

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

'A HAPPY NEW YEAR!' With all our hearts; but, as Carlyle says, 'There is in man a higher than love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness. . . Love not pleasure; love God. This is the EVERLASTING YEA, wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him.' And yet, and yet—A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It is a bold wish, as well as a kindly one. The great march of mankind has brought us face to face with a new Century. Tremendous thought! What lies hidden there? But what is the Century to the Forever? and yet we shall all have more to do with that in the coming Century than with the Century itself. It is that great Forever we are really facing: it is that we go forth to meet. Let our march forth and out be a brave and trustful one, in the spirit of Rowland Sill's severe but majestic song:—

What may we take into the vast Forever?
That marble door

Admits no fruit of all our long endeavour,
No fame-wreathed crown we wore,
No garnered lore.

What can we bear beyond the unknown portal?
No gold, no gains
Of all our toiling. In the life immortal
No hoarded wealth remains,
Nor gilds, nor stains.

Naked from out that far abyss behind us
We entered here:
No word came with our coming, to remind us
What wondrous world was near,
No hope, no fear.

Into the silent, starless night before us,
Naked we glide:
No hand has marked the constellations o'er us,
No comrade at our side,
No chart, no guide.

Yet, fearless toward that midnight, black and hollow,
Our footsteps fare;
The beckoning of a Father's hand we follow—
His love alone is there,
No curse, no care.

'Things to come' is still tiresomely perverse. It quotes a very old passage from 'The Spiritualist Magazine,' describing a certain writer's disgust at finding that a spirit could lie and otherwise misbehave itself, and quoting the editor's remark that he is surprised to find anyone imagining that every spirit is truthful and good. Upon that, 'Things to come' says: 'It comes to this then. Approach the spirits with a mind made up with what is convenient to be believed, and then accept such revelations as accord with

that belief. In this case it is quite superfluous to have any revelation at all. Each Spiritist is a law unto himself.'

There is malice in this summing up. 'What is convenient to be believed' is simply spiteful. 'What is reasonable and right to believe' would have been truthful and clean. As for 'revelations,' how often must we repeat that we do not accept spirit-messages as revelations? We take every one on its merits. 'Each Spiritist is a law unto himself' has also animus in it. Why not be respectful and say, 'Each Spiritualist is led by his own conscience and reason'? That would also have the merit of being true.

The seventh edition of 'Gone before,' compiled by Henry Southgate (London: Charles Taylor), has just reached us. It is described as 'A manual of consolation for the bereaved and a well of sympathy for the sorrowing, filled from many sources.' It is a gathering together of an enormous number of extracts, in prose and poetry, all helpful in the direction and for the purpose indicated. Their bias is towards a mild evangelicalism, but they are sufficiently catholic and sufficiently numerous to more or less meet all tastes and needs. There is a good Index of authors, but, strange to say, no Index of first lines of poetic pieces.

'We still retain too freely the old conventional notions of 'judgment' and 'redemption,' perpetuated by the symbols of the past;—but symbols always taken for realities. True Spiritualism emancipates us here. It teaches us that we are being judged every hour, and every hour are being saved or lost. The unseen will only continue the process. There will be no vital difference. Mr. J. Bruce Wallace, the writer of the following paragraph, would probably hesitate at our word 'lost.' His thoughts on this subject we find to be very consoling and uplifting:—

Every day is a day of judgment, in which, on the one side, we are facing the opening of the books of the past, and, on the other side, writing what will have to be faced by and by. Every day is also a day of redemption, for all judgment is redemptive; it is a discovery of the lower phases of understanding as indeed low, and thus a call to something higher; it is a process in the human uplift,—in the ascent to the consciousness and experience of more and more of the All-Good. Every day is a day of magnificent opportunity to think pure and high creative thoughts, to scatter broadcast the seed of future harvests, to send forth, into the infinite, thought-waves of truth and love and unity which will influence our own and others' activity, and build surroundings worthy of the conscious children of God.

Ultimately, we have no doubt about this, but all judgment is not immediately redemptive on this plane of being, and we fear is not so in the life beyond. And yet, if we believe in ultimate redemption through experience and judgment, we may in a sense be said to erase the very idea of loss.

'Freedom' does not know us. It actually says:—

The Spiritualists are not wanting in thought, and have not gone to sleep in their belief; they are wide awake on the erroneous side of the situation. They magnify the happiness of the next world entirely above any to be found

in this. They believe so greatly in the power and beauty of the life after death that death becomes an emancipator to all their hopes. They fail to appreciate this life and this world because they so constantly look forward to something better. 'Fields in the distance look green.' But in this case there is no proof that the fields exist, and it, therefore, would seem sensible to enjoy every particle of the present by putting our minds in it fully to see what new wonders we can bring out of it. If the world and this life had been worked threadbare it would be different. But it is all fresh and new; its possibilities have not been disclosed even to the faintest extent as yet.

We wish the lively editor of 'Freedom' could come and look at us—especially on one of our grand conversazione evenings. We certainly do not look then like people who 'fail to appreciate this life and this world' or who fail 'to enjoy every particle of the present.' The truth lies in the opposite direction. Our Spiritualism, by presenting this world as the avenue to the great home, makes that avenue to us enchanted ground. We find our interest in this world increased just in proportion as it suggests to us unseen presences and powers.

Dean Farrar has lately usefully drawn attention to the change that has come over all sorts and conditions of men during the last few years, in relation to belief in an eternal hell. He says:—

When my 'Eternal Hope' was published, I lived for weeks and months amid a hail-storm of anathemas. Now the majority of thinking and educated Christians hold the view which I there maintained—that sin indeed is always punishment, but that there is no proof that repentance and pardon will not be always possible, and that we may trust in the mercy of God 'for ever and ever'—or, as it is, literally, in the original, 'for ever and beyond.' We have learned—or at any rate, all thinking and educated men have learned—that 'everlasting' (*aiōnios*), which occurs but twice in the New Testament, is not a synonym of 'eternal' (*aiōnios*), but the direct antithesis of it: the former being the unrealisable conception of endless time, and the latter referring to a state from which our imperfect human conception of time is absolutely excluded.

