

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

In one of the latest of Abby A. Judson's always bright and readable letters, the following passages occur:—

It is not because decarnate spirits have forgotten what took place in earth-life, and have equally forgotten what took place in spirit on re-entering the earth-plane, that we get incorrect communications. It is because the medium through whom or to whom they come has something in his own mental condition that blurs the picture. We can, of course, make allowance for the fact that those who have been long in spirit, or intensely engaged there, find new events covering up the memories of earth, while he who revisits the earth plane may enter its experiences so vividly that life in spirit may seem for the moment less clear. These natural facts may make the memories of earth-life and of spirit-life less vivid, but they could not, of course, have the result of making them contradictory.

I was led into this train of thinking by the inquiry so often made of me how my father now views his life-work on earth as a foreign missionary. Many have sent me communications signed with his name, often declaring that he regrets having been a missionary, that his time was wholly wasted, and that he had better have devoted his energies to something else. In one writing he is represented as saying that he had better have blazed trees in the western wilds of America, and learned charity of the wild beasts. He is also made to praise the virtue of the women in Burmah; and to say that he could not teach the heathen a religion which would help their morals.

Such communications could not have come from my father, because they contradict facts known to him in his earth-life. Virtue was scarcely known among the Burmese women, the men were savagely cruel, and the people were addicted to lying and drunkenness. He taught them a pure morality, and a much higher standard of ethics now prevails in those parts of Burmah where missionaries have laboured.

We would respectfully submit that the unseen witness may be right after all. The Burmese have been much misunderstood and misrepresented. Everyone who can, ought to read Mr. Fielding's most charming and enlightening book: 'The Soul of a People.'

We can hardly help pitying the poor clergyman who is hard put to it now-a-days to keep the peace between his knowledge and his documents, his rationality and his creeds. Here is the Rev. J. Moden, Vicar of Well, Bedale, for instance, reading a paper before the Wensleydale Clerical Society on 'Prayer Book Revision.' The dear good man seems sorely troubled about 'the resurrection of the body,' and this is what he says:—

Every time a worshiper attends either morning or evening service he repeats the Apostles' Creed, and thus makes a statement which no one with the merest smattering of scientific knowledge can accept. He does this when he states his belief in the resurrection of the body. St. Paul says, 'There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.' It is, however, the natural body which is referred to in the creed, and understood by the worshipers, just as it is in the Fourth Article that describes the resurrection of our Lord.

Now, I fully admit that no one should seek to limit the power of God, or to measure the Infinite by any standard of human conceivability. But, on the other hand, no article of faith should involve or imply a contradiction, and this is what unfortunately happens when we assert our belief in the resurrection of the natural body; for its elements enter into millions of organisms, and cannot be in two places at once, any more than the same brick can be in two different houses, as a part of their structure, at one and the same moment.

Hence, I would suggest the interposition of the word spiritual, so that the paragraph would read thus: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the spiritual body, and the life everlasting.' I would also suggest that this creed would gain in clearness, and therefore in spiritual value, if the word 'Hades' were substituted for 'Hell' in the longest paragraph. For words are always changing their meaning, and the latter term no longer conveys the thought embodied in the creed.

A tender, thoughtful and spiritually convincing work is Mr. Hillis' book on 'Foretokens of Immortality' (London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier). Its four chapters cover a great deal of ground, and bring to bear upon the subject most of the conclusions of modern spiritual thought. These chapters are entitled, 'Foregleams of Immortality,' 'Immortality and Life's Withheld Completions,' 'Christ and Immortality,' and 'The Witness of Great Men to Immortality.' It is only a small book, but it has grown out of great thoughts, and fully deserves its second title, 'Studies "for the hour when the immortal hope burns low in the heart."'

We are a little sick of the Omar Khayyám cult, with its everlasting oscillation between rowdy praise of drink and debauchery and its sentimental musing upon Fate: and we are, therefore, not predisposed to welcome the 'Modern Khayyám' by R. Didden (London: Watts and Co.). Still, we looked through it with pleasure on the whole, and some of its suggestions concerning the other side of the public-house are not bad. The redeeming features of the little booklet are its pure note of Nature-worship and a certain pathetic strain of hope concerning a life beyond the wine cup, the roses and the sun. The following verses show the writer almost at his best:—

Thou wilt not suffer what Thyself hast made
With all its faults and flaws, its light and shade,
To perish utterly in boundless night
If a new place of life the Soul invade!

Ah no, Great Father! Thou wilt gently take
Thy poor blind children—/ from Death they wake—
By Thy strong Hand, and fondly lead them on
To Brighter Scenes, for their and—Thine own sake!

Once more the wingéd Messengers of Spring
On bough and thorn their happy carols sing;
Once more the balmy Breeze with soft caress
Invites the Soul to woodland wandering.

With snowy blossom are the gardens clad,
And from the ground peeps many a lovely head.
The Tulip lifts her chalice to the dew,
And little Bluebell feels that she is glad.

Upon the hedgerow wakes the Bud anew,
And wonders why she slept the winter through.
A little bird hums something in her ear,
And then she smiles assent—for birdie knew.

It will be strange indeed if, as we originally got our religious beginnings from the East, we now get our upliftings and corrections from the East. Our conception of God has become apparently hopelessly anthropomorphic. Matthew Arnold had even to flout it and to scoff at it: and there are some who think that it is now responsible for much of the agnosticism and even the atheism of our day. From the East, again and again, light comes. The Eastern mind is still largely spiritual; and the Western habit of bringing everything to the yard measure and the scale is still happily foreign to it. The West likes its transcendent, the East its immanent, God: and the immanent God is now the only possible God, even to Western thought. 'God is spirit,' or He is impossible.

The following, from an address in India by Swami Bhandarkar, is instructive in this relation:—

The fact that we have all of us to face in the beginning is that religion is not confined to one people or one country, but that human beings in all ages and all countries, whether savage or civilised, have had some religion. Religion is inseparable from humanity. Man has always believed in some invisible power from which all that is visible has sprung; in something infinite on which all that is finite rests; in a power on which he is dependent and which is beneficent, and he has felt reverence for that power and worshiped it. The belief may be found to have assumed a distinct shape in some conditions of society and to have remained indistinct in others; it may have led to a variety of superstitions and absurdities: but if you endeavour to find the inmost principle of all religions, you will, I believe, find it to be as I have stated it. Along with a belief in one's own existence and in the reality of the world, we find a belief in an invisible power and in something greater than the finite and beyond the finite, existing everywhere. If religion is of supreme importance to man, we must expect that it should have been revealed to him in the very beginning, implanted by God in his very nature, so that wherever he went he might carry it with him like his shadow. And this is what we actually find. Man has been carrying religious belief like his shadow wherever he goes; religion is as widely spread as humanity itself. Thus, then, God's revelation to man was made not only at a certain period in the world's history, but it began with the dawning of human intelligence, and went on progressing through all ages, and it is going on still, and will go on. God is ever with us, communicating more and more of His truth to us as our powers of apprehension become purer and keener.

How much the journalists miss because they will not be receptive to the rays that proceed from 'LIGHT'! Here is the 'Echo' saying: 'Mr. Ottokar Hofmann, an electrician, writing in the "Electrical Age," claims to have discovered that the human body emits rays which act on a sensitive photographic plate.'

That is very old news, but not concerning Mr. Hofmann.

The mystery of Evil will probably always be with us, but not necessarily as a mystery of misery. Already, meanings, like bright star-like flowers in the desert, make glad the heart of the wanderer; and already, the whisper of the unseen angel is becoming articulate, and, for some of us, the message suffices. We begin to understand the meaning of the process, and many can see what one of our finest thinkers has pointed out:—

We can at least begin to realise distinctly that unless our eyes had been opened at some time, so that we might come to know the good and the evil, we should never have become fashioned in God's image. We should have been the denizens of a world of puppets, where neither morality nor religion could have found place or meaning. The mystery of evil remains a mystery still, but it is no longer a harsh dissonance, such as greeted the poet's ear when the doors of hell were thrown open; for we see that this mystery belongs among the profound harmonies in God's creation. This reflection may have in it something that is consoling, as we look forth upon the ills of the world. Many are the pains of life, and the struggle with wickedness is hard; its course is marked with sorrow and tears. But assuredly its deep impress upon the human soul is the indispensable background against which shall be set hereafter the eternal joys of heaven.

'Country Life' is puzzled. Here is the opening paragraph of its review of 'The Alleged Haunting of B—— House':—

The story of 'The Alleged Haunting of B—— House,' into which Lord Bute and Miss Goodrich-Freer have made patient investigation, is distinctly interesting. You may take it in either of two ways. That is to say you may, with a mind lavishly open to the infinite possibilities of Nature, believe that it is worth while to inquire solemnly into the phenomena of the spiritual world; or, starting upon the frank basis that it is all nonsense to believe in ghosts, you may amuse yourself by studying the rapidity with which a story grows. Far be it from us to prescribe the proper attitude, since by so doing we might run more than the risk of giving offence. This is often called a materialistic age; as a matter of fact there was never an age, even in the most superstitious times, when a greater variety of spiritual and spiritualistic theories were held in high esteem.

Then, after referring to some of the records, 'Country Life' says:—

After all this, it may be as well to remind our readers that the number of 'Country Life' recording the appearance of this strange book, which itself records the strangest possible stories, appears late in the reign of Queen Victoria, and not in the days of the witch of Endor.

Yes, 'Country Life' is distinctly puzzled. But it probably knows more than it is willing to confess.

The 'Globe' also is puzzled. The following shows it:—

SPIRITUALISED AMERICA.

It is remarkable that a young, vigorous, and commercially-minded country like America should be more bitten by Eastern occultism than any other of the civilised and progressive nations. Apart from the fact that Spiritualism flourishes in all parts of the States and that their mediums are in particular request at European séances, the incredible number of journals dealing with the esoteric which are published in America prove unmistakably that it is quite possible for the Yankee to lie down with the Spook and thoroughly enjoy its society. One American magazine, for instance, contains forty pages of advertisements devoted almost entirely to spiritualistic literature.

