

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

We cordially welcome Mr. Fay Mills' ardent discourse on The Problem of Immortality, and feel confident it will do much good ; but one passage appears to us to be weak. Dealing with the question : How shall we find out whether man is immortal ? he says :—

There are those who say that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead answers this question. We do not know whether Jesus rose from the dead or not ! We have no way to find out. But if he did rise from the dead that would not settle anything concerning your immortality or mine. For if, on the one hand, Jesus was God, and rose from the dead, that would simply prove that God could rise from the dead, and not what man could do ; and if, on the other hand, he was a man entirely like unto us, and was able to break the bars of the grave and come forth untouched by the influence of death, then I think it would be almost disheartening so far as proving universal immortality is concerned, for, in all the eighteen hundred years since, there has not been another verifiable instance, from all the multitudes and millions and billions of men that have lived upon the earth, who has done this thing—and at the most, if he were a man, it would simply prove that one man, and he a most exceptional one, had been immortal.

There are those who say that the testimony of Modern Spiritualism answers this question. I do not care to go into that just at this moment, but in passing I will say this—if all that is claimed in the way of testimony from Spiritualism is true, if there have been thousands of those who have gone from the flesh who have found means of communicating with men still in the body, that would only prove that some men are immortal, and still we would be confronted with the same question.

Is that so ? We are sending forth every year a steady stream of emigrants to distant lands. The majority we never hear from and never see again ; but some return, and these tell us that the stream is continually arriving on the other side ; and we consider the matter settled. The analogy is not perfect, but it sufficiently indicates the logical position in relation to the persistence of human beings after what is called 'death.' If some 'return,' and if some always keep returning, and if these tell us that all pass safely over, we are by no means restricted to Mr. Mills' narrow inference, but are warranted in arriving at a very different conclusion.

Dr. William H. Hudson, Professor of English in Stanford University, California, publishes a reflective sermon on 'Faith and Life.' The problem is the apparent antagonism between a man's faith and his life. We are, he says, confronted with these 'awkward facts,' that 'a man's creed does not appear to give us any adequate measure of his honesty, his kindness, his veracity—does not seem to stand in any necessary, permanent, or vital relations with what for all of us must remain the supreme realities, conduct and character.' 'It seems to be quite

possible to yield intellectual subscription to any number of propositions concerning the Trinity, for instance, or the attributes of Deity, or the fall of man, or the condition of the unconverted after death, and at the same time to have our attitude toward life and duty affected to no appreciable extent. Acceptance or rejection of certain specified articles of belief, in other words, may be treated, and indeed is commonly treated, as a matter quite apart from that other momentous question—the question of the way in which a man takes life, and the spirit in which he lays hold of its facts and its problems.'

We are afraid this is true.

But Dr. Hudson has another notion of 'Faith.' He is not thinking of assent to propositions, but of 'a man's entire spiritual attitude towards the world, its facts, its problems, its mysteries.' Very finely he says :—

Such spiritual attitude has often little enough to do with acceptance or rejection of this or that article of belief, of one or another philosophical postulate or conclusion. It has almost everything to do with the cultivation and preservation of a certain condition of our emotional nature—the real source and fountainhead of the waters which bring sweetness and blessing, or the reverse of these, to the vast area of our daily lives ; and with the clearness, or lack of clearness, of the atmosphere, or personal medium, through which we look out upon the world. Do we feel, at the bottom of our hearts, that, whatever hypothesis we may frame about human affairs and the destiny of the race, life is, after all, worth living ? ;—that spiritual culture, the development of the highest capabilities of character, is, in the largest acceptation of the phrase, worth while ? ;—that the processes at work in the universe about us, and in that tiny field of struggle, and suffering, and aspiration, in which our parts have to be played out, are not altogether affairs of blind and blundering chance ? ;—that the cosmos is, in some inexplicable yet very real way, sound at the core ? Is the world a blot or blank for us ? or does it 'mean intensely, and mean good' ? These questions, and such as these, strike down into a subsoil far deeper and richer than that which nourishes what we habitually call our creeds.

'The Idler' for June is being freely advertised as containing a Discussion of 'Spirit Manifestations' by Andrew Lang and others. We are sorry to say that it is a decidedly poor affair. Andrew Lang gives us a page of lazy hesitations and hair splittings. Sir Walter Besant contributes four lines, with a solemn shake of the head in them. C. K. Burrow half believes and half shirks. H. D. Lowry tells a useless story, and makes the inane remark that 'it would be beyond the power of all the ghosts in the world to make a serious impression on a man who had once witnessed a good performance at the Egyptian Hall.' S. L. Bensusan turns out half a page of patter about a drunken carrier ; and A. Lawrence talks Old Bogie nonsense about the Devil. A poor show ! We hope none of our readers have wasted a shilling over it.

This, from 'The Church Gazette,' by 'Peter Abelard,' might profitably be pondered by our teachers :—

I recollect a story told once of the late Bishop Harold Browne, who enjoyed, and deservedly, a reputation for cautious judgment and ripe learning. A brother bishop asked him one day whether in his opinion the English

Church allowed the practice of prayer for the faithful departed. 'Undoubtedly,' said Harold Browne. 'Then why don't we say so?' was the reply. In the same way we may ask whether most of us do not regard the passages I have quoted from the Old Testament, and many others of the same kind, as figurative. The answer would in most cases be in the affirmative, and if so I should be inclined to retort, 'Then why don't you say so?' In the long run the truth is not served by pious fictions and make-believes. It is better for a church, as for an individual, that she should beat her music out, and, in the slang of the day, appear before the footlights and face the music of the orchestra. The course of eternal truth never does run smooth, but her chariot wheels are too often made to run heavily, and her victory delayed through the unwillingness of Wisdom's children to look facts in the face.

That the Bible will lose by an honest recognition of its figures of speech, by its being brought into line with all the other knowledge of God's ways which is streaming on us to-day, I should be an infidel to doubt. That man is the true infidel who dare not trust his little bark on the deep wide sea of eternity, but must hug the shore of tradition, and with his eye on the bays and inlets fringed by man's credal dwelling-places, have no thought of the silent, rolling stars above him, by which his course might and should be shaped.

In 'The Christian Register' we notice an unusually bright little review of the biographical edition of Thackeray's works. Here is the conclusion of it:—

After Thackeray passed out of the troublous years of his editorial experience, he settled down to a little quiet work, and so rounded out his days in peace. He died suddenly in the early morning of December 24th, 1863. For years before, he had been looking forward, considering the ways of Providence and learning to be content therewith. He did not believe that laws would be changed for his benefit. He did believe that it was possible to learn the ways of cheerful subinission and patience. His formula was: 'I am well: Amen. I am ill: Amen. I die: Amen always.' He wrote once, 'When I was going to die, as I thought I was one night, I was as easy in mind and as trustful of God, and as confident in his wisdom and mercy, as Saint Augustine or Saint Teresa or Lady Huntingdon or Rev. Caesar Malan—I mean any Churchman, High or Low; and so no more about it.' The notes close with a letter written to Mrs. Procter concerning trouble which had come into her home. Of himself he said, 'I go—to what I don't know, but to God's next world, which is His, and He made it.' And so Mrs. Ritchie writes: 'Whenever my father wrote of death, it was with peaceful encouragement and good will; and now with his own words it seems fitting to end these notes of his dear life.'

Dr. M. J. Savage's notable series of sermons on Immortality will, we hear, be published in book form. We hope an English publisher will be found. The twelfth of the series, on 'The Society for Psychical Research and the Immortal Life,' ought to sell well here. The London Spiritualist Alliance really ought to have its book and tract department: and it will if ever it gets the building it so much needs and deserves.

A delicate little summer poem is this, by Mary Woodward Weatherbee:—

How could I climb? They said it was so high,
Remote as any star. How could I enter
Even its border lands or gates of peace?
And so, because I had no wings to fly,
I sent my soul in prayer to heaven's reposeful centre.

When, lo! a little blue flower at my feet,
The carol of a homing vesper sparrow,
On shimmering wings a silver butterfly,
Built me a ladder; and my soul sped fleet
As from a bow to heaven the faithful arrow.

SIGN-POST RELIGION.—The tendency to sensationalism in spiritual matters is to be deplored, and we sympathise with the Bishop of Ripon, who recently deprecated what he aptly called a 'sort of sign-post religion.' He felt, says the 'Daily Mail,' 'that the danger of the present day lay in that dreadful idea which belonged to the commercial world, and which, he was sorry to say, was finding its way into religious work, namely, that if they wished to succeed they must flaunt their wares before the public eye; and he very much doubted whether it could be the means of bringing about the best moral and spiritual conditions.'

SOME RECENT EXPERIENCES.

By 'AN OLD CORRESPONDENT.'

II.

On May 28th last, in the course of general conversation with the lady medium before referred to, she asked me if I ever had heard of a person named 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge.' On my replying in the affirmative, she stated that on the preceding night Dr. ——, her control, brought to her in her room, after she had retired for the night, an old gentleman who was dressed in peculiarly cut clothes of a bygone period, which garments she minutely described to me. This spiritual personage informed her his name was 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge,' and that he knew Professor Wilson very well when he lived in the Lake District. He also stated that he had seen the medium when she was a young child, in Grasmere churchyard, and that she was there along with a Miss P., of Kendal (now deceased), and my wife, and myself. How this spiritual personage came to be in Grasmere churchyard on a particular occasion, or for what purpose he was there, was not particularly explained to the medium, but the facts given were quite accurate, for on casting my memory back for a great number of years I remembered that on my third visit to the Lake District, the medium was living with us in Kendal in the autumn, and that on that occasion we took a circular tour from Kendal which terminated at Grasmere, where we had lunch and then strolled into the churchyard to look at the graves of Wordsworth and Hartley Coleridge, son of S. T. Coleridge, and that Miss P., of Kendal, with whom we were then residing, was one of the party. The old gentleman, the medium said, also told her that he believed his Bible to a large extent when in earth life, but that on passing over he found it very difficult to recognise the new world into which he had entered as being in any way like that foreshadowed in the Scriptures, and that for a good while, he said, he felt 'very queer and confused.' As regards the intimacy of Coleridge with Professor Wilson, a brief perusal of a biographical dictionary at my club satisfied me on that point, and also that there were frequent meetings in the early part of the present century between Wilson, Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge, at Grasmere and elsewhere in the Lake District.

