

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"WHATEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

"LIGHT, MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

Two accounts that figure in the daily Press meet my eye and cause me wonderment. One refers to ancient history: the other is a story of to-day. A well-known writer, who uses the *nom de plume* of Dagonet, recalls youthful reminiscences of Faraday as Sandemanian. His grandfather, his father and himself were co-worshippers in a little chapel in Paul's-alley, of which Faraday was one of the deacons or elders. "Another was a butcher, another a gas-fitter, and a fourth, if I remember rightly, a linendraper." There Faraday expounded the Bible and gained the affection of the youthful "Dagonet" "because he did not waggle his head and whine and tremble" as other elders did. But evil days came: in 1856 Faraday was put out of the synagogue. His scientific researches had unsettled his Sandemanianism. "The gas-fitter, the linendraper, and the butcher were shocked but stern." They prayed for him and probably at him. Would "God send light into his darkened brain?" Oh! the pathos of it! The wonder of it! The great man, whom all the world delighted to honour, came down to this abortive little meeting-house, and, in the presence of the gas-fitter, the linendraper, the butcher, and some few others of less consideration, abased himself with tears and vowed that no science should ever again interfere with his perfect Sandemanianism. And so there was a great calm; all wept—"weeping was a Sandemanian weakness"—and another soul—they did not count the size or weight of them in the Sandemanian little Bethel—was saved, and the prayers of the butcher and his company were triumphantly answered. The Sandemanians as a body, it is consoling to learn, preferred the butcher as a preacher, "and they considered it a terrible thing for a good man to devote himself to such doubtful subjects as electricity instead of reading the Bible and being content with things as they were."

Psychological problem, indeed! What made Faraday content with Messrs. the butchers and gasfitters? What possible interest could he feel in the exposition of the Bible by men who could not possibly know anything about it, who could not have the brains and education necessary to judge concerning its many problems, and who must have expressed themselves about it in a way to give one a bad toothache? There must have been one very weak side to Faraday's mind, if there was also a very strong one. In that he is not altogether out of touch with his fellow-scientists. Most of them, apart from the special subject on which they are admitted authorities, are less clear-headed and far less unprejudiced than most average men. It makes one tremble to think what a jury of exalted

men of science would be as compared with the ordinary jury of middle-class intellect when confronted with a problem that enlisted their prejudices. Faraday's excursion into the domain of Spiritualism makes one smile as much as his Sandemanianism. Hopelessly befogged as he was about it, he must have been quite as hopelessly befogged as to the interpretation of the Bible. Could he have thought that the butcher, the baker, the —, or rather the linendraper, and the gasfitter were inspired? Did he think—he with his knowledge—that the keys of interpretation were in their hands? What *did* he think?

That the Bible was verbally inspired and that Sandemanians had a mission to interpret it? One would naturally reject such a ridiculous hypothesis. But here comes in the second subject of my perplexity. The papers of the day (June 23rd) contain what is styled a confession of faith. It is signed by Mr. Spurgeon, his brother, and some two dozen names of persons unknown to fame, whether for good or evil. They might be Sandemanians for all that is known of them. The burden rests wholly on the shoulders of Mr. Spurgeon, and this is his avowal for self and partners. It is perhaps better to allow the extraordinary document to speak for itself:—

We, the undersigned, banded together in fraternal union, observing with growing pain and sorrow the loosening hold of many upon the truths of revelation, are constrained to avow our firmest belief in the verbal inspiration of all Holy Scripture as originally given. To us, the Bible does not merely contain the Word of God, but is the Word of God. From beginning to end we accept it, believe it, and continue to preach it. To us the Old Testament is no less inspired than the New. The book is an organic whole. Reverence for the New Testament accompanied by scepticism as to the Old appears to us absurd. The two must stand or fall together. We accept Christ's own verdict concerning "Moses and all the prophets" in preference to any of the supposed discoveries of so-called higher criticism.

The confession goes on to avow a belief in Election, Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ, imputation of His righteousness, justification by faith, and the "hopeless perdition of all who reject the Saviour." It makes me rub my eyes and wonder whether I have been for some ages asleep. From beginning to end, the Bible, as an organic whole, Old and New Testament alike, is the inspired Word of an infallible God! Science has nothing to do with Genesis, and the paralysis of the solar system by Joshua is to be taken *au pied de la lettre*! Man may do as he pleases if he only repents in the nick of time. He may have been an embodiment of the virtues, a pattern to all in his *life*, but his *faith* is not sound, and perdition—hopeless and eternal—is his lot. This is somewhat worse than Faraday's Sandemanianism, and I confess to being utterly bowed down with shame on the mere reading of such a creed. Comment would be out of place. The bare recital gives one the shivers. Contrast the creed of the Spiritualist! And these Pharisees, remember, would consign him to hell hot-foot! For him there would be no hope, and if they had only flourished (as the biographies have it) a few centuries earlier, they would have burnt his body and damned his soul with all the energy of an Inquisitor. Spiritualism has, at least, taught us not to return the compliment. It is

recorded that a Protestant bishop once tackled a Catholic little boy who had supped his theological broth hot. The boy told the bishop that he would go to hell with such belief as his. "What!" said the bishop, "No hope?" "Yes," said the reflective urchin, "There may be a little, from your invincible ignorance." So let us think that there may be hope even for these Sandemanians and latter-day Pharisees.

It is refreshing to turn from this grotesque nonsense to the most recent volume of the Rev. H. R. Haweis, "The Broad Church," reviewed in this journal last week. There indeed one finds "words of truth and soberness." I have not read for a long time a more valuable work nor one that will be more serviceable to an honest mind that is casting about for some *locus standi* within the Church. For in these transition days it is not safe for all to wander afield without guidance. Some expression of religious belief in company with those like-minded is a necessity for most of us. The soul that is deprived of that which nurtures its religious instincts is apt to be stunted and starved. Sectarian vagaries are apt to misguide—in some cases to disquiet an already disturbed soul. The sober dignity of the Old Church, if only the burden of faith and dogma can be lightened, is safer and more satisfying to those, at any rate, who have been born and brought up within its pale, and who desire nothing better than to end their days with its benediction. I would by no means, in so saying, cast any slur on other forms of belief, but the largest charity cannot attribute to Mr. Spurgeon and his friends or to the "heated pulpiteers" of a sectarian narrowness of belief—for otherwise there would be no sects: it is the emphasising of one clearly realised article of faith that gives birth to the sect—it is, I say, impossible to attribute to these sobriety, dignity, and adequate knowledge. It may be that zeal may make up for many a deficiency. It is unquestionable that the absence of zeal, energy, and knowledge has done much to paralyse the Church and render nugatory the influence that it ought to wield. If it regains that ancient influence—and I see around me evidence that it is appreciably increasing its power—it will be by attention to such home-truths as are set forth in this volume with a directness and sincerity of thought that seem to me wholly admirable.

I should not have ventured to add anything to the notice which has already appeared in "LIGHT," were it not that there are scattered up and down in the pages of this volume various allusions to the subject with which I deal in these pages. I am a chronicler of matters that impinge on Spiritualism in general, and on the philosophical and religious aspects of public utterances in respect of it, quite as much as I am of facts and phenomena connected with its objective manifestations. Mr. Haweis has much to say that I may allude to in rapid summary, and by so doing commend his book to the study of my friends. The "Union of Science with so-called Supernaturalism"—"in the rehabilitation of which [latter] lie the pith and marrow of the Religion of the Future"—occupied me almost exclusively in writing my "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism." I cannot, therefore, read without keen interest whatever has for its aim the union of Scientific Knowledge with Religious Faith. The demonstrated facts of the Spiritualist, however separate they may stand from the knowledge of the Materialist, have no antagonism to the supernaturalism of the Catholic Church and the reasonable interpretation of the Bible. In that sacred Book there are records that the larger knowledge of to-day compels us to reject. In our records enthusiasm and ignorance have placed much that we must put aside as unproved and even manifestly mistaken. But in both these are abundant testimony to the working of supernatural or super-normal spirit-agency, and the records of the past are

confirmed and supported by the experiences of the present. That is the great point as it seems to me which should be pressed on the ministers of religion. Formularies, dogmas, creeds, expressions and definitions of faith are in urgent need of re-statement. But no less important is the recognition that the methods which in ancient days were used by the world of spirit to act on the world of matter are in operation still, and that from the proven facts and accredited teachings of Spiritualism the Church may and ought to derive a support that it has hitherto neglected, and which it cannot much longer neglect without peril.

I would especially refer my readers to the sections which I now specify as containing matter directly bearing on their special beliefs and knowledge. I do not pretend that I refer to all, for the whole book is one no page of which should be missed, but I direct attention to the treatment of the following subjects:—

Creeds and Formularies. (Section 7.)

"Over every creed and formulary is written this motto: It was true—It is true—It is no longer true."

Reformation rather than Revolution. (Section 12.)

"When the old books of magic were burnt (Acts xix. 19) accumulations of Occult Science were lost." "the old Church conserved both Art and Spiritualism."

The Resurrection of the Body. (Section 29.)

A survival of the soul, not a resuscitation of the body.

Trinity in Unity. (Section 38.)

Personalities grouped into some higher and Diviner unity—diversity of function, unity of purpose.

Divinity of Christ. (Section 48 *et seq.*)

A noteworthy example of the way in which the author deals with thorny subjects. A discussion of theories, which may be skipped by those whose faith suffices.

Matter and Force. (Section 89 *et seq.*)

Very important. "Science will shortly be the handmaid of supernaturalism." "We shall command the secret of making our presence felt at a distance." We are already realising the power of mind on mind. Carry it on—"I believe in the Holy Ghost—spirit, mind, influence." See also section 91, "The Stigmata," and sections 96 to 100, all very important.

Hypnotism, Homœopathy, and the Church. (Section 103.)

Figments at first condemned and sneered at are found to be crude presentations of afterwards recognised truth. "People are beginning to see that some form of Spiritualism underlies every kind of religion that has had, or is ever likely to have, any effect on the world."

Is the Great Hereafter a Dream? (Section 149 *et seq.*)

No. "Evolution is upwards—it is towards immortality." "In the last few months (1890) half the medical world has openly swallowed under the word 'Hypnotism' precisely the facts which they have derided for a century under the name of 'Mesmerism.' They may yet be wrong—if not quite wrong, yet very wrong—about Spiritualism."

Spiritualism, its Journals and its Believers. (Sections 161, 162.)

"The leading journal in England is certainly 'LIGHT.'"

The Spirit-self: the Argument for a Future. (Sections 164-175.)

Worthy of special attention; too close an argument to be indicated in a few words.