'The Matriculation Directory' (London: W. B. Clive), No. XXVI., gives full information concerning all Matriculation business, with articles on the special subjects for January and June, 1900.

This is not a bad story,—from America, of course:—

'I hear you have a little sister at your house,' said a Chicago grocer to a small boy the other day. 'Yes, sir,' said Johnny. 'Do you like that?' was queried. 'I wish it was a boy,' said Johnny, 'so I could play "mibs" with him, an' baseball an' tag an' all those things, when he got bigger.' 'Well,' said the storekeeper, 'why don't you exchange your little sister for a boy?' Johnny reflected for a minute. Then he said rather sorrowfully: 'We can't now: it's too late. We've used her four days.'

'LIGHT.'

As an inducement to new and casual readers to become subscribers, we will supply 'LIGHT' for thirteen weeks, post free, for 2s., as a 'trial' subscription, feeling assured that at the termination of that period they will feel that they 'cannot do without it,' and will then subscribe at the usual rates. May we at the same time suggest to those of our regular readers who have friends to whom they would like to introduce the paper, that they should avail themselves of this offer, and forward to us the names and addresses of such friends, upon receipt of which, together with the requisite postal order, we shall be pleased to forward 'LIGHT' to them by post, as stated above?

A WISE RESOLVE.—This day shall be consecrated by beautiful thoughts. Into it shall enter nothing unworthy. It will be a day of inspiration, a day in which all gladness of the heavenly radiance shall shine. It is to be lived on the spiritual plane, on which alone is our real life.—LILIAN WHITING.

THE SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION OF
PHYSICAL PSYCHICISM.

When photography was first discovered on the planet Mars, photographers had quite as unpleasant a time of it as Spiritualists are having now on this planet. It happened, at the time, that the leading inhabitants worshipped Light as Divinity. Consequently, the idea that Light should make pictures was distasteful to the high priests, especially as their scriptures said nothing on the subject. They did not deny some of the facts presented to them, but said they were all done by conjuring and confederacy, and pointed suspiciously to the fact that a photograph could not be produced without a dark box and a dark room. Some audacious photographers contended that Light was only one of the forms of Nature's energy, and appealed to the scientific world. The scientific men said they knew all the forms of natural energy, and Light was not one of them. Some few, however, condescended to examine the new claims, provided their own conditions were strictly adhered to. These conditions, they said kindly, were strictly intended to exclude trickery. They insisted that the sensitive plate must not be carried in a dark plateholder; that the camera must be dispensed with; and finally, that the plate must be held before their eyes in front of the lens, and not carried away into a dark room to be developed. Some even thought the use of the developer showed that Light had nothing to do with the result. The poor photographers said they would try under these conditions, and a meeting for experiment was arranged with them by a scientific society called the Photographic Research Society. When no image appeared on the sensitive plate as it was held before the microscopic gaze of the assembly, some savant remarked that that was just as he thought; evidently Light had no effect on the plates: probably it was a trick plate previously prepared with a picture drawn in chemicals, which would appear when washed in the developer. He wanted to break up the meeting at once, as the roguery had already been proved. However, he consented to stay to see the plate washed in the developer before their eyes, because he said it would show that his theory of trickery by previously-prepared chemicals was right. When the plate was developed, no picture appeared—only blackness, whereas the plate was formerly light.

When these facts were published in the scientific papers, the scientific and religious world were naturally jubilant at the success of their theories. True, someone wrote to say that the fact of the plate having become completely black was interesting and significant. But it was generally thought to be only a piece of the artfulness of the photographer so as to get the continuance of his own conditions, and the whole subject of photography fell into disrepute as unworthy the attention of science; and it was centuries before the real facts were generally recognised by the public and not until photographers had been obliged to claim Light as a supernatural and not a natural force.

From this little parable we see that it is not really scientific, in examining the effects of an alleged agent, to insist on conditions which will prevent that agent from properly working or manifesting its power. One is much more likely to arrive at the truth by carefully noting the failures and successes and observing by comparison what conditions prevent and what favour the agent, so as to avoid the former and insist on the latter.

All this may seem very obvious, but yet there is a great deal of pseudo-science in the way in which the investigation of physical psychicism is being treated by scientific persons.

Spiritualists have after long experience taken up somewhat the following position as regards the physical phenomena and materialisations of the séance room: That they are caused by unseen operators of a human nature, acting in the same way as mesmerists and hypnotists do, on the minds of one or more persons sitting in the circle, and willing that vital plastic matter and forces, which are abstracted as the psychics become deeper and deeper entranced, should condense or re-form into the shape of the type or mould which their imagination holds over it; and as a living vibrating body grows in this way more and more into the scale of our own vibrations, it can appeal to our eyes, or move matter

which appeals to our eyes, or make sounds which appeal to our ears.

This is about the essence of our present position on the subject, and scientific Spiritualists should insist on scientific investigators, from other schools of thought, making no conditions that interfere with the proper working of the above stated course of action; otherwise we shall be as foolish as the photographers of Mars were.

Therefore it will be unscientific to allow any conditions to be insisted on which will prevent the mediums from partially or entirely becoming comatose or somnambule—for instance, tight bandaging or tight squeezing of the hand, or words or actions which keep them awake or excited—unless the mediums be very old campaigners ready to fall asleep on any battlefield.

Akin to this, it is unscientific to make experiments in any place or company where there are factors of disturbance which prevent anybody's mind present from becoming calm and quiescent, and in mutual accord—such as loud jarring noises without, excited persons within, companions who are thinking the whole proceedings humbug or devilry, or who are ruffled at their neighbours and are blatantly saying so in their thoughts, and therefore telepathically disturbing the equanimity of every sensitive, reposeful person present. In short the presence of any anxious or over positive mind is unscientific, and so are any conditions that persons making hypnotic experiments would find disturbing.

Again, it is unscientific to ignore the factor of unseen intelligences assisting in the experiments, who are not to be treated as mere automata or slaves or gnomes, but as humans who have their own principles and promptings for action, and in some cases their own instructions and orders from higher intelligences to be carried out. Therefore, it is unscientific to invite mediums to your house without previous arrangement, and then to ask them to perform without an opportunity for asking those on the other side whether they are willing and prepared to help. Some people think that these phenomena can be switched on at any moment like the electric light.

In physical psychics these unseen intelligences are generally children of Nature, and must be humoured and treated as such may be in the flesh when any favour is required of them.

Therefore it is unscientific to ask them to perform before anyone who is uncongenial or antipathetic to them, or who mentally is considering them low and common and silly, just because they are full of wild animal spirits and merriment. It is possible that it is this very quality of exuberant spirits which gives them the privilege of being able to manifest to us the presence of an exuberant vital energy.

Lastly, it is unscientific to allow any condition which would prevent the free projection of the psychic body or aura of the mediums.

It is here that the practice of making of wire cages between the medium and the cabinet is questionable. Some recent experimenters with Mrs. Giddins and her daughter once tried fixing up some wire fencing in front of the cabinet. Some manifestations, I believe, did occur inside this fencing and that was satisfactory, as dissipating previous doubts, but both the mediums felt peculiar painful sensations in their bodies afterwards; whether it was due to actual lesion of the psychic body, or to the fact of the somnambules having the fixed idea of the wires in their minds, I cannot say, but the experiments of M. de Rochas have proved that when projection of the psychic bodies is induced, sensation leaves the material body and becomes 'exteriorised' in the psychic bodies.

For a similar reason grabbing of psychic apparitions and kickings under tables and the poking of sticks in a cabinet are unscientific. So also the objecting to the use of cabinets and darkened rooms is unscientific; for this reason—the ether of the room in which the psychic body is to condense must be free from any disintegrating vibrating energy. Light, like heat, is a disintegrating vibratory energy antagonistic to cohesion. Even strong thought-vibrations interfere. It is probably to stop these discordant thought-vibrations that music is often required of the sitters. Therefore, people who sit by, silent and wrapt in their own thoughts when hymns or songs are being sung, are acting unscientifically. If they cannot join in vocally, they should at least

follow the rhythm mentally, so as to stop thought-vibrations.

Again, the suspicion that every movement of a medium's limbs or muscles concomitant with any phenomenon occurring necessarily implies fraud is unscientific. Even in physical psychics the mind of the medium is being used to direct the motricity, and the automatic movements of limbs are as natural as those of a person dreaming, or reciting some episode of action forcibly impressed in the imagination.

I should be glad if the perusal of these remarks will do something to convince the general investigating public of the silliness of some of the practices they so commonly, out of ignorance, indulge in. For instance, if you are getting up or joining a party to investigate these phenomena seriously, it is foolish to invite any ribald person to come with you, or to your house, who simply pretends to have an interest in the matter and who really wants only to have a laugh at the show or to prove it all fraud.

It is silly to come late to the meeting and disturb everybody as well as the medium, and still more silly to ask everybody who has come to sit waiting for you half-an-hour or more because you are afraid you cannot come punctually. You might as inconsiderately ask a hostess to delay a dinner party, or a guard a train, for your special benefit.

It is silly when you come into a séance room to sit before a cabinet, where perhaps unseen performers are waiting to begin, and to talk disparagingly of them or of their mediums.

It is silly to invite an investigating party to meet in your house when, perhaps, in another room of your house there is some member of the family thinking the whole practice is all devilry or idiocy.

It is silly to sit in a circle and be wishing for such and such a person to appear, or such and such a performance to take place.

It is silly to prolong proceedings when most persons present are inwardly anxious about last trains and getting home.

It is silly to expect the same results to occur in a room or a company strange to the medium and to the band of invisible workers, as under conditions that are familiar.