I next inquired of the medium if she had ever heard of Coleridge, the celebrated poet, philosopher, and teacher, and her reply was emphatically in the negative. It was hardly necessary for me to inquire, as I know the class of literature she reads, and she is to my knowledge entirely unacquainted with the poetry and literature, or the names of the literary men, of the time when Coleridge and the other Lake poets existed. The next point was, if possible, to discover if a likeness of Coleridge existed: and as my business engagements at that time were many, I sent a post-card to a worthy friend, an earnest Spiritualist, who is a member of a literary institute, to which is attached a good reference library, and on the 30th he informed me by letter that he would call upon me 'with what I wanted' the following day. He did so, and handed me a rather dilapidated and patched-up copy of Coleridge's 'Table Talk,' published in 1858, and which had as a frontispiece a portrait of that author.

With the view of testing the identity of the spiritual personage who represented that he was 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge,' I waited till the medium was at tea one night in my house, and covering up everything but the portrait itself, I suddenly, and without any premonition, put it before her, and after about an instant's inspection she said: 'That is Coleridge. My slight hesitation arose from the fact that his hair was brushed further back on his brow than is shown in the portrait, but I am certain the face is the one I saw.'

Of course it is open to the sceptic to say either that the medium had invented the whole episode, or, having been reading up Coleridge, and finding that he knew Professor Wilson, who had formerly, she stated to me, appeared to her, she next gave me these new details as to Coleridge to fill in. To this I would reply that the evidence in Wilson's case was cumulative, and an interval of six or seven years elapsed between the writing of the first message and the appearance of Wilson to her in Edinburgh, just as she was leaving there for the Lake District. But I would rather prefer to put the case as one of spirit identity resting (to me at least) on

the undoubted fact that she had neither known nor heard of either Wilson or Coleridge before they came athwart her 'inner vision'; and if the evidence is not sufficient to satisfy every sceptic, I would only say in addition *cui bono?* What benefit, credit, or prestige has the lady in question to gain by giving me these cases of spirit return? All they can do to *me* is to deepen my belief in Spiritualism; while the only object I have in giving them to your readers is to add a link or two to the chain of evidence for spirit identity now being completed from so many trustworthy sources.

I shall say no more on this particular case, but will next proceed to deal with the communications from the two officers O. and P., referred to in my first article. At the moment of writing (June 3rd) I am unable to say that either of these persons ever lived, but am about to search the files of the 'Times' and 'Illustrated News' for their life history (if they ever existed), and date and place of passing over to the other side.

(To be continued.)

SLATE WRITING IN COLOURS.

Our contributor 'Quæstor Vitæ' has entrusted to us, for inspection by any friends who may wish to see it, the slate covered with writing in eight different colours, produced through the mediumship of Mr. Evans, as described in 'LIGHT' of May 22nd. 'Q. V.' writes, with regard to the remarks of Dr. Hodgson concerning this experience:—

Every particular phenomenon must be taken by itself and estimated according to the conditions of verification under which it is obtained. The accusations of fraud brought against Mr. Evans by Dr. Hodgson bear directly on the particular séances to which he refers, and *not* on the séance at which this slate-writing was obtained.

This particular slate, and the two others accompanying it, which were written upon on the same occasion and on which the writing is in ordinary slate pencil, were never touched by Mr. Evans from the time they were laid on the table after inspection by me, till I myself took them up. The slates were placed on the table, close to me, about a yard away from Mr. Evans, he sitting at the other side of the table and not touching it. One of the slates (marked to that effect) was held by myself all the time. Mr. Evans did not leave his chair or the room, whereas I am told that Mr. Davey, when producing imitations of this phenomenon by conjuring, usually left the room. The conditions were not then under the control of the investigator as they are with a professional medium, and Dr. Alfred R. Wallace tells me that no leading Spiritualist possessing considerable experience of this phenomenon, was allowed free investigation of Mr. Davey's trick performances. It is evident, therefore, that Mr. Davey's imitations have no bearing on the slates submitted herewith. On the other hand, we have the valuable description on p. 233 of 'LIGHT,' showing that slate-writing has been produced through a non-professional medium, in the studio of the investigator, constituting indisputable evidence that this phenomenon is produced by supernormal power.

It will be observed that in the case of the writing in colours, each line is superposed over the letter J written in chalk on the slate *immediately* before laying it on the table over some slate-pencil dust (no colours being visible on the table). The letter O was written on the surface of the slate which remained upwards, as a check against the possibility of substitution. But substitution was impossible under the conditions above described.

It must also be remembered that evidence has been adduced that writing has been produced on slates suspended above the head of the investigator, and on others held under the feet of the investigator, through the mediumship of Miss Bangs. I obtained writing on slates which I held on my shoulder, in the presence of a medium who used to live in New York twenty years ago and whose name I have forgotten.

Dr. Hodgson is of course at liberty to refuse to accept the conclusions of other investigators, but that precedent demonstrates that, in seeking to establish his own conclusions as carrying any further validity, he is utterly illogical.

CONJURING AND SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA.

By 'AN OLD INVESTIGATOR.'

If any person who has had sufficient experience to be convinced that communication with the spirit world is a fact, be desirous of differentiating between various intellects, he should start the subject of Spiritualism, and listen to the remarks of various persons for, or against its possibility. In too many cases it will be found that facts are denied, which is the easiest way of avoiding an explanation. Reason and fair arguments are ignored, and preconceived opinions, based on incomplete evidence, are put forward as if they were facts. These are the proceedings of the self-sufficient dogmatist, who really believes that what he does not know, has no existence.

Others again who have had no personal experience, will admit that they know nothing of the more subtle laws of what we call Nature. A hundred years ago, if a man had spoken of wireless telegraphy as a possibility, he would have been called a lunatic, and if he could have successfully demonstrated it, the limited intelligence of the men called scientific at that date, would have failed to comprehend the proofs, or would have pronounced it a conjuring trick, or have attributed it to witchcraft.

The more subtle the laws which govern any phenomenon, the more difficult it is to make the man with a coarse intellect comprehend it.

Spiritual communion is a subject that must be decided by facts and evidence, not hooted at by ignorant coxcomb men, or attributed to tricks, or conjuring, when we find that what occurs cannot be explained by either of these assumed causes. This would be the conclusion of the man with a well-balanced mind.

How utterly incompetent at various dates have been the minds of the then leaders of so-called science ; and how they hooted at that which was true, and abused the discoverer of this truth, cannot be better shown than in the case of Dr. Thomas Young, the discoverer of the undulatory theory of light.

At the meeting on June 6th, at the Royal Institution, Lord Rayleigh spoke of the important discoveries of Dr. Young, who was the builder of the undulatory theory of light, and after bearing testimony to the great value of Dr. Young's work, he said his views were correct. This is stated nearly 100 years after Young announced his discovery.

Let us now see how the leading scientific writers spoke of this discovery when it was first announced.

At that date the 'Edinburgh Review' claimed to possess a monopoly of scientific knowledge, and here is what appeared in its pages :—

'Another Bakerian lecture containing more fancies, more blunders, more unfounded hypotheses, more gratuitous fictions, all upon the same field, and from the fertile, yet fruitless brain of the same eternal Dr. Young.'

No doubt the gentleman who wrote the above believed himself to be a very clever fellow, yet he was——.

It is a pity that in the Royal Society there is not a 'Chamber of Horrors,' where portraits could be hung of those men who, at various dates, by an unfortunate combination of ignorance and vanity, have done their best to suppress the advance of truth.

Perhaps one of the most marked indications of feebleness of intelligence is when a person cannot distinguish between a conjuring trick, and a true spiritual phenomenon. And yet how simple is the difference. Let us refer, first, to mere physical phenomena. We pay a visit to a professional medium, at the medium's house. We see a table rise from the ground, a chair move without contact, and perhaps hear a locked piano play a tune. These phenomena do not *convince* us that some power exists, which is beyond that which is generally known. *Assuming* that the so-called medium is a cheat, mechanical arrangements *might* be made, to produce these effects, and we invent the theory of conjuring, as a *possible* explanation.

Next we invite the medium to come to our own house ; we receive the medium at the door ; and take her into a room, where she has never been before. She sits with us at a heavy dining table, and this dining table shortly rises a foot from the ground, and by its movement replies to ques-

tions. A book on our library shelf, at the end of the room, is suddenly placed on the table by invisible means. Our piano, which we had locked, and the key of which was in our pocket, sounds a note, then several notes, and then plays clearly an air, which was a favourite of a deceased relative, who, when on earth, had frequently played this air on that piano.

A person who assures us that all these facts are due to conjuring, we can only correctly describe as an intense idiot. Yet there are such men, and they write for some of our popular papers, and assert that those who do not agree with them, are incompetent as investigators.

We will now pass beyond these mere physical manifestations, which the ignorant imagine are the end, instead of merely the means to the end, and we again visit a public medium. As before, the table moves, just as the needle of a telegraph instrument moves, but it is not the mere movement which is important, but the information given by the movement. By the movement of the table we are told that the spirit of a friend is present whose name is A. B. C.; that he last saw us at D.; that he had died in India about forty-eight hours previously (and this occurred before a telegraph was laid to India); that he wishes us to do so and so.

Three weeks elapse before we ascertain that this information is correct in every detail.

What are we to think of the man who can assert that all this information was given by tricks, and conjuring, and that those who believe there was anything in it are vain and foolish? Such a man ought to be dealt with as an impostor, who is deceiving and misleading persons even more ignorant than he is himself, and thus, perhaps, preventing weak-minded people from even examining a subject of vital importance to every human being.

That the method adopted by some so-called scientists, to what they call 'test a medium,' is little short of puerile has more than once been mentioned in 'LIGHT.' But perhaps the most marked indication of a feeble intelligence, combined with inordinate vanity, is when a writer states with all the pomposity of imagined infallibility, that all so-called spiritual phenomena are to be accounted for by tricks, and that those who think differently are mere fools.

