

The Harbinger of Light

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A PSYCHIC DIGEST

Edited by
Rev. J. T. Huston, N.D.

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LEADING FEATURES:

New York Magistrate Says that Spiritualism is
Legal.

The Spirit Body.

The Brightness of Spiritualism.

“More Teachings of Silver Birch.”

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The Harbinger of Light

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and Spiritual Philosophy

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EDITOR: REV. J. T. HUSTON, N.D. ADELAIDE

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New York Magistrate Says that Spiritualism is Legal

(Reprinted from "Psychic News".)

In England a medium is sent to gaol under the Witchcraft Act, having been found guilty of conjuration. In the United States, where Spiritualism, like all other religions, is freely practised, a medium was charged in New York with fortune-telling and acquitted.

In the Duncan case, the Bible was quoted, the Church's prohibition was cited, hours were spent reading from ancient laws on witchcraft, conjuration, sorcery and enchantment.

The Rev. Marion Miller, a mental and physical medium, a member of the General Assembly of Spiritualists, was arrested during a church service by a policewoman.

Below, taken from "Psychic Observer", is the judgment of the magistrate, Francis Giaecone, which is in striking contrast to the summing-up at the Old Bailey, and the decision of the Court of Criminal Appeal.

The magistrate also said that messages transmitted by ministers who were mediums, who acted

in good faith, and without personal fee, could not be regarded as merely fortune-telling:

The only issue is the good faith of the defendant. The prosecution contends that she was merely telling fortunes, while the defence seeks to prove that in the observance of a duly recognised religion she was merely giving expression to her religious faith.

She is supported in her trial by the principles and traditions of our democratic form of government, which leave untrammelled and untouched the right to the individual to observe her faith according to the dictates of her own conscience.

However, there is another silent witness in this case which may militate against the defendant. It may be an intruder, but it is ever forceful. It is prejudice.

The defendant is a minister of the Spiritualist Church, and in addition thereto she states that she is a medium with the faculty of communicating with the spirit of the departed. That is a faculty which is recognised by her church.

Prejudice and Justice.

The community generally is sceptical as to the possession of that faculty on the part of any mortal. Religion, in the generally accepted sense, has surrounded the realm of the dead with an impenetrable wall, and with many taboos, not only because death is so totally final for all human relations, but also because it is believed that an attempt to communicate with the dead would lead to madness, and would trifle with the Divinity.

If the defendant is justified in her faith, such scepticism would amount to prejudice. If it is thrown into the balance of our judgment, prejudice falsifies the scales of justice.

It may be argued that the mores or the beliefs of the community are reflected in the Statutes. In this case, however, the statute does provide for an exception. It was the intent of the legislature to

omit from the effects of the law the beliefs, practices and usages of incorporated ecclesiastical governing bodies or their duly licensed teachers or ministers acting in good faith and without personal fee.

State Recognition.

The State, acting through its proper department, has already recognised the Spiritualist church by granting them a charter of incorporation under the Religious Corporations Law of the State of New York. It recognises the defendant as a duly ordained minister of such church, and even grants unto her the authority to solemnise marriages; certainly a most sacred power in our civilised community.

As against the background of the church organisation and of our constitutional guarantees and traditions of democracy, the court must be most scrupulous and careful in the weighing of the facts in this case.

The evidence of bad faith must be clear. If one omits from the consideration of the testimony the silent but powerful presence of scepticism, the defendant's position must be stronger and more secure.

The question here is not the validity of the beliefs of the defendant. They have already been accepted by the State. In the field of science those beliefs have been challenged, and, on the other hand, they have found some, if only a few, advocates and sponsors. The defence produced witnesses of varied background who stated they were attendants of the church because they found comfort in its tenets.

The defendant herself said that she abandoned her former church several years ago, when she lost her son, and had found solace in Spiritualism.

"Superstition."

The names of distinguished people can be cited in support of the validity of the claims of the defendant, names such as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Cesare Lombroso, and Camille Flam-

marion, not to cite an infinite number of writers like Victor Hugo and Victorien Sardou.

There have always been some people who sought refuge in prophecy and in an effort to communicate with the dead. Men, driven by exaggerated ambitions or by excessive fear, have always sought to scrutinise the face of the morrow, and sought assistance in those who were gifted in that alleged faculty.

At one time it was a general belief: we now consider it a superstition. However, some scientists, though only a few, and this particular religion recognised by the State, accept the fact that some people called mediums have the mysterious power of communication with the spirit of the departed.

Science Admits It.

Not long ago one of the universities of the United States held a symposium on the question. Though it was careful to point out that it did not sponsor Spiritualism, and that it acted merely in a parliamentary capacity, nevertheless the mere fact that a university found benefit or necessity in calling such a symposium adds dignity to the question.

While it is true that the weight of scientific authority may be against acceptance of the full claims of the believers in psychic communication, it is nevertheless true that scientists admit that there is some mysterious power which generally exists, and that should still be investigated.

It may be that scientists specialising in certain fields, constantly engaged in the pursuit of a definite goal, delving in mysterious realms, may become so refined in their conclusions that their subtleties are as vague and as gossamer as the nothingness with which they began.

The court cites these facts, not to concede the validity of the principles of Spiritualism, nor to hold that their validity must be established. The attacks of Houdini and of men of greater weight in the scientific world are well known. In addition,

however, in this State Spiritualism has been elevated to the dignity of a religion.

The court, in weighing the testimony, must recognise that fact. Further, bearing in mind the general principles of such incorporated church, the presumption of innocence, the conflict in the testimony, the good character of the defendant, and all of these considerations generally, the defendant is entitled to the benefit of the doubt.

It is true that lifting the veil that separates the living from the dead may bring us to madness; it is true that there is occasion for fraud and deceit, as it is also true that there has already been much fraud and deceit in connection with Spiritualism. Incidentally, fortune-telling is the crime of quacks, mountebanks and charlatans. Nevertheless, we are here dealing with a duly ordained minister of a recognised religion. If the religion is to hold its place in the community and not forfeit its charter, it must exercise vigilance to expose fraud and deceit, and, wherever it does occur, it seems to the court that the proper method of procedure would be by disciplinary action in the body of the church.

No Evidence.

It may be contended where a public offence is committed the court has jurisdiction, and should act, which of course is true, but it is also true that the degree of evidence to satisfy the conscience of him who tries the facts, in the case of such a person, should be stronger than in the case of a mountebank or a quack picked up at the fair or some other unregulated, unsupervised place.

In reading the cases cited by the people (the prosecution), the court finds neither binding nor persuasive force in them.

Of course, if calling the messages transmitted by the medium ministers of the Spiritualist church mere fortune-telling is to place such ministers within the provisions of the law, it will amount to a nullification of the statute.

It is the function of the court to construe the intent of the legislature. The legislature obviously and apparently intended to do what it obviously and apparently says, that is, not to interfere with incorporated ecclesiastical governing bodies or their duly licensed teachers or ministers acting in good faith and without personal fee.

Protection.

The amendment was evidently passed in 1929 for the purpose of protecting such religious bodies. If the legislature did not so intend, and the working of the statute does not express its intention, or if it is felt that that privilege is abused, then the legislature should repeal the said exemption from the law.

In some decisions it is soundly stated that the pretence of religion should not be a cloak for fraud. Here the exemption by statute is plain by fair construction.

Since the defendant is a minister of the church, the matter exempted and the person involved are too closely bound to exclude the person without excluding the matter. Acknowledging Spiritualism was the big step. Whatever the beliefs of the court, it is bound by the legislative act.

The legislature has spoken. The courts do not legislate. The court is the spokesman for the sovereign power of the State, which under our form of government is the jealous custodian of the right of every man, woman or child to believe as his or her conscience dictates. The defendant is found not guilty.

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In all my communication with those who have passed on, I have been impressed by their insistence of the reality of their world, and how they look on this world of ours as but a poor imitation of theirs. What we see is temporal; it is the unseen that is eternal.—Arthur Findlay.

A REMARKABLE PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE

(By G. H. Harwood.)

Thinking of war, and the causes of war prompts me to remind your readers of those works of Pierre Van Paasen, the Dutchman who was European correspondent of the New York "Times" for some years before the present boil-over. His two books, "The Days of Our Years" and "That Day Alone", give a very good account of the schemings and betrayals that led to the present carnage. He is particularly severe on the Papacy, I fear, with only too good reasons.