In addition to this new matter, the general drift of which I have briefly pointed out, there is the sermon on Spiritualism originally published in "LIGHT," one on Prayer, and another on John Stuart Mill's Religion. The advice I give, and I never felt more sure in speaking than I do, is to get the book and study it, for it contains more thought and more truth than any number of volumes of sermons that I have met with.

"THEY NEVER WERE SO NIGH."

"Oh, hearts that never cease to yearn!
Oh, brimming tears that ne'er are dried;
The dead, though they depart, return,
As if they had not died.

The living are the only dead;
The dead live—never more to die;
And often when we mourn them fled,
They never were so nigh."

—ANON.

LETTERS ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

BY A READER OF "LIGHT."

No. IV.

DEAR —, I left off with a promise to give you some account of my descent into the abyss of negation into which so many thinking, earnest minds have strayed never to return.

After my revolt I began to question everything. I studied and read. That bulwark of the Christian religion, "Eternal Punishment," was destroyed for me by a very simple and practical experience, it may interest you to know. Long before the divines began to make any stir to refute it, it had fallen for me, but I dared not say what I had intuitively discovered under pain of being shunned as a heretic. The incidents of the experience were these. I had a very near and dear relative, a young fellow whose career was full of promise. He was in the army. All went well for a time, but at length he came to grief. His very attractions proved his undoing, until finally he came to a sudden and untimely end at the early age of twenty-two. His death was a shock and a sorrow. My thoughts naturally turned to his condition in a future life. His follies and excesses forbade my believing he was what is termed "saved." What then? At the time of his death I was in the capital of one of the Presidencies in India. A great stir was going on in the city; the population was up in arms at what it considered an unjust sentence passed by one of our English judges upon a native defaulter. The Press took the matter up, declaring that to sentence a man to fifteen years' imprisonment for an offence that would have been amply punished by two was unjust. Society was scandalised at the verdict, and echoed the Press that the sentence of the judge was a crying shame. "So," thought I, "if society which is evil—or generally allowed to be so—can discern so nicely to adjust the balance between the weight of an offence and its just measure of punishment, am I to believe that God's Justice will sentence a youth cut off in the midst of his follies to an Eternity of punishment for a short career of foolishness—the result more of heredity and environment rather than of innate wickedness? Impossible!" I never believed in the Eternity of punishment after that. I did not even argue about it. The fact was self evident. Justice in man and Justice in God must mean the same thing. Justice: neither more nor less. An Eternity of punishment for a fragment of ill-spent time was injustice, and had no part, therefore, in God. Thus easily did this favourite stronghold fall without even the blast of a trumpet to lay it low. I never tortured any texts to get a meaning out of them to build up the walls again. It was enough for me that the doctrine dishonoured the majesty of God. The truth underlying the idea I found to be this: It is quite possible for us through persistence in evil to corrupt our whole nature so irrevocably that good becomes abhorrent to us; in which case we *voluntarily* alienate ourselves from God, Who in His Love and Mercy provides some suitable place for us where we shall not be tortured by the glory of His Presence or Influence which we are unable to bear. But this, so far from being sent as a punishment, is a manifestation of His pitying Love, Who builds for us a home in accordance with what the Buddhists call our self-created Karma. But for those souls who have been hurried out of life—as was my young relative—I felt instinctively there was some other sphere of training beyond what our churches allowed. My idea was subsequently confirmed when I read the writings of Swedenborg, whose illuminations have shed so much new light on our world; compelling the tyrants of dogma to set aside many of their most cherished opinions.

Questioning as I did everything, I questioned the churches. On what foundations did they stand? I went through a process familiar to the readers of "Robert Elsmere." I questioned the Divinity of Christ. "On scientific bases I thought it could not be possible. I went to hear what Voysey had to say; what the Unitarians had to say; back again to Church to compare—finally getting lost in the mephitic vapours of the abyss—unable to discern anything clearly, feeling only the tyranny of life with its many sorrows—they were real enough—and finding comfort nowhere. The Bible, according to the teachers of the abyss, was an effete piece of literature; a narcotic to those who

had no thinking powers, lulling them to sleep in an imaginary security, but useless and archaic for the modern development of thought; its language coarse and profane to the impure minds of a generation whose "chastest part is their ears," as says one of their ablest poets. Brought thus far began to doubt if there were any God at all! And as for immortality—was not that, too, a delusion and a snare? The wise people after all were the people who got the most they could out of To-day, and I had wasted my life in fruitless effort and was a fool for my pains!

At this point of my spiritual life I left off prayer; or if I prayed, it was a dumb, agonised entreaty without form—that if there were any Truth, any Light in this world I might find it! For the moment I could only echo Balzac, "O mon Dieu, comme ton monde est mal arrangé!" I resented my lost and suffering youth. Ministers of religion were distasteful to me. I saw in them only a set of men of limited thought and feeble capacity, each tied up to his own petty doctrine, for the most part untrue. The clergy of my own church most limited of all, tied and bound as they were by the iron chains of the Thirty-nine Articles, whose importance exceeded in their minds even Mercy and the Love of God. Did any among them strive to emancipate himself from the bondage of dogma, he was at once set upon by his Christian orthodox brethren and pecked to death, as in the case of poor F. W. Robertson, the foremost man of light and leading of his day, the pioneer of our modern toleration and enlightenment. But they killed him! Brave, grand soul that he was! I speak of him with love and reverence because he was my sheet anchor in that tempest in the abyss. Until I met with him I still held on to God—informally, dimly, blindly, and in the dark—hardly believing Him even while I clung hold; not knowing if I might not be cast adrift; not quite sure if what I clung to were fact or fiction.

I understood then what it is that impels people reaching this point in the swamp of negation to voluntarily give themselves up body, soul, and spirit to the Church of Rome, if only it will lift them out and take their minds and consciences in its keeping, and bolt them in lest they commit suicide on their souls. They tacitly admit their partial insanity and fly to "Mother Church" to hide and control them. It needs a strong head and a supporting arm—even while unconscious of the support—to look into the depths of the abyss of negation without flinging oneself headlong into some one of its many magnetic whirlpools, the most popular of which is "The Unknowable," as when the Evil One takes you to the brink and says:—

"You see how powerless Christianity is to combat all this. Why, its very members are all divided and cannot live the life it demands. They spend their time for the most part in uttering vain repetitions and ceaseless iterations, or squabbling over texts and times and seasons or how they shall adorn their persons and their churches, while their lives are no better, in many instances not so good as those who dwell in this beautiful abyss, ignoring God and worshipping only themselves in Humanity; those who find nothing true but the material and positive part of their existence. Look at the Christian Church? What is it after all but an investment in that other and imaginary world from which its shareholders expect a splendid dividend? Revelation? miracles? Moonshine! there is no such thing anywhere. In the words of your own familiar formula, 'As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end,' is the Truth, that needs no pious Amen. It is simply matter of fact. Evolution is the only recognised law. You were evolved from protoplasm and your mind is only a secretion. You are from without to within. There is no law for you but what you can see and handle externally. A future Life? *A quoi bon?* Surely you will have had enough in this. Your duty as an altruist is to live for posterity. Worship Humanity. There is nothing greater anywhere than yourself, and for the beauty and intricacy of this worship come and see. Comte will show you how you can have all the spiritual gratification which arises from a sensuous ritual without being burdened with the strain of the supernatural. You will be launched at once into a glorified society of the mutually admiring. If you only distinguish yourself enough they will put you into their calendar together with Shakespeare and Jesus Christ, and you will have a service of praise ordained to

celebrate your existence. Is it not beautiful and gratifying, and oh, so comforting? Surely you cannot hesitate."

Oh, the subtlety of Satan! God give me the pen to fight him with his own weapons, to slay him with his own satire! I looked into the abyss which had been so glowingly painted for me and shook my head. That, too, was a lie! I felt it! Truth must be somewhere. God must be somewhere. "O that I knew where I might find Him." That was my cry just then while still holding on, sustained by some Power outside myself which kept me from being swallowed up and lost in that awful and impenetrable darkness.

In my next I will trace the effect of this darkness on some of the great minds of our day with the result to Humanity.

SPIRITUALISM IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

"ARCHBISHOP TAIT ON EXORCISM."

One of the most important subjects connected with Spiritualism is the connection between insanity and the possession of the mind, or body, or both, by evil or undeveloped spirits, and the possibility of effecting a cure by some process of exorcism. The following correspondence between a colonial Bishop and the late Archbishop Tait, for which we are indebted to the recently published *Life of the Primate*, by the Dean of Windsor and Canon Benham, seems valuable in this connection:—

"Early in this year," writes the colonial prelate, "an estimable clergyman in my diocese, the Rev. A. B., became disordered in mind, and was obliged to give up his curacy. After some aberrations the malady suddenly took the terrible form of the conviction that he was possessed by a devil. At first he was terribly violent and destructive in his paroxysms. It was a very terrible sight. He certainly exhibited all the phenomena of diabolical possession which we read of in the Gospels—the same tendency to tear off clothes, the constant grinding of the teeth, and distressing working of the maxillary muscles; above all the strange duality of consciousness with a constant struggle between the two wills—even a duality of vocalisation, Mr. B. from time to time talking in his natural voice, and then suddenly—and often with blasphemous expressions utterly foreign to his natural disposition—in a totally different voice, and with a totally changed expression of countenance. Since then I have frequently visited him, and I notice that he is quieter than heretofore and less liable to demoniacal outbreaks. Except for this 'possession' he is as rational as you or I. The memory is entire; his powers of reasoning clear and vigorous; and his hold upon the doctrines and duties of religion strong and persistent, in spite of rude interruptions during prayer and at the mention of holy persons and things from his devil-half. He is painfully conscious of this, and on his complaining that the devil would not let him think consecutively in unpremeditated prayer I composed for him some forms of private prayer suitable to his case. But from my first visit he has constantly implored me to exorcise him, declaring that he is satisfied that he must be thus authoritatively exorcised to be relieved, and trying to prove to me that I have the power to set him free. I have reasoned much with him—for he is quite capable of argument—to show him that I see no evidence that this extraordinary gift was continued to Christ's Ministry along with the ordinary gifts of the Spirit, and we have thoroughly discussed the question together. He still has set his heart on exorcism, and I have promised to refer the question to you and to abide by your dictum in the matter. Will you kindly direct me as to what I ought to do?"