Men who write in this way belong to the same school as did those who abused Dr. Thomas Young, and described him as a fool and an impostor.

Niches in 'the Chamber of Horrors' of the Royal Society, ought to be kept for these men, if only as a warning to those who may yet be disposed to explain that which they cannot comprehend, by theories lacking the essential element of truth, and accuracy.

MILLIONAIRES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

Miss Helen Gould, of New York, who has recently engaged in many philanthropic enterprises, is said to be a Spiritualist, and is carrying out the wishes of her father as conveyed to her from the spirit side of life. Be that as it may, she is undoubtedly a large-hearted, sympathetic lady, who has performed many generous and kindly deeds. Our old friend, Dr. J. M. Peebles, recently reported in the 'Progressive Thinker' a number of communications received by him from departed millionaires, including Astor, Singer, Gould and Tweed, the testimony from all of whom indicates that the lot of the excessively rich man is not a happy one:

Having left their material riches behind and accumulated no spiritual wealth, they feel particularly poor and lament their want of forethought. Jay Gould's communication, which is very brief, is as follows: 'All my wealth, all my struggles and toils for gain have not brought me happiness. I am unhappy, I wander to and fro, seeking and searching for the path that leads to higher values, to peace of mind, but I find it not. It is too true that as I sowed, so am I now reaping. O God, when will it end?'

Commenting upon the above the 'Harbinger of Light' observes:—

It is not to be inferred from this that the rich man cannot enter into Heaven. Those who use their wealth wisely and generously may be great benefactors to their fellows and carry a wealth of good deeds done in the body with them to the spirit world, the fruits of which are recognised and appreciated there.

QUESTIONS REGARDING MEDIUMSHIP.

A correspondent (C. F. W.) asks us to reply to the following questions:—

1. Could I become a medium so that a spirit could write through me?
2. Is there any reason why I should not develop the power if I have it? (I am seventeen).
3. How could I develop mediumship?

1. We reply that mediumship is generally believed to be dependent upon constitutional organic conditions. If you are susceptible to the influence of people on the other side they will be able to make their presence known to you, if you invite their co-operation. The mode of such manifestation cannot be pre-determined; you might be controlled to write, or the spirits might be able to produce 'raps' or to give other physical evidences of their presence and power. If you possess the peculiar sensitiveness necessary for such perception, you will be able to 'discern' the spirits clairvoyantly, or to hear them speak, clairaudiently. It is quite probable that you are mediumistic, as almost every person possesses *some* qualification for intercourse with the unseen. Your especial aptitudes, however, will have to be discovered by experiment. If you follow the 'advice to inquirers' given by 'M. A. (Oxon)', you will, in all probability, very soon be made conscious of your natural qualifications, and be advised 'from the other side' what course to pursue. You might make the experiment of sitting for automatic writing, if you wish, and see if it results favourably. Place a sheet of paper before you upon a table, hold a pencil lightly in the position for writing, and await events; meanwhile asking, either vocally or mentally, if there is a spirit present who can impel your hand to write.

2. There is no reason why you should not develop the powers you possess, provided you seek such unfoldment with good intent, and are wise and temperate in their exercise. All natural faculties are legitimate, and their use tends to benefit their possessor, and others; it is the abuse of such gifts that leads to suffering. You should be on your guard against pretentious spirits, yet not too sanguine, nor too exacting.

3. The development of mediumship can be secured in the same way as you would develop your muscles—by exercise. The 'home circle' is the very best school for educating psychic powers. In the conduct of such sittings the following conditions should be observed: Punctuality, regularity, aspiration, receptivity, patience, perseverance, and sympathy. Do not take everything that happens, nor every message, as due to the action of infallible spirits; neither should you be disappointed if you do not receive conclusive tests of identity at the outset. The operators at the other end of the line require time and experience to make perfect connections, and frequently need to make experiments—as much so as we do—to ascertain how to secure the best results. Further, your susceptibility requires to be developed, and you need the training which experience alone can give to prepare and fit you to become a useful and reliable means of communion. Therefore, make haste slowly. It is advisable that you should read the best books upon the subject, and you could not do better than become a member of the London Spiritualist Alliance, as the Library of over thirteen hundred books would then be at your service.

IN MEMORIAM.

We regret to have to record the decease on the 14th inst., at 'Rosenfeld,' Mount Ephraim, Streatham Hill, of Mrs. Harriette Kennard Rudd (widow of Mr. Stanley Edwin Rudd, of Dean-street, Soho), in her eighty-eighth year. Our departed friend had been an ardent Spiritualist for many years. She was always deeply interested in our work, and cheerfully contributed to all funds for its promotion. We respectfully tender our sympathy to her surviving relatives on their bereavement.

MR. E. W. and MRS. M. H. WALLIS will be pleased to make engagements for lectures in London or the Provinces. Address: 62, Station-road, Church End, Finchley, London, N.

LONDON (ELEPHANT AND CASTLE).—'LIGHT' is kept on sale by Mr. Wirbatz, 18, New Kent-road, S.E.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MRS. GIDDINS AND DAUGHTER.

THIRD REPORT.

The development of these two mediums for experiments in physical psychics is progressing very rapidly and very favourably.

The cabinet has been removed from the corner of the room to the bow window and considerably enlarged, which has the double advantage of giving greater distance from the mediums, and allowing a greater number of visitors to face the proceedings.

The band who are practising to demonstrate their presence through physical means remain the same—Charla, Susa, and Crawley the Harlequin—and they are rapidly becoming more and more at home and powerful.

Visitors are now invited to place themselves one by one close up to the curtains, in a position where they can note the presence of both the mediums, one on each side of them, whose hands are being held by others of the company. They then hold a tambourine, coated with luminous paint, against the curtain, and a hand will come and take the tambourine from them and slowly raise it up some five or six feet from the ground. In a similar way if a concertina be held by one handle so as to droop in front of the curtain, a hand will come out and press up the bottom end so as to sound the reeds.

While experimenting in this way two weeks ago I felt a little hand touching my hand and arm. I also placed my hand against the curtain and felt the pressure of hands from the other side, while Mrs. Giddins and her daughter were standing behind me. Others of the company were afterwards similarly favoured, including the mediums, who seemed to experience as great a delight as the rest in feeling the bodily presence of their friends.

Since then this touching by materialised hands through the curtain is becoming more established, especially when the operating band are friendly with the postulant for a greeting.

The old phenomena of the blowing of the horn and movements of objects inside the cabinet, and the blowing out of the curtains, still constantly take place. From my position I can guarantee there are no confederates or mechanical means used to elicit the results, and if any of the visitors coming on the public days are distrustful of the way in which the mediums are being held by others, the arrangement by which they can for a trifling fee engage the mediums' services on any other night, when only themselves and any really earnest friend they might like to bring with them are present, ought to make them pause from the uncharitableness of going home and declaring the phenomena were all produced by the mediums and that the people who held them were fools or confederates.

I know of no persons as yet who have engaged the mediums privately who have not convinced themselves of the absence of fraud or confederacy.

To one gentleman in particular I am extremely indebted for the trouble he has taken in this way. I refer to Mr. W. W. Baggally—a member both of the London Spiritualist Alliance and of the Society for Psychical Research, who, with another scientific friend, has been patiently experimenting once a week for the past three months, and has expressed himself to me as more than satisfied with the genuineness of the results. This coming from one who has spent over a decade in the investigation of psychic matters, and who has been taking in this case all methods of scientific precautions against fraud, is highly satisfactory. I hope to induce him to append to my account a short corroborating report.

Some private visitors have arranged for experiments during the afternoon while sitting in the daylight. I understand that phenomena have taken place under these circumstances although of course not so pronounced. Perhaps someone who has made this experiment will write a report of it to strengthen the evidence.

Before concluding I had better assure those interested in these mediums that the daily sitting for physical phenomena is not in any way affecting their health. On the contrary, during the time that they have given

themselves up to this work at Kew, their health has been most excellent. The little girl, who was weak and delicate before, is growing rapidly and becoming quite robust, and she devotes herself all the mornings to her lessons in such a way that she has won already the high regard and affection of her teachers at school.

I think these good results are entirely due to the fact that both these mediums are deeply impressed with the high mission of their public work. This gives them a feeling of exaltation which acts on their spirits, and thence on their minds and bodies, and prevents depression and its consequences.

Indeed, I think it the most hopeful sign that these two are not like some other physical and materialising mediums who take no interest in Spiritualism as a Cause, who curse their own possession of gifts, and sell their powers for gold until their vitality is depleted.

The little daughter, moreover, has always the mother to support her when she sits, and the two, acting as mediums in conjunction, relieve each other of the anxious responsibility for something to occur when one does not feel fit or in the mood. The sitting for phenomena is never irksome to either of them; in fact, so devoted are they that if no visitor turns up any evening, they go upstairs to the séance room just as usual, and have their converse with the other world by themselves.

At any rate a good experiment is being made to decide the point whether the constant sitting for physical phenomena is debilitating in itself or only through the lack of spiritualisation of the mediums which it has in some cases entailed.

In the case of Daniel Home, who first developed his mediumship when he was a derelict in the last stages of consumption and who sat for the first five years of his development constantly, every night, but whose purpose and motive were always highly pitched, the course seems to have done no harm but good, so that his constitution was strengthened and he lived to do a long life work. There were periods when, by order of the other side, he had to desist and turn his life habits into other currents. So there will be probably with these mediums; and so with all of us there is in our professional and public world the necessity at times to turn the life stream into fresh channels, lest it grow clogged with the weeds and rushes of habit and monotony.

F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE.