Readers of your magazine, and yourself, would also be very interested in a remarkable psychic experience which he underwent. It would be back about 1936, when he was living in a quiet little village on the outskirts of Paris. From here he used to travel daily to Paris to forward his reports to the "Times", but he loved to live quietly among the simple French village folk, whom he learned to love and admire so well.

Nothing in his writings, which are very self-revealing and biographical, leads us to suppose that the writer was in any way psychic. He doesn't mention the subject, and clearly does not understand much about it. He just lived among the villagers, in a small cottage, alone with his dog, and a young woman used to come and tidy up the place, prepare his meals, and keep order for him.

Life had gone on quietly for some months, then one evening, as Van Paasen sat reading, his dog began to whine and show signs of distress. For several evenings this continued. Once Van Paasen, trying to ascertain the reason for the disturbance, went outside the door, and saw at the bottom of the steps the form of a large hound. He had seen nothing like it in the village, and to make the matter more disturbing, the hound disappeared as quickly and as mysteriously as it appeared.

I write from memory, but I think there was only one occasion when he saw the animal, but for several evenings he distinctly heard sounds, like the trotting feet of a dog, through the corridors, and his own dog barked furiously and showed every sign of utter terror.

The writer himself was by this time very much scared himself, but on the last evening of the manifestations he was trying to quieten his own fears and settle down in his room to read, when his dog barked in a frightened manner, and ran to the head of the stairs. Here Van Paasen saw him apparently engaged in deadly conflict with an utterly invisible assailant. He said they came rolling into the room, his own dog biting and slashing in frenzy, then being rolled over and over on the floor, as he retreated into the room. There in the room, under the light, the man saw his dog beaten under the sofa, where in a final terrified flurry he was (evidently) fatally mauled by the invisible dog, until at last he lay stretched dead under the sofa.

Nothing would induce Van Paasen to stay another night under the roof, and wondering where he might turn for help, he thought of the serene, quiet, old village Cure, with whom he had so often spoken. A simple, guileless old Padre, this, yet so wise in the matter of which Van Paasen was utterly ignorant. To the Cure he turned.

Monsier le Cure came. He listened quietly to the story as told by the discomforted correspondent. He smiled gently at his agitation. "I do not think it will be necessary to leave your house, my friend," he said. "Let me see, did you not recently engage a new girl to do your house out for you?"

Van Paasen assented.

"What age is she?" asked M. de Cure.

"About fifteen or sixteen," replied Van Paasen.

"If you will simply tell her to go," remarked the Cure, "I do not think you will be troubled with any more of these visitations. Such things are common enough among the French country folk, and

particularly liable to occur round about the age of puberty. Just send her away, and you will have no further trouble."

M. le Cure was right. With his calm, gentle touch he smoothed over what had become a serious difficulty in the life of his foreign friend.

Such is the story. There seem to be some unusual features about this experience. That it actually happened, no one who has read Van Paasen will seriously doubt. But although M. le Cure knew all the answers, it seems that such a case, where the dog was actually killed by the phantom assailant, is of very unusual psychic strength. Perhaps this girl was a very powerful medium, but untrained and undeveloped.

It is a pity that Van Paasen, in his emotional reaction, rather akin to horror, neglected to observe or inform us, of the actual condition of the dog after death. Was he killed without leaving any visible mark on his body, or was the skin torn and bloodied? Accurate observation might have been of considerable help to those who record and study psychic phenomena.

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WESLEY AND SPIRITUALISM

The Rev. J. L. Stafford, a Methodist padre, writing to the "Glasgow Evening News", calls attention to the fact that Wesley, the founder of Methodism, believed in the continued activity of the spirits of the so-called "dead". He befriended Elizabeth Hobson, whose psychic record is one of the most exciting in the literature of the subject.

When her character was assailed by so-called "inquirers", he defended her. This was about 1782. The phenomena had commenced about 1750—almost a hundred years before the Hydesville rappings announced the birth of Modern Spiritualism.

These experiences are recorded in a work entitled "The Epworth Phenomena", a book that we would like to have in our Reference Library.

THE SPIRIT BODY

Photographed and Weighed in the Laboratory.
(By H. P. Van Walt.)

[“The Two Worlds” in an issue recently received, published the following article, which is composed of extracts from an extremely important paper submitted to the recent International Spiritualists’ Congress.]

One of the most important experiments was conducted in September, 1933, by Dr. R. A. Watters, F.R.S.A. (Director of the Dr. William Bernard Johnston Foundation for Psychological Research, U.S.A.), which conclusively proves the fact that the habitat of the soul in the living organism has been located. This is the more important, as this experiment was carried out on a strictly scientific basis by a prominent scientist.

It has always been the aim of scientists to determine the force or principle responsible for the animation of matter, and up to 1933 no scientist had been able to solve this vital problem. Up to that time two hypotheses were held: namely, the mechanistic and the vitalistic.

The mechanistic theory contends that “Life” is a series of phenomena which are electrical, chemical and mechanical in nature. The vitalistic theory holds, however, that electrical phenomena and chemical activity are incidental to “life”, and that the complex organism is governed by an “inner force”, or “governing principle”, which is, in the last analysis, “the soul”.

The mechanistic school holds that when “life” has left the body, it simply means that physiological and psychological phenomena have ceased to function. The organism is dead, because the phenomena which are responsible for life are absent; in short, the mechanistic philosophy contends that no-

thing leaves the physical body at the moment of death.

The vitalistic hypothesis contends that something does leave the body at death. Now, my compatriots, Messrs. Matla and Zaalberg van Zelst, have weighed the astral body of the living, and found it weighs approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ oz., which works out at about 60 grammes. Dr. Duncan McDougall, of Haverhill, Massachusetts, U.S., confirmed this result by putting dying patients on a scale, and he registered a loss in weight of $2\text{-}2\frac{1}{2}$ oz. at the moment of death.

Although the vitalistic school were proved to be right by these tests, they still could not prove their theory as to what caused this loss in weight. The vitalistic school is based more on faith than on facts, and the vitalists have to be content to rest on theory, whilst the mechanistic school can fall back on laboratory observations.

Before vitalism can discredit the mechanistic hypothesis, however, it must prove that a soul exists, and that its existence is necessary to "life". Science lends no ear to a hypothetical soul; it wants something more tangible.

Only since the discovery of X-rays and radium have we been able to acquire definite information about matter. Studies of radio-active minerals and analyses of atomic structures have given us some understanding of the working-plan of matter.

In the beginning of this century matter was defined as being composed of atoms, which were believed to represent the smallest parts into which a substance could be divided. We now know that these atoms are composed of electrons (negative charges of electricity) and protons (positive charges of electricity). All matter is made up of atoms, which can, as already said, be divided into its constituents. All matter is made up of atoms, whether it be a book, a stone, a flower, or a human being, the ultimate composition of matter is atomic in Nature.

This atom now may again be divided into two parts: the nucleus and the electrons. The nucleus or proton is a positive charge of electricity, whilst the electrons are negative charges. One can picture the atom as a solar system, that is the nucleus (the sun) around which revolve the electrons. The distance between the nucleus and the electron is about one-millionth of a centimetre. The electron goes round its tiny orbit with an enormous rapidity, its velocity being about 1,400 miles a second. Just to give you an idea of this rapidity, it is interesting to know that in one-millionth of a second the electron travels about seven thousand million times round the small orbit. If an atom loses one of its electrons the positive charge of the nucleus overbalances the charge of the electrons, and the atom becomes a positive atom or a positive ion. On the other hand, if an atom takes on another electron (or better, if an atom attaches to itself another electron), then the negative charge of the electrons will overbalance the positive charge of the nucleus, and we have a negative atom, or a negative ion. An ion, in short, is an unbalanced atom.

Structure of the Atom.

With the discovery of radio-activity ultimately came the knowledge of the working-plan of the atom, and we received a better understanding of atomic structure.

And why did we get this better understanding? For the simple reason because a radio-active mineral is constantly going through a process of atomic rupture and transmutation, by virtue of the strange emissions of radio-active rays.