The Archbishop replied:—

"MY DEAR BISHOP,—What you tell me about Mr. B. is very remarkable. Under all the circumstances I cannot think you would do wrong in yielding to his desire for a formal service of the nature of exorcism. Of course, such words as you would use would all be in the form of prayer, and if he desires that you should in a set form of words call upon God in prayer to deliver him in His mercy from this terrible disease there can, I think, be no reason against your doing so. From what you say of the poor man's present state he is evidently quite capable of understanding the nature of such a service, which he would not suppose to be an exercise of miraculous power on your part, but an invocation of the aid of Almighty God to bring his sufferings to an end. So long as he understands that the

operative power is God's and not man's he may call it exorcism; and it would seem hardly right to deny him—in his present distressing condition—the special form of relief which he craves. Such at least is my view of the matter which you have laid before me. I shall be much interested to hear the issue.—Yours ever,
A. C. CANTUAR."

It is added "the Bishop acted in accordance with the advice thus given. Recovery ensued."

THE PROBLEM OF IMMORTALITY.*

This little book of sixty pages deals with a vast subject under the heads of (1) Immortality and Natural Religion; (2) Immortality and Revealed Religion; (3) The Foundation Fact of Christianity. We may at once say that there is nothing new in the argument. The writer neglects the evidence ready to his hands that some souls who have lived on earth are living still, and have given evidence far stronger than any that can be adduced from other sources of their perpetuated life. Had he attended to this evidence, all that he brings forward of presumption would have been indefinitely strengthened. The Jew knew nothing of this belief in immortality, as the writer confesses. From Genesis to Malachi there is nothing to warrant the conclusion that the doctrine was inculcated on the Jew. And yet there is a consensus of belief in immortality common to man as man. It is taught in the sacred books of Brahminism, Moham-edanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, in the Zendavesta, equally with the religious symbolism of ancient Egypt and the literature of Greece and Rome. There is a world-wide dread of extinction; a pervading consciousness of a capacity for a higher and nobler life; a general sense that no signs of finality can be discovered in the growth of a human soul on earth. Men pause with hope in their hearts, but no sound breaks the stillness that surrounds the tomb. That is precisely where the writer fails to estimate the evidence that anyone who deals with this subject must now reckon with. For, if we are to take the lowest view of the evidence that Spiritualism affords to the discussion, it must be admitted that even a single unimpeachable utterance from the Silent Land establishes a far-reaching possibility. If death has not destroyed in even a single case, the argument is transferred to another plane. And Spiritualism offers a wealth of evidence that the Soul survives Death. We do not desire that all the records which abound in the literature of the subject should be received without the severest scrutiny, without making all allowance for possible causes of error derived from our ignorance of the conditions of disembodied life, from the vagaries of embodied spirit, from discrepancies and divergences of evidence, from the possible fooling that a mischievous or deceiving spirit may play off upon us. Let these be granted: and yet the plain fact remains that Spiritualism offers the only evidence and the most complete of man's survival after physical death. The writer hints that he is "not prepared to relegate to the limbo of old wives' fables all the testimonies of men in regard to conscious communion with a world other than this world of sense." It is well; but it would have been better if he had examined those testimonies and so had supported the presumptions that he gathers from the resurrection of Jesus. It is not too much to say that the faulty and weak evidence that we have—and it is all that faith has for its support—of this cornerstone of Christian belief receives incalculable support from what is within the knowledge of many now living men. It is not too much to say that an isolated case resting on such evidence is incapable of bearing the superstructure of belief that has been raised upon it: buttressed and shored up by our present knowledge it is equally within sober statement to say that evidence otherwise weak receives a support that can come from no other source. For Faith in these utilitarian days cannot afford to despise the help of Knowledge: and that which is in risk of failing to command pious assent is strengthened and assured of acceptance by the aid of Scientific Demonstration. In failing to recognise this the author of this well-meant little book throws aside his best and strongest ally.

THE pleasure of life is according to the man that lives it, and not according to the work or the place.—EMERSON. ("Conduct of Life: Fate.")

* "Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury." By Randall Thomas Davidson, D.D., Dean of Windsor, and William Benham, B.D., Hon. Canon of Canterbury. (Macmillan and Co.)

"Mors Janua Vitæ: a contribution to the Problem of Immortality." Rev. W. J. Hocking. (Elliot Stock.) 1891.

MARY RONDEL'S GHOST.

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

From "The Summerland."

Time and again, when I was a boy of twelve or thirteen years of age, I used to sit and watch a hand, holding a pencil, moving to and fro over a sheet of paper. It was a white, well-shaped woman's hand, with long, slender fingers and a turquoise ring on one finger. I must not make a mystery of this. It was the hand of a fair, young American lady who, years afterwards, leaped or fell from a steamboat in Long Island Sound, and so vanished from this world. But, at the time I write, she was a woman of happy disposition and singular intelligence, and was a graduate of a famous Western college. Greek and the Calculus were as familiar to her as figs and grapes were to me. Either her education, or a natural bias of mind, once rendered her rather sceptical in her views; nowadays she might have been called an agnostic. Nevertheless, she possessed (though she herself despised and ridiculed it) that still unexplained power of susceptibility that we have agreed to call mediumistic. She was a "writing medium."

It was the era of the Fox sisters and of Home. Spiritualism had not lost its novelty. Science had delivered no verdict, and nobody knew whether to believe or not. But there was an English lady living near us, whose poetry was read by all England and America,* who was a believer and often discoursed with earnestness on the subject, and one day she said: "If we only had a medium!" whereupon, this American girl-graduate that I speak of, out of the kindness of her heart, but with some reluctance, intimated that she believed she had some little faculty in that way, but that she could not herself place the least credence in the supernatural origin of the phenomena.

To make a long story short—for who could resist the urging of that little, brown-eyed woman of genius who was a lyric in herself?—our medium consented to an experiment, and for a couple of weeks thereafter, while seven or eight of us sat round the table in the great Italian hall, the pencil in her white hand would be driven along the paper, now under one unseen impulse, now under another, she regarding it with a look half apprehensive, half incredulous, but all of us hugely interested. Our deceased friends and relatives announced themselves, one after another, and expressed sentiments of unimpeachable morality and virtuous exhortation—just what anyone would have expected of such good and respectable persons, and the thing was becoming a trifle monotonous and the medium was wishing that more useful ways of employing one's leisure might be found, when all of a sudden—

Draw up closer; the story begins here. Her hand, which had been moving methodically under the direction of the spirit of my maternal grandfather, and had just written the words, "We study causes," was suddenly and violently seized upon, as it were, by a new and turbulent influence, almost knocking the pencil out of her fingers and hurrying it onwards in a quite original handwriting, uncouth and heedless and, moreover, incorrect in orthography. The medium started and looked troubled; a wave of interest ran round the circle; she bent forward and spoke out the words: "I must speak with Mr. Hawthorne. I want his sympathy."

My father laughed. He had deprecated and made fun of the whole business from the beginning. But with the courtesy of a man of the world and an ex-consul of the United States, he consented to listen to a communication which seemed to convey such urgency. Who was the vehement petitioner?

In the course of the next half-hour, we had as much of her history as she ever confided to us. Her name was Mary Rondel. She was born in Boston, one hundred years before, and died there in pain and misery, still a young woman. Her troubles had their source in a certain member of our own family, with whom she had been intimately acquainted. She was not happy even yet, and Mr. Hawthorne's sympathy she must and would have.

* Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the "English lady" referred to, Hiram Powers, the sculptor, and Charlotte Cushman, the eminent actress, were earnest believers in Spiritualism, and frequently held circles for spirit communion, at which, at different times, were gathered some of the brightest intellects among the literati and nobility of Italy, and the most distinguished visitors in Florence.—Ed. "Summerland."

But how shall I indicate the weird, curious, and yet pathetic impression that was produced, not more by the matter, than by the manner of her communications? Mary Rondel was bitterly in earnest; she would be heard; she upset the propriety of all our other spiritual friends. It was in vain that they attempted to assure us that she was a bad, improper, untruthful, ill-conditioned creature. In the midst of their pious homilies she would swoop down, snatch the pencil, and send it staggering in violent evolutions along the page; her language was anything but conventional; nay, it sometimes became indiscreet, if not scandalous. Occasionally, our refined little medium would protest and remove her hand from the table. But no sooner did she resume, than Mary was at it again. She would not be denied. She was a temperament, a will, a person. Of all our long procession of communicants she alone showed an unmistakable and vivid individuality. We would have known her had we met her on the street. She had been waiting in the dark void of the unseen world for the better part of a century for an opportunity to speak and declare herself, and she was not going to let it go unimproved. And yet the poor creature knew not what to say—only that she desired Mr. Hawthorne's sympathy. But what good it was to do her, or by what right she demanded it we were not informed.

He assured her that he would and did sympathise with her, hoping thereby to pacify her, and so get rid of her. But, no—she clung to us all the tighter. Having at length found a sympathiser, she would henceforth cleave to him. It soon became impossible to get communications from anybody except Mary Rondel; and, since the atmosphere she brought with her was clearly unheavenly, the séances were finally abandoned; and that was the end of Mary, so far as we were concerned.

Now, the sequel was strange. We returned to America two or three years later; and four years after that my father died. Some venerable maiden cousins of ours sent us, some months subsequently, a box of old books and papers that had belonged to our family in the last century. Among the books was a dilapidated copy of Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia," bearing date 1586. On the fly-leaves were the autographs of a number of ancestors, from the first emigrant down to Daniel Hawthorne, who, history says, commanded a privateer during the revolution, and on the broad margin at the bottom of the tenth page was inscribed, in faded brown ink, a woman's name: "Mary Rondel." It is before me as I write, an ill-formed name but showing character. After some reflection, I remembered the circumstances under which I had seen that name before. Searching further into the book, I came upon the love sonnets and stanzas in the latter part of the volume, but several of these had been marked round with a pen and such glosses written in the margin as "Pray, mistress, read this," or "Read this as if myself spake it." Some of these writings were in the chirography of Daniel Hawthorne; others, in another hand. I surmised that the book had once been read jointly by two lovers, who had taken this indirect means of intimating their sentiments.

The longer I meditated upon the matter, the more interested I became. At last I wrote a letter to those old maiden cousins and, without saying anything about the spiritual experience in the Italian villa, I inquired whether they were cognisant of any family traditions connected with a person called Mary Rondel. Here is their reply:—

"Dear Cousin,—A Miss Mary Rondel, of Boston, knew one of your great uncles, Daniel Hawthorne, about 1775. The story will not interest you; it is not creditable to either party. It ended unfortunately; there had been some talk of a marriage, but their relations were broken off, and I am unable to say what became of the young woman. Your uncle afterwards fitted out a privateer," &c., &c.

No, I don't pretend to explain it. I simply give you the facts.

THE soul contains the event that shall befall it, for the event is only the actualisation of its thoughts; and what we pray to ourselves for is always granted.—EMERSON. ("Conduct of Life: Fate.")

"WHEN a man is so fugitive and unsettled that he will not stand to the verdict of his own faculties, one can no more fasten anything upon him than he can write in the water, or tie knots of the wind."—HENRY MORE.