As regards the experiment of sitting with these mediums for physical phenomena in the daytime, Miss Mack Wall, who with a friend has tried it, reports to me that she sat two weeks ago, about four o'clock one very bright and hot afternoon, at Kew, with Mrs. Giddins and her daughter and another lady. The cabinet was in the window recess, which was darkened with shutters and curtains, but the room was still full of dusky light. At first the mediums, as usual, sat outside with the company, but whether it was due to the strong light coming through chinks, or the heat of the weather, or the want of a larger company, nothing occurred to mark the presence of the unseen except a solitary note on a whistle. Then Lily was made to sit inside the cabinet, and to signify by singing and by clapping her hands that her own voice and hands were engaged; her mother remained outside in view of the others. Under these conditions a horn pinned to the cabinet curtains, *outside of it*, in view of the sitters, was blown some dozen times, the tambourine taken from their hands as they held it in front of the curtains, a concertina played whilst they held it by one hand near the cabinet, and they felt the distinct touch of the hands of a presence when they held their own hands against the curtains. Simultaneously with the phenomena the sound of Lily clapping her hands was heard.

F. W. T.

[We have received a letter from Mr. Baggally, confirming Mr. Thurstan's testimony, but are compelled to hold it over until next week.—ED. 'LIGHT.']

THERE never has been an objection made to Modern Spiritualism that was not made to the primitive Christianity and to every other philosophical, scientific and religious movement. All have suffered alike in this respect.—'Light of Truth.'

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
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SATURDAY, JUNE 24th, 1899.

EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.

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DESPERATE PREJUDICE.

We cannot expect everybody to undertake a personal inquiry into the evidence of the truth of our testimony ; and we certainly do not expect anybody to accept that testimony without personal inquiry. But what we do expect is that they who decide not to inquire should keep off the bench, and deliver no verdict : and we specially expect them to be passably modest about it and decently civil. Above all, we expect this from anyone who professes to be a philosopher. But that, unfortunately, is precisely what we do not get : and our experience is that it is not always the philosopher who best loves wisdom, just as it is not always the scientist who sets us the best example of readiness to follow truth.

Here, for instance, is one of the latest books on Psychology. It is by Professor Hugo Münsterberg and is entitled 'Psychology and Life' (Westminster: A. Constable and Co.). In some respects it is highly worthy of respectful attention. The author of it has a subtle mind, with a somewhat rare vocabulary, indicating discrimination and not fog nor eccentricity, though many readers will need a glossary. But he is a zealot, not an inquirer. He loudly trumpets forth the fact that he is making war : but he chiefly does it by getting into his pulpit, locking himself in and affirming—or denouncing. In one paragraph at the end of the book, he naively remarks: 'We have given decisions, not arguments.'

He is wonderful at calling names, and in coining sarcasms which he insinuates are arguments. His *bête noire* is Spiritualism. He simply hates it. He calls it 'the most repulsive claim of mysticism.' Concerning it, 'one sweeping word is sufficient. There are no subtle discriminations necessary, as in the other fields.' He 'rejects everything without exception.' 'The real question is whether departed spirits enter into communication with living men by mediums and by incarnation. The scientist does not admit a compromise: with regard to this, he flatly denies the possibility.' 'The facts as they are claimed do not exist, and never will exist, and no debate makes the situation better.' Then he dismisses the subject with what we can only call a contemptuous snort.

Now it is scarcely credible that this scientist, this philosopher, the writer of this serious book, a Professor in a University, after delivering this positive judgment, actually admits this; 'I have never taken part in a telepathic experiment or in a spiritualistic séance.' . . . 'I consider it undignified to visit such performances.' So then, this philosopher stands on his dignity, and thinks it

more dignified to be ignorant and yet to be positive than to know something by personal experience and possibly dirty his hands.

We might stop here, for a philosopher who 'carries on' like that hardly deserves attention, but he is better than he would have us believe. He has read a good deal, and he is a bit of a psychologist himself, in the genuine modern sense: but he is a psychologist who goes a little way, unwillingly, and then pegs out his claim, with an 'I'll be hanged if I go an inch further!' He makes wry faces at Hypnotism and scoffs at Telepathy, as we understand Hypnotism and Telepathy, but he gives in to the wonderful power of Suggestion, though it clearly puzzles him to explain how the suggestion to jump out of the window might be quite naturally obeyed. He thinks it possible, but only if certain fixed antagonistic ideas on the folly of doing such a thing could be kept down. But the power to overcome such ideas 'is quite a normal thing . . . in our normal mental life.' So if the accumulation of antagonistic ideas is overcome, and the subject does jump out of the window, that is only a case of a normal action of ideas, strongly accentuated. There is nothing mystical in it. But who ever said there was ? In a sense everything is normal, because everything is natural: and that is the same as saying that every effect has an adequate cause:—All of which we steadfastly believe.

Now it is just here we get our Professor into his corner, because his entire case turns upon a supposed difference between Psychology and Mysticism. Psychology, in his opinion, is purely scientific: Mysticism is mere magic. Very well: then we disavow Mysticism. The mystic, he says, holds that his mystical manifestations belong to and come in from 'an uncausal emotional world,' and the difference between him and the psychologist is 'not between the facts we can explain and the facts we cannot explain, and for which we seek an explanation of the same order . . . no: it is between the facts which are now explicable by causal laws, or may be so in any possible future, and those facts which are acknowledged as in principle outside of the necessary causal connections, and bound together by their values for our personal feelings instead of by mechanical laws.' If that is involved, and if it looks nonsensical, we cannot help it. We quote it only for the purpose of again saying that we are not such mystics, and that we know not where to look for such ; though perhaps that final phrase 'mechanical laws' may just save the Professor ; but in that case the absurdity seems even a little greater, for then the suggestion is that mechanical laws alone have 'causal connections.' And, to tell the truth, it looks as though he really meant that. If so, will he kindly explain the causal connection between, say, the mechanical laws of the brain and thought or even elementary consciousness?—how the one is transmuted into the other. The good Professor says: 'In the effort to represent the world as a causal one—that is, in our character as naturalists—we know only a causal world, and no other. We may know little about that postulated causal world, but we are sure beforehand that whatever the future may discover about it must belong to the causal system, or it is wrong.' By all means! That exactly expresses our view, and we do not care in the slightest what the Professor chooses to call us. We stand for a causal world, a causal universe, a causal spirit-sphere, a causal ghost, a causal God.

'If,' says this stickler for 'mechanical laws,' 'if the scientists of earlier times believed in phenomena as products of witchcraft, and believe to-day in the same phenomena as products of hypnotic suggestion and hysteria, the mystics are not victorious, but defeated.' Are they really ? But the phenomena were denied by the scientists of yesterday. The whole thing was held to be fraud or fooling. Are not the people who believed in their gravity

as profound facts victorious if now the gravity of the facts is admitted? Oh no, they are defeated, says the Professor, because now we know it was not Satan and witchcraft that produced the phenomena; and 'they are brought under the causal categories.' But even Satan and witchcraft may be bringable under 'the causal categories' for all we know. If this writer would only turn his attention to that fact, he might find the ground very much cleared about him. We do not despair of his doing this, because, towards the close, we find this hopeful passage: 'No scientist in the world feels uncomfortable over the confession that there are many—endlessly many—things in the world which we do not know; no sane man dreams that the last day of scientific progress has yet come, and that every problem has been solved. On the contrary, the springs of scientific enthusiasm lie in the conviction that we stand only at the beginning of knowledge, and that every day may unveil new elements of the universe. Even physiological psychology, which seems so conceited in the face of mysticism, admits how meagre is the knowledge it has so far gleaned.'

It would be ungracious on our part to add another word of criticism after that handsome admission of limited knowledge and overwhelming ignorance, sunned by such boundless hope.

THE MASTERY OF FATE.

It is refreshing, in these days of paling pessimism, when one hears so much blame laid upon 'environment' and when 'circumstances' or 'heredity' are made the scapegoats for the shortcomings or wrong-doings of the weak and vicious, to read the strong and bracing words of one who believes that man is a spiritual being, endowed with positive powers for good. Surely, if it is true that 'mind rules the world' and that 'thoughts are things,' or become things, then it is possible for us to be 'masters' and make 'events our slaves.' But, in any case, if we think so, and act upon the thought, we shall be more efficient for good than if we apologise for living, and with gloomy appreciation of life's miseries attribute them to 'fate' and refrain from attempting to conquer in the world's conflict. The Rev. George H. Hepworth puts the matter very forcibly when he says:—

'God has done one thing which seems to me so awfully grand that the brain reels while contemplating it. He has given you sole charge of your own character. You are master, and events are your slaves. He puts sweet and persuading influences about you. He sends the whole unseen world to direct you with invisible hands, but when you face your experience you alone must decide whether it shall lift you to the stars or sink you into the mire. Such responsibility! How God must have prized the soul He created when He made it the arbiter of its own fate.'

'And if He has given it such grandeur and crowned it with immortality, can we do aught else than lead princely lives, as Jesus did, conscious that we are so large that we should disdain all smallness, and should throb with that divine ambition which will be satisfied with nothing less than the highest good and the noblest attainment?

'That is the religion of Christ, and it consists of an appreciation of what you are, and of your destiny, and a determination, with help from above, to produce such a character out of the discords and smiles of time that He will say at last, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

CURED: BUT HOW?

Is this a case of 'expectancy'? of 'auto-suggestion'? of 'mind healing'? or spirit influence? The 'Daily Mail' for June 15th published a statement that a wonderful cure was effected on Tuesday, the 13th inst., by the waters of St. Winifred's Well:—

A brass moulder named Richard Whittam, of 16, Balmoral-road, Lancaster, who for six years has had no control of his legs and has been treated by different doctors for sciatica and locomotor ataxy, is now able to walk freely with the aid of a walking-stick. He attended the usual devotions at the well, and was carried to the water and dipped in three times. While dressing he found that for the first time for six years he could move his legs and stand up.

HOW TO BE WELL AND HAPPY.

BY MARY ROBBINS MEAD (IN 'MIND' FOR MAY).

To attain health and happiness we must aspire to the ability to concentrate our forces, so that, in the place of discords above which we have not yet risen, we can establish a fixed habit of harmonious thinking. It requires time and unfailing effort; but it is really the greatest work an individual can do. We must try to unfold the power to control our thinking, so that we may say of every condition in life: 'I must affect it, instead of letting it affect me.' Conscious growth means persistent effort. If things fail to make me happy or strong it is because I myself do not assume the right attitude toward the experiences of life. In our sorrow, loneliness and despair, we forget that life holds an unending supply for every need, and that whatever our requirement may be, we can attract a sure supply by dropping the thought of trouble and waiting with hope for a change of consciousness that will make everything appear in a different light. Man is controlled primarily not by physical states but by his directions of mind or beliefs.