This, by Annie J. C. Norris, in 'Freedom,' leaves a very pleasant taste in the mouth after reading it aloud. Try it!—

Believing as I do, in the importance of the will development, I welcome rather than condemn, bursts of individual assertion in a child. Wise direction is better than all the conquering. I find one little method very helpful to me, when the baby will is asserted against mine. It may help some other mother; with this hope I have mentioned it. I say, 'Let me see those little eyes; I want to see the love-light there for mamma,' and if I once get the sweet rebellious eyes to look into mine, where I meet them with a smile, the work is done; my tot will always respond to my call for the love-light, and will say, 'I mind you, mamma,' and will do my bidding with a bright face and happy heart. How much better than a sullen obedience wrought through fear. The bond of love cannot be made too strong between child and parent. I would rather wait an hour for the loving response, than to be obeyed merely because I was 'bigger' than my child, and cowed him.

It may take a bit more time out of to-day, but it will put enough of sunshine into your own and your child's to-morrows to repay a thousand fold.

Never be afraid of loving too much. No one was ever hurt (no matter how the world may judge) by loving or being loved too much. It is the repression of love that has hurt us all.

THE one thing needful is to look up, to revere something above us, to desire something better, to hunger for a higher good. He who loves the highest, truest, and best is, in his heart and soul, a lover of God.—J. FREEMAN CLARKE.

'Stand not aloof nor apart,
Plunge in the thick of the fight;
There in the street and the mart,
That is the place to do right.
Not in some cloister or cave,
Not in some kingdom above,
Here, on this side of the grave,
Here should we labour and love.'

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

THE MOST DIRECT ROAD TO SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

We recently had the privilege of hearing an interesting address on 'Spiritual Culture.' The subject was treated as involving something besides love and goodness, a something which included these but included also, as we understood, direct knowledge of spiritual truth, such as the Eastern occultists claim to possess. The question was raised as to the shortest method of attaining this spiritual culture, and we understood the lecturer to say that, in his opinion, the 'short cut' to this attainment is by asceticism.

It is interesting to compare his statement with the answer given by automatic writing to Mrs. Underwood when she put a similar question to her unseen correspondents. Whatever view may be held as to the source of those curious writings,* the remark is worth considering on its own merits. We do not accept statements as true because of the authority on which they claim to come, unless they carry with them the intrinsic stamp of value, unless they meet with the assent of that inner faculty by which alone truth can be recognised and assimilated; unless, moreover, the statements interpret and harmonise the facts of experience.

Mrs. Underwood inquired concerning the shortest road to the higher spheres. When the question had been put, her husband, who was sitting by her, made the observation: 'I expect there is not a short cut.' Whereupon her hand wrote, 'Love for all humanity is the short cut.' 'Intellectual development depends largely upon the love element for sustenance and power.'

Personally, this answer claims our assent because life and experience bear out its truth. Not only do we believe that no thing and no person can be so quickly understood by any other way, but we very much doubt whether any thing or any being can be understood *at all* adequately, except by this 'short cut,' except by the exercise of sympathetic affection.

If this is the 'short cut' to knowledge, then we have the clue to many a perplexity; then we glimpse a way in which the apparent inequalities of life's opportunities may be adjusted. Into this we cannot enter now. The correctness or incorrectness of this suggestion can best be tested by individual consideration, individual application to life. Philosophy and occultism are educative and fascinating, and in no sense to be depreciated; they do, however, often carry us into abysses in which we find ourselves quite out of our depth, and in which the most profoundly wise claim no certain *knowledge* except the knowledge of their ignorance. 'That which is hid from the wise and prudent reveals itself to babes.' Where philosophic thought falls back tired and bewildered, almost despairing, love intuitively *knows*.

From this fact we gain further light on the mystery of suffering. Experience shows that love is quickened and developed by suffering. This does not solve the mystery, of course, but it throws a side light upon it. Love is the faculty by which alone true knowledge of God and spiritual truth can be attained; therefore any cost is worth paying for the evolution of this priceless faculty.

It is best evolved in the hard struggle of life, in contact with pain and temptation, by falls and difficult uprisings. The goal is *assured knowledge* by the individual, differentiated spirit. Probably many an ignorant, uncultured soul whose surroundings have been justly deplored by the cultured and refined, will matriculate rapidly in the school of the other world, because amid the terrible environment of grinding poverty and sin, the love faculty was quickened into healthy vitality, and attained an efficiency greater than that attained by the more educated, or even by the ascetic. Plato says: 'He who under the influence of true love rising upwards from these begins to see that Beauty, is not far from the end . . . and at last *knows* what the essence of Beauty is. . . I try to persuade others that in the attainment of this end human nature will not easily find "a better helper than love."—'The Symposium.'

The author of the little volume, 'A Visit to a Gnāni,' seems to have reached a similar conclusion. Towards the close of his book he remarks that perhaps Western nations

* 'Automatic or Spirit Writing,' by S. UNDERWOOD. P. 254.

may attain the goal of spiritual culture more rapidly than the Eastern, by a directer road, along the lines of brotherly love.

To the Westerns has been given a revelation of love which has transfigured the meaning of the word, exalting it to a degree which no phraseology can express. Its interpretation has been given in a life, and only by *living* can the significance of that interpretation be apprehended.

'Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin.'

Those who propound other methods of spiritual attainment, and on philosophical grounds support them, are often actually themselves attaining (though possibly hardly conscious of the fact) by this short cut, they are learning to *know*, not by intellectual ratiocination, but by the exercise of a diviner faculty, which makes darkness light before them in the hard struggle with the world's problems.

H. A. D.

A SUCCESSFUL SITTING WITH MR. CECIL HUSK.

As opportunities for the identification of materialised forms are comparatively rare in this country, the following recent incident which occurred at one of Mr. Husk's Thursday afternoon sances may be of interest and value to a larger audience than the one present on that occasion.