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Light:

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TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi. It will much facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they are under two columns in length. Long communications are always in danger of being delayed, and are frequently declined on account of want of space, though in other respects good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space of half a column to ensure insertion.

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ASSEMBLY OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

The London Spiritualist Alliance held a *Conversazione* in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall, on the evening of Thursday, June 25th. There was a large attendance of members and friends, the company including:—

Mr. J. T. Audy, Mr. Prosper Audy, Mr. and Miss Allen, Mr. T. A. Amos and Miss Jessie Amos, Miss Anwyl, Mrs. Bradley, Mr., Mrs., and Miss Bertram, Mrs. L. G. Banister and Miss Banister, Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Brunner, Mr. H. Darby, Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Bower, Dr. and Mrs. Pullen Burry, Mrs. Bliss, Mrs. and Miss Brinckley, Mrs. Bell, Mrs. and Miss Ethel Bell, Mr. F. Berkeley, Mrs. Boulton, Mr. W. Bartlett, Mr. and Mrs. F. Clarke, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Collingwood, Mr. and Mrs. R. Copley, Mr. J. Chesworth, Mr. and Mrs. Clark, Madame Casinello, Mrs. Clively, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Carden and Miss Carden, the Misses Day, Mr. J. M. Dale, Mr. James Duff, the Misses Drake, Miss Dawney, Miss J. Dixon, Mr. T. G. Davies, Mr. F. T. A. Davies, Mrs. and Miss Darling, Mr. and Mrs. Drummond, Mr. R. Donaldson, Mr. Gilbert Elliot, Mrs. T. H. Edmands, Mr. and Mrs. T. Everitt, Mr. and Mrs. Desmond FitzGerald, Mrs. Freckelton and the Misses Freckelton, Mr. Ferriman, Mrs. Geddis, Miss F. Gifford, Mrs. G. Goodall, Madame Greck, Mr. Herbert A. Greck, Mr. S. Grove, Mr. and Mrs. B. D. Godfrey, Mr. B. Stanley Godfrey, Mr. U. B. Goddard, Mr. M. Gunn, Mr. G. E. Gunn, Mr. I. Hawkins, Mrs. F. W. Hayes, Miss Hansombody, Mr. J. W. Heribel, B.D., Mr. C. J. Whistler Hanson, Mr. E. C. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Kemsley, Mr. Kilvington, Mr. S. Keyworth, Mr. G. Kemp, Miss Kluht, Miss Chaddock Lowndes, Miss Frances Lord, Mr. Light, Miss C. Leveson, Dr. Marsh, Mrs. and Miss Maltby, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Mitchiner, Mr. Edward Matthews, Miss McKibbin, Mr. and Mrs. J. MacGeary, Mrs. Phillips, the Countess de Panama, Mr. C. Pearson, Mrs. E. Parker, Mr. and Mrs. Pethybridge, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Paul Peyss, Miss Parke, Mrs. J. Procter, Mr. J. Procter, Mrs. Rorke, Miss Richards, Mr. and Mrs. E. Dawson Rogers, Miss Dawson Rogers, Mrs. Rudd, Mrs. and Miss Riley, Mr. F. W. Read, Mr. Reed, Miss Reeves, Miss Sullivan, Miss Shearer, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Sidley, Mrs. C. Spring, Mr. T. Shorter and Miss Shorter, Mr. P. G. Sarpy, Mr. and Mrs. Slater, Mr. Smythe, Mr. Percy Smythe, Miss Schomberg, Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, Mr. and Mrs. R. Stapley, Mrs. Thomas, Colonel Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Tindall, Mrs. Townshend, Mr. and Mrs. Morell Theobald, Mr. E. Tritschler, Mr. and Mrs. Towns, Miss Rowan Vincent, Mrs. and Miss Wingfield, Miss Wolff, Mr. C. White, Miss White, the Misses Williamson, Mrs. and Miss J. C. Ward, Mrs. Withall, the Misses Withall, Mr. H. Withall, Mrs. B. World, Mr. W. Waters, Mrs. Western, Mr. H. Wright, Mr. Watford, &c., &c.

In the unavoidable absence of the President from continued illness, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, as senior Vice-

President, occupied the chair, and introduced the Rev. J. Page Hopps, who delivered the following address on

A STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT JEHOVAH FROM THE STANDPOINT OF SPIRITUALISM.

If the question "Who was Jehovah?" failed to shock people, that would only be so because they would regard it as so entirely superfluous or unmeaning. The matter-of-course reply would be, "Jehovah was and is the one true and living God who revealed himself to the Jewish nation, and, through it, to the world." I might as well say at once that I regard that as the most extraordinary and the most self-evident delusion that ever took possession of the queer compound we call the imagination of man. It is the standing mystery of Christendom; it is a colossal monument of human credulity; it shows that mankind can be got to believe or to imagine anything.

Not long ago, Dr. Momerie, in his blunt address on "The corruption of the Church," noticed the phrase "The God of the Bible," and hit it full in the face by saying: "Which God? There are so many of them." He was right. In the Bible, words and actions are attributed to God which belong to absolutely opposite moral and spiritual spheres. In one place you have a God merciful and just; in another, a God savage and arbitrary. Here, He is benevolent; there brutal. From one point of view, you may say, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"; from another, all you can say is "The Lord will have His revengeful way; I have no chance." What are we to do? It is difficult to say; but it is easy to say what we cannot do—we cannot say that the Jehovah of the Bible is one being.

There are two explanations:—either that the name "Jehovah" was a symbol, standing for an ideal Deity, reflecting, from time to time, the thoughts and feelings of His worshipers, or that the name was applied to a number of unseen beings of varying grades who, at different times, got control of the Hebrew mediums, also of varying grades—with results everywhere discoverable in the Bible.

In the first case, Moses and Joshua and David did no more than Mr. Spurgeon, Canon Farrar, and Dr. Martineau are doing; for all these idealised or idealise the Infinite One, and always according to the measure of the man—and always an imperfect ideal, never the absolutely real—always more and more perceived as men pass out of their darkness into God's marvellous light.

In the second case, the name "Jehovah" indicated a real being or beings who were neither higher nor better than their communications, which must be taken on their merits, good or bad, wise or foolish, sensible or insane. For my own part, I think the truth lies in this direction, and hold that the humblest Spiritualist, who knows what spirit-intercourse means and involves, is nearer to the solution of the problem than the profoundest scholar whose eyes are held by the delusion that Jehovah means the one Almighty God. The one has the key, the other does not see the door—or know where to look for it. Continually we have "the spirit" or "the angel of the Lord" mentioned in connection with manifestations and appearances more or less familiar to all Spiritualists. If one spirit or angel, why not many? If the good and wise, why not the bad and foolish? Remember the Book of Job, with Satan lounging about the corridors of Heaven, mingling with "the sons of God," and departing only to test and worry the sons of men. Was he not equal to some of the things attributed to Jehovah?—and to the use of His name?

But everyone here probably knows by experience how puzzling are the contradictory results of spirit-communication; at one time all beautiful and good, at another time all ugly and detestable; and the same name used:—just like the records concerning Jehovah. Who has not discovered that Shakespeare can talk like a third-rate local preacher, that Milton can indulge in the dialect of Bethnal Green, and that someone calling himself your father can let you in for a heartless fraud?—not a bit more disorderly than the difference between the twenty-first chapter of the Second Book of Samuel and the twenty-third Psalm:—Jehovah, in the one case, being a bloodthirsty demon, and, in the other case, a being worthy to be adored as "Our Father in Heaven."

The suspicion that the Jehovah of the Old Testament was either a band of spirits of varying grades or a masterful spirit who took possession of this wandering tribe of fugitive slaves, and assumed the name "Jehovah," is borne out by the fact that he is continually represented as vindictively jealous. He cannot bear rivals. He is always warning his adorers against "other Gods." Nothing makes him so angry as to be neglected. Take only one instance. It is in the Book of Deuteronomy (Chap. 13):—

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder; and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your

soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandment, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him and cleave unto Him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. If thy brother, the son of thy mother or thy son or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers, *namely* of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth, thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die." Honestly now, can you, ought you to accept that as spoken by the one Almighty God, the Father of Jesus, and our own? Is it not infinitely more likely to have been the insidious, jealous, malignant suggestion of some spirit of evil?

Consider one other very instructive instance of grave inconsistency. The Old Testament abounds with denunciation of human sacrifices, and yet the Hebrews were continually adopting the practice, and in the name of Jehovah, or mixed up with Jehovah worship. The Book of Ezekiel (xxiii. 39) tells how the people came into the temple fresh from the offering up of their children to their idols; and Jeremiah (xix. 4) tells how the "blood of innocents" had been offered in the temple itself; and probing the matter further, we find that some "Jehovah" seems to have favoured it. Ezekiel seems puzzled over this, for he makes Jehovah say (xx. 25-6): "I gave them statutes that were not good . . . and I polluted them in their offerings, by making to pass through the fire all that were born, that I might make them desolate." But, in the Book of Leviticus, we actually have direct proof that someone calling himself "Jehovah" did really demand human sacrifice. It is there stated (xxvii. 28-9) that every devoted thing, devoted to Jehovah, whether of man or beast, shall surely be put to death. Colenso makes the pregnant remark that Jeremiah's frequent repudiation of human sacrifices in Jehovah's name, "shows plainly that the people must have pleaded some authority for the practice, emanating (as he declared) from Jehovah himself." The story about Abraham's readiness to take his only son Isaac, for the purpose of offering him up by fire, shows where these people were. Who was it, do you really think, that called Abraham to do that wicked deed? If into your room there came even the loveliest spirit-form, radiant with what seemed the light of Heaven, ordering you to take your little son and go and burn him up on Primrose Hill, yea, though that being said, "I am Jesus Christ," would you not say, "Get thee behind me, Satan"? But Abraham took it as a matter of course, got ready his wood and his fire, and, when he came to the place, made Isaac carry the wood for his own burning, and calmly said to his servant, "Abide ye here . . . I and the lad will go yonder and worship." "But God interfered to stop it after all," it is said. Yes, but the question is, What made Abraham so ready to go and do it? It did not seem to him anything either very wicked or very strange.

There is, however, a case where the horrid offering was carried out—and as a compact with Jehovah Himself. Jephthah, when "the spirit of Jehovah came upon him," made a compact with Jehovah that if He would give him a victory in a battle he would offer up, as a burnt offering, whatever first came from his house to meet him on his return, and he kept his word, and offered up to his dreadful deity his beloved child. What made this prominent Hebrew enter into such a horrible compact with Jehovah—when "the spirit of Jehovah came upon him," too—if the offering up of human life was not accredited as possible in Jehovah-worship? Probably some "spirit" did "come upon him," and it may have called itself "Jehovah," but the homeliest modern English Spiritualist would have seen through the ghastly fraud. It seems perfectly evident that there were several Jehovahs or so-called gods, some of whom denounced and some of whom conveyed the impression that they desired or might command the offering up of human sacrifices. In plain English, there were bad spirits and good.