The tide goes out, but it comes back again, and my own comes to me. The going out leaves me in despair; the coming in brings joy. A fixed habit of harmonious thinking must be established while the tide is out, and it can only be done through the self-discipline that ignores bondage and limitation as much as possible and that holds to the fact of the imperishable qualities in the soul that are to be evolved in relation to the eternity I have, in which to love all that belongs to me.

We must strive to expel discordant thoughts as they arise, literally casting aside the burden while we climb the mountain. Letting go of discordant thoughts and filling the consciousness with a desire to manifest the higher degrees of harmony is the only sure way permanently to change environments. It is not possible to realise true happiness until we abandon the love of the lower self for that of the higher. Give your energies to the demonstration of the fact that you are an immortal soul and deny the paralysing belief in destruction and death that makes of life a farce not worth living. Realising yourself as an immortal being, you can meet experiences without the fear and agony that wither and blight the efforts of one who cannot discern in the inner self a power to evolve both health and happiness. You can refuse to give your thoughts to the conditions that destroy happiness and can fill your consciousness with thoughts of your developing possibilities. The very hardest experience can be changed almost as if by magic when you hold the right mental attitude toward it.

Refuse to see yourself as one who can be crushed by another, or by any form of suffering. Attract from life the elements of love which you can send back to those who have held the power to create in you the sense of hatred or resentment. When any environment presses with unendurable weight, withdraw your thoughts from it; as fast as the rankling, corroding thought comes back, put it away from you by turning the power of your being towards the source of strength within your soul.

You can make of life a perpetual round of happy attainment, if you constantly withdraw your thoughts from inharmonious conditions. The power within is equal to everything (as you are at one with the Infinite). You may 'overcome' by withdrawing your attention or refusing to accept. Turn away from discords and persistently surrender the love of the lower self to the hope of co-operating with and manifesting the ideal self. This is done by that discipline that is never abandoned, whether the progress can be measured or not. A life given to this greatest of all objects cannot result in failure: its success will reach fathoms below and heights above our sense of limitation.

Anita Trueman says, in the same number of 'Mind': 'I and the Father are one,' involved the secret of Christ's teaching. If one but consciously realises the oneness of his being with the source of all being, he will clearly see the solution of every wearying and perplexing problem. One can live from inspiration as easily as to speak from inspiration, if he will but let this thought of oneness with eternal truth be his daily companion and training master.

To act from inspiration is to act from the centre of con-

[June 24, 1899.]

trol ; the seat of spiritual consciousness. Acting from this centre, one can appeal to the highest and divinest in any other soul, calling its most interior principle into activity. We are immune from discord so long as we maintain this attitude. It is only when we transgress these principles that discord inflicts itself upon us. Speaking from the inspiration of Divine Intelligence, we are enabled to reach the deeply involved inner-selves of our brothers. To live from the centre of control by the light of Divine Intelligence is the secret of power in all things, within and without.

Q.V.

AUTOMATIC SPIRIT MESSAGES.

THEOSOPHY AND VEGETARIANISM.

The following communications, on two interesting topics, are the first to be published of a large series of private and independent spirit writings through the hand of a lady in Newcastle, whose development in mediumship has been entirely within her own family circle. The questions are put in writing *without her knowledge or observation!*

Is it certain that our 'eternal' home is in the spirit sphere? Is the theory of reincarnation a myth?

The question you ask is one that is far reaching. There is reincarnation; but not as you seem to understand it! For example, the spirit of man may not be born again in the body of an infant. The spirit may, however, return to your earth as I do, and make itself manifest through another's body, by influencing it in thought, and even in deed. The said spirit may at one time have lived a life so thoroughly selfish and useless, that to further its progress it is needful for it to return and do good on earth by using its spiritual influence to work through another's body for the benefit of humanity. The theory that men return to your life again and yet again, and have no knowledge of a former existence, I know nothing of. I remember my former life and the most outstanding incidents of that life, and so I am able the better to do those things which in it I left undone. I do not, however, wish you to go away with the idea that there is no truth in reincarnation. There may be, for even we do not know *all* the wonders of God's creation. But this I tell you, that the Divine Law is one of *progression*; and unless for that purpose, I do not believe it. If God and the spirit find it good for progression, then it will be, but not for everyone. Those who, like us, feel that the better results can be had in spirit life, work out our progression and the world's from this side.

This I can comprehend and appreciate; but not that the spirit should be reborn in the flesh with no knowledge of its prior sins of omission or commission. What say you of vegetarianism as a means for mediumistic development?

I was a child of nature and lived principally on the fruits and herbs of the earth, and on these I grew, and felt that life was sweet and worth living. The fruits and herbs are natural food and good for man's growth. Still, I am not of those who condemn all flesh-eating. A little of that is good, too, else why did God the Father provide so plentifully His children of old with it? The dwellers in cities who toil like you, dear brother, need a little to stimulate the body; but those who can have more abundant fresh air are wise to abstain from it. The Lord sent down quails from Heaven, we are told, for the children of Israel; and again you read in the Bible that the Prodigal's father killed the 'fatted calf.' Abraham, too, fed the angels on the flesh meat to his hand, and St. Peter was told to arise, kill, and eat. These are mere incidents, and may not be even correctly written down by me; but they tell that flesh of animals was given for food. It is undoubtedly cleaner and better for those who can to be what you call vegetarians; but it is not always practicable, and the body God has given you must be properly fed and nourished. Christ Himself did not abstain from flesh nor fish. . . . I agree with it so far as it is possible.

DR. J. M. PEEBLES, in the course of a pleasant private letter, states that he fully intends journeying around the world once more. He is now corresponding with South African Spiritualists, Hindoo Spiritualists, and those in Australia and New Zealand. We shall be delighted to receive reports from him and to see him in London once more on his way home.

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.

In a recent issue, 'The Light of Truth' reprinted a report from 'The Boston Globe,' describing a series of experimental séances which have been conducted in Boston, Mass., by expert photographers, and other members of the staff of 'The Globe,' from which it will be seen that they not only failed to detect fraud on the part of the medium, Mr. F. N. Foster, but succeeded in obtaining some remarkable and satisfactory psychic results. We trust that the recently appointed committee of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be equally fortunate in finding mediums willing to submit to test conditions, through whom phenomena of a satisfactory character may be observed. 'The Globe' report states :—

Marked plates from 'The Globe' art department and from a wholesale house in the city were taken and never did Mr. Foster fail to produce what he called 'spirit effects.' Every theory suggested to 'The Globe' was tested and exploded.

After the final test Mr. Foster invited two of 'The Globe' staff to spend an hour or two with him and talk the matter over, during the course of which it was suggested that if the exposure had been made in the dark, without the light exposure, and results had been produced, it would have overcome all objections. No photographer has been able to produce such results and it would have covered all the ground gone over in the preceding tests. Mr. Foster immediately agreed to make the test, although he did not guarantee results.

Marked plates from 'The Globe' art department were brought, marked so that there was no possibility of tampering with them. The plates were kept in the possession of 'The Globe's' representatives until, after about an hour's conversation, Mr. Foster announced that he was ready to make the experiment.

With 'The Globe's' representatives was a third gentleman who is interested in photography and who remained and witnessed the experiment. 'The Globe' man took the marked plate, entered the 'dark room' and inserted it in the plate holder. Mr. Foster was unaware of the manner in which the plate was marked, and he asked no questions.

This point having been reached Mr. Foster remarked :

'Gentlemen, you must thoroughly understand that I do not guarantee success in this experiment—for an experiment it is—and although all conditions are very favourable to-night, I do not feel certain of success. All of you are welcome to remain in the room. But this, you know, is against my custom, for at all tests I agree to no one but the sitter being in the room with me. I will proceed exactly as I would in the daytime. Draw the dark curtains over the window and door, and when the gas is turned out I think the room will be as dark as it possibly can be. The camera can stand just as it is, or in any way you may suggest, and now all there is to do is to place the holder in the camera and turn the light out, first setting the music box going, as I never attempt the dark séance without the music.'

All being ready the music box was started, one of 'The Globe' representatives turned off the gas, and the room became so dark that one could not see the hand when held before the eyes.

Mr. Foster said that he had removed the cap from the lens, as he always did for the dark exposure, and for about three minutes all was silence. Then came the raps upon the camera, and Mr. Foster's usual query as to whether they were 'all through.' Raps came again, very distinct, and Foster called for the music to be stopped and the gas lighted.

This was at once done and 'The Globe' expert took from the camera the holder containing the marked plate. A short conversation ensued and all four entered the dark room, the gas being again extinguished.

'The Globe' man at once took the plate from the holder and placed it in the bath for development and in a very short time a 'spirit' face appeared upon the plate. It was that of an elderly gentleman, and nothing but the head appeared. Mr. Foster himself was apparently much astonished at the result, and said he really did not feel confident of any face appearing, but was much pleased that he had been able to demonstrate the fact that his 'spirit' forms were produced in the dark.

With the development of the face appeared the marks upon the plate made by 'The Globe' expert, 'Boston Globe,' in two places, and an X mark in one corner, proving beyond any doubt that the plate furnished was the one with the face upon it. 'The Globe' representatives had completely failed to detect any fraud on the part of Mr. Foster, he allowing them to have their own way during all the proceedings, and the visitors would like these questions answered : 'How was the face produced upon the plate? Is it spirit photography?'

THE PROBLEM OF IMMORTALITY.