On my way to Brighton for a holiday I decided to break my journey in London, and attended one of Mr. Husk's sances on the afternoon of November 22nd. On arriving, I found four ladies and two gentlemen waiting, and found that all the persons present were total strangers to me and to Mr. and Mrs. Husk. After a few formal introductions we took our seats, as directed, at a round table about four feet in diameter. The phenomena that occurred were mostly of the usual character, such as the appearance of forms shown by means of luminous cards, the playing of a heavy musical box in various parts of the room, and greeting by several distinct voices. Apparently many things that occurred, and much that was said by the voices, were intended for all of us; but almost every person present had some special manifestation, and in this respect I was greatly favoured, as I shall presently show. One of the voices carried on a conversation in Dutch with the gentleman on my right, which he quite understood; and another pronounced a benediction in Latin. During the sance I heard eight voices, and saw six faces by the light of the luminous cards. Possibly faces were shown to the sitters on the other side of the table, which I did not see; certainly I heard voices conversing with the ladies on the opposite side, but could not hear all that was said.

John King's stentorian bass voice was unmistakable, and in addressing me he said he seemed to know me, and thought we had met before. In this he was correct, for I saw Katie King, and shook hands and talked with John King, in 1874, at a sance held by Messrs. Herne and Williams, in Lamb's Conduit-street, when the phenomenon of materialisation was so remarkable that I have much more reason to remember it than John King himself had.

To resume: In the course of the manifestations on the present occasion, John King, speaking in a strong, clear voice, said: 'Dr. Baldwin, there is a lady trying to show herself to you, and I want you to notice particularly the lower part of her face, for there is something peculiar about it.' In inky darkness I looked straight in front of me, and immediately up went the luminous slate, and a face as unlike John King's as his face is unlike that of the medium or of any sitter present, slowly developed before my eyes. The form had light, slightly wavy hair, parted in the middle; the forehead leaned forwards, slightly bent towards the chest; the eyes were light, widely set; nose rather prominent, lips drawn downwards, chin lost in the neck and chest, which was in turn more or less lost in drapery or frills brought high up to the face. I saw all distinctly, and knew who it was, but waited for her to speak. As she did not do so, I said, hoping for a reply, 'Is that you, Priscilla?' She nodded three times, then

showed herself still more plainly, and whispered, 'God bless you.' She looked very pleased, and the slate dropped. On my telling the company that I recognised the figure, the slate went up again, and the same face, and almost in the same place, appeared once more, but this time the drapery round the neck was deficient somewhat on the right side; it looked as though a bow of ribbon had been attempted, and only half of it finished, leaving the neck on the right bare, and revealing the furrows and scars of a serious burn which had pulled down the chin, and united it in scar-tissue with the neck and chest, giving face and forehead an inclination downwards.

I was abundantly satisfied, and the form again disappeared; whereupon John King asked me what was the peculiarity about the lower part of her face. I replied that it was my sister, who was seriously burnt on the neck, arms, and chest when seven years of age, and under the care of a tender-hearted country surgeon, for the sake of ease the chin was allowed to heal down on the neck and chest, and subsequent contraction drew down the features and lips, and disfigured her for life.

May I explain further, that my sister passed on, in 1869, at the age of twenty-four? She used to wear her neck adornments attached to the top of her dress, high up, in order to hide her disfigurement. Subsequent to her interment I heard of her frequently in Belper and Birmingham through different mediums, and she promised me repeatedly that whenever opportunity occurred she would try to materialise, and show herself to me as she was in life. My visit to London in 1874 was if possible to give her an opportunity. Then, as now, I was fortunate in being a perfect stranger to everyone present; yet John King astonished me by addressing me as 'Hallo, you Brummagem fellow.' On neither occasion did anyone know anything about me, least of all could they know that I had a sister of such a description and history. Since then only on about six occasions have I had an opportunity to attend materialising sances, and from the length of time which has elapsed, and the frequent disappointments, I had ceased to expect her. On going to Mr. Husk's on the present occasion I had not even hoped that she would come, being chiefly interested to see whether John King was the same John King whom I had seen years ago at Messrs. Herne and Williams' in Lamb's Conduit-street.

I am aware there are quite a number of learned and elaborate theories for explaining my sister out of all this, by subliminal consciousness, telepathy, astral shells, &c., but I am a plain man, and prefer a direct explanation to a tortuous one, and I cannot make any of these theories fit the facts without a good deal of straining and twisting; besides, I was attached to my sister and I am not anxious to have her explained away, however cleverly. Neither am I so dominated by scientific or theological proprieties and prejudices as to be frightened at the possible existence of my sister in London more than thirty years after the burial of her body, that I must needs run after any and every new-fangled and much mangled theory to get rid of the facts. Instead of seeking these fashionable and finely spun theories to explain my sister's appearance away I am rather disposed to apply a common-sense and plain interpretation of the occurrence, which, I think, justifies me in looking upon this experience as the intelligent fulfilment of a promise made for the first time nearly thirty years ago, both promise and fulfilment occurring subsequent to the burial of my sister's body, which took place in June, 1869.

In conclusion, I wish to record the fact that John King expressed himself highly satisfied with the incident, and said that my sister and all of them were as pleased at the identification as I was to experience it, and he said, 'It is such incidents as these that make me feel that my work is not yet done.' At an earlier stage in the sance I had ventured the remark, 'I suppose, John, we shall soon be losing you as we did Katie?' to which he replied that he could not tell. As evidence of my gratitude to him, the mediums, and all concerned, I sincerely hope it will be long before he finds it necessary to follow Katie's example and bid a final farewell to this mundane sphere.

AQUILA BALDWIN.

Birmingham.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
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EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.

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A SOLEMN HOUR.

The ending of a year is always a time for grave as well as tender thought. Amid the happy greetings, the serious undertone is heard, or ought to be—'We spend our years as a tale that is told.' It is well to hear that thoughtful voice: it is better if we can hear it, and welcome it, and smile. It is a great victory not to mind; it is a greater victory to know that it is 'better on before'—that we are wayfaring on to a haven and a home—that these often wintry ways will end surely enough in a summer-land.

But the ending of the year comes now with added solemnity; for it is the ending of a century as well. In vain, bare reason urges that one year is like another, or that, on the other side of the planet, our century's ending is not theirs. It is quite true, but it somehow seems irrelevant. The great Time-cycles move on, and are related to vast astronomical periods; and these again seem strangely blended with subtle forces, purposes and fulfillments. It is not merely a matter which concerns an almanac: it is concerned with the mighty heart-beats of Fate and God.