I will only mention one other curious glimpse of confusion, a well-known one but very suggestive. In the Second Book of Samuel (xxiv. 1-4) it is said that "the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and He moved David" to take a census. But in the First Book of the Chronicles (xxi. 1-4) we read that "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David" to take the census: and every feature in the story shows that the same transaction is referred to. The devout orthodox explanation is that

God permitted Satan to do it, somewhat in the way that He permitted Satan to go and torture Job: but the truth lies on the surface: some spirit prompted the deed, and whether it was called "Jehovah" or "Satan" depended upon the point of view; the unfortunate thing being that, as a rule, these people did not discriminate, but put down everything to their God which came from the spirit-world in His name—a folly which, unhappily, Christendom has consented to take over and endorse.

Who, then, was Jehovah? The ancestors of the Hebrews knew nothing of the name. We read in the Book of Exodus (vi. 3) that when Jehovah revealed Himself to Moses He said, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of El Shaddai, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them." That is clear enough. "Jehovah" is introduced as a new God or a new name—and the tradition is that the new comer came through Moses; though this record has the appearance of trying to make out that the innovation was not really an innovation as the setting up of a new God, but only as the promulgation of a new name. The tradition may be wrong in putting the introduction of the name as early as the time of Moses, but, for my purpose, this is immaterial. The point of importance is that "Jehovah" is admittedly a new name, and a curious fact is that by many lines we are led to Canaan as its home; and to one particular tribe as the channel through which the name and the cult found their way to the Hebrews. This tribe was known as the Kenites, a people inhabiting the peninsula of Sinai, with whom, at a very early period, the Hebrews were closely connected. Jethro, called "priest of Midian," one of whose daughters Moses married, was really a Kenite prince or chief, and his clan seems to have given considerable help to the Hebrews. Of the memorable visits of Moses and his friends to his father-in-law, Jethro, Dean Stanley writes: "He" (*i. e.*, Jethro) "is the first friend, the first counsellor, the first guide, that they have met since they cut themselves off from the wisdom of Egypt; and they hang upon his lips like children." "When he was to depart to his own land and to his own kindred, Moses prayed him not to leave them." In the trackless desert, he, with his Bedouin instincts and his knowledge of the wilderness, would know 'how they were to camp, and would be to them instead of eyes.' The alliance so formed was never broken. In subsequent ages, when Israel had long since become a settled and civilised people, in their own land, a stranger's eye would have at once discerned little groups of settlers here and there retaining their Arabian customs, yet one with the masters of the soil—"the children of the Kenite," says Stanley, "dwelling among the people." In the First Book of Samuel (xv.) there is a very enlightening illustration of the close feeling of friendship between these Kenites and the Hebrews. Saul had resolved to attack the Amalekites amongst whom the Kenites were: so he sent a message to them; "Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites," and were saved.

Colenso was on the same track, though farther afield, when he showed the Phœnician origin of "Jehovah." He quotes the conservative Ewald who connects the word with Moses, or, rather, with the descendants of Moses "on the mother's side," *i. e.*, on the side of the Kenite, and who says that, for some centuries after Moses, the word was "not very much used in common speech"—all of which points to the gradual adoption by the Hebrews of this Canaanitish deity. The language of the Phœnicians was practically the same as that of the Hebrews; and it is certain that when the Hebrews came into contact with them they freely mixed with them and adopted many of their religious practices; assimilating, as Colenso points out, their own practice to that of their heathen neighbours, serving their gods and adopting their forms of worship. Among these gods the great sun-god stood pre-eminently. His great name has been "expressed both by heathen and Christian writers by the very same Greek letters (Ι.Α.Ω.) by which they express also the mysterious Hebrew name" now called "Jehovah," which, however, is really a clumsy rendering of the Old Testament word; the word Yahveh or Jahveh being nearer to the original. But the important point is that the name of the great sun-god, the object of adoration in Canaan, was practically the very name which in time came to be recognised among the Hebrews. A Secretary of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, speaking of some of the Assyrian inscriptions on the ancient monuments, once said, frankly; "The incommunicable name of the Great Jehovah Himself has been found as the name of a Syrian deity of extreme antiquity, probably not in its spiritual character far remote from the God of the Hebrews"; but he did not seem to see the tremendous meaning of the discovery. "The whole body of proof, which we have had before us," says Colenso, "seems to us to tend conclusively to this, that the Hebrews, after their settlement in Canaan, coming in contact with the ancient religion of the land, and adopting readily, as the Scripture tells us they did, the worship of the people 'round

about them,' became by degrees acquainted with the Great Name of the Phœnician Deity, and that from this source has been derived their own mysterious name for the Deity."

How then is it that we find the name "Jehovah" in the very beginning of the Bible? Most of you know the explanation. In the so-called Books of Moses we have at least two strata of records—the one written by a person who states, as we have seen, that the name was revealed to Moses, and who therefore never uses it in his story till Moses does—the word "Elohim" (gods) appearing in his part of the story till then; the other written by a person who wanted to produce the impression that Jehovah was known from the first, and who therefore introduces the name into the story from the beginning. Precisely in the same way, the prophets, when they attain to purer views, assume that Jehovah was a pure and righteous God from the first.

Now we can face the question: How then comes it to pass that we find in the Bible stern denunciations of the heathen practices of these very people who supplied the cult of Jehovah-worship? The answer is obvious. The worship of Jehovah, like the worship of Baal or Moloch, began low down, gross and anthropomorphic in the extreme, but, as time went on, the reformers and prophets emerged from the general corruption, and preached a purer faith. The result we know: a people raised with difficulty to that purer faith, and always ready to sink back into the old idolatry of Jehovah-worship in its first crude form: a process not unknown even in England, and still going on: the God of John Calvin and the God of Canon Farrar being as far apart as the God of Samuel and the God of Malachi, whose prophecy, standing alone, shows clearly what the prophet had to do against the priest.

The adoption of the Canaanitish God by the Hebrews was in harmony with the very ancient belief in territorial deities. When Jephthah challenged the king of the Ammonites to answer him, he pits Jehovah his God against Chemosh the God of the Ammonites, and talks about each God giving land—as though they were territorial deities, patronising the peoples they champion. Hence we find the servants of the king of Syria, after being beaten by the Israelites, hitting upon this explanation and device; "Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they"; and we actually find Naaman, when he had resolved to worship Jehovah, as his God, asking for two mules' burden of earth on which to put his altar when he got away to Syria; just a bit of the territory, to link him with the territorial God! When Solomon built the Temple, he said to Jehovah, "I have built a house of habitation for Thee, and a place for Thy dwelling for ever." So, in the Book of Ezekiel, we find Jerusalem is called, by Jehovah (or, rather, by the prophet speaking in his name), "the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I shall dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever"—a very comfortable provincial deity; and, in the Book of Daniel, we read that when Daniel, in exile, prayed, "he opened a window that looked towards Jerusalem." Again, when the King of Assyria carried away the children of Israel from Palestine, and colonised the country with people from Babylon and other distant places, we are told that Jehovah sent lions amongst them because they did not worship Him; and that they had to send for some exiled Hebrew priests to teach them "the ways of the God of the land" (2 Kings xvii. 25-28); the inference being that Jehovah was a jealous territorial deity, the champion of the Jews. So, again, when Artaxerxes sent Ezra to Jerusalem to restore it, he gave him many precious things, and amongst them certain vessels which, said he (vii. 19), "are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, to be laid before the God of Jerusalem." But proof positive as to change of God lies before us at the very spot where we might expect to find it. In the concluding chapter of the Book of Joshua, where we find the story of the great crisis, the settlement of the Hebrews in the land of Canaan, we come upon the deliberate choice of a God—almost the voting for Him; and it plainly describes the great change. The aged Joshua is speaking:—

"Now, therefore, fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah. And the people answered and said: God forbid that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods; for Jehovah our God, He brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: and Jehovah drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land; therefore will we also serve Jehovah, for He is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, He is a holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake Jehovah and serve strange gods, then

He will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that He hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua: Nay, but we will serve Jehovah."

It is true that the proofs here antedate their connection with Jehovah, and identify Him with the God, or gods who, under other names, had led their fathers; but the whole thing is clearly the ripening in Joshua's mind of what had passed in the mind of Moses. The record states that Moses, for the first time, came upon this new God or new name; and now here is his successor openly giving in his adhesion to the new cult, and prevailing on the people to give up the old gods and to accept the new God with the new territory.

Here it is plain that they were not monotheists. They believed in other gods—in gods old and new—and they now deliberately "put away the gods" which their fathers had, and took for their God this new "Jehovah." But they were never true to Him for long. "Worshiping other gods" was their favourite pastime. It probably simply meant holding intercourse or spirit-communion with many active and ambitious opposition godlings. This is probably the key to the whole history of the Jews on this side of it.

But, whatever Jehovah is, He is always the champion or disciplinarian of this fighting tribe. Their enemies are His. When Moses had to fight Amalek, he built an altar to Jehovah and called it "Jehovah, my banner," "for," he said, "Jehovah hath sworn; Jehovah will have war against Amalek from generation to generation." Moses had no other idea than this—that this fighting God was his. He would have been perfectly ready to admit that Amalek had its God and champion, too.

There is a good deal of light to be found in such stories as that contained in the Second Book of the Chronicles (xxviii. 22-25): "In the time of his distress Ahaz trespassed against Jehovah, for he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said; Because the gods of the king of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers."

Here we get it all: territorial gods, who help and smite; and worship offered, to secure the one and buy off the other; putting up one's adoration to the highest bidder; going over to the god who helps. Hence the jealousy and anger of Jehovah, everywhere discoverable, for the Hebrews were very apt scholars in the school of backsliding. We find, then, that as the nation grew in importance, and as Jehovah-worship became more and more identified with it, it became what one has bluntly called "a pitiful rivalry between Jehovah and other local deities"—i.e., between various real or supposed spirits and their mediums. Thus we find the existence of "other gods" assumed; and all that is said is that the Hebrews must be true to their choice—to, in fact, their great local spirit. Thus we read (Deut. vi. 14, 15) "Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you (for the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you): lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth," and the threat is made that if they do go after these other gods, or spirits, they shall be cursed (Deut. xxviii. 16-20): "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed."