It is silly to think that the psychic phenomena are easily produced by anyone on the other side, and require no rehearsal and preparation; or even to think that those on the other side know all about the subject, or that they are in full waking possession of their faculties. Sometimes I am convinced that novices on the other side, being on their part also half somnambule, do not always know whether they have succeeded in exteriorising themselves from the medium, and believe themselves to be doing so when all the while they are simply entrancing the mediums and making their bodies move automatically by acting interiorly on their minds, as the usual spirit control does.

It is silly to judge the effects witnessed from our point of view and not from that of what they imply under the circumstances. The unseen performers with great exertions and preparations may have succeeded in moving some piece of furniture, or in ringing a bell, in order to demonstrate the fact that unseen psychic beings can, under some conditions, correspond with us again by physical means; and it must be annoying to them to feel someone mentally thinking the whole performance a stupid or useless waste of energy.

F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

A CANDID CONFESSION.—Do I believe in the transmission of ideas? Certainly. Who doesn't? Why, from the time I was three years old I have seen the truth of the old saw, 'Talk of the devil and he will appear.' Someone comes near us; we unconsciously begin to talk about him, and presto—the person appears before our eyes. We haven't begun to touch the hem of the garment of the phenomena of mind yet. We have thrown away every atom of our energy into material achievements, into getting the almighty dollar. We have thought of nothing else but to tunnel through mountains, bridge chasms, transform the deserts, build cities, and make slaves of the forces of Nature. The realm of the mind is a vast continent that has yet hardly been explored—to say nothing of being cultivated and developed. Thought is something as real as electricity or any other force, and there is no reason why it should not travel between widely separated persons just like wireless telegraphy.—SUSAN B. ANTHONY.

'THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD.'

The Eastern idea of a female principle in God is, I think, badly expressed by the phrase 'the Motherhood of God,' and when rendered in that way is apt to give rise to a misconception, because Western peoples generally forget that such expressions are purely allegorical.

One of the six systems of Indian religio-philosophy posits two forces or principles at the foundations of all things; these principles are positive and negative, or, by analogy, male and female, and are called respectively Purusha and Prakriti, names which we generally render in English by Spirit and Matter. Purusha and Prakriti are eternal and inseparable, and the one cannot be pictured in the mind without the other, although, of course, we can toss each name about by itself glibly enough. Purusha is the active, informing, causative, thinking, planning principle; Prakriti is the passive, receptive, obedient principle, that blindly, and of necessity, carries out the behests of Purusha.

Now, the 'Bhavagad Gita,' which seeks to harmonise and combine all systems of Indian religious speculation, says a great deal about Maya, and the 'Great Illusion.' All phenomenal existence, even that of the Gods and Goddesses themselves, is illusion, the effect of Maya. All things and persons pass away like phantasmagoria, and only the unmanifested Deity abides eternally. Maya itself, or the power of producing the illusion which we call the Universe, is an attribute of the eternal Deity, and does not perish, but is ever ready to create universes in unending succession.

The 'Bhavagad Gita' is a magnificent poem, and, like all poems, it addresses itself to the emotions rather than to the intellect; therefore it does not make any formal attempt to reconcile the idea of 'the Supreme' and His divine Maya with that of an eternally co-existing Purusha and Prakriti. But there is no doubt that 'the Supreme' corresponds to Purusha, the positive, male element in Deity; while Maya corresponds to Prakriti, the negative, female element. If, therefore, Prakriti be Matter, or the 'mother' element, it is also Maya; but in what sense can matter, the Mother, be illusion?

It seems to me that the ancient sages guessed that which our modern men of science are striving to prove, namely, that all that can be said to exist in the shape of matter are vibrations in some hypothetical substance, which is certainly ethereal, and may perchance be 'spiritual'; vibrations which, according to their frequency, our senses translate to our consciousness as sound, electricity, light, heat, colour, density, and so on. The unknown substance is not cognisable by us until it is thrown into vibrations; and it is 'the Supreme' who throws it into vibration from time to time, thereby creating what we call a material universe. It is this unknown Substance that is eternal, while the vibrations in it are only temporary and casual; and this eternal ethereal Substance is the Divine Mother; who when she is stirred into vibration by the Mayavic power of 'the Supreme' gives birth to 'the Great Illusion,' the material universe. It is the 'Great Depth,' or 'Abyss,' of the Mystics and Kabalists.

In any other sense than this 'the Motherhood of God' is a purely anthropomorphic conception; full of pretty sentiment, no doubt, but inevitably suggesting by natural mental association other conceptions on its own level; and this anthropomorphic conception is utterly belittling to God, if that name be understood in the sense of Deity. Maternity may be very beautiful, but it does not exhaust the functions of the 'female element'; and it is a purely physiological function, which is exercised by animals and insects as well as by mankind; indeed, in the shape in which it is known to mortals, that function does not seem to be more specially divine than digestion—the one is necessary for the preservation of the individual, the other for the preservation of the race.

We must not forget that 'God' is a term that is used in two very different senses. In one sense it means Deity, the Life of the universe, 'the Supreme' of the 'Bhavagad Gita,' who sets the unknown Substance in vibration, the Force that acts through the 'laws of Nature,' or 'secondary causes'; and which, while showing equal solicitude for the welfare of all created things, is, for that very reason, seemingly indifferent

to the fate of individuals, whether those individuals be molecules, mortals or worlds. The other sense in which the term 'God' is used is that of a personal protector, father, king, judge, rewarder or punisher, a belief in whose existence is due far more to human hopes and fears than to inference from the phenomena of Nature; and who exists for each individual primarily in his own mind; being, in fact, for each man little more than a disguised and magnified reflection of himself. In the former sense, God is spirit; in the latter sense God is a spirit, whom each person pictures to himself in any form he likes, or in the form suggested to him during his 'religious education.'

Andrew Lang has shown pretty conclusively that the conception of God as Deity was the basis of the religion of early man; and that the worship of Gods sprang up and developed within almost historic times. The phases through which religious thought has passed seem to be: first the conception of Deity as universal Life, or impersonal Power; then the formation of allegorical ideas and representations of that evidently intelligent and beneficent, but in some ways terrible, Power; then the acceptance (through the suggestion of the priesthood) of those allegories as actually descriptive of defunct ancestors become Gods, and of their doings. At the present moment the world is returning noiselessly to the early conception of Deity, because it is beginning to see that the personages and places vouched for as realities by the priesthood are after all merely psychic phenomena, cunningly grafted upon the allegories constructed originally by the human imagination to account for the Cosmos in a quasi-comprehensible manner, and which in after ages were mistaken for statements of fact. RICHARD HARTE.

A VITALISING THOUGHT.

That the spirit man is the real individual, and the physical body but a materialised form which will be cast aside when it has served its purpose in the evolution of the self-consciousness of the being who employs its aid to express his innate possibilities, is a vitalising thought which adds new meaning and dignity to life. Man has his heredity from God as well as from the physical world. Aye, in a larger sense, even Nature's heredity is divine. That cheerful and luminous writer, the Rev. George H. Hepworth, presents the spiritual idea very helpfully in the following passages, taken from one of his weekly sermons published in the 'New York Herald':—

'Man is a twofold being—dust and God! In good time the dust will go back to the place from whence it was taken, to be used again as a component part of tree or flower or animal. We need it only for a few years, and when it has served our purpose we sigh farewell, for its companionship has been very pleasant, and so our knowledge of it ends.

'But the "living soul," what of that? It does not return to Him whose breath it was, but preserves its identity, is indestructible, and, as a personal being, enters another sphere of activity, there to be developed by circumstances more favourable than any which earth can afford.

'The dust can accomplish its entire mission here, and why, therefore, should it continue to be a part of us? But the soul never wakes up to a perfect knowledge of itself until it is roused from the sleep of death. Then only does it thrill with the consciousness of real life. Its bondage to the flesh is broken, it becomes free, it loses the sense of limitation, it recognises its dignity as a part of the plan of God, it feels within itself the throbbing of this breath of the Creator, it appreciates its kinship to Him, and it trembles with boundless joy at the thought that it is immortal.'

Do we, who as Spiritualists claim to *know* that we continue to live after the sleep of death, 'thrill with the consciousness of real life,' and 'tremble with boundless joy at the thought that we are immortal'? Or is it true that familiarity with the thought has made us indifferent?

DR. J. V. MANSFIELD, a veteran medium widely known in former years as the 'Spirit Postmaster,' died at his home in Ipswich, Mass., on the 3rd inst. He was over eighty years of age, and has closed a long and honourable career. Thousands of Spiritualists will remember him as, perhaps, the first great tie which linked them to the world of spirits. His phase was the answering of sealed letters. Many and varied crucial tests of his powers and their genuineness were made. He retired several years ago to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of his home.—'Light of Truth.'

AN INTERESTING EPISODE.

BY 'AN OLD CORRESPONDENT.'

On July 7th last I received a letter from a valued friend, an earnest Spiritualist, who had lately been having a series of sittings with Mrs. Treadwell, of St. John's Wood. He stated that at a séance in his house during the preceding week, the spirit of a lady known to him simply by name when in earth life, but who had once formed one of a party who sat at his house in 1889, at a séance with Messrs. Husk and Williams, who then were jointly giving séances in private circles, and also to select gatherings at rooms in Lamb's Conduit-street, had come, through the medium in trance, and spoken to him. In the course of her observations she bewailed her former doubts, when *here*, on the subject of spirit return; spoke of her present condition, and of one male member of her family (a son). Shortly after this spiritual personage ceased using the vocal organs of the medium, she was controlled by 'Sophy,' her childish guide, who, as I have always found, is remarkably intelligent and acute; and 'Sophy' informed my friend that the spiritual personage (Mrs. —) who had just left had spoken of her son, who, 'Sophy' mentioned, was now abroad (mentioning the foreign country), and then she (the little control) stated that the son laboured under one mental deficiency and one very unusual physical defect. The writer of the letter to me then added: 'If you could verify this last (the physical defect), it would put all thought-reading out of the way in this case. No doubt there is such a phenomenon as 'thought transference.' Unfortunately, I was unable to answer the query put as to the physical defect, for the simple reason that I had never met the young gentleman in question, although several members of the family were known to me; while as to the mental deficiency (which was not particularly serious), I could make no inquiry whatever. On handing my friend's letter to my wife for perusal, she said (speaking of the physical defect), 'It is quite true. I have never met the young man myself; but Mrs. —' (an acquaintance of ours) 'has more than once informed me of it.' As I personally know Mrs. — had ample knowledge about the family, there is not the least doubt in my mind that 'Sophy's' information was correct.