We leave behind us we know not what; we pass on to we know not what. Mystery and unsolved problems are behind us and before. Carlyle is right: 'Generation after generation takes to itself the Form of a Body, and, forth-issuing from Cimmerian Night, on Heaven's mission appears. . . Thus, like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious Mankind thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick succeeding grandeur, through the unknown Deep. Thus, like a God-created, fire-breathing Spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth; then plunge again into the Inane. . . But whence?—O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God and to God.'

We do not propose, then, to join the great army of those who have undertaken to balance accounts with the fading century. It has kept its own secrets and its books; and the hour of reckoning is not yet. It is too early to say what we and our fathers have actually done. The bare facts are dimly recorded, but the motives that impelled, the spirit that went forth with the so-called facts, are not recorded; and least of all can we declare results. These, Time alone can reveal. They may be very different from what we now imagine. All we can do is to honestly adjust the effort to the hour, the available supply to the seeming need; but no one can tell what he has really achieved.

Many things that seem great are probably very small; and many apparently small things may be great. It is always true that the first may be last, and the last first. It is consoling also to think that while some seemingly beneficent events may speedily run themselves dry, many apparently injurious or distressing things may have in them the germs of far-reaching good. All history teaches that. It is therefore impossible to balance accounts in any way with the century, though some of its achievements are obvious enough.

It is undeniable, for instance, that the world has made important advances in many things that make for gain and comfort on the material side of human life; though, even here, the amount of the gain and good may not at all be as great as we imagine. In relation to 'comfort' this is assuredly true; for comfort is entirely relative to standard and custom. A nice villa is better than a poor cottage, and a poor cottage may be better than a gipsy's tent, but the comfort, in either case, is purely a matter of use and desire. Thousands of the denizens of gipsy-tents would hate villa life, on the score of comfort alone. 'He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow,' said the wise man of the East. 'He that increaseth his standard and his habit of comfort increaseth the sources of discomfort,' might be said by the wise man of the West. We have, indeed, made amazing advances in material things, but it would puzzle us to see how the account really stands on the score of average happiness.

When, however, we turn to the ethical and spiritual sides of life, the advance is not at all as clear. There are cross-currents, very difficult to trace, and still more difficult to estimate as to depth and force, but the outlook is not entirely consoling. We sometimes wonder whether we are not, to a great extent, suffering from a spiritual debauch of selfish, though in some directions attractive, worldliness. The love of money and the standard of its value, as the ticket admitting to everything; the increase in luxury; the self-regarding masterful impulses, making possible such curiously callous forms of injustice, all tend to the arrest of congratulation upon the 'advances' of this much-praised century. There are many keen-sighted and keen-witted observers of the signs of the times who tell us that we are morally and spiritually dwindling, that real heroism, the essence of which is sacrifice and not brute courage in getting what one wants, is a vanishing grace, and that we are a race of degenerates, neurotics and 'cads.' We do not think so, but we find it very difficult to argue that we are shining as a race of ethical athletes, aspirants and saints.

On the whole, so far as we are specially concerned, we ought to be thankful and hopeful. Our prospects, as Spiritualists, were never as good. Our only fear is that we shall not be resolute and enterprising enough to house and husband the treasures ready to our hands. The spirit of inquiry is abroad. There are hungerings and thirstings which are all the more urgent because of the starved ethical and spiritual conditions of modern society. Science is now, knowing or unknowing, justifying us or preparing the court for our justification. We are no longer relegated to the merely silly side of journalism. The preachers are looking out with mixed feelings upon this Star in the East. Yes, we are thankful and hopeful.

In the meantime, one of the colossal facts of the departing century is that Materialism, so long the world's skeleton in the closet, is now a heap of dust; and that Agnosticism is taken at its word as that which does not know. Materialism is right enough as far as it goes, but the old wall has vanished, and we have simply passed on. We now know that it is impossible to explain or even to define the innermost facts of life and thought or of substance in terms of chemistry and dynamics. Before long, Science will have

to say: 'In one sense or another, we are all Spiritualists now.'

And so we end on a strong note of confidence in the mighty Powers of God and Good. No permanent going back is possible. Sorrowful lessons will have to be learnt: bitter but blessed disillusionings will come; but these will all work together for our good: and Humanity can only end at one goal—at the feet of the Ideal Christ, 'clothed and in its right mind.'

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A meeting of Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held in the French Drawing Room, St. James's Hall (entrance from Piccadilly), at 7 for 7.30 p.m., on Friday *next*, January 4th, 1901, when

'TIEN,'

speaking through Mr. J. J. Morse, will answer questions from the audience. Friends wishing for 'Tien's' help towards the solution of problems which may have occurred to them will do well to come prepared with their questions already written—bearing in mind that the questions should *not* be of a purely personal character, of no interest except to the inquirer, but should have some bearing on the facts and philosophy of Spiritualism.

DRAWING ROOM MEETING.

In the interest of friends who find it impracticable or inconvenient to attend evening meetings, it has been decided to hold another Drawing Room Meeting in the French Room, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, on Friday, January 11th, 1901, from 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m., for conversation and the answering of questions bearing upon subjects of mutual interest.

Afternoon Tea at 4.30 p.m.

Admission will be by *ticket only*. Tickets will be sent to all Members and Associates.

THE DOUBLE.

I have been requested by one of your frequent contributors to send the following account for the benefit of those who are interested in 'the double.'

A friend and I were going to a concert, and my friend, being nervous, wished me to go home with her after the concert, and remain over night. Having to pass my own home before reaching hers, my husband arranged to give me a sign—viz., to have a light burning in the children's room if they required me, and to have all in darkness otherwise.

When the time came the lights were gone, the blinds were drawn, and I was on the wrong side of them. The eerie feeling that came over me while I gazed upward at those eloquent windows can never be effaced from my memory, but saying nothing of this to my friend, we walked on. Being too homesick to partake of the supper which was waiting, I went straight to my bedroom, and lying down I threw three kisses to my dear ones at home and straight-way seemed to *float* into a deep, dreamless sleep.