Persons who shrink from this tracking home of Jehovah to ancient Spiritualism would be helped if they would open their eyes to the fact that the Old Testament is practically one long record of the phenomena of spirit-communion. We are constantly coming across "the angel of the Lord." The ark, upon which so much seemed to turn, was a portable séance-room in or from which the spirit-manifestations and oracles were given. Moses, when he received the revelation of the mystic name, saw the glowing spirit-light in the bush. In fact, he was a powerful medium for spirit-manifestations, as we see all through. David, when hard pressed by Saul, consulted Abiathar the priest, who brought his magic ephod, and held a séance for the purpose of asking "Jehovah" whether David would be captured. "An angel of the Lord" appears to the people at Bochim to reproach them for not throwing down the rival altars of the inhabitants of that land. Another "angel of the Lord" appears to the wife of Manoah, to promise her a son. In a time of sore distress, the children of Israel came and sat before the ark, and "inquire of Jehovah" about a battle, and receive a response to go and fight, with a promise of help. "In the year that king Uzziah died," Isaiah said he saw "Jehovah sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his trailing robes filled the temple." But there is no end to it. This "Jehovah" is

evidently a powerful spirit, or a number of spirits, in close affinity for some reasons with these Hebrews, but with varying results—of wisdom and folly, good and evil, purity and obscenity—just as it is in London and Boston and Paris to-day.

Before parting with the subject, I ought at least to glance at the difficult problem presented by the moral and spiritual characteristics of Jehovah. The problem turns upon the fact that these moral and spiritual characteristics are altogether contradictory and confused. On the one hand, we have the priceless Ten Commandments, and, on the other hand, we have a multitude of statements which are grossly inconsistent with them, unless we assume that the author of the commandments has no need to keep them; for we find Him acting like the most arbitrary despot—fanciful, fickle, and horribly cruel.

He tells Moses to make Him a dwelling-house, and gives him minute directions as to the tables, and curtains, and candlesticks, and tassels, and shovels, and pans. (Ex. xxv. - xxvii.)

He gives directions as to the marriage of a widow with her deceased husband's brother, and as to what the widow is to do if he should refuse to have her. She is to come to him in the presence of the elders, "and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed."

He complains of the Hebrews as obstinate, and threatens to destroy them, but is prevented by Moses, who protests against His hot wrath, and appeals to His vanity by saying that if He hastily destroyed these people the Egyptians would mock Him because of His failure; and then, we are told, Jehovah repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people, and did it not. (Ex. xxxii.)

He wants to destroy Ahab, and looks round and asks someone to tempt him to his ruin; and, after many had spoken, He deliberately chooses "a lying spirit" and sends him to do His will; "There came forth a spirit and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will persuade him. And Jehovah said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And He said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so." (1 Kings xxii.) It is true this is only a rival prophet's statement, but, in the story, the event justifies him.

When, at a certain time, the children of Israel were led away into idolatry, "the anger of Jehovah was kindled" against them, and the usual pestilence was sent to punish them; "and Jehovah said unto Moses, Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them up before Jehovah against the sun, that the fierce anger of Jehovah may be turned away from Israel." And then, in the sight of all the people, one of the heathen women came up with one of the children of Israel; whereupon Phinehas took a javelin in his hand, and thrust both of them through the body, and they died; and then the pestilence was stayed, after it had slain four and twenty thousand persons. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying: Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy." And then He added: "Vex the Midianites, and smite them." (Num. xxv.)

Samuel, the great prophet, said to Saul the king: "Thus saith Jehovah: go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." But Saul spared the king "and the rest of the sheep, and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and of the lambs, and all that was good"; he only obeyed Jehovah to the extent of utterly destroying all the people—men, women, and children, with the edge of the sword. But Samuel was angry, "and Jehovah repented that He had made Saul king over Israel," and Samuel "hewed Agag in pieces before Jehovah." (1 Sam. xv.) The honest test is to put nineteenth century men into the positions of Saul and Samuel, and to see how the story would look if, instead of Saul and Samuel, we read, for instance, Duke of Cambridge and the Bishop of London. What should we think, what ought we to think, if the Duke of Cambridge put to death all the men, women, and children of a captured town, if the Bishop of London cut into pieces, before our Father, a respited king, and if, because the Duke had "spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings and the lambs and all that was good," the Lord said: "It repenteth me that I ever made the Duke Commander-in-Chief"? There is no relevance in the reply that we ought to judge men by the standards of their own age; for here the very point is that we are considering, not what men said and did, but God. We cannot judge God by the standards of varying ages. The moment people put in the plea of "the standard of past ages" they surrender everything, and I am content; for I can quite understand that Samuel, or the spirit which used him and took the name of Jehovah, acted in harmony with the standard of the age; and that is precisely what I am trying to show.

There was a famine in the days of David, and David "inquired of Jehovah" the reason for it: "and Jehovah answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." So David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of Jehovah? And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you. And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto Jehovah in Gibeah of Saul, whom Jehovah did choose. And the king said, I will give them," "and they hanged them in the hill before Jehovah . . . and, after that, Jehovah was intreated (or pacified) for the land." (2 Sam. xxi.) And so the wretched old feud was settled by a series of most brutal murders, and the famine was removed, and Jehovah was content!

It is not much to be wondered at that a very powerful section of the Early Christians (the Gnostics) held that Jehovah was really a king of demons, the antagonist of the Supreme Intelligence of the Universe.

In laying these facts before you, I have said nothing of the Hebrews by way of serious blame. They knew no better. The savage-hearted bigot and the remorseless fighting raider pictured Jehovah to their minds: or kindred spirits found them out and used them. The barbaric poet who cried out, "Jehovah is a man of war . . . Thy right hand, O Jehovah, has dashed the enemy in pieces" (Ex. xv.) honestly believed in a fighting deity to match his own violent spirit; and that other poet who (in Ps. lxxviii.) pictured Jehovah as promising that He would bring His people that their feet might be "dipped in the blood" of their enemies, "and the tongues of their dogs in the same," could not help his adoring brutality. I do not blame him: I only blame the nineteenth century civilised Englishmen and Englishwomen who shut enlightened eyes to plain facts, and try to keep up the strange delusion that the chaos of spirits called "Jehovah" were the one eternal and unchanging God.

Of course there are rays of light amid the painful gloom—cadences of music amid the dissonant cries. The frequent demand for righteousness is something on the other side, though, on investigation, the disappointing fact appears that Jehovah's reproofs and reproaches for "sin" too often turn out to be only reproofs and reproaches because of a tendency to desert him for "other gods"; and the hottest denunciations and the severest penalties are often seen to be reserved, not for real sin at all, but for departures from the rigid lines of Jehovah-worship. As we are so often reminded, He is indeed "a jealous god."

But, as time goes on, the ugly features disappear or are toned down. The sublime truth of the unity and aloneness of the everlasting God comes forth like a glorious sun from dense fogs and clouds, and the evolution of the disagreeable and changeful Jehovah of a barbarous tribe ends, in Jesus, in the Heavenly Father of us all.

I thankfully admit that almost from the first there is the feeling after something higher than ugly anthropomorphism, and that there was an undercurrent which seemed to be bearing on even these debased spirit-haunters to the sublime discovery in which the chaotic worship of fifty contradictory Jehovahs ended—that beyond and within all the gods and their makers there dwelt One whose mysterious life was the cause of all life, and who was revealed even in the very anxiety which led the restless soul to worship anything rather than have no God at all. The vital mistake is made when the crude and pitiable imaginings of barbarians, or the equally crude and pitiable announcements of barbaric spirits, are taken as the revelations of the Most High.

There is a "survival of the fittest" even in the beating-in of these disorderly or imperfect things from the Unseen, and the fittest did survive. If anyone likes to say that this justifies the theory of gradual revelation by God (thus bringing in all the ugly stages as parts of the "revelation") I have only to say that in such a case the word "revelation" is inappropriate. The proper word would be *discovery*, and the operating agent would be, not God, but man.

Agreed about this, we might then, possibly, pass on to a reconciling thought—something like the following. The journey from the confusions of Jehovah-worship to the sunshine of the worship of the Father may, in the sphere of religion, be regarded as the equivalent of the journey from the chimpanzee to Shakspeare, in the sphere of Natural History, for both of which the Great Creator is responsible only as He is responsible for all the developments and consequences of the working out of Natural Law. But that takes all so-called "revelations" out of the sphere of supernatural disclosure on the part of God, and leaves them, where I want them to be left, in the sphere of natural discovery on the part of man.

Thus understood, we may discern, in a sense, the striving of God's spirit with man in these early efforts to find Him; and so we may look upon these baffled seekers with

pathetic and grateful thoughts, not unlike the thoughts we cherish when we think of those who first struck out the human path in the jungle, away from the cave and the growl of the brute over the half-crunched bone; and so, to our eyes, these poor brothers and sisters, with their ghastly spirit hauntings, their bloody rites and their savage oracles, may look pathetic enough, asking our pity, not our blame: but, for God's sake and for man's, do not ask us to see the ideal God in their Molochs, their Elohim, their Jehovahs, and their Baals: do not ask us to call that a direct revelation from God which was only the croak of a disorderly spirit or the crude thought of a poor struggling man.

All this is of the greatest possible practical value. It helps us to stand on our guard against the assaults of so-called "revelations"; it makes an end of pernicious finalities and infallibilities; it teaches us what true divine guidance is; it leads us safely back to the ever-advancing human soul; it preserves for us the Heavenly vision of a pure and perfect Ideal God—beyond though within us all. "The dim and shadowy outlines of the superhuman deity fade slowly away from before us," said Professor Clifford, "and, as the mist of his presence floats aside, we perceive with greater and greater clearness the shape of a yet grander and nobler figure—of Him who made all gods and shall unmake them. From the dim dawn of history, and from the inmost depth of every soul, the face of our father, Man, looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says, 'Before Jehovah was, I am!'" Yes; but beyond the old gods and their makers a vaster presence looms—in whom we all "live and move and have our being." Jehovah disappears, only that the Father may appear. Moses and Samuel recede, only that we may listen to Jesus and John and Paul. For the rudimentary local God, we are going on to the discovery of the God of the mighty Human Brotherhood—the God whom a modern prophet called "the altogether beautiful of the Universe."

"The ancient gods are dead.
Jove rules no longer o'er the Olympian plain;
The ocean waits for Neptune's car in vain;
Apollo tunes no more his golden lyre;
Vesuvius trembles not with Vulcan's fire;
Mars leads not now the armies of the world;
Young Cupid's darts at Pluto are not hurled,
And Venus' charms are fled.
The ancient gods are dead.

"Valhallah's noble halls are empty now,
Where Thor, the mighty thunderer, from his brow
Shot lightnings forth upon the trembling earth,
And Odin held his wassail, and loud mirth
Echoed from roof to roof, as went the feast
Until the day dawned, and the waiting east
Made radiant Balder's head.
The ancient gods are dead.