The Rev. B. Fay Mills, one of the most popular preachers of Boston, Mass., U.S.A., has been attracting large audiences during the past season. He was for a time associated with the Rev. Dwight Moody in his 'revivalist' work, but recently investigated social and spiritual problems and delivered several acceptable philosophical addresses at the New England Spiritualist Camp ground at Lake Pleasant. While he did not avow himself a Spiritualist, he showed that he was deeply interested in the phenomena which he witnessed through several mediums, and there can be no doubt that his psychical studies largely influenced his religious opinions. An eloquent and a forcible speaker, he has advanced into the front rank of the broad-minded teachers of spiritual philosophy, and the crowds of people who throng the theatre where he preaches bear testimony to his powers to move the hearts of his hearers. The 'Banner of Light' publishes a verbatim report of one of his sermons upon 'The Problem of Immortality,' in the course of which he said :—

'If there be any reason for existing at all there is reason for going on! If there was any reason why the fire-mist should be formed, if there was any reason why the atoms, the particles, the meteors of the air should strike one another until they were formed into worlds, if there was any reason why the ice age should pass away, and the age of vegetation should come, if there was any reason for the growth from protoplasm to man; if there is any science, if there is any philosophy, then there is a reason why man should go on! If there is any reason for the brain, if there is any reason for the heart, if there is any reason for emotion, if there is any reason for love, then there is a reason for man's going on! If there is any reason for conscience, if there is any thought of right and wrong, if there is anything worthy of scorn and anything worthy of emulation, if there is anything holy, and noble, and pure, upon which men should think, then there is in man that which is worthy to persist, and that which shall persist!'

"Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
Paid by a voice floating by to be lost on an endless sea :
Glory of virtue! to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong ;
Nay ! but she asked not for glory, no lover of glory she—
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be."

All science, all philosophy, all human life, are unintelligible if we believe there are moral laws anywhere that are different from moral laws here, or if we do not believe that law is an eternal thing.

The mind, and the conscience also, revolt at the thought that this world is the only theatre for the administration of justice, for we very often do not get justice here. We see Shakespeare scorned and starved out of life—the most consummate flower of his age! We see Cicero, the lover of his nation, with his head lopped off by a Roman soldier at the command of the rulers of his nation! We see Columbus bound and in chains taking his way along the shores of the land he discovered with a heavy heart, breaking because of the ingratitude of his fellows! We see Socrates condemned to drink the cup of hemlock! "A Nero crowned and a St. Paul beheaded; a Borgia wearing the tiara and a Savonarola burned at the stake; an Augustus winning an empire and a Christ crucified!"

Take another thought—we do not begin to exhaust the possibilities of life—any of us. As the eloquent preacher who has just come to be Henry Ward Beecher's and Lyman Abbott's successor in Brooklyn says : "Men go toward death stored with latent faculties and forces, just as our winter-bound earth goes toward May—stored with myriad germs and seeds, waiting for summer to unlock and send them forth to bud and blossom and fruitage. There are unexplored riches in the human constitution. What is man? No one knows. Many of his faculties exist in him like unwrapped tools in a box—not even examined, much less named. Three or four of his forty faculties ask three-score years for development—the other latent powers ask an immortal life for growth beyond the grave."

There is one word that is always spoken by those who claim to represent departed spirits returned to communicate with people still in the flesh—so far as I have read the literature the testimony is unanimous in this respect—that there is immortal progress for all, beyond the tomb.

I think there is considerable evidence for the claims of Spiritualists. As I have said a number of times, I should be more than glad to welcome such communications myself, but I cannot bear any personal testimony on the subject. But suppose it were none of it true, suppose no spirit ever came back to communicate with man—not even the spirits of the great leaders, religious leaders, concerning whom there have been so many traditions about their resurrection; suppose the

tales in the Bible of the communication of departed spirits with men—and all the other tales of all the centuries—were none of them true, that would be no argument against immortality. In fact, the analogy almost seems to be the other way, for man cannot go back of this life—I cannot, at least. I would like to communicate with what I was before I was a man, but while I can think some thoughts along that line I have not been able to accomplish it. A man is not even able to get his brain into an infant's skull!

Can Orion swing in his courses in the firmament for seventy thousand myriads of ages, and man, who is conscious that there is in him enough to make seventy million Orions, die after seventy years of existence on this earth? Must Charles Darwin die at sixty years of age, and his great world-transforming book be immortal and eternal? No! genius does not "burst and vanish as a firework in the night"; and I agree with Mrs. Phelps-Ward when she says: "Death is either a glorious change or it is an awful outrage."

Now for the other reason why I believe in immortality. I have already suggested it; it is what I call the Soul-Consciousness. You may ask me if I ever saw a soul, and I will have to tell you, No, I never did; but I have seen something more than bodies—I can tell you that. I believe that "the eyesight has another eyesight." I believe that back of the hands and the faces that we are conscious of there are other hands and other faces; "calm and actual faces." I believe that this theory explains the most facts and leaves the least unexplained. Science does not see all matter. Science analyses that lily, until it says the lily is composed of molecules and atoms, but science cannot fill up the spaces between the atoms. What does it say is there? "Ether." I have just as much right to call it spirit as science has to call it ether. Ether is really a great big question point. When the scientist gets to the point where we want to ask questions, he stops and looks wise, and says, "Ether." The scientist does not know about the inter-stellar spaces, but he tells us he believes they are all filled—because Nature abhors a vacuum, and he cannot think of a vacuum. Mark you! I am not sneering at science; I love the scientist and honour him, and I have an ambition to know real things along that line. But there are some things science cannot do, and some things it cannot explain.

"Life is not a form of body, but body is a form of life"; the important thing is not the physical. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Parker were walking in the country one day, and some crank came up to them and said, "Do you men know that the world will speedily come to an end?" Mr. Emerson said, "I think I can get along without it." Of course he could get along without it. One of our pastors in this city has written words that express this:—

"The ship may sink
And I may drink
A hasty death in the bitter sea ;
But all that I leave
In the ocean grave
Can be slipped and spared and no loss to me.

What care I
Though falls the sky
And the shrivelling earth to a cinder turn ?
No fires of doom
Can ever consume
What never was made nor meant to burn.

Let go the breath !
There is no death
To the living soul, nor loss nor harm.
Not of the clod
Is the life of God :
Let it mount, as it will, from form to form."

How much space can a man inhabit? "How little way a man's hands can reach, and yet his vision takes in the stars!" How much space do I inhabit? Here I am, standing in a spot a foot one way, six inches the other. Is that all? No! I can reach up; that belongs to me, too. I can move; I can go round and round this globe, if I will. How much space can I inhabit? There is the roof—I can see beyond it. And I can stand on any square foot of God's earth to-night and look up into the infinite spaces and live there. How much space can I inhabit? Am I simply a little two-legged animal standing down here? I cannot only see beyond the stars, I can think thoughts that make the stars shrink into insignificance. This is the "real real."

"I know that I am deathless." You know how astronomers found the planet Neptune; not by sweeping the sky with the telescope, but by noticing the irregular movements of Uranus. They said that Uranus must have a body drawing upon it; they calculated the size and the distance of that body, and then turned their telescopes where they thought that body ought to be, and two astronomers at once discovered the planet Neptune. And I have found "The World to Come" in such a way as that. I know where it ought to be; I know what responds to my best thought; I

know what responds to my best conscience ; I know what responds to my best hope, and I propose to believe it.

Not science, not philosophy, not revelation has been our teacher in the best and truest facts of life, but the soul. Concerning the supreme motive in life, science formerly taught, for example, that it was the self-principle that worked along the seemingly cruel lines of natural selection and survival of the fittest, and even now it is giving only half the field to altruistic instinct. Philosophy is a sublime endeavour to find the best, but often succeeds only in so entangling thought on the two horns of a dilemma that we are obliged to confess ourselves unable to unravel it. Revelation, so-called, has spoken to us of the personality of God and the dual nature of man, and has set before us reward and punishment as incitement and deterrent. And all the while, deep within the soul, a voice as unmistakable, although as gentle as the summer breeze and murmuring of spring birds, has spoken to us of love as the one all-constructive, all-efficient, motive power in life.

And now, if we must, let us still ask : "What saith science, what saith philosophy, of the immortality of man ?" But I warn you that, honouring each according to its services as I do, you will turn from these eager, though blind leaders of the blind, to find the answer only in your soul.

Soul ! soul ! what canst thou say of immortality ? I hear the answer, "I am I, superior to this housing of flesh which now reveals but only half interprets me. I am bound as yet; great vistas open before me, but my powers of vision are not yet strong enough to see more than short distances along their shining lengths. Wondrous harmonies faintly salute my ears, echoing and reechoing through vast regions which I am not able to traverse yet ; light, beauty, fragrance, power, sublimest, truest thoughts press upon me from every side, yet I walk as one 'veiled and sleeping,' not yet large enough, fine enough, free enough, to grasp the marvellous significance of it all. Yet truly I know that this is no phantasimagoria of a fanciful mind, no cunningly-devised illusion, but that it is true ; that these are perceptions of the real world in which I live, and that the things I see and touch are but partial manifestations of that which veritably exists. Nay, more ! I see that ethical, loving purpose is the essence and substance out of which the universe is built. That I am only an individual atom in it does not argue my unimportance. I am one of the Divine ideas, an invaluable link in an unbroken chain of sequences. And this knowledge is at once my inspiration, my vigour, my wisdom and my energy. I work tirelessly, up-bearing and up-borne, intelligently shaping and being shaped by the eternal progress and purpose."

Shall I cease to exist before this larger, truer life is mine ? Never a soul throughout the length and breadth of earth that hath found its voice but answers "No !" And all the echoes of the Universal Soul thunder and reverberate along the hills and valleys of matter and of mind "No ! No ! No !" I shall persist, I shall pass from life to fuller life, from partial knowledge to satisfying truth, from loyalty to devotion, from service to partnership, from love to greater love, from mountain height to mountain height, from glory unto glory.'

A TARDY DISCOVERY.

Among the early mesmerists the power of some of their clairvoyants to see and describe the conditions of the organs of persons with whom they were placed *en rapport* was well known, and frequently utilised for the benefit of those who were suffering from diseases which had baffled the skill of medical men. The French hypnotists have elicited similar phenomena with their sensitives, and a number of mediums have also given evidence of their possessing the same faculty. Hence, it is amusing to those who are aware of these facts, to find the 'Daily Mail' Boston correspondent discovering 'A human X ray' at this late date. But, better late than never ! The 'Mail' correspondent says :—

'The strange powers possessed by a boy named Alfey Brett are being examined by the Society for Psychical Research. He is the son of Dr. Brett, chief of the College of Physicians in Boston, and when hypnotised by his father becomes a sort of human X ray, being able to see through solid objects. He describes minutely the bones and other portions of the anatomy of persons submitting to the test, including physical defects and malformations. He is only eleven years old, and has had no instruction in anatomy !'