Now, this is an episode not very usual at séances. The spiritual personage (the mother) who came said nothing regarding her son's mental or bodily condition, or where he then was living, but 'Sophy,' the spirit control, who must have seen the young gentleman in question (and who I have since heard is now living abroad) and must have noted his mental and physical peculiarities, was now able, through her medium, who had never seen him in the body, to make these details known to persons on this side for verification. It is the occurrence of a mass of incidents such as these that have occurred, in my long experience in the phenomena of Spiritualism, that go to make 'assurance doubly sure' of its verity, and it seems almost like 'slaying the slain' to go on multiplying evidence, were it not for the attitude of the uninstructed, the scientist, the arrogant and cocksure sceptic, and last, but not least, the Press scribbler of facetious (or what are meant for facetious) and disparaging articles in the daily secular Press, upon a subject of which they have not the most elementary knowledge. Not till these and kindred attacks cease can earnest Spiritualists cease to multiply cases of spirit identity and return, or episodes like the one now given.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HECTOR RUMFORD.—Thank you for your kindly letter and good wishes.

'SEPHARIAL.'—We have not yet had any intimation of Mrs. Dearborn's plans, and, therefore, are unable to say when she will arrive.

M. BLISS.—Thank you for your letter. It should do good in the 'Blackpool Herald,' but is hardly suited to our columns.

CHAS. D.—We do not know of any Spiritualists in Bournemouth whose names we may give you, but, if any of our readers residing in that town are willing to oblige, we shall be pleased to supply you with the desired information on receiving it from them.

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EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.

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AN INSTRUCTIVE CONTROVERSY.

A remarkably entertaining and enlightening controversy is being carried on over Mr. Beeby's book of sermons on 'Creed and Life.' As usual, we do not feel moved to enlist under any of the banners, but we cannot help taking a benevolent interest in the scholarly and intrepid thinker who has drawn upon himself the lightnings of theological wrath. Mr. Beeby, as Vicar of Yardley Wood, has a sympathetic bishop and, in addition, is very well able to take care of himself. He certainly has one advantage over most of his opponents:—he knows what he is talking about and he can think. If we do not enlist under his banner, we wish him good luck, and 'a happy issue out of all his'—desires to remain in the church.

But what concerns us is his free handling of the old conventional notions of the past resurrection of Christ, and the future resurrection of 'the great army of the dead.' The following quotations from his sermons will suffice to indicate the extent of this free handling:—

A revived body of flesh and bones is nothing to us. What we want is proof of the continued existence of Christ now, in the spiritual world. . . I understand by the Resurrection of Jesus His continued existence in the unseen spiritual world. . . The Resurrection of Jesus is a revelation to the spiritual consciousness; in the first instance it is a 'vision' to the inward soul of the disciples (no matter how external it may have seemed to them): in the second place it is the dramatic representation to us by the evangelist of the spiritual truth which he wishes to teach us. . . The Incarnation, or coming down from heaven, and the Ascension, or going back to heaven, in the view of the Gospel according to St. John, are not movements in space but modes of manifestation of the Eternal Christ.

This anxiety of the new orthodoxy to keep a germ of our present body, as that from which shall come the eternal clothing, would be ludicrous were we not engaged in so serious a subject. . . This attachment to a germ of our mortal flesh, and expecting immortal life to manifest itself from out the ground, strikes me as the grossest materialism. . . The animal body is at death altogether laid aside. The spiritual body, in putting off the animal, puts on an outer clothing in place of it, one suitable to the life in the new environment, in order to be perfectly equipped for the full activity of the spiritual world beyond the veil.

Naturally enough, these rational and truly spiritual ideas have provoked the ire of 'the defenders of the faith'; and Mr. Beeby has had to do battle for his faith. One of his battle pieces lies before us at this moment;—'A defence of *Creed and Life*: in reply to the "Church Quarterly Review."'

In this reply, the gentle and scholarly thinker appears as an adroit and spirited fighter who captures certain batteries which ought to belong to the other side but which readily enough fall into his hands. The most useful of these is that very remarkable volume of 'Sermons preached in Westminster Abbey' by Canon Wilberforce, of which Mr. Beeby makes excellent use. In fact, the whole of the Wilberforce battery on the Abbey ramparts is in his hands; for the Canon talks like this:—The actual resurrection of Christ was not from Joseph of Arimathea's sepulchre, but from the body which he left hanging on the cross. (Ponder that, all good Spiritualists!). The promise of the Scripture is not reconstruction of the body, but permanence of the individuality. The Ascension of Christ was his withdrawal into the fourth dimension of space. And, as he speaks of himself as being the representative, the promise and the potency of the human race, his resurrection and ascension only illustrate ours.

Mr. Beeby, very properly, uses all this with merciless severity against his assailants who clamour for his excommunication. Why do they not aim higher, and attack Westminster Abbey?

But he appears to chiefly enjoy himself when grappling with his Quarterly reviewer and Canon Malcolm McColl. The reviewer says scornfully of him that he reduces the resurrection of Christ to a mere 'continued existence in the unseen world'; whereupon Mr. Beeby remarks: 'His continued existence in the unseen spiritual world is all that I mean! But is not this indeed all? Is not this the very substance of the faith?' A very natural inquiry. The precise happening to the body is a matter of no particular consequence. At best it is only an element of mystery, and it may easily be a cause of confusion. The main thing must be the demonstration of the fact that Jesus persisted beyond the cross into spirit-life, and that we shall persist too.

Canon McColl also yields good results when his criticisms and denunciations are examined, for he too follows Canon Wilberforce after all, in saying that Christ's resurrection body was 'a glorified body—a body, that is, no longer subject to physical laws but to spiritual . . . and that he retired in this spiritual body into the spiritual realm.' But this is excellent Spiritualism, and more so than even Mr. Beeby's 'heresy,' since he leans a little too much to 'vision.' Canon McColl tells us that, after his resurrection, Christ could 're-enter the physical realm and make Himself subject to the laws—touch, vision, eating, &c.—to serve a specific and temporary purpose.' The Spiritualist agrees, and probably goes further than Canon McColl would, inasmuch as he knows that all this is true still, and not of Christ only.

We have looked across this field of controversy more as onlookers than as participators. It is an engaging sight. The signs of the times are so very obvious: the 'Lesson for the day' is so exceedingly plain.

MRS. JENNIE HAGAN-JACKSON, who was in this country last year, delivered the dedicatory address of the Spiritual Temple, Fort Worth, Texas, on Sunday, June 4th. She said: 'We dedicate this temple to the holy angels of light; to those spirits who have journeyed so far that they have learned the lessons that we, as yet, have only dreamed; to the great and sacred thoughts and aspirations of all who have been and shall be with us; to the highest host of purity; to that virtue which shall stand spotless in the sight of the angels, and to that infinite, immeasurable beauty and sweetness that has ever been the light of the world-love. We dedicate this temple to every human heart that sorrows and mourns; to every soul that asks for light; to every child that needs a friend; to the humblest toiler, and to the grandest man or woman who stands in humanity's cause. We dedicate it to our brothers and sisters in far-off countries across the sea; to the spirit of the living age, and to the universal spirit of love, of purity, and of glory.'

SPIRIT TEACHINGS.

THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF W. STANTON MOSES.

(Continued from page 319.)

I have been thinking that it would surely be much better that you should let us know more of the way in which we should manage a circle. We are ignorant, and if we are to carry on the investigation successfully, we must learn. I can tell that the sudden withdrawal is very bad—from my feelings. I feel as if a number of strings had been pulled suddenly at the part which we call the solar plexus, and virtue is gone out.

That is so. We explained to you, on the occasion when the failure was made in the lights, that the circle was united together by magnetic bonds, which converge towards its centre. Magnetic cords unite each member to that central point to which the magnetic emanations of the circle converge; and, when they are joined by the magnetic forces which we have prepared, a union between these, when harmoniously effected, causes conditions under which we are able to operate. A discord between these, caused by lack of affinity in the magnetic emanations of the circle, causes conditions under which we cannot do so. If you rightly understand this, you will see that the magnetic conditions of the circle may be upset in many ways; by the illness of one of the circle, or of more, especially of the medium; by the mental inharmoniousness of any from anxiety or fatigue or mental disturbance; by the undue preponderance of the positive or negative element in the circle; by the faultiness of atmospheric conditions, especially electrical disturbance; by lack of passivity, caused by undue exertion of will power on the part of any; any, or a combination, of these causes, may render it hard or impossible for us to bring ourselves into harmonious relation with the circle.

Yes. Then, if I understand rightly, the circle is united by magnetic cords to a point below (?) or above (?) the table, and your centre of influence is above; I suppose that is where I see the column of light, and where the scent comes from?