When I went home in the morning my husband's first greeting was, 'You came to see us last night, mother.' Puzzled to know his meaning, he explained: 'The children and I exchanged rooms. I had put out the light, but was lying awake in the darkness, when you entered the room. You were in your night-robe, and your hair was hanging in a plait over your shoulders. You passed to the foot of the bed. I saw you distinctly, for you were accompanied by a most beautiful, but weird, dazzling blue light, which seemed to rise from the floor. I sat up to have a nearer view, but you vanished as I did so, and the room was in darkness again.'

'How did you feel?' I asked. 'Were you nervous?'

'Very nervous indeed,' he replied; 'it was not canny.'

At that time we had neither of us heard of such happenings.

Carlisle.

M.

IS A SPIRITUALIST CHURCH NEEDED?

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MR. ROBERT M. THEOBALD, M.A.,
TO THE MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES OF THE LONDON
SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER
30TH, 1900.

(Continued from page 609.)

DISCUSSION ON MR. THEOBALD'S ADDRESS.

MR. R. BODDINGTON asked for some definition of what the lecturer meant by religion, and also why he talked of the Christian Church as a consecrated one.

MR. THEOBALD said he had already stated his impression that religion was a matter of emotion. He was not speaking of religion in a dogmatic sense, but as a question of psychological fact. Any particular religion must be defined by its dogmas.

MR. E. WHYTE was greatly surprised at the tenor of the paper they had just heard. To him it afforded very little information as to the general aspect of Spiritualism. It also implied a lack of knowledge on the speaker's side as to the working of Spiritualism at the present time. The many Sunday meetings of Spiritualists, both in London and the provinces, supplied a need, for, after all, churches and other organisations were governed by the laws of supply and demand. As illustrative of the efficacy of the work done by spiritualist meetings, Mr. Whyte quoted cases where strangers and sceptics had been led, by means of the clairvoyance given by mediums at such meetings, not only to espouse the cause of Spiritualism, but also that of religion. Atheists had been led by Spiritualism to a belief in the Deity. The Sunday services of Spiritualists, therefore, met a demand which was not supplied by the churches, a work which they were not capable of performing. Again, Spiritualism taught that man's future happiness or misery was determined by his own inherent character. They could not find that doctrine emphasised by any of the churches. With the churches it was creed, not character. The religion of the churches was a materialistic religion, as proved by their doctrine of the resurrection of the body.

MR. ROWE thought the lecturer had given his case away, and for this reason. If Spiritualism was to be confined to what he (the lecturer) called the scientific basis, obviously he had proved the need for a meeting together of those people who had learned something higher than the mere phenomena. Dr. Theobald had said that if the members of the proposed Spiritualistic Church met together they would still be yearning for something they had not got. Well, he (Mr. Rowe) could not speak for other people, but, so far, he had not had such an experience. Spiritualists wanted to meet with kindred souls and not merely to witness phenomena.

THE REV. JOHN PAGE HOPPS, responding to an invitation to address the meeting, said he would much rather listen to others than speak himself. He might say, however, he had not felt happy that evening. (Hear, hear.) Somehow, the atmosphere and tone were not right. 'I do not know,' he continued, 'whether the greater part of the address was directed towards me, or merely a small part of it. But I felt a good deal as though I were a little child wanting to walk with a few companions and pick a few flowers, and then I am chided and told to avoid gluttony and drunkenness. Now I do not see that I am in any danger of gluttony and drunkenness; and my wishes and opinions are simply those of a man who feels quite certain that there are a great many people in this mighty London who want to gather together as brothers and sisters for their own ends. And yet we are told this is selfish, and that the idea of a church is much higher when it provides boots and clothes and soup, for other people. But I can tell you, as an old minister, that this idea has turned many a church away from its proper work.' Proceeding, Mr. Hopps said that his idea was that they should meet together, and do each other good by sympathy and exchange of thoughts, and then go away and use their new strength and courage in their work in the world. It would be silly and selfish if they merely met to sing hymns and say prayers; but no intelligent Spiritualist dreamed of doing anything of the sort. They

wanted to meet together in a right spirit to strengthen their faith, to improve their tempers, to encourage each other, and feel the joy of sympathy pass from mind to mind and from heart to heart, and then to go away and live their separate lives the better, as a result. Such a view of the matter was expressed, in one form or another, every day in letters or the utterances of people who attended the Alliance meetings. One lady had written that she felt 'warmed and cheered in the bright company.' Other testimony of the same kind which had reached him, either by letter or orally, was also quoted by Mr. Hopps. 'I do not believe a bit,' he continued, 'in an organised spiritual church, with a constitution, rules and officials. I think it would be a very great mistake to call on Dr. Theobald or anybody else to draw up such an organisation as that. We should all go wrong. It seems so absolutely unlike the thing we want. Therefore I do not believe in a spiritualistic church in that sense, and I do not believe in any spiritualistic organisation whatever of that kind being called into existence by the London Spiritualist Alliance. I should not like to see the Alliance responsible for anything of the kind. What I want is (and I am sure some day the right man or woman will come, and it will be done) that in this mighty London there shall be a chance for those people who don't want theology, who don't want controversy, ritual, or priestcraft, but who want to be brothers and sisters in spiritual communion. Once you knew the beauty and joy of it you would never be willing to give it up. And I am perfectly sure that London would be very much blest by such gatherings.'

MR. WILLIAM THEOBALD: I was very glad to hear Mr. Page Hopps say that he did not wish for a church; but that is the whole question that is under discussion. It appears to me, therefore, that he practically agrees with the lecturer. The kind of meetings which have been described by previous speakers can be held, and are held now, and very valuable and instructive they are. They fill a want which is apparent to us all; but it seems to me that if you organise these meetings, or create a church or an organisation by any means, you must introduce rules. (No.) You cannot have an organisation without rules, and you then run a danger of introducing creeds. That is the danger to be avoided. Spiritualism as now conducted is, I think, a very important medium for co-operation between religion (as we understand it) and science, and it has done immense good in harmonising the spirit of the churches with scientific thought. It seems to me that Spiritualism has a mission to fulfil by permeating the organisations which now exist rather than to create another which I maintain would require rules, and thus run a great risk of introducing creeds.