These radio-active emanations are the alpha-, beta- and gamma-rays, and it is with the radio-active minerals that we explore the structure of other atoms. The alpha-ray, for instance, is the shot we fire into the atom, and through its behaviour we learn something of the atomic structure. The effects of alpha and beta-rays on other atoms are observed

by means of a most ingenious device called the "Wilson Expansion Chamber". This is an apparatus which makes possible the study of the motions of radio-active emanations as they make their way through gas. The Wilson Expansion Chamber consists of a cylinder of brass, with a glass top, forming a box, which extends downwards into the main cylinder for a few inches. This box is circular, of course, and may be moved up and down. It is called the observation chamber. Into one side of this observation chamber is mounted a specimen container, in which may be placed radio-active minerals, biological specimens, etc. At right angles to the specimen chamber is a powerful lamp, which illuminates the process. When a flywheel is turned, automatically a cloud, or artificial fog is produced. Now we know that when a fog settles, it has a tendency to settle on something, at least when there is something on which it can settle.

If a piece of radium is introduced, alpha- and beta-rays will shoot through that cloud. The speed of alpha-rays is such that it does not displace the air, as does a bullet from a gun, but shoots straight through the loose structure of air atoms, without doing any more harm than knock off an electron or two from the atom. As we have seen, these unbalanced air atoms which lose an electron become positive and negative ions. This is what is called "the ionisation process". These ions now attract moisture, in other words the fog, the cloud that settles on these tiny particles, and they reflect light, so that when the alpha-ray shoots through the fog, it leaves a trail of light, which can be photographed.

Basis of the Process.

We now come to the photographing of the soul. I had to dwell rather lengthily on the photographing of ions, which is a well-known physics experiment, in order to make clear on what principle the photographing of the soul is based, and in order that you may understand the manner in which the astral body has been photographed.

The basis of the whole process is this: If fog settles on these infinitely small ion particles, which, through the fact that moisture settles on them, may be photographed, it would be quite possible, and not at all absurd that this fog (this moisture) will also settle on, or attach itself to, the particles of that quantity—let us call it a quantity—of the astral body, however fine and subtle it may be. This experiment is merely to establish the fact that the separation of a quantity from the body by laboratory experiment will amount to conclusive proof that all forms of life, all complex organisms, possess an intra-atomic quantity.

The Immaterial Body.

The experimenters argued that if a soul exists, it must find lodging in the intra-atomic spaces of the atoms composing the cellular structure. It is Eddington who has said: "If all the atoms of the human body were placed together and occupied one bit of space, the entire man would not be larger than a dot made with the sharpest pencil point." If so, the physical body of an organism consists mostly of space, of inter- or intra-atomic space, and if a soul exists it is there that we must look for it. And, if infinitesimal quantities, such as positive and negative ions can be located, and their phenomena photographed by means of an apparatus, then it seems probable that the instrument can also detect intra-atomic phenomena.

The result of these experiments has been that actually an "immaterial body" made its escape from the physical body at the moment of death, and was made visible by medium of water vapour, and has even been photographed, as I shall show directly.

A large insect was the lowest form of life with which Watters could experiment, and he tried insects first. In the vicinity of the laboratory were a large amount of grasshoppers. About one hundred specimens were collected. Fifty insects were

chosen for the cloud-chamber experiment, and the other fifty were selected to determine the most suitable method of inducing death. In the end ether was chosen as a lethal agent.

Although every precaution was utilised, it was impossible to predict with absolute precision the exact moment of actual death, as death occurs in different specimens at different times. Therefore it will be readily understood that this type of experiment is not one which ensures success every time and in every case, as one has to guess when the time has come for photographic exposure.

Astral "Shadows".

The specimen is anaesthetised first, and afterwards placed in the specimen chamber, into either end of which a piece of cotton is placed saturated with ether. When it was thought that death was taking place, the plate in the camera was exposed.

Now, something very interesting about these experiments is the following:—

As soon as the photographic exposure had been made, the insect was removed and injected with adrenalin, which, as you know, is a kind of reviver for the organism.

In some instances, after the injection of the drug, the specimen would exhibit evidences of recovery, which indicated that the photograph had been taken before the lethal agent had had time to induce actual death.

In every instance when a specimen showed signs of recovery, even after several hours, the photograph showed no evidence of any extra or "astral shadow".

In instances where our photograph did show characteristic shadows or formations of "immaterial bodies", the insects never manifested the slightest evidence of recovery, although they were injected with the drug and kept under observation constantly for periods ranging from eight to fourteen hours.

In 14 or of the 50 experiments, a phantom insect appeared on the plate, and in all these 14 instances the specimen did not recover—viz. the specimen was dead.

Similar to the Physical Body.

There is one point which I must mention in order to prevent the sceptics and our antagonists claiming that these shadowy forms may be due to chance or to an incidental gas formation. I would point to the constancy of the appearance of the phantoms which, according to the theory, were bound to appear. In other words, when experiments were made with a grasshopper a shadowy form of a grasshopper became visible.

The phantoms were always conforming to the physical contours of the specimen selected. The astral body was in every case and in every repeated experiment characteristic of the physical body of the specimen with which the experiment was made. Nothing was left to chance, never an immaterial "counterpart" of a mouse was formed when a frog served as a specimen. From the frog issued the phantom of a frog, from a butterfly that of a butterfly, from a mouse that of a mouse. Hundreds of these experiments were made, and the photographic findings were always positive, as far as the corresponding of the phantom formation with the contours of the specimen was concerned. We must allow for distortion of the phantom due to physical conditions existing in the vapour chamber.

The experimenters believe they have demonstrated that an immaterial body slips out of the physical body at the moment of actual death, just in the same manner as one slips out of a coat, and they conclude that "while the experiments have thus far been limited to animals representative of lower forms of life, it should be obvious that similar results could be obtained with higher forms of life—including human beings—under experimental conditions."

The importance of these experiments cannot be

sufficiently emphasised, nor that through these tests we have come very near to proving that there is an etheric body, which survives the death of the physical one.

Personally, I do not think that there is any phenomena in the great chain of evidence on which the truth of Spiritualism is based, which so convincingly demonstrates survival after death as the phenomena of bi-location, by which is meant the separation of the astral body from the physical.

Even the German professors (Dr. Hans Driesch and Mattiesen) have admitted that if it could be proven that the living human organism is composed of a physical, and of an immaterial body which can exist independently and apart from the physical body, Spiritualism would stand on a firm basis, not only that, but science would have to accept the spiritualistic hypothesis as being logical.

It has been the great merit of Watter's experiments that he has demonstrated under experimental conditions that "to die" practically means that an exact counterpart of the physical body is set free, and that death only affects the physical part of the living organism.

In connection with the experiments of Watters, it is only logical and reasonable that the hundreds and thousands of supernormal phenomena which have set mankind guessing as to their origin, and which have puzzled science for so many years, should, in the first place, be attributed to that "immaterial counterpart" to the "immaterial quantity" which is liberated at the instant of death.

It is at least far more logical and plausible to attribute these mysterious messages which we receive from, let us say, somewhere to this "astral counterpart", once its existence has been demonstrated beyond doubt, than to try and invent all sorts of distorted pseudo-scientific and sometimes simply ridiculous theories and hypotheses, in order to try and deny that great and holy and wonderful truth, that great truth that our dead are active.

THE BRIGHTNESS OF SPIRITUALISM

(By M. Guthrie.)

Spiritualists? Oh! those people who sit in the dark and talk to the dead?"

So say the ignorant, confusing some of the forms of phenomena with the philosophy.

But granting we do sometimes sit in the dark, it is for the same reason that a photographic plate is taken, and then developed, in the dark, and, as the embryo of all life, whether plant or animal, is carried in the darkness of the earth or of the physical body until the day of its completion, so does the spiritual embryo require darkness. But for all that, some forms of phenomena thrive in the bright light of day, as is demonstrated here every week.

Although our theme is entitled the "brightness" of Spiritualism, yet to us it is a solemn thing to hold communion with those who are no longer in the body—as Tennyson so aptly sings: "How pure of heart and sound of head, with what divine affections bold, should be the man whose thoughts would hold an hour's converse with the dead." But there is a brightness in that solemnity, born of a thrill of happiness to think, and to know, that such contact is possible. I am no lover of the hilarity that occurs at some seances under the plea that it raises the vibrations. Some of my friends must have changed since entering into spirit-life, to perform such antics, or else they think I have. Not that there should be anything doleful in it—that is the other extreme. Naturalness is one of the laws of spirit-life, and our friends who return will be the same as they used to be, with this addition: they have gone a little further, have learnt a little more, have been cleansing themselves of some of the faults that once marred their characters, and we, as Spiritualists, will rise in the estimation of those who judge us by our philosophy, who watch our reactions to it, if we adopt a sane, natural attitude towards it—towards that

which gives us so much inward happiness founded on a belief and knowledge of survival, which is the first step in Spiritualism. Brightness, happiness, joy, pleasure, all these should be the result of our religion, for "religion never was designed to make our pleasures less." The Puritans, though they saved England during a crisis, erred in presenting religion as something to make us wear long faces. Every natural instinct was suppressed, which rebounded in causing hypocrisy and secret sinning, to the persecution of the erring one rather to trying to win him back by love and toleration. What wonder, then, when the king came into his own again, that the whole nation went mad, and a period followed that made England the byword of the world, until corruption defeated its own ends, and the people began once more to see that licence spelt the death of true liberty.