"On Sinai's rugged heights the clouds appear—
The prophet goes no longer there to hear
The eternal word, nor full of gladness sees
Heaven's judgment break on all his enemies.
The flower-sprinkled sod, by God's command,
Reeks not with useless blood, nor through the land
His vengeful armies spread.
The ancient gods are dead.

"No frowning despot sits on Heaven's throne,
Dispensing favours by His will alone,
Sends some to Heaven and some to lowest hell,
In unprogressive bliss or woe to dwell;
Demands no horrid sacrifice of blood,
Nor nails His victims to the cruel wood
In others' guilty stead.
The ancient gods are dead.

"Law rules majestic in the courts above,
And has no moods, but, hand in hand with love,
Sweeps through the universe, and smiling sees
The spheres obedient to her vast decrees;—
Proclaims all men the sons, not slaves, of God,
And breathes the message of his Fatherhood.
The true God is not dead."

At the close of the address a cordial vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Page Hopps, on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Morell Theobald, and the proceedings then became informal, varied by friendly intercourse, music, and refreshments—the music being under the efficient direction of the Misses Withall, to whom, as well as to the other friends who assisted, the society is greatly indebted. Miss Clementine Ward, whom we are always delighted to welcome, gratified the audience with several sweet songs, charmingly accompanied by herself on the concertina. And the violin playing of Miss Ethel Freckleton also elicited warm applause. This young lady, whose presence is not unknown amongst us, shows a marked degree of talent in her pure intonation and correct expression, and that most human instrument, the violin, in her hands was made to discourse some exquisite music. A well-known friend, Miss Jean Giffard, also favoured us with a song, which was highly appreciated. The grand piano used on the occasion was kindly lent by the Messrs. Brinsmead.

LAURENCE OLIPHANT.

[We have received from a correspondent an estimate of the life of Laurence Oliphant, which unfortunately arrived so as to clash with the review which we have printed of Mrs. Oliphant's book. We give this notice as an independent estimate of one who was acquainted with the ministrations of Thomas Lake Harris when he was in this country.—Ed. "LIGHT."]

The story of Laurence Oliphant's life is one of the most instructive, most thrilling, and yet sad withal, that we have read for some time, told, as it is, in Mrs. Oliphant's own charming style, with now and then the naive confession at certain parts of the recital that she could not understand him. Read by Spiritualists the meaning is not far to seek; and the lessons both from the character of the hero of the story, and the side lights cast upon it from others with whom he was associated, notably from Thomas Lake Harris, are such as should not be disregarded.

His life has been described as a wasted life; it was not that. Another reviewer speaks of the book as a tragedy for a summer day's reading, of the ruined career, and of the broken life. This is only partly true. Few men have had a more eventful career, and few have been surrounded by such troops of friends—true friends all—and yet how varied their bonds of friendship! He was loved as the charming conversationalist, as the cultured traveller and man of infinite adventure, as the clever diplomatist and brilliant man of society, sparkling at all times and everywhere, and not least as "Times" correspondent. But in reading the fascinating story as depicted by his namesake, Mrs. Oliphant, it is easy to see that there was continually an undercurrent of dissatisfaction in his life. He felt as though continually in bondage, and yearned for a nobler pursuit in life than the round of fashion, or gaiety, or travel, or adventure afforded him. He possessed a deeply spiritual nature, which his surroundings too often smothered, and his whole soul cried out to be delivered from the bondage.

Unfortunately, as I think, he did not meet with his true, charming affinity and helpmeet to his ideal life until he had taken a wrong course in which to express the spirit of absolute self-sacrifice which is the true key to all worthy effort to promote the welfare of humanity. For, casting about to find a worthy outlet for this Christ-like spirit within him, he had been led unconsciously to give up following the Master, and had yielded his whole manhood to one whom I regard not as an impostor—as most reviewers have portrayed him—but as an intense religious enthusiast, who had become so far bewildered in his eccentric course as to conceive himself to possess absolute authority from Christ Himself—I refer to Thomas Lake Harris, whom I remember to have listened to spell-bound, and in rapt amazement, some thirty years ago, when he charmed a select audience for a few weeks in London by his brilliant discourses on the Christian life, surrounded as these discourses were by prayers of wonderful inspiration. I am not surprised that the charm of the man eventually led to his being worshipped by his followers, so much so as to spoil his original simplicity of purpose and transform him into a Pope or a god.

This faulty transformation might be found, in a somewhat lesser degree, among ourselves, where hero-worship follows pulpit eloquence until the minister becomes a priest and his people his dupes.

Laurence Oliphant had a yearning spiritual longing, I say, to "live the life," to give up his life wholly to the Master's service; and for a time he was fascinated by Harris's discipline as a preparation for that life. Had he but met Miss Alice Le Strange before he had given over his allegiance to Harris, there was all in their two characters to make a perfect life of devotion to the good of humanity, as was evolved some years after in their joint work at Haifa; and much of the tragedy of his life would have been omitted. But the false step had been taken. Laurence Oliphant had become the slave of Harris, and after a menial course of drudgery, of no use whatever but to exemplify the true spirit of self-sacrifice that was in him, he was on furlough in Paris, where he became once more the welcome correspondent to the "Times," but devoting the proceeds to the Harris Colony. The story of their love is darkened by the absorption of their dual life into the slavery

of Harris, which at one time threatened to prevent their union, as it subsequently, for a time, dissolved it.

But separated as they became, the life of each was marked by the true martyr spirit—misdirected. They both seemed blinded to the higher law which the Master Christ had taught, when He enunciated the sublime and divine axiom that what God hath joined is not for man to put asunder. It is the saddest part of the whole history, this sundering by Harris; but though weeping endured for a night, joy came in the morning! We are not told how Oliphant became disenchanting. But we find him in Syria with enthusiastic schemes for the benefit of the Jews, and with them the uplifting to nobler life of all the nationalities drawn towards him and his noble wife in Syria. Here we find Laurence Oliphant and his true helpmeet animated by the spirit of self-sacrifice, working nobly and jointly for the poor around them. Naturally they became leaders, and stood as Father and Mother to the heterogeneous collection of people from all parts who had been fascinated by their true, devout fervour.

Both drew near to, and lived in the very atmosphere of the spirit-world. Their spiritual senses were so quickened partly by the inspiration of their noble work and partly by their intense aspiration for a lifting above the material outlook of the world, that they seemed to forget the slow-working process which God has ever shown in the redemption of humanity. It has puzzled many of us before, and will yet again be as a galling curb upon enthusiasts, who have to remember—

God never is before His time,
And never is behind.

This time drew forth the puzzling book "Sympneumata," which seems to point to the supreme yet noble failure which all such impatient human efforts surely encompass. While reverencing Christ and His life as God's truest revelation as yet to humanity, Laurence Oliphant and his wife grew into the ecstatic conviction that they had a fuller revelation to make, and it resulted *inter alia* in the exposition of the divine feminine in the Godhead. It may have been revealed to them by spirit intercourse, but for the time Laurence Oliphant forgot his own definition as to how far such revelations should be accepted. For this is what he wrote to a friend on that very point: (p. 278): "No information received by human experience, whether Spiritualistic or Materialistic, is to be relied on as conveying finality of truth, none is to be dreaded if acquired in the true mental attitude. That people do see, feel, and communicate with spirits of all degrees of elevation and degradation is unquestionable to anyone who has incurred, even without will-act, such experience, as fever is an unquestionable fact to those who have been struck down by it."

I should much like to linger longer over this interesting book, told in such a charming style as it is by Mrs. Oliphant; but what has been said will lead others to get the book for themselves; and according to their own sympathy with Laurence Oliphant's deepest character and his persistent yearnings after the uplifting of himself and this material world into a more spiritual atmosphere, will be their appreciation of his mixed but interesting life.

VEGA.

THREE LITTLE BOOKS OF DEVOTION.*

These little books are selections from the writings of a "lady who is entirely under the spiritual control of her late husband." They may be described as a series of short apophthegms, selected apparently without special reference to context, each embodying in a few words some aspect of spiritual truth. They deal with such subjects as God's manifestation to man and man's nature; Duty on earth; Spiritual existence and the state after death; Spiritual life and some of its lessons: Spiritual Forces, and the like. The "Chaplet of Amaranth" is a selection of brief thoughts on this life and the next. The whole forms a series of devotional readings suited for meditation, and we have no doubt that those who feel the need of some terse saying on which to focus their thoughts will find these little books a boon. They have been admirably printed and put forth by Mr. Burns, are handy in size, and very pleasant to the eye.

* "From Over the Tomb," "From Soul to Soul," "A Chaplet of Amaranth" (J. Burns), 1889.

"VOICES FROM UNSEEN WORLDS."*

This is a thirty-two page pamphlet containing seven short, *i.e.*, four-page tracts which have been issued from time to time. The author may fitly say that they are not collected and issued to the public for gain: they must, indeed, be sold under the actual cost of production. They deal with a number of subjects, social, political, and religious; as well as purely Spiritualistic. Strikes; the Nationalisation of Labour, Land, and Water; Spiritualism; Life, Death and Immortality; and the Universal Religion, denominated Faithism are among the subjects treated. The style is direct and incisive, and leaves no doubt as to the writer's meaning. If we cannot always agree with him it is not because he is obscure in statement. Nor, indeed, if we make due allowance for the burning nature of the topics discussed, can we allege any want of moderation on their handling. The pamphlet should be useful for distribution.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Double.

SIR,—A strange experience happened to my brother, Dr Theobald, some few years ago, and as you are wishing to receive reliable instances of "The Double," I will now give you the account as described by himself in a letter he wrote to me at the time.

I do not remember whether I have published it before in any of the Spiritualist papers, but if I have done so at all, it must have been a long time ago, and it will, in all probability, be quite new to the present readers of "LIGHT." Besides which it is perhaps worth telling twice. My brother wrote:—

"It was after midnight, I was sitting up reading, the household having retired to rest.

"I was sitting on a chair with my feet lying across another chair, reading 'Dr. Arnold's Life.'

"I read on till I was drowsy, and ceased to be in my ordinary waking condition. Still I did not go off to sleep, for I was conscious of my situation and knew that it was time to go to bed.

"At last I made up my mind that I would, and I seemed to myself to get up from my two chairs and go out of the dining-room: but I could not proceed beyond the hall, and returned.

"As I returned, I saw my own body lying on the two chairs, and was particularly struck by seeing my trousers, from an outside point of view, and noticed how different they looked from their usual appearance, as seen from the wearer's point of view!