MR. BODDINGTON, supplementing his previous remarks, disputed the proposition that Spiritualism did not contain within itself the essentials of religion. Like Mr. Whyte, he claimed that it had made its converts devout and given them a larger share of the divine life than they had previously possessed. He referred to the nebulous character of present-day Christianity, which, under the influence of the Higher Criticism, had been so modified that the ablest theologian could scarcely tell what was Christianity and what was not.

DR. BERKS HUTCHINSON thought that instead of leaving the churches, Spiritualists should try to influence the ministers and congregations in the direction of Spiritualism. He personally had been instrumental in converting the minister of a church to Spiritualism. Nevertheless he claimed that Spiritualism was not a religion but a science.

MADAME MIRIAM GODFREY referred to the fact that Spiritualists belong to all denominations, Jews, Protestants and Roman Catholics amongst others. A church would therefore clearly be a mistake, since on the very first point of religious belief they would feel a difference. Her own conception of religion was simply embodied in the injunction, 'Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.'

MR. E. W. WALLIS said they were all deeply indebted to Dr. Theobald for his able paper, and the very suggestive remarks he had made. Instead, however, of asking, 'Is a Spiritualist Church Needed?' he thought perhaps it would have been better to frame the question in this way 'Are Spiritualist Churches Needed?' Then they would have got nearer to the kernel of the subject. From a study of the

correspondence in 'LIGHT' he had not gathered that the idea was to build up a large organisation, or set up a church or creed. The idea was that there might be one church, if possible, where Spiritualists could meet together for sympathy, co-operation and mutual heartening, in order to go back to the world strengthened and refreshed. He entirely dissented from Dr. Theobald's suggestion that such an object was a selfish one, and he contended that Spiritualism and Religion were closely allied, since the religious sense was a quality of the human spirit. Spiritualism, indeed, was the science of the spiritual life, and as such must include all religions. Dr. Theobald had expressed the opinion that the churches which already exist should be used by Spiritualists for the performance of their religious duties. To him (Mr. Wallis) there were many things in the churches which outraged one's sense of God, of religion, of love and righteousness, and he quoted the case of certain of the Psalms and the cruder types of hymns. In this matter of religious exercises the attitude was the important point. Spiritualistic societies which exist for propaganda work, and to assist inquirers, were not perhaps fulfilling the highest duties, and a spiritualist church, or meetings of a more devotional character, might tend to lead Spiritualists to the very work which they ought to engage in. 'It seems to me,' said Mr. Wallis in conclusion, 'that the question can be reduced to this: Is Spiritualism to be confined to a consideration of its facts, or are we to follow out those facts to their logical conclusion and recognise what they teach in relation to our spiritual nature and needs, and with devout worship and aspiration endeavour to express those religious needs and our religious longings in services of this character?'

ALDERMAN WARD regretted the fact that many Sunday meetings of Spiritualists were held in rooms which during the week were devoted to promiscuous gatherings, dancing, &c. Could not Spiritualists secure for their services rooms which should afford better conditions? If they were to protect their mediums he thought some steps should be taken in this direction.

MISS MARCH asked whether Spiritualists could not at once set about raising money to establish what might be called a 'Spiritualist Meeting House,' and do all the good they could with it.

MR. T. ATWOOD thought that many Spiritualists had but an imperfect notion of what went on inside the churches. In a church he had recently attended he had heard the Rev. Boyd Carpenter say that character and not creed was the true test of a man's religion. Teaching of that sort was very prevalent in all kinds of churches.

MR. BROOKS felt that Spiritualists were in need of more fellowship and more like-mindedness. He thought, therefore, that there should be a meeting place of the kind under discussion. He had found, on going round the various societies, that reverence and worship were greatly lacking at their meetings, and he thought many people in the churches would willingly attend those particular places if they could only find reverence, not only for God but also for one another.

MR. BERTRAM thought that the answer to the question 'Is a Spiritualist Church Needed?' was 'Yes.' Nevertheless, there were a good many spiritualistic churches in London, and he would be very sorry if these gatherings or congregations were ever done away with. He hoped Spiritualists would soon have halls of their own, and be no longer compelled to assemble in places which at other times were used for promiscuous purposes.

THE PRESIDENT: It seems to me you are all really agreed although you all seem to differ. If you will take the question put before you in the sense in which it was intended, I think you will come to a mutual understanding. It is astonishing how readily some people will find what they are looking for, although to other minds it may have no real existence. For instance, as Editor of 'LIGHT' I have been charged in an American paper with having advocated the establishment of a sacerdotal Spiritualism and spiritualist hierarchy, and with admitting letters in favour of such a movement while refusing letters on the other side. The writer evidently expected to see a sacerdotal Spiritualism advocated in 'LIGHT' and, therefore, managed to find it, notwithstanding the fact that 'LIGHT' has never advocated anything of the

kind. I make it a rule in the conduct of 'LIGHT,' that every correspondent who answers another shall treat him courteously, and I have never refused a letter simply because the views expressed differed from my own, but I have done so when the writers have been discourteous or abusive. I have allowed every man to speak freely so long as he treated those from whom he differed as equally sincere and honest as himself, and nobody knows, I think, from what I admit into the pages of 'LIGHT,' what my own opinions are. Well, I should not have alluded to 'LIGHT' at all to-night but for the fact that this meeting comes out of correspondence in 'LIGHT'; and I do not know that I should even then have referred to the matter, were it not that the American paper of which I have spoken goes on to suggest that, being also President of the London Spiritualist Alliance, I have thus committed the Alliance to the same views in regard to a supposed sacerdotal Spiritualism. But kindly permit me to remind you that if I ever commit the Alliance to anything unworthy, the Alliance has an easy remedy. It has only to ask me to retire, and I should do so with the greatest possible alacrity. But I do not think I have ever committed the Alliance to anything of the kind. The gentleman who writes thus has made a mistake. Nothing has ever been suggested as to the establishment of any such sacerdotal Spiritualism as he indicates, and, on the other hand, my own personal view is this:—Such an organisation is impossible, and I am moreover strongly impressed that the very attempt to establish it would inflict the greatest possible injury on our cause.