All religious beliefs, whether Christian or pagan, were gradually crystallised into rules called dogmas. These were very well to a certain extent; they provided a ready reference to what people were expected to believe. But the holders by dogma soon became dogmatic, then intolerant, and thus a spirit of persecution was born.

Spiritualism is free from dogma, but we believe in certain things, and for the guidance of new converts it has consented to the cataloguing of a set of rules. We hold by them, but we should not try to ram them down unwilling throats. They were included in the teachings of Jesus, and some are even taken from the writings of the noblest of the pagans.

One effect Spiritualism has upon its sincere votaries is to make them bright and happy. It answers many questions, or, if it does not, it puts us in the way of answering them ourselves. It has taken away that bugbear, the fear of death, and what comes after. No longer is the other world a place of stagnation, of punishment, of loneliness and sorrow for the majority, and happiness for a few favoured ones. I know there is still some reluctance

to quit this scene, with all its strife; we feel we still have dear ties here; we still have work to do; a few still need us, and the old ideas still cling to us, giving us a dread of physical death, which, after all, is not felt by the departing soul, nor yet by the body it is leaving. Friends who have returned tell us that the actual wrench is pleasant, and this is often shown by the beautiful smile that sometimes spreads over the face as the spirit leaves. This is sometimes caused because he recognises some one he has loved and lost, but sometimes because the relief from pain is so great.

But Spiritualism substitutes a definite knowledge for a vague and theoretical faith. There is no death, but transition, as we so often sing. The discoveries of science have taken the place of the old blind faith. We have warmed ourselves at the world's internal fires; we have broken the white sunlight into the violet healing rays; we have traversed under the water, through the mountains, and through the upper air; we have found antidotes for every poison, anodynes for every pain. Yesterday's miracles are to-morrow's commonplace; yesterday's luxuries, to-morrow's necessity. A legendary Adam was expelled from Eden "lest he take of the tree of life and live for ever", having already laid hold of the tree of knowledge. An understanding Christ, when men marvelled at his capacity for surmounting the weakness of the flesh, said, "But greater works than these shall ye do". Adam was punished because he was inquisitive, but Jesus said, "Seek, and ye shall find". And though immortality cannot be proved, because it is still in process, and we cannot prove what is not yet finalised, yet all the findings of survival point to immortality, and, because immortality is part of eternity, we are immortal now, and the present moment is part of eternity.

Let us live up to the beliefs we profess; let us show happy faces to the world; let us show that our philosophy is worth while, and is a source of joy,

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THE CHANGING FORMS OF MEDIUMSHIP !

(By Ernest W. Oaten, in "The Two Worlds".)

As I look back over the past I am struck by the differences which take place from time to time in those phases of psychic phenomena which come prominently before the public and then fade away, only to give place in turn to other phases.

When Spiritualism burst upon a materialistic world in 1848, it took the form largely of the physical phenomena, rappings, voices and levitations. Communication by means of table tilts became a common-place in thousands of homes. And then, after a decade of such activity there seemed to be a lull in which mental phenomena, clairvoyance and psychometry held the field. In about the 'seventies, however, there came a recurrence of the physical phenomena which manifested in magnetic healing, materialisation, apports and the heavier forms of material manifestations. And one reads of the time when for some years materialisation was represented by well over a dozen mediums. One has only to name such people as Herne, Williams, Husk, Mrs. D'Esperance, Florrie Cook, Kate Wood, Annie Fairlamb, David Duguid, George Spriggs, Sadler, Monck, Craddock, all of whom were prominent between 1870 and the end of the century. I think it probable that another half a dozen names could be added to that list. Materialisation became comparatively common, and it was interesting to compare the peculiarities of the phenomena which characterised each particular medium.

Then after the founding of the Psychical Society in the 'eighties there came a renewed interest

love and brightness. Let the love of God beam from our eyes; let the law of kindness dwell on our lips. Give love without stint, for the world needs it, and if we give without measure, we shall receive the same again, with compound interest.

in mental phenomena, though these were often associated with semi-physical forms of psychical phenomena, as in water divining, phantasms of the living, etc. Gradually, however, the more mental forms of psychic activity loomed larger and larger. We had a spate of trance speakers with such remarkable mediums as E. W. Wallis, J. J. Morse, William Wallace, John Macdonald, W. E. Long, Walter Howell and a host of others. And such fine clairvoyants as Tom Tyrrell, Aaron Wilkinson, Victor Wyldes, Miss McCreddie and many others, all of whom were outstanding mediums in their own domain. To-day we have few great speakers, the old standard of trance mediumship seems to have passed. I hope only to return at some future time. Each variation of spirit manifestation has contributed something to the well-being of the whole.

At the present moment it is doubtful whether the movement ever had such a fine array of clairvoyants and clairsaudients suitable for public platform work, as we now possess. True it is that we have not a Tom Tyrrell, or, I think, anyone approaching him, but the mean average of our best clairvoyants probably stands higher than at any time in our history.

Mental phenomena undoubtedly hold the field to-day; but I find myself wondering why physical phenomena have receded into the background. Even where there has been the promise of good physical phenomena with some young mediums of recent years, they have seemed to gradually recede into the background, and in the main have failed to fulfill their promise. I find myself wondering what may be the cause. Much, if not all of the phenomena of the early years was based upon the home circle; I am not referring merely to the regular circle which may meet at a specific time, and where the sitters vary from week to week, but the real home circle where the members of a family or a few friends met at regular intervals, with the same sitters, sitting in the same chairs, under as far as pos-

sible the same conditions, and where it was only by special favour the stranger was admitted, and even then he had to take his place as an observer, outside the circle. Physical phenomena of the best type takes years to stabilise itself, even where static conditions are observed. That there are thousands of home circles in this country, I quite agree, but it is doubtful if in proportion to our numbers they are as prevalent or as continuous as they used to be.

I remember the time when one could go to almost any Spiritualist Church in the country as a stranger and enquirer, and at the close of the evening meeting obtain an invitation to a special circle which met from 9 o'clock to 10 p.m. or thereabouts. And I have known of hundreds of sound Spiritualists who have been brought into the Movement by this means. To-day if such Sunday evening circles are held people stay away from Church, and hold them in lieu of attendance at the Service.

I am often puzzled to discover the reason for these many changes. It may be that life to-day is too full, that we have to attend the pictures or a hundred-and-one other modern night activities. This may be an easy form of entertainment requiring no exertion, but which nevertheless lead us nowhere and teach us nothing. Maybe we are on the verge of other changes. It may well be that there are other forms of mediumship yet to be manifested: that the Spirit people will find other outlets for their knowledge, and their interest in humanity. Sure I am of one thing, the door of Spirit Communication having been opened (however slightly), and its phenomena scientifically examined and recorded, will never again be closed. And the future depends as much upon us as upon the spirit operators.

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The Way to Happiness: Worry less, work more, waste less, give more, talk less, practise more.—This is the way.

PSYCHIC LIGHT ON NEW TESTAMENT "MIRACLES"

(By Hereward Carrington, in "Loaves and Fishes")

There are various ways of viewing the miracles which have been attributed to Christ in the Gospel narratives. One of them is the ultra-rationalistic: they are all the result of fraud and deception, mainly on the part of the compilers of the New Testament records, or are the result of illusion, error and superstition in a relatively primitive and unenlightened age; that the accounts are either borrowed or concocted, and a series of incredible miracles attributed to Christ in order to bolster up the waning but tyrannical power of the Church. This extreme view can hardly be given serious consideration by any careful student of the records themselves and the accessible documentary evidence.

