congress it became specially evident that the feeling of the meeting was distinctly non-Christian.' How can this be, since upon that very memorable occasion a large and enthusiastic audience received with every demonstration of approval the most eminently Christian address of the whole Congress? The paper read by Dr. A. R. Wallace was indeed a great call from a great man, and cannot fail to have made a lasting impression on many who listened to the plea for practical Christianity, but time may possibly prove it to have been too entirely conceived in the spirit of Christ to meet with general appreciation in what we grotesquely call the 'year of our Lord 1898.' I cannot pretend to represent the London Spiritualist Alliance, but can at least assure Miss Bates that, in common with very many others, I agree with her in regarding Jesus of Nazareth as a great Spiritualist, Reformer, Teacher, and Socialist. We have not 'given up Christ,' as she fears, but merely sought to dissociate ourselves from what she rightly calls the 'misconceptions inevitable to a state of progressing moral perception'; and it is just because 'misconceptions' are 'inevitable' that we must deal with them in kindly fashion, not relying too confidently on our own infallibility.

I have not found any paragraph in Dr. Wallace's address wherein he states that Modern Spiritualism has given us truths not revealed by Christianity. Everybody knows that spiritualistic phenomena are not new. They have formed the basis of a belief in an invisible world through the ages. They accompanied Christ's mission on earth, testifying to the truth of His assertions, and helping to carry conviction to the minds and hearts of His hearers. Modern Spiritualism is, then, a revival merely; a revival necessitated by the spread of materialistic ideas. The world was growing clever a little too fast. People had almost come to think they had found out everything, and belief in an invisible, spiritual existence had begun to be looked upon as a folly and superstition. The need of phenomena must, then, be apparent to all, and, even though largely produced by the 'lower denizens of the spirit world,' as Dr. Wallace thinks, are not to be despised. Surely it was well to call our attention to the identity of practical Christianity with Socialism or Social Justice? Christianity, Spiritualism, Socialism are indissolubly connected, and I fail to understand what or where is that 'reaction' of which Miss Bates complains. Finally, I would ask her to reconsider her decision—to give us the benefit of her earnest and hearty co-operation; to remember that the Alliance is striving to make known a great truth; that all who are not 'with' us are, to a degree, 'against' us; that we are students all—observing facts, deducing from them to the best of our ability, and anxious to welcome all who share with us the actual knowledge of man's survival of death and the possibility of communicating with him after that great change has taken place. Let all small differences be obliterated by the glory of that shining light.

'BIDSTON.'

Dr. Alfred R. Wallace and Socialism.

SIR,—I am in agreement with 'R. H.'s' letter. I think it a matter for congratulation that the respect his audience felt for Dr. Wallace prevented any member of it from taking exception to the address at the time.

Our experience in Spiritualism teaches us that there are on the other side Individualists and Collectivists, Republicans and Monarchists, admirers of Lord Beaconsfield and of Mr. Gladstone.

SIR,—One can understand 'R. H.'s' regret without sharing it. If we do not get what we desire, we usually regret it, but it does not follow that what we get is wrong. Besides, in the case of a man like Dr. Wallace, his choice would, in any case, be an argument in its favour. A careful reading of his address yields the fact that he thinks Spiritualism has social bearings, and that it leads to a social Gospel. Is that not true? So it was to the point.

But, in any case, we must stand on guard against any narrowing, any tabooing, any closing of windows and doors. There is life in ventilation: there is death in stagnation. By the way, is not Miss Bates wrong in her assumption that the bias of the London Spiritualist Alliance is not a haven for *Christian* Spiritualists? It is generally accepted that 'LIGHT' is, on the whole, a very fair representative of the Alliance, and we all know how steadfastly 'LIGHT' has testified for Jesus, and entirely on the lines she indicates. In fact, it is an open secret that many think it is too orthodox!

But again the need appears for breadth, freedom, and the open mind.

AN INQUIRER.

SIR,—As you have opened your columns for expression of opinions on the above subject, I should like to maintain a contrary view to that of your correspondent 'R. H.' last week.