A friend has suggested to-night that he could not go to a church where he would hear such and such a doctrine preached. But let me remind him that what to him would be so objectionable is, in all probability, what some other Spiritualist would very much like to hear. Do not forget that while you have your own decided opinions, other Spiritualists hold different opinions just as strongly and just as conscientiously. There are spiritualists in almost every religious denomination, including Roman Catholics. How can you have one recognised spiritualist church that will embrace Spiritualists of every creed, from Roman Catholics at the one end to Unitarians at the other? You may have religious meetings without a creed, but you cannot have a Church without a creed. People do not go to a church merely to be treated with negatives, knowing that certain things must not be so much as hinted at. Roman Catholics insist that certain rites and ceremonies are an essential part of their worship. Others insist that certain doctrines must be constantly proclaimed. What would a Wesleyan think if his minister failed to preach the vicarious sacrifice—'Christ and Him crucified'? Some Spiritualists—the Swedenborgians, for instance—do not believe in a vicarious atonement, but there are numbers of Spiritualists who do; and if you start a church in which you rule out certain doctrines, you will exclude a large number of Spiritualists also. I know of a Roman Catholic circle the members of which have communications from some of the saints of their Church, who counsel them to hold fast to their faith. Are we to taboo them? Certainly we cannot.

And now there comes another question: Do I object to spiritualist churches altogether? I once knew a clergyman with very strong feelings against Nonconformists, and one of his parishioners said to him, 'Is it true, as I hear, that you have refused to bury a Dissenter?' 'I? I refuse to bury a Dissenter? Certainly not! I should like to bury the lot of them!' was the reply of the clergyman. That was a man of large ideas and a very comprehensive mind. I am disposed to be equally comprehensive—though in another direction. If I am asked whether I object altogether to a spiritualist church, I would reply that, while I object to the promotion of a 'Church' which should presume to represent Spiritualists in the aggregate, I would gladly see churches for Spiritualists everywhere, scattered through the length and breadth of the land. Spiritualism may not be, primarily, a religion, but that is no reason why Spiritualists should not be religious and keenly feel the need of places in which those of them who are like-minded could meet from time to time for meditation, communion, and aspiration. But I would call such places by some other name than 'church'—a term

likely to lead to misapprehension. To my mind, 'Temple' would be a better name—a spiritualist temple for Spiritualists to worship in, but not a 'Spiritualist Church' supposed to represent the whole body of Spiritualists. Any local spiritualist church would only represent those who chose to be represented by it.

The President then quoted instances in support of his contention that it was impossible to lay down a body of doctrine that should be common to all Spiritualists. Thus 'Hafed,' a volume of distinctly spiritualistic origin, taught the divinity and immaculate conception of Christ, although many Spiritualists held that Christ was only a man, and born under the usual circumstances. If Spiritualists differed from 'Hafed,' they differed from him as Rationalists, not as Spiritualists.

Then, again, they might take the account given by 'Julia,' Mr. Stead's control, of her experiences in the next life. She asserts that she met and conversed with Jesus Christ in that other life, and that he spoke of himself as her Saviour. Under such circumstances, it was unwise to talk about setting up a spiritualistic church. Spiritualists should pride themselves on their liberty, and not bind themselves to any doctrine that was not compatible with reason. Spiritualists should be as plainly advocative of their own views as they could, but the danger began when any Spiritualist, or body of Spiritualists, insisted that his, or its, views alone represented Spiritualism. Looked at from that point of view, they did not want a sacerdotal Spiritualism, and he would suggest that the term 'temple' be substituted for 'church.'

A vote of thanks to the speaker was unanimously adopted, and MR. THEOBALD, in some concluding remarks, regretted that Mr. J. Page Hopps had been obliged to leave before receiving the osculation which he had prepared for his wounded feelings. He and some other speakers had very unnecessarily disclaimed the supposed imputation of selfishness as characterising spiritualist meetings of a devotional character. The topic itself may explain all this. A church which exists only in order to benefit its own members is essentially a selfish organisation, however other-worldly its type of selfishness may be. But devotional meetings in which outside interests are left out of consideration are not liable to such a censure, and he wished his criticisms to be taken with this limitation. Other objections had been so admirably met by the president in his general summing up of the discussion, that he had no disposition to add more, except to thank them for the exceedingly kind and patient hearing they had accorded to him.

NOT WORK, BUT WORRY.

It is not the work, but the worry
That wrinkles the smooth, fair face,
That blends grey hair with the dusky
And robs the form of its grace,
That dims the lustre and sparkle
Of eyes that were once so bright,
But now are heavy and troubled
With a weary, despondent light.

It is not the work, but the worry
That drives all sleep away,
As we toss and turn and wonder
About the cares of the day.
Do we think of the hands' hard labour
Or the steps of the tired feet?
Ah, no! But we plan and ponder
How both ends can be made to meet.

It is not the work, but the worry
That makes us sober and sad,
That makes us narrow and sordid
When we should be cheery and glad.
There's a shadow before the sunlight
And ever a cloud in the blue;
The scent of the roses is tainted,
The notes of the song are untrue.

It is not the work, but the worry
That makes the world grow old,
That numbers the years of its children
Ere half the story is told;
That weakens their faith in heaven
And the wisdom of God's great plan.
Ah, 'tis not the work, but the worry,
That breaks the heart of man!

—'The Suggester and Thinker.'

THE PROPOSED MAGNETIC SOCIETY.

POSSIBLE MISCONCEPTIONS.