A second view is that expressed by traditional orthodox theology—all Christ's miracles are genuine and are evidences of his divine power. They represent unique events, in which the laws of Nature are subverted and contravened. This attitude, of course, leaves no loophole for explanations of any kind, and any attempts to draw analogies between the New Testament miracles and similar psychic phenomena would be quite useless, even profane. I am compelled to pass over this view, also, for obvious reasons, the chief of which is that I believe it to be essentially untrue; it merely emphasises the hopeless divergence existing between these views and those of modern science.

A third view is that at least the majority of the Gospel accounts are true, in the sense that they attempt to convey the essential facts as witnessed or reported at or about the time of Christ, or shortly after His death. The miracles themselves would thus represent genuine supernormal (psychic) phenomena: healings, visions, warnings, perception of the thoughts of others, etc.

These could not be accounted for by any ordinary naturalistic theories, and hence were to that extent miraculous. But they were not unique, in as much as they have been paralleled by similar manifestations in all times and in our own day; nor do they contravene the established Laws of Nature in the sense generally understood. They occur in accordance with higher psychic laws, the reality of which we are only now beginning to understand. It is perhaps hardly necessary for me to say that this is my own opinion. . . .

Viewed in this light, their authenticity is re-established, the truthfulness of the Gospel narratives vindicated, new light is thrown upon the life of Jesus, and the lustre of his name enhanced.

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TO AVOID CONFUSION

A correspondent writes me: "Why is it, we wonder, that so few people who preside at our services trouble to plan them before they go on to the platform. Too often there is whispering between chairman and speaker about details that ought to have been arranged in the ante-room before the service started. The chairman should settle the order of service and the time-table, and see that these are adhered to. To my mind nothing is worse than a meeting that drags on after the congregation has become restless. This would be avoided if speakers and demonstrators are told exactly how long they are expected to work, and pulled up if they exceed the allotted time." The complaint is a reasonable one. Generally, in my platform work, I ask to see the order of service before I leave the ante-room, and in very few cases do I fail to find it. Careful preparation avoids confusion. In the words of St. Paul: "Let everything be done decently and in order."

BUT WHAT WILL REMAIN ?

An Editorial in "Prediction."

"Philosophers speak about death being the gate of life. But it is not at all convincing unless one has some evidence other than philosophic speculation."

This point was made by Lord Dowding in a recent address on "Survival" at Christ Church, Mayfair.

As Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, he was Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Fighter Command from 1936 to 1940. He it was who prepared the plans and deployed the force which fought the glorious Battle of Britain. He is a matter-of-fact man who has the habit of saying what he thinks.

And why should people become so mysterious and involved in their thought when their minds contemplate the possibility of survival? There is no need for all the fashionable mental hocus-pocus.

Over the span of thousands of years, men have built around this fact an elaborate structure of fantastic theory, supposition and fable.

Without exception, every great religious teacher has taught survival, and without exception their followers have done their best to cloud and complicate the issue.

Take the case of Christianity alone. Jesus never pictured the degrees of purgatory and paradise which some of His later followers were so fond of preaching. His teaching on the point was, as always, direct and simple.

The enduring vision of the spiritual world which he left his disciples was of a house with many mansions—and in the parables He gave many a striking illustration, later forgotten or ignored, that even the sinner might find a new life and redemption in the greater world beyond.

Lord Dowding says bluntly that this higher life sounds very fine in theory, but it is not convincing.

He has, however, taken the pains to inquire whether there are any After-life theories based on fact. And he has found that there are.

Frankly, the belief in survival is not easily maintained in war time. Materialistic trends appear all-powerful, and we are, every one of us, snatched away in the turbulent stream of war.

It is very hard, under battle conditions, when guns and mines and tanks and planes are tearing life to pieces, to believe in an after life merely because one remembers that in the balmy days of peace a certain philosopher said so.

Of course, religion strikes deeper than that. But even faith may well be shattered when it looks out on the holocaust of war, where freedom and survival appear to fall, naturally, only to the most brutal and powerful.

No, Lord Dowding, philosophers may speculate, and teachers may school their classrooms till the end of time, but an ounce of fact can overwhelm a ton of fine theories.

That is why it is so good to see psychical research maintained in war time. For here is the flickering candle, making its presence felt in a dim, shadowy, and very uncertain world.

Here, on this fortress of fact, men may defy the lance of fear and superstition. They have something more than speculation upon which to build their image of the life to come. They have caught a glimpse of the Unseen, and learn to know, amid the crash and tumble and interplay of material powers, that it is only the Unseen which is Eternal.

BOOKS WANTED

"Beyond Human Personality," by Geraldine Cummins; "The Road to Immortality," by E. B. Gibbs; "An Ethical System, Cased on the Laws of Nature," by M. Deshumbert; "A Good Book on Atlantis," "The Blue Island," by W. T. Stead; "The True History of Jesus of Nazareth," "The Occult Life of Jesus of Nazareth," "The Hull-Covert Debate."

Give condition and price wanted, K. P. Smith, c/o The Editor, Harbinger of Light.

MATERIALISATIONS

Marvellous Proofs of Survival.

The hard-headed materialist who isn't going to stand any nonsense, nor accept any of your "conditions are not favourable" excuses; but expects, when he has paid his guinea, to have the fully materialised ghost of his Aunt Elizabeth, or Uncle John, presented straight away for cross-examination—such a one had better read Mr. Harry Boddington's "Materialisations" (Psychic Press), and learn humility and wisdom.

In return for his sarcastic scepticism, he will get the gentle irony of a man who has given long and patient years to the investigation of spirit phenomena, and who insists that ignorance of psychic laws is no excuse for an emphatic denial of facts.

The facts are there. Attested to by eminent scientific men who have given their reputation as hostage for the evidence they vouch for. Mr. Boddington submits dozens of such facts. But you can't walk into a seance room and demand: "Half-a-dozen ghosts, please," in the same way that you walk into a dairy and ask for half-a-pound of butter. Or rather, you can demand, but you won't get your ghosts in that easy fashion.

You see, these ghosts have their own personalities and their feelings, and are not to be ordered about by just anybody at any time. Those "favourable conditions" are really necessary, much as you may object to them. They have to be studied, understood, conformed to. And then, when after prolonged patience and loving care, a "form" is materialised, some clump-soled idiot pushes his clumsy hand into a most delicate fabric—and a medium is "exposed", and injured probably for life.

If you belong to those who will not believe unless they see signs and wonders, for heaven's sake keep clear of the physical-phenomena seance room.

The only value of physical phenomena, or any

other psychic phenomena, is the proof it gives of survival. The only true value of that proof is the realisation it contains that man is a spirit, and that he has got to go on and on living with the character he is himself forming while on this earth. Incidentally, of course, it brings comfort to those who have lost their loved ones; but that comfort is of small account unless it carries conviction that if these loved ones still survive, we, too, shall survive. If that conviction fails to influence the spiritual development of the individual, then all the ghosts who have ever materialised have been wasting their time—and ours.

The seekers after signs and wonders who do not realise this had better confine their attentions to cocktail parties. The pleasure of surprising their friends with the “startling apparitions, my dear”, or “the wonderful message I received”, is mere childish inconsequence unless “spirit return” means spirit-existence, with all its implications, here and now. And these “sign and wonder seekers” are just the kind of people to cause trouble in a seance room. Ignorant credulity is always so anxious to prove how clear-sighted and scientific it is. Lacking the most elementary knowledge of scientific investigation, it clumsily thrusts its spanner into the most delicate machinery, and then guffaws loudly when it finds the machine destroyed.

Really, one cannot wonder at Mr. Boddington's suggestion that seance rooms should be closed to all but “those who are qualified by teaching and experience to understand the phenomena”. Some preliminary training; some definite evidence of genuine spiritual desire, rather than mere curiosity-mongering, should be required before an “investigator” is permitted admission to a materialisation seance.

Personally, I haven't the slightest desire to see the Ghost of Hamlet's Father, or any one else's father, materialised to make a sensationalist's entertainment; and I should object with terrific disgust at the appearance of any one dear to me before a

crowd of strangers; even if they had all paid their guineas. So that I feel a good deal of sympathy with Mr. Boddington—though the statement is somewhat sweeping—when he says: “Spiritualism has been made so cheap and nasty that the very name means a cheap entertainment or fortune-telling to the masses around us. There is nothing wrong with the phenomena. It is the way they are being exploited that is producing revulsion.”

In so far as this applies to the caterers for the signs and wonder-seekers, or to those who give advice as when best to sell or buy property, Mr. Boddington's scorn is justifiable; but he knows that his statement is a generalisation, and does not apply to the many thousands of earnest workers who are seeking to keep their Spiritualism on a high plane.