A NEW PUBLIC MEDIUM.—Our correspondent 'Ariel' informs us that he has recently listened with much pleasure and profit to several inspirational discourses given by Mr. Terry, of 6, William-street, Lozells, Birmingham, and on one occasion submitted to him a series of abstruse and scientific questions to which very interesting and instructive replies were promptly given. Our correspondent desires to recommend Mr. Terry to societies as an acceptable speaker.

THE REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE.

The Rev. M. J. Savage was recently taken to task by the 'New York Sun' for affirming his belief that 'we carry with us into the life beyond death our personal consciousness and the memory of what we have been here and of the friends we have loved'; that 'we shall find ourselves greeted by our friends who have gone before us'; that 'the people of the other life have bodies'; that 'the thinker takes with him his power to think, and that the ranges of thought there are so vast as to seem almost impossible.' The 'Sun' asks :—

'What authority for a future life is there except dogma ? Immortality does not reveal itself to the simple reason. It is unknown to human science and undiscoverable and undemonstrable by it. Except in Scripture or tradition, made authoritative by religious dogma, we have no basis for anything more than a purely fanciful, poetic conception of a future life. No man, of himself, has ever been able to pry into the mystery of death. To the natural eye, when a man is dead that is the end of him. His dead body is buried away to go into noisome corruption. Only in dogmatic assertion, the assertion of the authority of a revelation from God, of a wholly supernatural communication, has anybody any ground for assuming, as the Rev. Mr. Savage assumes, that the dead come to life again in another state of existence ; and Mr. Savage, as a Unitarian, rejects all dogma.'

'Coming from him, then, his sermon of last Sunday on the conditions of life beyond the grave was only a string of fancies by a mind confessedly without any attainable knowledge of the subject and without any faith in the dogma which is the only authority men have or can have for looking forward confidently to a future life as existing at all.'

In response to this criticism Mr. Savage called attention to the peculiar condition in which the 'Sun' writer was left by his own logic :—

'You assert that all belief in God, in Scripture, in immortality, has one basis, and one basis only. This is Church dogma.'

'Grant it for the sake of argument, and where does my critic find himself ? He accepts the Church dogma either for a reason or without a reason. If he does it for some reason, then he thereby inevitably admits that reason is the final court of appeal. He is a rationalist ; for reason is supposed to authorise and support his dogma. If he accepts his dogma for no reason, then there is no reason why he should accept it. There is no reason why he should not as well be a Mohammedan or an Atheist. When reason is ruled out of court then it is clear that there is no reason left for anything.'

'As to supposed facts on which to base belief, yours are very like mine ; only mine are modern, and can be investigated, while yours are ancient, and cannot.'

In the closing paragraph of Mr. Savage's reply we have the whole case in a nutshell. The strength of our position is clearly brought out ; modern facts can be investigated, ancient ones cannot—a distinction with a decided difference.

NEW PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

'The Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford : A practical scheme for maintaining the continuity of annual subscription during the lifetime and for a number of years after the subscriber's decease, through the agency of the Post-office Savings Bank.' By E. PAUL JENKINS. London : Simpkin and Marshall. Price 2s. 6d.

'Hydropathy and Serotherapy.' By DR. A. LUTAUD. London : Anti-Vivisection Society, 32, Sackville-street, Piccadilly, London, W. Price 6d.

'The Review of Reviews' for June contains : A portrait of 'The Mother Queen at Home' ; 'Sketches of the Members of the Parliament of Peace' ; 'Some Pages of a Busy Life' ; and 'What Shall be Done with China ?' by W. T. STEAD, &c. London : 125, Fleet-street, E.C. Price 6d. 'Spiritual Gifts and Mediumistic Capabilities.' By PROFESSOR T. TIMSON. 3, Museum-street, Leicester. Price 6d. and 1s.'

'The Arena' ; 'The Theosophist' ; 'Revue Scientifique and Morale du Spiritisme' ; 'Expression' ; 'The Suggester and Thinker' ; 'Freedom' ; 'The Torch' ; 'The World's Advance Thought' ; 'Faith and Hope Messenger,' &c.

By a curious misprint an American contemporary says that 'Professor Loveland is nothing if not clear and turgid in his statements.' We suppose 'clear and lucid' was what was meant—the statement is far from lucid as it stands.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—'LIGHT' is kept on sale by W. H. Robinson, 4, Nelson-street, and Book Market.

THE ITALIAN PSYCHICAL PRESS.

The following case of a veridical apparition seen by two witnesses was communicated by Signor B. Albiero di Verona to the editor of the 'Rivista di Studi Psichici,' and is printed in the May number :—

Signor Albiero states that in the autumn a lady named Guiseppina Cadin, residing at Verona (Via Ponte Pietra 6), called at his house and related the following vision which she had seen during the night, or rather at an early hour of the morning. At about 4 a.m. she had occasion to call her son, a boy of sixteen years of age ; she lit his candle, and he then sprang out of bed, and in the same moment saw before him the appearance of an uncle who had been ill for some time at Vicenza ; alarmed, he called his mother, who also saw the apparition of her brother-in-law. He stood immovable at the foot of the bed, his head wrapt in a linen cloth, and gazed at her fixedly and pathetically. He looked pale and wore a sad smile on his lips. The vision lasted for a few moments. La Cadin made an effort and called him by name ; but he disappeared.

A few days after the vision she was informed that her brother-in law had died on the same day and at the same hour that the vision appeared.

The following is communicated by M. Flammarion, who states that the narrator (Andrea B.) is a member of 'La Società Astronomica di Francia' :—

Andrea B. was staying in Rome during the month of June, 1896 ; his mother was also lodging there at the same time, in another street. One morning, at eight o'clock, she arrived at his lodging much agitated, and on his inquiring the cause she related the following occurrence. Whilst making her toilet she had suddenly seen her nephew, Renato Kraemer, who looked at her and said, smiling, 'Ma sì, sono morte' (It is true, I am dead). Very much startled, she hastened to her son, who did his best to calm her and to divert her mind. After the lapse of about a fortnight Andrea B. states that he learned that his cousin died after a short illness about 6 a.m. on June 12th, 1896, which was the date of the appearance to his mother ; and that before he died he had several times expressed a wish to see this aunt, who had for him a specially warm affection, and who would certainly have returned to Paris to see him had she been aware of his serious illness.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.

Reincarnation and Divine Justice.

SIR,—'Excelsior' has now brought his long article to a close, and your readers will be able to judge whether they have learned anything useful or new. An honest desire to teach what one holds to be true is generally appreciated, but this should not be done at the expense of those who think differently. That 'Excelsior' is very slightly acquainted with Spiritualists and their doctrine must certainly be assumed, for is it news to us that 'the trials, sufferings, and grossness of earth are necessary but not permanent elements of progress'? Do we not admit the 'union of matter and spirit'? Do we not believe matter to be but the manifestation of spirit? Do we not also conceive 'that Infinite Wisdom has not created to destroy'? Nay, do not many of us affirm that *life* is indestructible? That the life manifestation may change, but must persist for ever? All this is pressed upon our notice as though we knew it not! 'Excelsior' also invites our attention to a communication received by him automatically, but the information given in this way, though far transcending the ideas of the transmitter before death, in no degree adds to our own knowledge, for we recognise *men* as spirits *now*, and we recognise *spirits* as *men* hereafter. The error, also, of supposing 'the soul destined to an isolated existence independent of all material surroundings and agents for manifestation,' is happily not yet ours. And who attempts to bridge the distance between 'the Great Cause and the effect'?

Neither do we pretend to any monopoly of truth ; and as to laying claim to 'inspiration,' we are quite content to be guided by our facts just now, and must be careful not to travel in advance of them. It is, however, in his concluding paragraphs that 'Excelsior' is guilty of something worse than ignorance, for he seeks to warn off possible converts to Spiritualism by insisting upon the discordancy of its doc-

trines with the 'Divine attributes.' To protest against such an assertion is simply our duty, and one fails to see how it can be any part of the duty of 'Excelsior' to proclaim as a fact what he merely holds as a theory. In doing this he raises a doubt as to whether, after all, his 'convictions have the merit of sincerity.'

'BIDSTON.'

Concerning Reincarnation.

SIR,—There have been from time to time very earnest and interesting communications in your pages from various correspondents 'Concerning Reincarnation.'

Now I am not proposing to give any definite opinions of my own on the question, as I do not profess to entertain the idea that it is a question I have mentally *definitely* settled, either *pro* or *con*.

Briefly, I hold this view—that reincarnation is a fact, also a doctrine ; that it has been known to the leaders of thought, the priests and the prophets, in all the great religions, throughout time ; and that it is no new discovery of modern thinkers. This view having been (let us suppose) established, I may now say that, while looking upon this doctrine as a sort of fact in the conditions respecting man after death and before birth, I consider that reincarnation is not, and cannot be, either a *Christian* doctrine or a *hope* for the human race, but rather a blessing on the surface, leaning the other way ; in short, as a *threat* for humanity, rather than encouragement. It is not, however, now within my present intentions to explain, and trouble your readers with, my reasons for coming to this conclusion—for the object of my letter is not to discourse philosophically, or theosophically, but historically. I do not believe in history myself, except very loosely, but I will endeavour to set a better example, and relate my little bit of history accurately.