The result of my two previous communications to 'LIGHT,' suggesting that a meeting should be held to consider the advisability of establishing a magnetic society in London, encourages me to draw attention to the subject again, in the hope that, by dealing with one or two points which have arisen, I may be able to add to the number of those who have already promised to support the project. Although the offers of assistance which I have received are by no means numerous, they are characteristic, and at the same time gratifying. They show conclusively that the need for unity and concerted action is strongly felt, not only by persons desirous of aid in their efforts to master the subject, but also by those whose practical knowledge enables them to realise the importance of further inquiry in this interesting department of science. Let me at once state, however, that in neither of my last two communications have I wished to infer that the proposed meeting should be confined entirely to those who style themselves 'magnetists' or students of 'magnetism.' The latter term was used by me for two reasons—in the first place, because it is the most familiar to, and the one most favoured by, readers of your journal, and secondly, because it was my desire to avoid both 'hypnotism' and 'mesmerism,' which cannot be used in a general sense without leading to the alienation of many whom it should be our object to conciliate. Even 'magnetism,' it is true, does not satisfactorily connote the subject in all its aspects. It is liable to become associated in our minds with 'animal magnetism,' as practised by Egyptians, Greeks and Romans many centuries ago; and also, if used without any qualification, it may be meant to indicate, as a correspondent points out, 'a branch of science quite distinct from that which interests us.' Still, when used in the sense in which we, as readers of 'LIGHT,' regard it, it frees us to a great extent of those extremes which 'hypnotism' and 'mesmerism' frequently imply, and, therefore, may be more appropriately used, until a better and more comprehensive term can be agreed upon. For these reasons alone have I made exclusive use of 'magnetism' hitherto, in writing to this journal; and if, by so doing, I have caused any who are familiar with the subject under another name to hesitate in expressing their willingness to attend the meeting referred to, I trust that they will hesitate no longer, but by the offer of personal support take the first step necessary to bring about the desired end.

Combination means progress, and unless we are prepared to sink our prejudices and approach the subject with an open mind, how can we hope to bring about that reconciliation of theories and processes which must necessarily precede any attempt to secure for the science the general recognition which it deserves? Great as may be the difference between the ancient theory of Mesmer and the more recent one of Braid—not to mention various others which have been advanced—such difference ought not to prevent the two schools from being brought together in a society which aimed at the elucidation of known facts, the discovery of new truths, and a fuller comprehension of the science in all its varying aspects. Rigid adherence to one particular theory, and unrestricted condemnation of all in opposition to it, have already been too long in vogue, and I sincerely urge all who have the interests of the subject, as a whole, at heart—no matter whether hypnotists, mesmerists, or magnetists, or merely students—to see if, by a careful discussion in meeting assembled, means can be devised to make the dawn of a new century also the dawn of a new era for this most interesting and important science. There is one other point which may have adversely influenced many who are otherwise much in sympathy with the suggestion. My attention has been drawn to it by another correspondent, who thinks that several who are interested in the matter may have hesitated to express approval lest they should be involved in financial responsibilities which they could not possibly discharge. Of course, no such responsibility would be incurred by pledging oneself to attend a preliminary meeting. Details of this

character would have to be arranged by the supporters themselves at a subsequent gathering, should the formation of a society be agreed upon. The only object I have in view is to arouse systematic activity in a science which I feel to be capable not only of great expansion, but also of being turned to valuable account in more than one respect.

ARTHUR HALLAM.

23, Dante-road, Newington, S.E.

THE INTERNATIONAL METAPHYSICAL LEAGUE.

An important movement has been growing up in America among the different schools of New Thought workers and an effort is being made to unite them in the International Metaphysical League, which aims:—

'1. To establish unity and co-operation of thought and action among all individuals and organisations throughout the world devoted to the study of the science of mind and being, and to bring them, so far as possible, under one name and organisation.

'2. To promote interest in and the practice of a true spiritual philosophy of life; to develop the highest self-culture through right thinking as a means of bringing one's loftiest ideals into present realisation; to stimulate faith in and study of the higher nature of man in its relation to health, happiness and progress.

'3. To teach the universal Fatherhood and Motherhood of God and the all-inclusive brotherhood of man;

'4. That One Life is immanent in the universe and is both centre and circumference of all things, visible and invisible, and that One Intelligence is in all, through all, and above all, and that from this Infinite Life and Intelligence proceed all light, love, and truth.

'5. These simple statements are, in their nature, tentative, and imply no limitations or boundaries to future progress and growth, as larger measures of light and truth shall be realised.'

The second annual convention of the league which was recently held in New York was very successful. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: The Rev. R. Heber Newton, New York, president; Mrs. Annie Rix Militz, Chicago, vice-president; Warren A. Rodman, Boston, secretary; Charles Brodie Patterson, New York, treasurer; Mrs. Fanny M. Harley, Chicago, assistant secretary. It was voted to hold the next annual convention in Chicago. Mr. C. C. Post and Mrs. Ursula N. Gestefeld were elected to fill vacancies in the executive board.

We shall watch the development of this movement with considerable interest. It is certainly an effort in the right direction and deserves to succeed.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

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

'Concerning Forecasts.'

SIR,—As a brief sequel to 'An Old Correspondent's' communication, in 'LIGHT' of December 15th, allow me to make the following statement:—In 1875 I met with Lottie Fowler in Glasgow, and through her I made the acquaintance of one of my most valued friends. On that occasion, at the close of the sitting, she said suddenly, 'You will go to Germany.' 'Germany!' I replied; 'I have no more prospect or expectation of going to Germany than I have of going to the moon.' 'Nevertheless,' she said, 'you will go.' Three years afterwards I received a telegram from Professor —, asking me if I would undertake his clerical duties in Hamburg, as he found that he could not go himself. I consented to do so.

How Lottie could see so far ahead has often been a puzzle to me, but her words came true.

FIDES.

PREMATURE BURIAL.—A correspondent, writing from Algiers, says:—'I hope you will continue to agitate the question of "Premature Burial." I have known of three cases which narrowly escaped burial while in trance; two were unconscious till they suddenly awoke to find themselves in their coffins; the third, a girl of seventeen, was conscious all the time and the horror turned her hair white. A fourth, a young married woman, was buried alive, and the fact was discovered by the family shortly after removing the coffin to another cemetery. No test is safe: decomposition setting in is the only certainty of death. In America the "Under-taker's Gazette" calmly announced that "about fifty persons annually were buried alive." In France, and French colonies, the law compels burial twenty-four hours after death.'