I started out to review Mr. Boddington's book. I am afraid I have succumbed to the influence of those final chapters only. Well, I make no apology. The final chapters lead up to, and contain, the moral of the rest of the book; and if that moral is properly digested and acted upon it will be for the entire benefit of the Spiritualist movement.—T.G., in “Service.”

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EMERGENCY FUND

We thankfully acknowledge the following donations to the Emergency Fund:

M.C., Queensland, £10; A.H.P., Victoria, £5; D.J.H., Merbein, £4 5/; M.J.McF., 30/6; Z.C.M.S., Brisbane, 21/; E.C., Monument Creek, 20/; G.P., Gordonvale, 20/; H.R.C., Horsham, 21/; S.M., Midland Junction, 15/; W.M.N., Brisbane, 14/6; G.M.H., Owen's Creek, 10/6; E.A.S., Hobart, 10/6; W.H.W., Elsternwick, 10/6; H.B., Drysdale, 10/6; R.W.W., Claremont, 10/6; S.J.M., Oakleigh, 10/; J.F., New Plymouth, 9/6; J.A.B., South Africa, 9/6; F.K., Ka-toomba, 5/; C.K.-C., Prahran, 4/6; W.A.P., Coburg, 2/.

MY FIRST SPIRITUALIST MEETING

(By Winifred Ellams, in "Prediction".)

There was some Dickensian flavour about my first attendance at a Spiritualist meeting. I felt it from the moment we (my friend and I) turned into the narrow passage between a boot shop and a fruiterers. Ahead of us was a straight flight of narrow stairs, which we mounted to confront several doors, all shut. A moment's exploration showed us that we had not arrived at a dead end, but were indeed on the right track; for, edging sideways through a narrow gap, we found ourselves staring at a notice which adjured us to "come up higher" if we wished for a higher revelation.

We accordingly mounted a second flight of steps, this time curving back on themselves, and, led by the murmur of voices, presented ourselves in an "upper room". Whether its situation was chosen on account of biblical precedent, or merely economy, I do not know.

I should judge the room to be no more than twelve feet square, and the number of people present perhaps twenty or twenty-five. After we had prayed privately—just as people do when entering most places of worship—my friend whispered to me that she should concentrate on a message for me, as she wished me to have as full an experience as possible.

I had only the most shadowy idea of what the proceedings would be, but I readily agreed to add my concentration to hers. At this point I should perhaps say that Mrs. B. has a considerable psychic gift herself, and assures me that I give off a lot of "power" of the kind required in these affairs.

But that in parenthesis. The room, besides chairs and forms for the congregation, had an organ, and an erection called a rostrum, which, I gathered, served as pulpit, lectern, and altar.

After a short while a man and woman came in, and the meeting started with a prayer and a hymn.

The woman, who was obviously going to be the medium, then delivered a short address. As a rule I find myself very impatient of people whose grammar is not all it might be; but in this case the sincerity of spirit shone clearly through above the stumbling and inadequate words. You felt that there was so much more in her heart than she had the wit to express. I have so often sat, in church, through seemingly interminable sermons, boringly delivered, and got the impression that it was just "Words, word, words!" Woodbine Willies are unfortunately rare.

The medium commended herself to God and her friends in the Spirit World, and then suddenly, revelation was upon us. She was drawn, she said, to a certain person in the audience; and began to describe (accurately) people connected with her who had passed over. I sat enthralled, quite forgetting, hearing the "comfortable words" of her messages, to concentrate on myself. She passed with the facility of real inspiration from one to another, encouraged by their eager answers and oft-repeated "Yes, yes . . ." A very human note was struck when, turning to a young girl dressed all in black, she said, with feeling, "God bless you. They have brought your baby back. A new flower for the spirit world taken before it was soiled." It appeared from what followed that she too had lost a child, and had wondered why, but that she had seen a vision of her baby in the Summerland, and had determined to fret no more.

It was strange, I thought, that a society calling themselves Spiritualists should prove so much more human than any other religious body I have yet encountered. These people penetrate more deeply into the realms of the spirit, and yet—or should I say therefore?—bring more real solace and assurance into life on this plane. They do not demand a blind faith without fact, but they link praise with proof.

Then suddenly my heart beat high with increased awareness as the medium turned towards

the corner where I sat crowded against the wall. "Would my father show himself to me through her?"

I am telling this exactly as it happened. I wish to make it no more marvellous than it was. First she described a woman of about fifty-six. . . . I placed her, and she went on to tell me that there was a great change ahead of me, but all was bright. Then she opened her eyes wide, and said: "I get the orthodox church very strongly round you . . . you are very welcome here; I don't mean to say . . . but the influence is very strong . . ." I could imagine it might be. For many years I attended two or three services regularly. After reiterating her message about the change, she passed on to my friend. I was glad to have a message at all, though not from the source I had anticipated. But if I had felt—which I did not—the slightest tinge of disappointment, it was quite dispelled when she passed on to my friend, Mrs. B. and continued my message. "Ah", she said, "I want to take you back to your schooldays . . . there's a connection with that, here . . ." (There was—between Mrs. B. and myself, not a spirit!) "I get exam. papers—many exams passed—you'll do well." I am a teacher. My friend herself has passed no exams.

After a further message she passed on to the next person—another woman—and continued my message! My friend's concentration must have set up a terrific power in our cramped corner!

"Now", she said. "Place a man in a position of responsibility—a teacher—preacher—teacher . . ." I could place him, though the woman next but one to me could not. My father was both. He was a headmaster and a licensed lay reader in charge of a country church belonging to a scattered parish. (Incidentally, his sermons were not boring.)

The medium continued, "You are going to a big building—it's a long journey—to sign some papers," she said. "You must think before you put pen to paper. It's very good. This man says he will

guide you—will guide your hand in all your writing . . . I get writing . . .”

Well, I had had my message. What more direct proof could I want of survival? What more encouraging prophecy of the future? For I have just sent two books off to the publishers, and am more than anxious to sign on the dotted line. My father, though of a mathematical rather than a literary turn of mind, would have taken such an interest in my work, had he lived to see it. His message conveyed to me through this medium, strengthened my resolve to push forward on the uphill road to success.

His spirit, glad, I am sure, to contact me again, must still have remained in the room, even after messages began to come in from other entities. For some time later, though the woman was not a trance medium, she suddenly stood up very straight, her voice grew more robust, and she called out my father's name, smiting one fist into the other palm, as I have so often seen him do in life.

We closed with a hymn and a prayer. The “Welcome” painted on the outer door seemed now to invite us into the busy world. We stepped on to the pavement refreshed and strengthened, feeling that “The higher self” of which we had sung, had indeed been set free.

And as I write this article—my testimony to the sincerity and usefulness of this practical religion—I wonder, “Is my father guiding my hand?” From the spiritual elevation I feel as I write, I think it must be so. Indeed, I know.

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Christians tell me that they love their enemies, and yet all I ask is—not that they love their enemies, not that they love their friends even, but that they treat those who differ from them with simple fairness. We do not wish to be forgiven, but we wish Christians to so act that we will not have to forgive them.—Robert Ingersoll.

HEALING

The laws of Nature are the laws of health, and he who lives according to these laws is never sick.

He who obeys these laws maintains an equilibrium in all his parts, and thus assures true harmony; and harmony is health, while discord is disease.

And that which produces harmony in all parts of man is medicine, insuring health.

The body is likened unto a violin: when the strings are too relaxed or too tense, the instrument is out of tune, and the man is sick.

Everything in Nature has been made to meet the wants of man, and the vast expanse of Nature may be searched for a remedy; there is a remedy for every ailment of the flesh.

The will of man is supreme, for by vigorous exercise of will man may make tense a cord that is too relaxed, or he may relax one that is too tense, and thus may help to heal himself.

When man has reached the place where he has faith in God and Nature, and in himself, he knows the word of power; and his word is cure for all.

The healer is the man who can inspire this faith, the tongue may speak to human ears, but souls are reached by souls that speak to souls.

The healer is the one that is large of soul, one who can enter into other souls, inspiring hope in those who have no hope, and faith in those who have no faith in God, in Nature, or in man.

A thousand things produce inharmony and make men sick, and a thousand things may tune the harpsicord and make men well.

A herb may heal the one; a drink of water may restore another one; a mountain breeze may bring life back to one that seems past hope.