Yes, that is so, friend. The luminous column that you see is the magnetic aura that we use. The central point of union is between the circle, and at times above the table, as when special physical manifestations are not in progress. It is below the table when it is desired to concentrate the power for the purpose of causing light or sound. Hence it is that you describe accurately a sensation as of tightening strings, accompanied by the withdrawal of power on occasions of a sudden and powerful manifestation. It is the sudden drain that causes you to become conscious of some bond that unites you to the circle. Sometimes, as you know, it is necessary to withdraw you, as medium, to a greater distance from the circle. At such times it is desirable to isolate you, and to preserve your aura intact. This is what is secured by isolation in a cabinet. In a minor degree we secure it by withdrawing you from the circle. At such times the other members of the circle should be instructed to keep contact with the table by pressing the palms of their hands closely and firmly on the surface, after rubbing them. Such contact should be preserved during the progress of any manifestation which occurs in the midst of the circle. It is well, also, to prepare the table beforehand by rubbing it over with sharp friction. It is at times better to cover it with a woollen cloth. It is easy for us to request its removal when we find it interferes with us. Is this clear to you, friend?

Yes. I suppose the friction of table and hands generates some electrical force, as we call it. Is the magnetic cord that unites us severed when my chair is withdrawn?

No, not severed, but weakened and relaxed. At such times you will notice a luminous aura round and behind you, and the withdrawal of power would not affect you as before, but rather by a series of sharp explosive noises on the chair and floor near you; and when excessive, by a sensation of weakness in the spine and lower limbs. The centres of power used then are different, and the withdrawal of it is not towards the circle, but reversely, in an opposite direction. At such times luminous columns would be seen by the inner vision around and behind you.

I believe that is so. Another point. You told us to shut up the room some hours before sitting. It has a tendency to get close, especially after burning myrrh, &c., in it.

You should always so arrange as to allow air to permeate the room, if possible. If not, then immediately before sitting pass a current of fresh air through it, or agitate the air in it. We only wish to have the room set apart from alien influences, so that it may be prepared and consecrated, as it were. If it be in any way offensive to you, let it be purified. No harm would then ensue to our preparations. We wish everything to be pure and lovely

Do you like the table covered over?

Such would be useful only in cases where it was wished to intensify the power for the purpose of a special manifestation, such as materialisation. This is merely the formation of a dark cabinet in the midst of the circle. As this would serve only to intensify that which is already at times too strong, do not try such plans, save by our direction. We will inform you when we are able. In many cases we, too, are making experiments on our side, and cannot tell. If you desire success, you will attain it far more readily by allowing us to carry on such plans as we are able, and by aiding us rather than by introducing anything new. We must rigidly regulate the use of the power, and repress all violence, and we must endeavour, so far as we can, to keep any experiments that we make within bounds, both as being only subsidiary and of altogether minor import; and also because persisting in them will incapacitate you for other duties. The demand on your vital power so made would be far too great for health.

I feared so. Is it injurious in every case? If it be so I can't follow it out.

All excess is injurious, and in dealing with a force of whose nature and operation you are ignorant, care and caution are requisite. Excessive use of medium power is exhausting, even in the case of those who make no other demands upon their energies; even in the case of those who are what you call physical mediums only. We have never wished you to debase the power we use to such purpose. It is not your mission, nor are you sufficiently rudely organised for such work. That which we do in this sort must be confined within rigid limits, and is strictly subsidiary to what is your work, viz., the receiving of information from us, systematising and arranging it, and conveying to inquiring souls the information that they long for. This is the special mission which is yours; and to it all else yields, the more especially when it interferes with and retards our holy work. You ask if the prosecution of physical mediumship is injurious. To those who are fitted for it and who use it in moderation it is not necessarily so, though care is required even then. To those who are not rudely organised it is injurious according to the degree in which it is used. In such cases as yours, where a strong protecting band is near, you must leave it to us to judge. Some experiments are necessary, and we are glad to make them, and desire to do so. But such violent phenomena as are rudely evoked are reprehensible and injurious. You need not fear that we shall permit them to be done; nor need you fear that we shall allow them to interfere either with your life work or with that special work of ours which is so dear to us.

+ I. S. D.

CORRELATION OF THOUGHT TO EXTERNAL THINGS.*

The thought we entertain, says Mrs. Wilmans, correlates us to certain externals in the outside world. Every thought a man thinks relates him to some external thing and draws him in the direction of it. When much thought has been given to one subject the result cannot be other than observable. Continued thought upon disease allies us to the external conditions related to disease. Thought on sin allies us to sin, while the belief that there is no sin destroys the accusing spirit within us; we see ourselves and others in a nobler light. A belief in poverty burdens and oppresses us till it makes us mentally poor and allies us with poverty-stricken conditions.

Thought allies us to external things that represent its own character. Therefore, by holding thoughts of wealth, knowing the law that relates effect and cause on the mental plane, he can attract wealth. Seek the kingdom of Heaven within where alone real riches exist, the inner opulence that is the sure foundation of unchanging wealth, that opulence which is the purse of Fortunatus and can never be exhausted. After this kingdom is discovered, then all these things (external wealth) shall be added.

Heaven exists within us in the faculties latent in the human mind; the superabundance of which no man has dreamed of. These powers will remain enfolded till he learns to believe in their existence, and then tries to develop them. Men are not rich because they are not introspective. The gradual recognition by man of his own latent powers, is the heaven within that is to be brought forward into the world. In him is the germ of all attainment.

Mental wealth, which is the recognition of innate ability, is the only true root of external wealth. A mental palace sends forth the spirit of a visible palace, with results that corrolate it. A mental poor-house projects from itself the spirit of a visible poor-house. The same may be said of sickness and sin, of health and goodness.

Seek the source of all power, of all opulence *within*, giving no heed to the external, and the external will manifest itself in wealth. The infinite spirit of strength and health, of intelligence, beauty and power which we call God, is *in* man.

Of all the poor-houses ever created in the mental realm, none are so utterly poverty-stricken as that which the creeds have erected in teaching man that he is destitute of merit; that any good in him is not of himself but of an outside God. Jesus did not teach this. He taught that man's innate mental opulence correlated him to external opulence. His lesson with regard to the lily meant that from its inner source of innate opulence it drew the glory in which it was arrayed.

Poverty affects man by bowing him with care and discouragement, which are purely mental states. They cause the poverty which is the effect, not the cause. The man is paralysed by a belief that he belongs to something that plays football with him and his circumstances. The outer, visible man has no need that the inner, invisible man cannot supply. Intimate ties subsist between thought and all production. To know that thought has power to bring things from where they abound and make material the desires of the heart, is to add an inch to the stature of lordship and sovereignty over the objective realm of use and necessity. Our thoughts clothe and feed us. This is the holy transmuting power of thought which changes the chemistry of seen things into fruition of desire and faith. A man is all mind; as he thinks and believes, so he *is*. All substance is mind. The entire universe is one mind, of which all objects, including man are varied expressions.

As man is a purely mental creature, so are his surroundings all mental states; and as tone resounds to tone, so do your surroundings repeat your mental conditions from far and near. It is deep calling unto deep all through the shoreless ocean of mind. The sound you send forth comes back to you, and no other sound can possibly reach your ears but the one you send out. Your poverty is the protracted echo of your own belief. Learn the science of mind that will change your belief, and by changing it, change the

whole world for you. The law of attraction, of expectation, is absolutely infinite in opulence. Poverty comes from seeing from a narrow and limited perception of the universal opulence, while wealth is the result of a more enlarged intellectual perception. Opulence becomes a personal endowment to the man who strives to understand this law and co-operate with it, who learns to perceive it or see it intellectually, and share in its life-giving power.

ARE COMMUNICATIONS RELIABLE?

In an article in the 'Revue de la France Moderne,' M Camille Flammarion's recent supposed declaration regarding spiritualistic beliefs is alluded to in reference to the frequency of delusive communications. The writer says: 'False prophets, false spirits, false gods abound. A celebrated name ought always to be suspected if given by a spirit. It is a mask under which it seeks to pass off its bad prose and its personal ideas. Innumerable people have been thus taken in. Being only too eager to receive communications by raps or embodiment, they are little concerned as to their source or their purity! A spirit has said it, that is enough. Such people, ignorant or easily duped, prepare for themselves great disillusiones.'

This is very true; but in proceeding to apply these remarks to M. Flammarion, the writer seems (in common with many others) to be under a misapprehension. A letter, dated July 7th, has just been published in a Utrecht journal, signed by M. Flammarion; from this letter it is obvious that the conclusions which have been drawn from his recent remarks upon spirit identity have been premature. The following is a translation of his letter:—

'An incomprehensible war of words has been started in the papers *à propos* of a phrase which has been extracted from one of my recent articles in "Les Annales Littéraires," in which I dispute the identity of the spirits. They assume that I have written a public letter to deny what I have published in my works! It is absolutely false. On the contrary, I am working at my book on "The Unknown," which will not be completed for a few months, in which I endeavour to analyse the phenomena scientifically. They ought to have waited for the publication of this book before drawing imaginary conclusions.'

A recent number of another French journal contains an account of a séance, in which the spirit of Colonel Henry purported to communicate by the voice of the medium. The details would be interesting were it possible to verify them; as we are not able to do this, we merely refer to them in order to ask readers of 'LIGHT' whether they can produce any evidence from their own experience to corroborate the following statement, said to have been made in the course of the séance: 'Mediumistic incarnation serves to strengthen (to give stamina to) spirits wandering in space. By this means they succeed in liberating themselves from the enswathing bands caused by thick vapours which darken their interior vision.' Is this statement as to the beneficial use of mediums upon the spirits who manifest by them, one which is supported by other communications? On this occasion it is said to have been made by a helpful, ministering spirit to whom Colonel Henry had once done a kindness during his earth life, and who, in gratitude, was seeking to influence him for good in the other life. ZERO.

PRISONER NO LONGER.—Spiritualism has been for me, in common with many others, says Gerald Massey, such a lifting of the mental horizon and a letting in of the heavens—such a formation of faith into facts—that I can only compare life without it to sailing on board ship with hatches battened down, and being kept a prisoner, living by the light of a candle, and then suddenly on some splendid starry night allowed to go on deck for the first time to see the stupendous mechanism of the heavens all aglow with the glory of God.

