

**THE WORK AND THE
COUNTERWORK; OR THE
RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN BELFAST.
WITH AN EXPLANATION OF THE
PHYSICAL PHENOMENA**

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The Work and the Counterwork; Or the Religious Revival in Belfast. With an Explanation of the Physical Phenomena by Edward A. Stopford

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EDWARD A. STOPFORD

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W. A. Stopford

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(To the Clergy and Parents.)

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THE
WORK AND THE COUNTERWORK;
OR,
THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN BELFAST.
WITH AN EXPLANATION OF
THE PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.

BY
EDWARD A. STOPFORD,
ARCHDEACON OF MEATH.

FIFTH EDITION.

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1859.



PREFACE.

HAVING spent ten days in the latter part of July in careful examination into the present religious movement in Belfast, I have been requested by many of my brethren to publish the result of my observations.

My chief object was to inquire into the nature of the bodily affections. I have strictly adhered to the plan I previously formed, to examine the phenomena myself, and to compare them with the results of past experience of a somewhat unusual kind.

I have been in communication in Belfast with persons holding various opinions on the subject; but it will be seen that my own views are the result of former experience, and not adopted from any with whom I communicated.

If I must at first deal with questions of a rather abstract nature, I will give facts and stories of terrible interest before I have done.

The views here expressed are the result of years of observation, thought, and study; but the expression of those views, suddenly called for by some of my brethren, and written at their request under great pressure in respect of time, entitles me to ask from them a favourable construction.

E. A. S.

Archdeaconry, Kells, Aug. 7, 1859.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

IN such a task as mine truth requires that correction be acknowledged. In the Second Edition, necessarily ordered in haste by the publishers, I had no opportunity. I embrace it now. I have pointed out in the Appendix to this Edition the alterations which I have made, at the suggestion of persons most competent to judge. I have not rejected any correction. I gladly take this opportunity of stating my conviction, that the good work advances in many places with more freedom than could have been hoped from the evils which still commonly attend it; and I see grounds for hope that more general and united efforts may be looked for to free this work from evil.

E. A. S.

September 17, 1859.

THE WORK AND THE COUNTERWORK ;

OR,

THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN BELFAST.

"THE kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field ; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." Such was our Lord's prophetic description of the condition of His Church until the time of the harvest. Let it be no cause of offence if Belfast be now subject to this common condition, and if the mingling of evil with good in the work in progress there should perplex us not a little, and "crave our wary walking."

That there is much good in this movement has been denied by none that I have met. All whom I have conversed with in Belfast—clergy, laity, persons of all classes in society, and holding all varieties of views in respect of the physical phenomena, do all agree that there is widely awakened a serious attention to religion in the minds of thousands who never thought seriously of it before ; that there is an access to men's

minds on the subject of religion, a readiness and desire for instruction, and for joining in the worship of God, such as never was known there before ; that churches and other houses of public worship are now filled as they were never filled before ; that instances are numerous of persons whose outward life is changed ; that in some places the outward face of society is changed (as far as we can yet see) by a visible reformation : all this is admitted without question by those who see most to blame in the conduct of the movement.

Even a stranger cannot fail to be struck with the earnest concern about religion which appears to pervade the people : as I listened to a street preacher during the dinner hour of the working men (the best sermon which I heard in Belfast) it was impossible not to be impressed with the earnest and reverent expression of countenance in all the working men and lads who gathered round, perhaps 150 in number ; faces so earnest I never saw before in any congregation. From house to house I saw much of the same feeling.

That there exists, at the same time, "a counterwork" dishonouring to the Holy Spirit, and antagonistic to the Scriptures as our sole revelation from God, founded on delusions by which it is very difficult to avoid being deluded, and sedulously propagated by means injurious alike to the welfare of souls and bodies, I shall have too painfully to prove as I proceed.

If I shall have to dwell chiefly on the counterwork,

it is only for the sake of the work ; that we may the better know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

The task is painful to me, and much against my inclination. The good in this movement pleads powerfully in my own heart for a toleration of the evil. I know it does so, too, in the hearts of others. I shrink from conflict with hopes and even with prejudices that arise from such pleadings. Yet, I may not shrink from it ; because it is Satan, and not Christ, who has mingled the evil with the good. It is *his* art to mix the tares with the wheat, and the mixture is made for *his* purpose ; the more powerfully the good appeals to us to be accepted *with the tares*, the more insidiously is Satan's art successful—the more his kingdom is advanced. I must, therefore, speak the whole truth, entreating those whose feelings may be hurt thereby to bear with me, believing that my own natural wishes and feelings are as much grieved as theirs. What I have to say will, perhaps, be found worthy of their attention.

The counterwork, such as I shall hereafter have to illustrate it, appears to me to take advantage of a bodily illness which has come to beco-existent with this revival movement, though not co-extensive with it.

How far the two co-extend is very difficult to ascertain. A clergyman in Belfast, who takes a more favourable view than I do of the physical phenomena, gave me his opinion that these cases are more numerous than the cases of conversion without such phenomena ; at the same time, he expressed his decided conviction that cases of true conversion without any bodily affec-