The virtue from a loving hand may heal a thousand more, for love is queen; thought reinforced by love is God's great sovereign balm.—"The Seeker."

WOMEN FALL FOR FORTUNE-TELLERS

(By Helen Upton, in "Sunday Sun", Sydney.)

Back in the days when witches burned at the stake, and a belief in black magic ran through the land, women had implicit faith in fortune-telling. They still have.

Magistrate Goldie, at Paddington Court, was caustic on the subject. "The credulity of foolish women makes them a prey to the fake fortune-tellers who batten on them," he said. "The people do tremendous harm. They should be gaoled."

Many a marriage has been wrecked, many a romance broken, because of the credulity of women who visit the fortune-tellers, and pay to hear of tall, dark and handsome men, of lottery wins to come, and of faithless husbands.

Again and again the Divorce Courts of Sydney have heard of marriages broken up because wives went to fortune-tellers and came away believing what they'd heard.

These women, ready to wreck their happiness because of a spurious seer's imagination, forget that the man or woman who could really foretell the future would have no need of the shillings of the credulous.

There was the wife of nearly 50 who left her husband after 20 years of happy marriage, because a fortune-teller told her she hadn't yet met her soul-mate, but that she would, and he would take her round the world.

In vain did the husband reason. She left the solid rock of domestic safety for the fortune-teller's dream palace.

Another wife left home because a fortune-teller warned her that her husband was "running round with a redhead".

Divorcing her for desertion, the husband swore in court he'd never taken out a redhead in his life, and didn't even know one to speak to.

Wife and Secretary.

The wife of a business man left him because a fortune-teller told her of a love affair between her husband and his secretary.

He told the court he'd never thought of the girl as anything else but a secretary, and that in any case she was engaged to a much younger man, and probably wouldn't have looked at him twice outside office hours.

Girls have broken off engagements because phony seers have told them they were on the wrong road to happiness, and that meetings with their real Prince Charming were imminent.

Strangely enough, these charlatans have never been able to tell much about their own futures; have told their tales to many a policewoman, and found themselves in court next day.

The fortune-teller who didn't foresee her own bad luck when she promised the earth and most of its material contents to a policewoman built plenty of romance into her story.

Two engagement rings before Christmas, both of which would be refused, followed by a happy, "comfortable" marriage to an engineer, were the main items in the rosy future. She threw in a lottery win for good measure.

The seer's own luck was limited to the fact that she got a bond instead.

[Editor's Note: We are glad that attention has been drawn to this cancer that is eating its way into the Spiritualist Movement by parasites who batten on its fair name. It cannot be too strongly insisted that Spiritualism is concerned solely with the evidences of survival after death, and the possibility of communication, having for its object the comforting of the bereaved, and a reason for the development of character. As a religion, a science, and a philosophy, it has nothing to do directly or indirectly with fortune-telling, which is one of the most perilous of superstitions and charlatanism.]

"MORE TEACHINGS OF SILVER BIRCH."

Silver Birch Defines Religion.

(Contributed by Charles Neil.)

You cannot kill truth: it would not be truth if you could, for truth is everlasting: it springs from God Himself, Who is equally enduring. Silver Birch, the spiritual guide who communicates through Hannan Swaffer's home circle in England, states that he is a servant of the Great Spirit. "I have striven to serve you," he says, "to bring you closer in the bonds of love. I have tried to teach you the laws of a higher realm of a greater life." Death is not a calamity as Silver Birch sees it. He teaches that death is our birth into a greater consciousness, with vaster freedom and better opportunities to express our latent powers.

"The Teachings of Silver Birch," and "More Teachings of Silver Birch" are books that have created much attention in spiritual matters, therefore it is interesting to quote what Silver Birch has to say about religion.

He says: "To some the truths that I bring are elementary, because they have heard them so often. To others they are revolutionary. We are dealing with mankind at different stages of growth. Some will quarrel with what we have to say. Some will deny it. Others will object because it comes from one who is regarded as a savage by your cultured Western world—so proficient in the arts of destruction. But the truth will stand because it is truth. Remember, what you already accept as normal is to others the greatest revolution that has ever come to mankind. We come always with the simple message that man is a spiritual being, part of the Great Spirit, linked with the Great Spirit for all eternity."

Again, he says, "Religion is to serve the Great Spirit by serving His children. Religion has little to do with the conventional ideas of your world. Religion is that which enables the Great Spirit in

you to be revealed in your life. Religion is that which increases the tie between you and the Great Spirit, and between you and His other children. Religion is that which makes you go out into your world and give service wherever you can. Religion is service, and service is religion.

"All else does not matter. When the physical body falls away, all the creeds over which human beings have for so long fought, and striven, are shown to be empty and vain, meaningless and purposeless, for they have not aided the growth of the soul by one iota. The growth of the soul is only increased by service, for as you forget self in the service of others, so your own soul grows in stature and strength.

"There have been for too long too many so-called religions, each with a variation of a message. The things which they hold most dear are in reality of no value. The things for which they have in the past caused blood to flow, or tortured, maimed and burned, do not increase the spirit of man by one inch. They have divided mankind into opposite camps; they have created barriers; they have caused needless differences in countries; in families. They have created disputes; they have done everything that stands for disruption and disharmony. They have failed to unite the children of the Great Spirit. That is why we—on the other side of death—care not for buildings and conventional religion. We are not concerned with what a man calls himself. It is what he does that matters."

One sitter suggested that the war had brought more religion into the world, more friendship and comradeship than there had been before. "That is quite a different matter," said the guide. "Hardship mutually endured creates sympathy, a little more toleration, and breaks down barriers. But true religion goes further than all that, for it seeks always to inspire to service, and service is the most important thing of all, and your world needs more

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AIRMAN TRAINED BY HYPNOTISM

(From "The Age" Special Correspondent in London.)

American airmen were trained by hypnotism early in the war—and it cut their course from 16 to six weeks. They were hypnotised before they went to sleep at night, and were then given lectures through headphones. This was revealed by Lieutenant Victor Ahlhelm, who, during a demonstration at Queen's University, Belfast, successfully "put to sleep" 200 students. Ahlhelm had the students under his spell for three minutes. He brought them back when he discovered that some of them perched on an organ in a crowded hall were in danger of falling. He hypnotised them by fixing their attention on a small silver object and addressing them in low, soothing tones. He claims on one occasion to have put to sleep a man 3,000 miles away.

Ahlhelm studied hypnotism at 22. He said: "In the presence of a doctor I have treated a number of war-shock cases. Regulations should be made to take hypnotism out of the hands of quacks, because it can be of great help in healing. It is of great assistance in psychiatry, and an effective anaesthetic. No one can be made to do anything against his moral convictions under hypnotism, which is an art which can be learned in a few minutes."

of it than ever to-day. That is the simple truth, yet because of its simplicity, we have encountered difficulties. Had we offered you some high-sounding title, some new phrases coined with mystical attractiveness, then some would want to listen because they would consider that here was something that would feed the intellect. We do not desire to feed intellects, but to feed starving souls. Hymns, religious services—these are but the husks. They are not the kernel of true religion. The Great Spirit can only be found within—not without.

TO OUR CORRESPONDENTS

Please accept our thanks for the many kind wishes for the success of the "Harbinger of Light" and for the welfare of its editor, which we most heartily reciprocate.

In reply to our general enquiry as to the length of time our readers have been subscribing to the Harbinger of Light, Miss Whitfield, Launceston (Tas.), writes: "We are sorry we cannot give you the exact time that we have been taking the 'Harbinger' we must have exceeded by many years the 60 years mentioned by one of your subscribers."

Readers' Opinions.

"I think that the 'Harbinger' is very good reading. I have been taking it for over thirty years—which speaks for itself."—A. McPherson, Merinda, Q.

"I congratulate you on the excellence of your publication. The subject matter is most informative, well chosen, and well expressed, and sets a fine high standard, worthy of emulation by other publications."—J. C. K. Sibbald, Brisbane.

"After 56 years' reading the 'Harbinger of Light', I still enjoy it, and hope I shall continue to do so until I am called to join my friends in Spiritland, with whom I am in close contact."—M. A. Hubble, North Sydney.

"I must congratulate you on your efforts to keep the 'Harbinger' to the front in these hard times. I look forward to getting it. Good luck to you and the 'Harbinger'."—J. A. Ballance, Transvaal, South Africa.