It is this. This doctrine of reincarnation has been really resuscitated by the Spiritualists, *not* by the Theosophists. It is to the writings of Allan Kardec that we must refer for the 'beginnings' of the modern view of the matter. Afterwards Edward Maitland and Anna Kingsford endorsed these views in their well-known 'Perfect Way.' Madame Blavatsky did not teach it or mention it in her first great work, 'Isis Unveiled.' Neither was it at all talked or written about except by a few persons, or by those belonging to the Kardeccian school. Its introduction to the Theosophical Society came about in this wise :

A certain circle, of which I was one of the members, used to sit, I think in 1877-8, with a medium, Mrs. Billing. The 'spirit' communicating was called 'Ski,' and 'Ski' was a reincarnationist, as indeed we were also ; not, I am quite sure now, from any superior intelligence on our part, but because the 'reincarnation' view suited our condition of thought, fostered by Allan Kardec, and later on by 'Ski' and Mrs. Kingsford. Some of us were already members of the lately-formed Theosophical Society, in which we did not, however, find this doctrine. This seemed to us at the time a want of doctrine, and the consequence was that Miss Francesca Arundale wrote a small pamphlet, called 'A Plea for Reincarnation,' and this pamphlet was read by her at a meeting of Spiritualists at 38, Great Russell-street. I was present on the occasion, as she, with myself, though belonging to the 'Association,' were sympathetic with the Kardeccian theory held by many Spiritualists and endorsed by Mrs. Kingsford, and particularised, so to speak, by the spirit 'Ski.' The theory was not promulgated as a Theosophical doctrine in the Society at that time at all. It was looked upon as rather distinctly 'Spiritualistic,' and the little work, 'A Plea for Reincarnation,' was certainly not a Theosophic publication, though well received. Later on the doctrine, for good or evil, has been incorporated as a tenet by the Society, but it did not originate with it.

'Light on the Path,' unless I am very much misled in my history, had a similar origin, i.e., within the ranks of the Spiritualists. It was originally written mediumistically by 'M.C.' and published in the 'Banner of Light.' The editor carefully returned the very interesting MS., which 'M.C.' showed to Colonel Olcott. He recognised its inherent value and merit, and it was through his instrumentality that it was published as a volume, as it now stands, a real gem of thought.

And now, having mentioned these recent historical data I should like to add that I can but consider as a grave objection the mistake that modern seekers make in announcing any one theory that has ever been promulgated in these or any other modern pages as in the least a *new thing, thought, or idea*. We of this century only betray our stupendous ignorance in saying so.

Everything is as old as the dear old hills. The more I dive into the writings of the great sages of antiquity, the more do I blush for my own ignorance, and altruistically also for others. The best advice I can possibly give to seekers on these matters is that they should put aside the writers of this century ; go back and back ; read, study, digest, and reflect, and then they will be somewhat more in a position to

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argue on this vital question, which it appears to me most writers approach with the words, 'I think,' when their writings betray the fact that they scarcely reflect at all!

As soon as we begin to prize and study these great Mystic works, and to read them, not critically, i.e., to discover their faults and shortcomings only, after the modern fashion of criticism, but to learn what was meant and what was taught, then shall we be getting nearer the fountain-head of information—even to one of the great sources epitomised in Gen. i., ii., and elsewhere, where similar grounds are narrated. Let us look upon the Sacred Scriptures, Buddhic, Hermetic, and Hebrew, as Arch-History, and such doctrines as reincarnation, &c., will take their proper place in sequence with the information necessary for the human Monad. But the drift of my letter is 'to lay the blame,' if it be blame, of the doctrine of reincarnation on the Spiritualists, not on the Theosophists. They, as a society, only accepted and taught it after its complete acceptance elsewhere.

ISABEL DE STEIGER, F.T.S.

Lady Caithness and Reincarnation.

SIR,—I always thought that Lady Caithness had fore-stalled me in the theory that it is not ourselves but the angel in us which recollects past lives and can say 'I am living again'; but if, as Mr. John Ryley thinks, her published words do not commit her to this theory, then I must father it myself and put it forth on the world for criticism. As God lives in us, so do the angels who represent certain attributes live in us; they are the 'sons of God,' we the sons of them, the grandsons of God; we, I mean, as spiritual beings. The celestial order descends from the Divine and the spiritual from the celestial.

In connection with this, may I ask students of Christian Scriptures whether any light from other sources can be shed on the mystical saying of the Great Master regarding children, that *their angels* see the face of God?

F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

A Good Test.

SIR,—I have been interested in Spiritualism for some years now, but never had a stronger proof of spirit return than on Sunday, June 11th.

Accompanied by my two nephews (lads of twelve and thirteen years of age), I paid a visit to Cavendish Rooms. Miss MacCreadie was the medium, and after successfully describing many spirits to their friends, she at last turned to where we were sitting, and most accurately depicted the form of my late sister-in-law standing near us. So good was the description that I at once recognised her, but kept silence, as I wished to see if the boys would know their mother again.

The elder one at last whispered in my ear, 'Why, it's mamma, I'm sure it is,' and then burst into tears, in which the younger one joined.

Both children are totally unacquainted with Spiritualism, and had never attended a meeting or séance before.

This I consider an undoubted testimony to the truth of the return of the so-called dead, and one that speaks volumes for Miss MacCreadie's clairvoyant powers. P. S.

'Not what is Said, or Who says it.'

SIR,—Apropos of the first 'Note by the Way,' in 'LIGHT' of the 10th inst., I am reminded of an answer I once received from a spirit, purporting to speak through Mrs. Hollis, to the same question propounded in the 'Literary Guide.' I was struck with the wisdom of the utterances of a spirit claiming to be Mrs. Hollis's control, and I determined, if an opportunity offered, to ask a question which had long perplexed me, which was as follows: Why is it, when communication with the spirit world seems to be so easy, that we so seldom get tests of identity from friends, and that glittering generalities, irrelevant and even false messages, are so often given? A reply came quickly and to the point:—

'In the first place, you are wrong to start with, when you say that it is easy to communicate with the spirit world. On the contrary, it is very difficult. A disembodied spirit has to take possession of a material organism with a brain of good or bad quality, as the case may be—a brain foreign to itself, lumbered up with its own ideas, prejudices, and opinions. The spirit has first to get possession. When this is accomplished, the first sensation of the spirit is often one of being dazed, and it is often with difficulty that the spirit is able to remember what it wants to say; the conditions are all unnatural and difficult to control, and even if able to control them, the brain of the medium may not have the necessary power of expression. Now what do you do? You begin to pelt the spirit with tests. It may be the spirit of your father who may recognise you, but who is only able to falter "My daughter." Instead of accepting it and entering into conversation, you begin—"What was your name?"

"Where were you born? How old were you?" and so forth. This still more confuses the spirit, and he may not be able to answer any of these questions when trying to use a foreign material organism. Now if you had accepted it, and entered into conversation as if you recognised him, he might be able after a little to satisfy you of his identity, whereas the other course would likely prove fatal to any satisfactory answer.'

I could see at once the reasonableness of this position, and I have never since been guilty of pelting a spirit with tests. May not this view account for the incongruities of messages purporting to come from great names? If it requires, as I have been taught, a brain equal to that of a Bradlaugh or a Gladstone, a George Eliot or a Mrs. Oliphant, to express his or her thoughts, and there is added to this the difficulty of possession and control, is it any wonder that communications claiming to come from a noted person may be entirely inadequate to that person's expression while in the body? That mediumship is bounded by the weaknesses, frailties, and limitations, to say nothing of the vices, of mediums, we all have had ample demonstration. And then, when the commercial element is considered, which must enter so largely into it when mediumship is made a source of livelihood, we find it still more complicated. The real question, it seems to me, as you say, is not what is said or who says it. The important matter is, is it a valuable contribution, and will it tend to an impulse toward spiritual life; and, above and beyond that, do the messages come from behind the scenes—from those who have passed through so-called death?

HELEN DENSMORE.

Kneeworth House, 78, Elm Park-road,
London, S.W.**Thanks!**

SIR,—Permit me through your columns to thank the many friends who have written expressing their sympathy, to both my wife and myself, in this hour of our trial. The sympathy offered, joined with the knowledge we possess of the continued existence of our little one, is very helpful. I would have wished to thank each friend who had written personally, but I find this to be impossible.

DAVID ANDERSON.

20, Ward-street, Glasgow.

SOCIETY WORK.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST CONFERENCE.—The annual outing to Epping Forest will take place on July 2nd. A general assembly at the King's Head, High Beech, Epping Forest, at 11 a.m. A conference at 2.30 p.m. Tea will be provided at 4 p.m., and a great meeting will be held at 5.30 p.m.—M. CLEGG, Secretary.

33, GROVE-LANE, CAMBERWELL, S.E.—Spiritualists generally being liberal thinkers, the address given by our leader on Sunday last, entitled 'The New Woman,' was followed with keen appreciation. All lovers of liberty and progress were urged to assist in bringing about the recognition of woman as a rational human being. At the after-circle, striking clairvoyance was given by Mr. Lovatt and Mrs. Rennie. On Thursday evening, public circle as usual.—H.H.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—At a well attended meeting on Sunday evening last Mr. G. H. Bibbings, in his own inimitable manner, vividly portrayed the great gain that a knowledge of Spiritualism can bring to those people who are fully alive to the need of understanding the many problems of life. Miss Florence Morse sang a solo, 'The Promise of Life,' and was warmly applauded by the numerous audience. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Miss Rowan Vincent, address and clairvoyance.—L.H.

NORTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY, 14, STROUD GREEN-ROAD, FINSBURY PARK.—Open Air.—On Sunday morning last, Mrs. Paton, of Leeds, and Mr. Emms were the speakers, and in the afternoon, Messrs. Thompson and Smith. In the evening, at the hall, Mr. Willis presided, and addresses were given by Messrs. Hewitt, Sutherland, Brooks, Jones, Smith, and W. Wallace. Meetings on Sunday next: At 11.30 a.m., in the park; at 7 p.m., in the hall; and on Wednesday, at 8 p.m.—T.B.

CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—Our morning public circle was conducted by Mr. W. E. Long, and very good conditions prevailed. At our evening service Mr. W. E. Long's guide spoke on 'The Sleep of Death.' The address was good, and, though the attendance was smaller than usual, all seemed well pleased. Many remained to take part in the after-service circle. On Monday, July 3rd, the outing will be to Oxshott, Surrey. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., public circle; at 3 p.m., children's Lyceum; at 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long will speak on 'Paul the Spiritualist'; at 8 p.m., members' circle.—VERAX.