"Then I became conscious that I was still lying down, and thought it singular, as I was positive I had been outside the dining-room and had returned again.

"After a pause I again made the resolve to go to bed. Again seemed to go out of the room, and on my return, beheld myself still lying upon the chairs.

"This occurred three times. The fourth, I actually roused up, and went off to bed.

"I told this to Mr. Watts, who very pertinently observed, 'Your experience shows a clear case of a man being beside himself!'

June, 1891.

F. J. THEOBALD.

SIR,—I have read with great interest the article in this day's "LIGHT" on "The Double," especially your own "experiences" on the subject, which my own experience confirms to a great extent. One experience of mine seems to have been proved beyond all cavilling; and as you encourage me, by your invitation, I will relate the circumstances.

I was on circuit as a Crown Prosecutor in New South Wales, at a town called Wagga-Wagga, about 170 miles from the capital of Sydney, where I resided with my wife and three grown-up sons; and on the Sunday I was dining with a bank manager, who was a Spiritualist, when late in the afternoon the Coroner for the district drove up to the door, and begged my host to give me up to him for the evening, the reason being that his wife wished me to see their nurse write with a Planchette. Of course I complied, and after a drive to his suburban residence, and an early tea, we adjourned to the drawing-room; and the nurse, with the Planchette, took her seat at the table with her master and mistress and myself.

* "Voices from Unseen Worlds: Heralds of Light and Progress." F. J. A. Davies. (J. Burns.) Price one halfpenny. Published for the author.

She commenced to form some letters—it could scarcely be called “writing”—but it was such a dreary exhibition, no talking being allowed, that I began thinking of my home, and felt assured that they would be holding a séance. I then thought that I should get through all the criminal business on Wednesday, and be able to return home on Wednesday night. But my thoughts were suddenly disturbed by the baby crying, and the lady rushing from the table, which broke up the séance.

On Wednesday night I returned to Sydney, and on my arriving home, I found my family just sitting down to breakfast. But no sooner were loving greetings exchanged, than a younger son eagerly inquired, “where I spent my Sunday evening.” I replied by asking, why he was so anxious to know; to which he retorted, “Never mind, I’ll tell you directly.”

I then stated that “I had been sitting at a circle, which had been abruptly disturbed through a baby crying out.”

On hearing this, my son quickly opened a side-board drawer, and produced a communication in his own writing (being a medium) given at their séance on the same Sunday evening. It was as follows: “G. M. S. Through the kindness of a German friend, who is taking charge of my body, I have come to see how you are all getting on.”

One of the circle having asked “when I should be returning home,” my spirit replied: “I think I shall get through all the criminal business on Wednesday, and be able to return home on Wednesday night.”

Another communication was then written: “Owing to the circle, in which your father is sitting, having been suddenly broken up, your father’s spirit was obliged to return to his body, for fear of accidents.”

I have only to add, that I had no personal consciousness of my “Double” having left me, nor of having visited my family.

G. MILNER STEPHEN, F.G.S. Lond., F.R.S. Aus.

40, York-place, W., June 20th, 1891.

P.S.—Inquirers may ask whether I know of other instances of my “Double” visiting at a distance. I will therefore state the following: A married lady in Australia, whose life was in danger—owing to a recent difficult confinement—informed me, some months after, that one night she had twice prayed for my spirit to come and relieve her of great agony (I being then ninety-five miles away), and that I came twice that night, and asked her “What was the matter,” and, on being informed, I placed my hands upon her, and removed the pains, and that she soon got well. Her husband and herself are highly-gifted mediums, and they both related the same story.—G. M. S.

SOCIETY WORK.

OPEN-AIR WORK. TOP OF GEORGE-LANE, HIGHGREEN-LANE, LEWISHAM.—On Sunday last, at 3.30 p.m., we held a meeting at the above place when Mr. Emms delivered a stirring address. Spiritualist literature was distributed to all present.—H. W. BRUNKER, Sec.

WINCHESTER HALL, 33, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM.—Left to our own members to supply a speaker, the President invited Mr. Munns to give an address and he did so with much fervour, giving great satisfaction to all present. Mrs. Audy gave a reading. We had also some good music by Mrs. Copley on the organ, Mr. Hawes the flute, and Master Copley the violin. Sunday next, Mr. R. J. Lees, at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Friday, healing, at 8 p.m.—J. T. AUDY.

24, HARCOURT-STREET, MARYLEBONE.—Mr. Towns presided at the members’ meeting. The balance-sheet, duly audited, was received, showing a balance in hand of 4s. 9d. Short speeches were delivered by Messrs. Towns, Hopcroft, Drake, and White. Sunday, at 11 a.m., Mr. Pursey, “Spirit Teachings”; at 7 p.m., Mr. Allen Montgomery on “Mesmerism,” illustrated with numerous diagrams. Thursday, at 7.45 p.m., Mr. Hopcroft. Saturday, at 7.45 p.m., Mr. Hawkins.—C. W.

PECKHAM RYE.—Mr. Lees, on Sunday last, continued his replies to the objections brought against his previous lectures. He dealt principally with the authenticity of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts now in existence, showing that we have not the original manuscripts of either Old or New Testaments. The discussion following was both varied and animated. The attack upon Spiritualism appears to be getting more definite at these meetings, which will give an opening for positive teaching in a little while. Subject next Sunday, at 3.15, “Sin and Evil; What are They?”

COPENHAGEN HALL, 184, COPENHAGEN-STREET, CALEDONIAN-ROAD, KING’S CROSS.—On Sunday evening last, Mr. T. Emms delivered a lecture upon Materialism, endeavouring to show its philosophical unsoundness. The position of Huxley, Spencer,

Tindall, Thomson, J. S. Mill, Stewart, Ross, and some others was reviewed and criticised from the Spiritualist standpoint. We beg to give notice that our quarterly meeting takes place on Sunday next at 11 a.m. On Sunday evening, July 5th, the Rev. Dr. Young will lecture upon “The Uses and Dangers of Spiritualism.”—S. T. RODGER.

OPEN-AIR SPIRITUAL MISSION, HYDE PARK (NEAR MARBLE ARCH).—Last Sunday we had an exceedingly large meeting. The chairman (Mr. Percy Smyth) opened the proceedings with an address, pointing out the comfort attained by the knowledge of a future life. Mr. A. M. Rodger then gave an interesting speech on “Spiritualism from a Biblical as well as a Scientific Point of View,” and secured the full attention of many listeners. Some one distributed tracts, “Beware of Spiritualism,” but Mr. Smyth and Mrs. Bullock replied with good effect. Next Sunday, at 3.30 p.m. Our literature was very eagerly sought after, and friends having back numbers of “LIGHT” or other Spiritual papers to spare will greatly help us by sending them to PERCY SMYTH, 34, Cornwall-road, Bayswater, W.

23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD, FOREST HILL, S.E.—Mrs. Stanley occupied our platform on Sunday when her guides delivered an impressive address on “The Teachings of the Present Day.” Parents were faithfully warned of the importance of educating their children in spiritual truths so that they may be enabled to take their places in the battle of life. All present were warned of the great importance of working out their own salvation, and asked not to believe that any substitute will ever pay our debt to the Great Spirit. Our room was crowded to excess, and extra chairs had to be provided. The address was much enjoyed by all and Mrs. Stanley was requested to visit us again at an early date. July 5th, Rev. Dr. F. R. Young, at 7 p.m. Thursday, séance, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Bliss. Saturday, developing circle, at 8 p.m.—H. W. BRUNKER, Sec.

311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—After the usual service on Sunday last the half-yearly general meeting was held, at which an encouraging report of past work was read by the late secretary, and the following officers were elected: Treasurer, J. Kemish; secretary, A. L. Ward; assistant-secretary, Mr. Coote; librarian, Mr. Killick; Lyceum conductor, Mr. Coleman; committee, Mrs. Kemish, Mrs. Perry, Mrs. Bullock, Miss Morrell, Miss Perry, and Messrs. Long, Du Buy, Perry, Jerry, and Bullock. Sunday, July 5th, “Individual Responsibility,” at 11.15 a.m.; Lyceum, at 3.0 p.m.; spirit circle, Mrs. Stanley and friends, at 7 p.m. Annual outing to Knockholt on Monday, July 13th. Tickets 2s. 8d. Assistance towards giving our Lyceum children a holiday gratefully received, however small.—A. L. WARD, 59, Trinity-square, Borough, S.E., Sec.

BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND PAMPHLETS RECEIVED

- “From Soul to Soul.”
- “From Over the Tomb.”
- “How to Read Faces.” JAMES COATES. No. 3 of Mental Science Series. 1s.
- “A Chaplet of Amaranth.” By A LADY. James Burns, 15, Southampton-row, W.C.
- “The Coming Day.” Edited by J. PAGE HOPPS. July, 1891. Price 3d. (Williams and Norgate.)
- “Original Hymn Tunes for Organ, Harmonium, or Piano.” By ROBERT COOPER. (James Burns.) 1s.
- “There is no Death.” FLORENCE MARRYAT. Kegan Paul, Trübner and Co., 1891. [A narrative of personal experiences.]
- “The Esoteric Basis of Christianity.” WILLIAM KINGSLAND. (Theosophical Publishing Society.) 38 pp. 1891. [A paper read before the Blavatsky Lodge.]
- “Lucifer.” June, 1891. Editor, ANNIE BESANT; sub-editor, G. R. S. MEAD. Price, 1s. 6d. [Almost exclusively concerned with memorial notices of the late editor, Madame Blavatsky.]
- “Theosophical Siftings,” Vol. IV., No. 8. 3d. (Theosophical Publishing Society.) [Contains “Eastern Psychology,” by G. R. S. Mead, and “The Astral Plane in the Physical Plane.”]
- “Darkness and Light in the Land of Egypt.” Colonel A. T. FRASER, Associate of the S.P.R. (Sutton, Drowley and Co., 11, Ludgate Hill.) 191 pp. 1s. [An indication to antiquity of invisible sources of energy in the physical universe.]
- “The Science of Spirit Return.” CHARLES DAWBARN. (Star Publishing Co., Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.) [An address originally delivered before the First Spiritual Society, Brooklyn, N.Y., and since repeated in substance in various places.]

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- “REJECTED.”—We have received and read with care what you send. We now await further developments at your pleasure, and will write fully when we hear from you as you propose.
- V.—Thank you. The articles you kindly send are, we regret to find, inadmissible, on account of the editor of “The Arena” distinctly reserving copyright of all articles. The extract, therefore, “On the Unconscious Secondary Self” we cannot use at all. The other, on “Are there objective apparitions?” being partly descriptive, we will try to use with some needful alteration. To make extracts from copyright articles admissible, they must be embodied in descriptive matter.