"I have seen much more light since I have been reading your wonderful magazine. I lend it to several people, and am very interested in the younger generation. I hope to have some good results during the summer vacation."—M. A. Sturges, Townsville, North Queensland.

SPIRITUALISM AS A SCIENCE, RELIGION OR HOBBY

(By R. Honey, Lakemba, N.S.W.)

With all due respect to St. Clair Stobart (December issue), I disagree that it is necessary to worry about science. Events of the past, and facts attested and proved by some of the greatest scientific men of our age, have placed Spiritualism in the position where it is now up to science to do the worrying; our job, as I see it, is not worry about science, but to clean up Spiritualism of the frauds and charlatans who still batten on the Movement.

What is needed is a committee composed of genuine sympathetic Spiritualists who would test any person claiming mediumistic powers, and if proved genuine, a certificate of endorsement could then be given. The whole movement should be unified so that these mediums could then be given charge of a district, who would be responsible for their care and keep, in the same way that pastors of many Churches are the responsibility of their parishes. All other mediums practising for fees should be investigated, and if found fraudulent or doubtful, should be openly proclaimed accordingly. Only in this way can Spiritualism be cleansed, and only then will people cease to furtively attend meetings or disclaim any knowledge or connection with it. Spiritualism is not, and cannot, be a religion in the true sense of the word; if one is a Christian Spiritualist then their religion is Christianity, and Spiritualism their demonstration of it.

We should scorn further to appeal to official science, which has merely become in the main a name to cover a collection of those who deny their birthright, who refuse to believe what they do not understand, and who flatly refuse to abide by the rule laid down by Lord Kelvin, that "Science is

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THEY WERE ALL TOGETHER

An interesting sidelight on Spirit-life is reported in England, in which a spirit communicated who had been three times married. All three husbands were with her. One is reminded of the question put to Christ: "Who's shall she be in heaven?" In this life, for physical and sexual reasons, marriage is an attachment between individuals which in the nature of the case should be exclusive and restricted. In Biblical days, too, marriage implied proprietorship—a woman was a man's exclusive property. Very gradually we are awakening to the larger view that the obligation is mutual rather than a one-sider proprietorship. In a world, however, which is not physical, and where progeny and propagation have not the same emphasis, life is lived on a plane of mental companionship. The dwellers there share each other's thoughts and aspirations, rather than their bodies, and life becomes a far more communal relationship; so that many may dwell together in harmony without infringing on the privileges of each other. They experience the interblending of minds and ideas, and the world of thought cannot well be exclusive. The social takes precedence over the domestic relationship.—"Two Worlds."K'

bound by the everlasting law of honour to face fearlessly every problem which can fairly be presented to it."

I believe that Spiritualism has nothing to fear from anyone. It may be persecuted for a while, as it naturally is in opposition to anything which undermines the essential brotherhood of man, but as long as we go our way in faith, we can pray for those who do not understand, or refuse to heed, knowing that as we go we grow, and those who are against us here will eventually be for us on the other side of the veil.—Pax Vobiscum.

WISDOM OF SILVER BIRCH

[Published by Psychic Press Ltd., 144 High Holborn, London. English price, 7/6. Not stocked by the "Harbinger of Light". Obtainable through Chas Neil, Kirribilli. (See advertisement inside front cover.)]

"Our allegiance is not to a Creed, not to a Book, not to a Church, but to the Great Spirit of Life and to His eternal natural laws."—Silver Birch.

Among the great services which Spiritualism has rendered to humanity is its philosophy. And eminent among spirit teachers is Silver Birch, guide of Hannen Swaffer's home circle, whose wisdom, counsel and guidance are known all over the world.

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It has never been claimed that spirit teachers solve human problems; what they do is to encourage us to solve our own. But their wisdom lies in so stimulating our thought that we gather new confidence to think for ourselves.

The result is that there are more people in the world to-day with independent minds than ever before, and much of the credit for that, we claim, is due to teachers like Silver Birch, who have unfailingly taught that there is a moral law ruling the universe, and that the secret of life is to live according to that law.

This book contains representative answers by Silver Birch to questions asked by most men and women.

—————:o:—————

Man usually tries to avoid that which he fears. Few have the courage to face ridicule and persecution, and, for this reason, great truths are so long delayed in their general acceptance. Let any who question this review the history of man's progress.

THE "CONFUCIUS" RECORD

Ross versus Whymant.

In "Both Ends of the Candle", autobiographical reminiscences by the late Sir E. Denison Ross, the Oriental scholar (Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1943), there is a chapter on "The Occult", in which he relates how with W. B. Yeats and Edmund Dulac, he made some experiments with a medium, but without much success. Perhaps he had no desire to investigate, and only did so to please his friends, for he remarks at the close of the chapter: "I am quite prepared to agree that I am mistaken in my attitude to the occult. I am only concerned to point out that I dislike playing with the unseen, and would rather not consult either a fallible or an infallible astrologer."

He takes upon himself, however, to make judgments, presumably on the Neville Whymant record of the Confucian voice made at the Valiantine voice sittings in New York in 1926, though he does not specify this. Dr. Whymant, with as good a knowledge of Chinese, if not better, than Ross, considered these very remarkable, and was personally the recipient of the voices and information given.

"I have in my possession", says Ross, "a gramophone record, taken at a seance in New York, containing what purports to be a short speech by no less than Confucius in person. Great importance was attached to this seance by its organisers, and certain persons, claiming a knowledge of Chinese, have said that the speech sounds quite genuine. They should have known better than to delude people so; for the record, though reproducing sounds reminiscent of Chinese, does not contain a single intelligible phrase. This I can aver, after having submitted the record to Chinese from various parts of China. Moreover, no one living has any idea how Confucius pronounced his mother tongue; all we can be sure of is more or less how he did not pronounce it."

Dr. Whymant's Testimony.

Psychic investigators judge this case on the whole record of several seances recorded at the time in the presence of reputable witnesses, and not upon the evidence of a gramophone record of a part of the proceedings taken under conditions of difficulty. Prof. Ross had never lived in China nor made the wide contacts with the language and study of the Confucian dialects which Dr. Whymant undertook in China. In "Psychic Adventures in New York" the latter testifies of one seance, "There was no doubt that somebody or something had been speaking most excellent Chinese there that evening, better Chinese than I, with all my training and experience in China, could speak."—"Light."

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REFERENCE LIBRARY

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations to the library:

Mr. Chas. Neil: "Objections to Spiritualism Answered," by H. A. Dallas (two copies); "When Your Animal Dies," by Sylvia Barbanell; "The Psychic Faculties and Their Development," Dr. R. Fielding-Ould.

Mrs. E. L. Savage: "The Survival of Man" by Sir Oliver Lodge; "A Soul's Travel Among the Flowers," Sister Avabamia.

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A SUCCESSFUL EFFORT

By the Progressive Spiritualists' Church.

The Progressive Spiritualists' Church of Perth, W.A., had its eleventh anniversary during November. They also held their annual bazaar, which was the most successful up to date. From its proceeds the Church was enabled to distribute about £60 among deserving cases. The total of the year's disbursements in charitable causes was £111.

A TRUE GHOST STORY

Some years ago I was sharing a flat with a friend in Chelsea. During the summer we made frequent excursions up the river, and one day we arranged to go with some friends to Chertsey. We were to start from Richmond early in the day, and spend the evening on the river, returning about midnight.

By some mischance I missed the train, and as we had decided that those who were punctual should start, I knew it would be of no use to follow later, so I returned home, and after spending a solitary evening, retired to bed at an earlier hour than usual.

I had been asleep for about two hours, when I suddenly sat up in bed startled by a feeling that there was someone in the room. I reached for the electric switch, but before my groping fingers had touched it I saw a dull light which seemed to come from the fireplace. It grew brighter, and in the midst of it appeared the figure of my friend standing upright, and now I perceived that the light was caused by a faint phosphorescence emanating from her whole frame. She was gazing at me with imploring eyes, and I saw that water was streaming from her clothes and hair, and running off her extended finger-tips as she held them towards me.

I sprang from the bed, but before I could reach her she turned with a gesture of farewell, and walked slowly out of the room. I reached the door as she closed it, and looked out, but there was no one to be seen in the corridor—she had entirely vanished.

Next morning I learned that the boat in which she and the rest of the party were returning to Richmond about midnight the night before, had been upset and, being caught by the weeds in the bed of the river, my friend had been drowned despite all attempts to rescue her.

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