AN INTELLECTUAL ABSURDITY.—Is 'In Memoriam' more than Tennyson? Is St. Paul's Cathedral more than Sir Christopher Wren, its architect? Is the leaf to live while the tree dies? Reason and conscience whisper, it cannot be. The generation that believed that death ended all, went rioting through life, trampling down sweetness and innocence as the wild boar tramples down rosebuds or lifts its tusks upon the perfumed shrubs. To suppose that death ends all is as intellectually absurd as it is morally monstrous. Because God lives, His children shall live also.—NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS.

* 'Poverty and its Cure.' Helen Wilmans, Sea Breeze, Florida, U.S.A.

TRANCE AND INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKING.

WHAT THE SPEAKERS THEMSELVES SAY.

III.

BY MR. R. J. LEES.

The question, What proportion of the utterances of our trance and inspirational speakers comes directly from the controlling spirit, and what is to be attributed to the medium, at once opens up the whole consideration of this phase of Spiritualism, which I think may be discussed with a great deal of profit and advantage.

For myself, I long ago came to the conclusion that trance mediumship is not in any sense a gift, but an acquired condition, and being so, may, for all practical purposes, be considered, estimated, and dealt with by applying the rules and estimates of an ordinary education.

To the student—and I wish very carefully to differentiate the student from the mere observer and curiosity-seeking Spiritualist—this branch of our subject is at the present time in the least satisfactory condition, and we frequently ask ourselves why this should be so. Is there not scope here for definite and scientific demonstration? Have we not a right to demand that this link in our chain of evidence should be as strong as the rest? Should we not reasonably expect that from the very nature of our claim—if it is a true one—the demonstration of identity should be even more conclusive through this mode of manifestation than any other? I think so, and until we reach such desirable results, we must consider that trance-speaking is, when weighed in the balance, decidedly wanting; and if we are true and devoted to the cause we have espoused, we shall not be content until, by our labours, we have discovered where the weakness lies, and have done our best to bring this phase of mediumship up to the desired and necessary standard.

In an endeavour to do something, even though very little, in this direction, let me point out the view of our present difficulty, which I take after a long experience, from the point of trance-speaking being an acquirement, development or education, rather than a gift. Such mediums, taken as a class, exhibit all the peculiarities and characteristic traits that are to be found in any other equal number of individuals gathered promiscuously from the human family, and if we consider them upon the same broad basis, we shall not be very far wrong in our estimate. The great majority of them wish to go through life as easily and comfortably as possible; they have neither wish to learn more than is just necessary, nor ambition to carry themselves through the ordinary difficulties they must meet; consequently, when they are thrown upon the world to make their way, their intellect is in a very hazy condition, and their ideas of even the rudiments of education are vague and valueless. Is not this a true sketch of the majority of our trance speakers? They were attracted first of all to a séance by an idea of the wonderful or curious, to all intents and purposes blind to the fact of the startling weight of the revelation brought to light by the phenomena which so amused them and over which they laughed so boisterously. At the séance they experienced strange sensations, at which they were at first frightened, then curious, then amused, until finally they were overpowered and fell asleep. When they awoke they were complimented by persons as thoughtless and careless as themselves, on the discovery that they were incipient trance speakers, and golden possibilities were sketched out to them as to what they might become if they would only continue the development. From that moment the perfection of the new Demosthenes overshadowed every other thought in the minds of the persons forming that circle, and the half-unconscious sufferer became the recipient of all the undesirable influences generated by the ignorant, excited, wondering, incarnated, half-ledged spirits who were anxious to hurry matters as much as possible. Presently the sufferer—which is much the more correct term to use at this stage than medium—began to speak, and on awaking was complimented in flattering terms on the 'astounding address' he, or she, had delivered. The next step was to hurry the victim off to a hall and force him to make a contemptible exhibition of himself upon the platform, but, being satisfied with the flatterer's report of the speech, he

considers himself a martyr when some well-meaning friend gives him a little candid advice; and Spiritualism suffers. Such mediums somehow come to the conclusion that it is wrong to attempt to develop their own mind, and so go forward perpetuating their own ignorance, doing nothing in the way of improvement more than acquiring a mechanical fluency of expression at the best. I remember hearing a medium years ago answer the question: 'Have you any mountains in the spirit world?' 'Yes!' was the reply, 'we have mountains as you have, with this exception; where you have mountains you have valleys, but we have mountains without the valleys.' When asked the name of the control she replied, 'John Bright'!

It is travesties such as this which render it necessary to make the inquiry we have entered upon, and furnish the stock arguments of our opponents. Was this particular medium I refer to a fraud? No! I believe she was as truly entranced as possible; but what was the controlling influence? She was forced into a false position at the outset of her development, fell under the spell of a spiritual atmosphere or condition without a personal identity to direct her, and in her exalted state was developed to speak her own impressions of the overpowering surroundings, while the hypnotic suggestion of the minds around her gave the high-sounding names she afterwards continued to use. As the twig is bent so the tree will grow, and I am firmly convinced that this is the state of things with the greater part of our trance speakers.

But there are others who form the bulwarks of our cause, and pluck all the sting from such arguments as are based upon the failures of those I have mentioned. There are men and women who have been attracted to a study of our phenomena by the tremendous issues at stake in the inquiry, and whose intelligence has been consecrated to the research on the altar of devotion; among these there have been developed trance speakers whom individual spirits on the other side have found worthy to use, and to whose voices we have listened as to those having authority. In the presence of such speakers we never find ourselves making inquiry, or analysis, as to what is spirit or what is medium; we are compelled to acknowledge that some greater power than the visible speaker is there. It is not in the style or form of utterance, it is not in the matter or the manner of delivery, but behind the whole there is an identity, a spirit, which touches and bears evidence with our own spirit, and we are convinced, though we may not be able to explain. It has been my pleasure many times during this last four years to listen to a preacher who speaks under such control, though he dare not let it be publicly known, but the self-evident fact of the change of identity is frequently perceived by members of his congregation. I have heard persons remark to him, 'I had to look twice to make sure it was you preaching, for your face changed so'; or again, 'I saw your face shine so while you were preaching that I thought of Moses when he came down from the Mount'; but perhaps the most pertinent to our present inquiry was a statement made by a very intelligent man some three or four weeks ago, to this effect: 'Well, it's a mystery to me. Our man went into the pulpit and he came out again when service was over, but I am as certain as that I am standing here that *he* didn't preach.' Here is the evidence we are seeking for, and which is to be obtained by approachment of medium to control and *vice versa*, and an intelligent understanding of what is required to accomplish it.

As long as thoughts and teachings from the beyond have to be manifested through human brains they must necessarily be limited by the channels used, and hence it will be impossible to prevent some trace of adulteration; our part is to see that we reduce this to the least possible degree; but when this is allowed, the identity, the teaching, the information conveyed may be, and often is, so far beyond the human as to demonstrate the fact and establish *prima facie* proof.

My personal experience is this. For years, when speaking under control my own identity has vacated my body and I have taken my place among the audience to listen to the discourse. Still, even in this condition I frequently hear the speaker use arguments and forms of speech peculiarly my own, and in answer to inquiry why this is so I am told that the necessary strain consequent upon control is so great as

to make it advisable to reduce it as much as possible, and when the speaker finds what suits his purpose there is no need for creation of other forms of expression. With that I am content.

I dare not take up more space to deal with inspirational speaking, but as this is far more limited in its operation than trance speaking we may for the present let it rest.

The next communication in this series will be contributed by Mr. J. B. Tetlow.

THACKERAY AND SPIRITUALISM.

The new edition of Thackeray's works, with the biographical sketch by his beloved daughter, has caused a renewal of public interest in that gentle soul, so tender and true, who loved his fellows, 'the suffering, the weak, the erring, the wicked, if you will, but still the friendly, the loving children of God our Father.'

It was worldliness he despised. With what might of genius he tore away its tawdry wrappings, and how he scorned the sham and vanity laid bare! But there was always pity and hope for its victims—they were still the beloved children of the Father. Humour to him was 'wit and love.'

Respecting his wondrous eloquence, he marvelled at himself, but in a way that will convince the informed Spiritualist that it was not altogether a mystery to him: 'I have been surprised at the observations made by some of my characters. It seems as if an occult power were moving the pen. The personage does or says something, and I ask, "How the dickens did he come to think of that?" . . . We spake anon of the inflated style of some writers. What, also if there is an afflated style? when a writer is like a Pythoness, on her oracle tripod, and mighty words, words which he cannot help, come blowing, bellowing, and whistling, and moaning through the speaking pipes of his bodily organ?'

How characteristic is his formula, contained in the quotation in 'LIGHT' of June 24th: 'I am well: Amen. I am ill: Amen. I die: Amen always.'

A delightful picture of the man is furnished by Mrs. Underhill in her book, 'The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism.'

Mrs. Underhill was the eldest of the Fox Sisters. She was endowed with a stronger and better-balanced personality than her poor sisters, and thus was able to pass unscathed through the dreadful psychological perils to which all public mediums are subjected. She left the earth-life a few years since, a worthy and respected woman. The following passage may be found on page 450 of her interesting and valuable contribution to the history of the great movement, in whose behalf her family were real martyrs:—

'Mr. Thackeray, during his stay in New York, visited my public séances, but never asked questions in a crowd. His course of investigation was unlike that of all others. The first visit he made he sat and listened to the sounds; and when his turn came to ask questions, he politely asked me to accept his arm and walk with him through the parlours (fifteen minutes were allotted to each visitor), and he said, "You must be weary by this time. Do your investigators always tax you as they have this evening?" I told him I considered this party very little trouble in comparison to most others. The raps followed us as we walked, and were heard by all in the room. He apparently paid little attention to the sounds as we walked. Suddenly he stopped in the middle of the room, and said to me: "I have read much of your family, and the persecution you have been subjected to; and the various expositions of the wise ones; but they have not been able to convict you."