Spiritualism at first sight seems to have nothing to do with revising the present state of social conditions, but as one who has been closely watching for the last eighteen years the chances of progress that our cause has in the present state of society, I am growing more and more convinced every year that society will first have to be reconstituted on lines which will give all persons time and motive for self-culture, and afford cultured persons opportunities for closer co-operation in domestic and social life, before the results in our séance rooms improve in quality and quantity, and before the gospel of our philosophy gains more popular acceptance. Woodcutting may have nothing to do with soldiering, but yet pioneer armies have chiefly to be woodcutters and roadmakers.

F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

SIR,—As letters from me have from time to time appeared in 'LIGHT' over the signature 'R. H.,' perhaps you will allow me to say a few words about the letter in your last issue from another 'R. H.,' with whom I have no desire to be identified. 'R. H.' furnishes a curious instance of how the same thing may strike different minds in completely opposite ways; for, so eminently appropriate did Dr. Wallace's address seem to a good many of his audience, that several of us at once determined to request him to allow us to print the address for circulation as a propagandist document; and this he has kindly permitted us to do. Our reasons for this request, and Dr. Wallace's for granting it, are these: Spiritualism and Socialism, the two subjects which he has joined together in the address, are both boycotted by the Press; and, if they are to be successfully brought before the public, it must be through some other channel than the newspapers; and it seems to us that the circulation of Dr. Wallace's address would be an excellent way to open a propagandist campaign, in the interests of both Spiritualism and Socialism, which would make the Press boycott ineffectual.

Our second reason for desiring to circulate the address is because we think that it expresses in an admirable manner the fact that an intimate natural connection exists between Spiritualism, in the more extended meaning of that word, and true Socialism, or the Brotherhood of Man. Unless I am much mistaken, Spiritualists as a body deny the right of the Theosophists to regard Universal Brotherhood as their particular monopoly, and claim at least a joint ownership in

it. Now the Socialism advocated in the address is simply and solely a little step in the only direction by proceeding in which we can by any possibility make a social state in any way resembling brotherhood among men an actuality. Singularly enough, the very thing that Dr. Wallace asks for, 'Equality of Opportunity,' is much more frequently regarded as an Individualist measure than as a Socialistic one ; because its first effect would undoubtedly be to intensify competition. It is only on account of the other measures which it would entail, measures for carrying it out fully and equitably, that Equality of Opportunity is Socialistic ; and even then it is not a Socialistic measure in the sense of a levelling down, but in that of a levelling up of mankind in general.

It is rather curious that in the same number in which the letter of 'R. H.' appears you have reprinted a correspondence from the 'London Review,' in which Dr. Wallace is severely taken to task for having anything to do with such 'charlatanism' as Modern Spiritualism. Dr. Wallace seems to be threatened with the same fate that befel the man with two wives : the old one plucked out all his dark hairs, and the young one all the grey ones. Dr. Wallace's spiritualistic admirers would pull out all his Socialism, and his scientific friends would pluck out all his Spiritualism ; and although the operation would far from leave him bald of ideas and enthusiasm, the effect would hardly be becoming.

Another coincidence is that in the same number of 'LIGHT' Mrs. Densmore unintentionally justifies those friends of Dr. Wallace who wish him to lose neither his dark hairs nor his grey ones ; for, in contrasting Theosophy with Spiritualism, she says of the latter : 'To my apprehension this is the only system of philosophy that is based on absolute democracy, equality, and justice, and I say this after a thorough study of the various theological systems.' If this is anywhere near the truth, surely the joining together of Spiritualism and 'equality and justice' by Dr. Wallace is of the nature of a true marriage, the parties to which neither 'R. H.' nor any other man has a right to 'put asunder.'

May I say in conclusion that (as secretary of our Committee) I shall be glad to forward the address, as soon as it is printed, to anyone who will send me his name and address (clearly written) ; and that I shall be much obliged if those who write for it will send me a list of persons who, in their opinion, would like to receive a copy?

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RICHARD HARTE.