'The rappings became tremendous, and the floor trembled beneath our feet. They were made all about the room and on the furniture. I invited him to call during my private hours, which he subsequently did, and conversed with the spirits freely. When he bade me good-bye for the last time, he expressed pleasure at having met us, and thanked me for my kindness in permitting him to visit us during our private hours. He expressed himself delighted with his visit, and said he was thoroughly convinced that no earthly power could make the sounds as he had heard them; and he laughed heartily at Dr. Flint's theory of the knee-joints.'

Here is an example for those who act as if they thought that spiritualistic truth is to be educed only by the torture of those through whom it is conveyed.

New York, July 3rd, 1899.

HENRY FORBES.

STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

When we are avowedly launching into speculation, it is advisable to take as a base some truth so elementary as to be almost axiomatic. The truism we select as our starting point for this article, is, that what we call Consciousness is developed in increasing degree as the scale of organic life ascends. It is scarcely apparent in the lower animals, more so in the higher, and but slightly so in man during the first stages of his development, its highest and fullest manifestation, as we know it, being in the thoroughly developed and equipped human personality.

Certain experiments of M. Janet's, lately referred to in 'LIGHT,' seem to indicate that if the connection between the Mind and any part of the human organism is broken (which apparently occurs in cases of partial anæsthesia) the Ego ceases to be conscious of impressions, which nevertheless continue to register themselves through the organs which have been temporarily rendered anæsthetic. We suppose that in ordinary sleep the disconnection is more complete. This experiment and its result suggest the following hypothesis, viz., that the Ego, if possessed of at least two organisms, a physical body and a psychical body, may be constantly receiving impressions from the two spheres with which it is related by means of both organisms, but that ordinarily it is not conscious of both sets of impressions at the same time; because, when consciousness is awake on one plane, the organ related to the other plane is in a condition of partial anæsthesia. We may further surmise that this inability to cognise both groups of impressions simultaneously is due to the fact that consciousness in humanity is, as yet, only in a very immature stage of development. It has, no doubt, attained to a far higher degree of manifestation than in any other order of beings on this earth, and on that account we are liable to fall into the error of supposing that man's faculty of consciousness is more fully developed than it really is; probably, almost certainly, we are very far down in the scale of conscious personalities. That there are almost limitless degrees of consciousness beyond that to which we have attained, but to which we are destined to attain in the course of ages, is a statement which for some of us has passed out of the range of mere speculation. If this is so, and human consciousness is a faculty as yet in quite an early stage of development, it is not surprising that it should be very strictly limited in its field of exercise, that it should manifest fitfully, that when exhibiting itself in relation to one group of facts or one environment, it should be withdrawn altogether or partially from another.

It is primarily on the physical plane that our consciousness is being developed, except (we would suggest) during the hours of sleep: then obviously the mind is in some mysterious way disconnected from the impressions which come from the material world, so that consciousness is not in exercise on this plane. Thus disengaged from sense perceptions, we think (and there is evidence to support the theory), that through the psychic organism the Ego becomes aware of the impressions which reach it from the spirit's environment. That it is unable to retain the memory of what it has perceived during physical sleep is quite consistent with the hypothesis here suggested; the limitation of faculty which makes the Ego generally incapable of extending consciousness into two spheres at once, may make it incapable of retaining the memory (which is a mode of consciousness) of both experiences at the same time. Even on the physical plane alone it is very difficult to the mind to attend to more than one subject at the same moment, perhaps impossible, and one memory is apt temporarily to put out another. Persistent cultivation of faculty in this direction will, however, we know, result in large growth of capacity, and there are many instances in which individuals are gifted with the power of cognising partially both spheres to which they are related. Seers, though frequently unconscious of the material environment when seeing visions, are sometimes aware of both the psychic and physical worlds at the same time. Those whose psychic faculties are not at all abnormally developed frequently have experiences which corroborate, for them, the possibility of this extension of consciousness; experiences not sufficiently defined to be, when taken alone, of any evidential value, but which have a cumulative and personal value as supplementary testimony

to the facts to which true psychics testify. There are, of course, among individuals various degrees of development of consciousness. Some throughout earthly life are rarely, if ever, conscious of any other environment besides that to which they are physically related.* There are others who are occasionally aware of impressions from both states; and others again who habitually live more in relation to the psychic and spirit world than to the physical. It seems probable that the cultivation of this faculty rests with ourselves more than is generally supposed, and that the result of neglecting to cultivate it may carry its consequences into the other life. Some communications purporting to come from the other side indicate that the event of death does not always liberate the mind from physical impressions—that dominant ideas persist for a long time in the personality; and it is likely, therefore, that a mind which has habitually, and almost exclusively, directed its consciousness upon the physical environment and conditions of earth life will find that the impressions it constantly dwelt upon cling to it still in the psychic world, and such an one will hardly at first feel at home in another sphere.

There is a significant passage in the 'Paradiso' where Beatrice upbraids Dante when he first enters Paradise with the words:—

"Thou makest thyself so dull
With false imagining, that thou seest not
What thou wouldst see if thou hadst shaken it off."

From the context we learn that 'the false imagining' which she blames, is, that he fancies himself still in earth life, and fails to recognise the fact that he is in a spiritual environment. The faculty required for such recognition, like other faculties, must be developed by growth; it is not created by change of circumstances.

It is not, however, in relation to the future only, but in relation to the present also, that the importance of deliberately resisting the tendency to concentrate the attention of the mind exclusively upon the earthly environment should be realised.

If we may judge by analogy, impressions may reach the Ego from the spirit world and register their influence even when they are not *consciously* perceived (we know this occurs in connection with the physical organism); but just as the body becomes apparently dead to sense impressions in deep sleep, so the psychic organism may become closed to spirit influence, if the whole consciousness is diverted on to the physical plane. Consciousness of the other sphere may not always be achieved, but openness to its impressions is within the reach of all, and depends upon the mind not being allowed to be so overcrowded with sense perceptions as to leave no room for impressions of any other kind.

A friend of the writer received a message through a medium to this effect: 'Tell my sister to think of me when she goes to sleep and I will teach her something.' This is one of many indications that we can voluntarily lay the mind open to impressions from the unseen sphere by deliberately directing the mind thither. The following striking incident recorded in 'Phantasms of the Living' bears on this point. Those who are not already acquainted with it will be glad to have it quoted in full. The account was written in 1879 and corroborated later by Mr. Stainton Moses in 1885:—

'One evening early last year, I resolved to try to appear to Z. (*i.e.*, Mr. Stainton Moses). I did not inform him beforehand of the intended experiment; but retired to rest shortly before midnight with thoughts intently fixed on Z., with whose room and surroundings, however, I was unacquainted. I soon fell asleep, and awoke next morning unconscious of anything having taken place. On seeing Z. a few days afterwards I inquired, "Did anything happen at your rooms on Saturday night?" "Yes!" replied he, "a great deal happened. I had been sitting over the fire with M. smoking and chatting. About 12.30 a.m. he rose to leave, and I let him out myself. I returned to the fire to finish my pipe, when I saw you sitting in the chair just vacated by him. I looked intently at you, and then took up a newspaper to assure myself I was not dreaming, but on laying it down I saw you still there. While I gazed without speaking, you faded away. Though I imagined you must be fast asleep at that hour, yet you appeared dressed in your ordinary garments, such as you usually wear every day." "Then my

experiment seems to have succeeded," said I; "the next time I come, ask me what I want, as I had on my mind certain questions I intended to ask you, but I was probably waiting for an invitation to speak." A few weeks later the experiment was repeated with equal success; I, as before, not informing Z. when it was made. On this occasion he not only questioned me on the subject which was at that time under very warm discussion between us, but detained me by the exercise of his will some time after I had intimated a desire to leave. This fact, when it came to be communicated to me, seemed to account for the violent and somewhat peculiar headache which marked the morning following the experiment; at least I remarked at the time that there was no apparent cause for the unusual headache; and as on the former occasion, no recollection remained of the event, or seeming event, of the preceding night.'

These two instances of mind action illustrate the two points we want to emphasise, viz.: (1) That consciousness can only operate with difficulty and very partially on both planes at the same time; and (2) That intentional direction of the mind towards any particular influence or group of influences, places it in a receptive condition with regard to them. Mr. Stainton Moses being a highly developed psychic, would be accessible on his psychic side, and therefore, when his friend's consciousness was operating wholly on that plane, he was able to converse with him, but his ability to do so was apparently facilitated by a deliberate intentional direction of the mind in the normal state.

If this hypothesis, that the faculty of consciousness is in a transitional state, and only beginning to acquire the capacity for operating on two planes at once, is correct, it not only explains satisfactorily some of the perplexities of our experiences whilst embodied, but it throws some light on the perplexities and confusions which envelop communications from the other sphere.

It is evident from various sources, among others from the evidence accumulated in Dr. Hodgson's 'Report of Mrs. Piper's Trances,'* that when the mind is, by the putting off of the body, disconnected with the material world, consciousness thus liberated to act on the psychic plane attains to a considerable advance of capacity (or, at least, if the individual is ready for the change of state, it does so). G. P. says, 'I am far clearer on all points than I was whilst shut up in the prisoned body.' 'You see I am more awake than asleep'; and he speaks of those still in the flesh as in 'dream-life'; 'friends sleeping in the material world, you to us are more like as we understand sleep.' This is an inevitable corollary of the proposition with which we started, that progress in consciousness accompanies life's ascensions. Although, however, we should expect the capacity of discarnate spirits to be in advance of ours, we should not expect it to be very greatly in advance when they first pass over, and we should not be surprised to find that the difficulty we experience of cognising consciously both states of being at once, still makes itself felt with them. From a study of the communications it seems probable that discarnate spirits have no direct consciousness of mere physical phenomena, that such consciousness as they have of present connection with the material world is derived by contact with the minds of incarnate beings, who thus become their mediums.

In a previous number of the 'Proceedings' (1892) this answer is reported as given during Mrs. Piper's trance, to the question 'Do they forget this world?' 'All that is material is forgotten as of no consequence. It is all a spiritual growth, and all spiritual growth here will help you there.' Consciousness of physical things, memory of *mere physical* things, this is not the direction in which the consciousness normally acts in that state. G. P. assents to Dr. Hodgson's suggestion when he says, 'You don't see the physical universe directly, but come into relation with our perception of the physical universe' (p. 438). And on another occasion, when Dr. Hodgson wanted G. P. to try and say what he was doing, G. P. answered, 'I will try my best, but it will wholly depend on my seeing your spiritual body, so please send out your spiritual body to me as much as you possibly can' (p. 439).

* This does not imply that they have no faith in a spiritual world; faith and consciousness are not synonymous.

* 'Proceedings,' S.P.R., Vol. XIII. This cannot be too carefully studied by those who are attempting to get a glimpse into the *rationale* of the subject.

We may conclude that the connection of discarnate spirits with us is normally altogether on the psychical and spiritual side of our existence, through thought and emotion, and that our accessibility depends mainly on our mental and psychical condition and development. It seems likely that when they attempt to concentrate consciousness on the physical plane through the organism of a medium (which is to them an abnormal operation of the faculty)—that when, so to speak, they 'creep down to our level'*—they experience difficulty akin to that which we feel in cognising two states simultaneously; that it can only be effected by a temporary diversion of the force by which they are able normally to read our thoughts and to commune with our minds. Margaret Mitchell, when communicating, says to her husband: 'Your thoughts do not reach me at all when I am speaking to you, but I hear strange sounds and have to half guess. . . (Question: Don't you see me at other times?) Oh! Yes, so much better than I do when I try to speak.' (See Dr. Hodgson's 'Report of Mrs. Piper,' p. 520, Vol. XIII.) It is often necessary to 'reculer pour mieux sauter'; and as a means to an end, the attempt to develop this abnormal operation of consciousness through material organisms is no doubt valuable; many are convinced by this means of the continued life of the so-called 'dead,' and of their continued proximity to and influence upon us, and glimpses of important laws are revealed to us. But there is reason to believe that the act of communicating thus is a drain upon the faculty by which spirits are habitually able to impress their thoughts on us and to discern ours, so that their influence is more actively operative when their energies are not divided between the two planes. That the attempt to exert consciousness and memory in two directions at once should result in confusion on the physical plane and partial anæsthesia on the psychic is only what one might expect; Dr. Hodgson suggests that the evident partial loss of consciousness which accompanies these communications in trance may be accounted for possibly by the suffocating effect of gases in the human organism. Probably he has good reasons for making this suggestion, but it seems as if the loss of consciousness would be amply accounted for by recognising the limitations of faculty which we experience, as belonging (in a less degree) to its exercise in the state immediately in advance of ours.

The length of this article seems to require an apology, especially as it contains so much that to students of Spiritualism, and especially to students of that most able and instructive Report, will seem elementary and familiar; its apology must be that some are too busy and others too impatient to do justice to the 300 pages of important matter the Report contains, and therefore are liable to miss some of the valuable intimations found there of the elementary laws which govern the operation of mind on the spirit plane.

H. A. D.

NEW PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

- 'The Free Man,' for July. Edited and published by C. W. CLOSE, Maine, U.S.A.: 124, Birch-street, Bangor. Price 10 cents.
- 'The Suggestor and Thinker,' for July. Edited by ROBERT SHEERIN, M.D. Ohio, U.S.A.: 178, Summit-street, Cleveland. Price 10 cents.
- 'Weeds and Flowers.' Poems written by WILLIAM LUTHER LONGSTAFF. London: Greening & Co., Limited, 20, Cecil-court, Charing Cross-road, W.C. Price 2s. 6d. net.
- 'Review of Reviews,' for July. London: 125, Fleet-street, E.C. Price 6d.
- 'Imagination and its Wonders.' By ARTHUR LOVELL. London: Nichols & Co., 23, Oxford-street, W. Price 5s. net.
- 'The Banner of Light,' 'The Progressive Thinker,' 'Freedom,' 'The South African Spiritualist,' 'Literary Digest,' 'Church Gazette,' 'The Inquirer,' 'Fred Burry's Journal of New Thought,' 'The Educational Review,' 'L'Echo du Merveilleux,' 'Le Messenger,' 'Revue du Monde Invisible,' 'Le Progrès Spirite,' 'Light of Truth.'

A BASIS FOR FAITH.—If a few years enable the tree to exhaust its every power and fulfil Nature's every pledge, for man, made in God's image, four-score years hardly avail to grow the root of industry, much less to exhaust the latent powers of reason or memory or morals. . . . Because, for animals, instinct is God's guide book to the art of living, and has never deceived robin nor butterfly, the poets felt it was safe to trust 'the instinct of immortality.'—NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS.

* See 'Automatic Spirit Writing,' by S. Underwood.

SOCIETY WORK.

CAMBERWELL, 33, GROVE-LANE, S.E.—The control of Mrs. Holgate gave a continuation of the address 'Where are the signs that shall follow those who believe?' which was listened to by an appreciative audience. At the after-circle clairvoyance was given by several of the sitters.—H.E.B.

MERTHYR SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, CENTRAL HALL, MERTHYR TYDFIL (WALES).—We had the privilege of listening to some thoughtful addresses by Mr. Will Phillips (editor of the 'Two Worlds') on Sunday last; the subjects being 'Knowledge versus Faith' and 'The Failure of Christianity.' Mrs. Billingsley kindly gave good clairvoyance at the evening meeting.—W. M. H.

HACKNEY SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, MANOR ROOMS, KENMURE-ROAD, MARE-STREET, N.E.—On Sunday last, Mr. A. Peters addressed the meeting upon 'The Power of Prayer' (a subject chosen by a member of the audience) in a very interesting and comprehensive style. The clairvoyance which followed was fully up to Mr. Peters' usual high standard. Next Sunday, at 11.30 a.m., open-air meeting in Victoria Park; at 7 p.m., Mr. and Mrs. Barrell.—O.H.

CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—We had several friends from Battersea at our public circle, who gave as the benefit of their mediumship. The conditions were good, and we had a nice time. At our evening service, Mr. R. Beel presided, and spoke on 'Reason and Religion,' illustrating the various phases of the religious thought of to-day. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., public circle; at 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long. At 7.45 p.m., a circle for members and associates.—VERAX.

NORTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY, 14, STROUD GREEN-ROAD, FINSBURY PARK.—Open-air Mission.—On Sunday last Mr. Brooks conducted the meeting, assisted by Messrs. Purglove, Palmer and Willis. In the evening, at 14, Stroud Green-road, Mr. Willis presided. Music by Mr. Bailey, Mus. Bac. Addresses on 'Overcoming' by the chairman, Messrs. Brooks and Hewitt. Clairvoyance by Mrs. Foster. On Sunday next, at 11.30 a.m., in the park; at 7 p.m., in the hall; on Wednesday, at 8 p.m., lecture.—F.B.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—The address entitled 'Spiritualism, Scientifically and Religiously Considered,' delivered by Mr. Peter Lee on Sunday last, was attentively listened to and appreciated. The kindness of Mr. Lee in coming from Rochdale to occupy the 'M. A. S.' platform was gratefully acknowledged. Mr. Bibbings—who had long been announced as the speaker for last Sunday—finding himself unable to fulfil his engagement Miss Von Holthoer sang 'Ave Maria' (Luzzi) with great musical ability, and warm appreciative thanks were once again accorded this lady for so kindly giving her services. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. E. W. Wallis, trance address, 'What Spiritualism has given us.' Solo, Miss Samuel.—L.H.

STOKE NEWINGTON SPIRITUAL SOCIETY, BLANCHE HALL, 99, WIESBADEN-ROAD, STOKE NEWINGTON-ROAD (Near Alexandra Theatre).—On Sunday evening last Miss MacCreadie gave no fewer than eighteen successful clairvoyant delineations; the atmospheric conditions rendering it a case of labour under difficulties. On Sunday next Mr. Alfred Peters will speak and give clairvoyance. He is at all times cordially welcome. Members and visitors will greatly oblige by being seated by 7 p.m., as the doors must be closed for clairvoyance and other manifestations. On Thursday, at 8 p.m., a circle will be held at 142, Stoke Newington-road.—C. A. WRIGHT, Secretary, 40, St. Jude-street, N.—The 'North London Guardian' for July 14th, said: 'Nowhere has Modern Spiritualism been marked by more rapid growth than in Stoke Newington. Started barely twelve months since by a very few earnest minds constituting themselves a pioneer committee, the tree thus planted has flourished so as to show an increase equal to 900 per cent., reckoning membership only. Modern Spiritualism is worthy of thoughtful investigation, dealing, as it does, with scientific, psychical truth.'

BATTERSEA PARK OUTDOOR WORK.—The anniversary, on Sunday last, of our commencement in Battersea Park on July 12th, 1896, will long be remembered by all who participated in the proceedings. In addition to the usual Battersea workers, the following speakers addressed the meetings: Mr. St. Clair (Camberwell), Messrs. Davis and Bullen (Canning Town), Mr. and Mrs. Clegg (Forest Gate), Mr. Brooks (Hackney), and Mr. W. O. Drake. All the speakers were in good form, and if the same enthusiasm could be maintained at all our meetings the result would be an immense increase in the ranks of Spiritualists. At first we doubted the wisdom of utilising the two platforms and thus dividing the interest, but when a spirituous debater created a diversion, the second platform was used as a means of holding the crowd together. We desire to draw the attention of normal speakers to open-air work as the best possible means of sharpening their ideas and powers of expression by personal contact with the criticism which this class of work affords. We should soon settle the average secretary's difficulty of obtaining speakers if this work were taken up in real earnest. On Sunday next, at 3.30 p.m., as usual.—H. B.