

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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SPECIAL NOTICE.

The Editor has left town for a short time, and he therefore asks his friends and correspondents to bear in mind that —while all communications intended to be printed will have due attention—he will be unable, at present, to reply to letters of a private or personal nature.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

From Mrs. Greenwood, of Hebden Bridge, who has done so much for Lyceums, we have received the following interesting particulars concerning them:—

Federated Lyceums 122, with a total membership of 1,245 officers and 6,540 scholars; Non-Federated 24, with a membership of 127 officers and 711 scholars; making a grand total of 1,372 officers and 7,251 scholars, total 8,623. These are the figures for the year ending December 31st, 1903. The Union owns its own official organ, 'The Lyceum Banner.' Its circulation has increased 50 per cent. during the last year and a-half, and it has added four pages to its size; is financially sound, there being a credit balance of £16 11s. 3d. The general fund has a cash in bank balance of £130 7s. 9½d. Our books for Lyceum work are now supplied to Lyceums in U.S.A., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Our sales last year were £203 10s. 5½d.

The Union's assets exceed the liabilities by £827 18s. 5½d. I think the above figures are proof positive of the Union's growth and vitality.

We hope to hear that London will follow Lancashire and Yorkshire's inspiring lead.

The following is in circulation, in the form of a neat little four-page invitation:—

A LYCEUM: WHAT IT IS.

The Sunday School of the Spiritualists known as 'A Lyceum' is composed of members of all ages, and is purely a democratic organisation, founded on the principle of 'the greatest good for the greatest number.'

The officers, or teachers, are elected by vote.

The origin is a spiritual one, and was given to the world by the famous Poughkeepsie Seer—Mr. Andrew Jackson Davis, who is therefore the founder of the movement.

The teachings are taken from the writings of the great, the wise and good people who have lived in all times and ages; also from the inspired lips of living people, whose lives are being spent in humanitarian endeavours.

The aim and object of the Lyceum is to train the members in ways of honesty and uprightness, that humanity may be influenced by their example to do right *because it is right* and shun wrong *because it is wrong*.

The training is four-fold: Physical, mental, moral, and spiritual.

(a) Physical by means of a series of marches and calisthenics arranged so as to bring into action every portion of the body.

(b) Mental. Given a sound mind and a sound body, the mentality will necessarily be healthy and vigorous, and capable of understanding the wise

counsels of the teachers, and the precepts contained in the 'Lyceum Manual.'

(c) Moral. A sense of right and wrong is inherent in each one, and this is impressed on the child's mind by careful example; and by strict adherence to truth, in thought, word and deed.

(d) Spiritual. After the above indications of development, the child must learn how to unfold the God-like qualities of love, truth and wisdom.

Thus, the glorious aim of the Lyceum is the spiritual, moral and intellectual elevation of its members, and through them of the world at large.

Its summary of principles is as follows—

'The Fatherhood of God.

'The Brotherhood of Man.

'The Immortality of the soul.

'The proven facts of communion between departed human spirits and mortals.

'Personal responsibility, with compensation and retribution hereafter, for good or evil deeds done here.

'And a path of eternal progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the path of eternal good.'

The B.S.L.U. The Lyceums in the United Kingdom are joined in union under the title of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union.

Through its secretary all necessary literature, 'Manuals' and 'Songsters,' &c., for the carrying on of a Lyceum may be obtained; also full instructions as to the formation of Lyceums. Address:—Mr. Alfred Kitson, Bromley-road, Hanging Heaton, Dewsbury.

'The Daily Mail' has published a series of sensational and obviously cooked reports of visits to London palmists. We hope good will result, in the cleaning of the stables. When the work is done, perhaps 'The Daily Mail' will turn the hose upon itself. It has been long overdue.

'The Daily Mail' we can quite understand, but 'The Daily News' surprises us. It prominently reports in large type a vulgar case of assault in Birmingham, specially telegraphed ('From our own correspondent'), and heads it, 'Spiritualist's wife's experiences.' If the brute had been a newspaper man, say an editor, would it have been decent to specially telegraph an 'Editor's wife's experiences'? There are black sheep here and there all over the land.

But perhaps we may take as a compliment the apparently offensive heading and the hot haste in publishing; as though 'The Daily News' meant to suggest: 'Here is a strange thing! A Spiritualist can actually be a brute!'

Our good friend, Mr. John Lobb, C.C., has been preaching sound doctrine to the Wesleyans, in Dalston. The title of his Discourse was 'Swine preferred to Jesus Christ,' the reference, of course, being to the Gadarenes who, taking alarm at the loss of their swine, besought Jesus to go away. They seemed to think their pigs worth more than the Christ, and more than the two 'possessed' men who had been restored to sanity by him.

Mr. Lobb, who knows as much about London as anyone, appears to think that Gadarenes and Londoners are pretty much alike. He says:—

The material interests which hustled Jesus Christ out of Decapolis are operating still against the spread of spiritual

religion. Never in the history of the Church was there less spiritual religion. A wave of worldly-mindedness, formalism, mere external conventionality, has taken a firm hold of the churches. Secular interests, the fascination, the pleasures of society, money-making, keeping up of appearances, have vitally affected the spiritual life of the churches. A wave of religious indifference, too, has come over the masses. What is to bring us back? How can the materialism of to-day be broken up? Something must be done sooner or later. Unfortunately, the political element and questions municipal have now a place in the pulpits. Passive resistance, too, blocks the way to religious revival of religion. Many of our churches are rent by great questions affecting the material interests of the masses. Meanwhile the spiritual side of religion is in abeyance, and in many of our churches we have large crops of spiritual weaklings. I had hoped that ere this we should have had a revival of religion.

Castling about him for consolation, the preacher exclaimed, 'I sometimes think we are on the eve of a remarkable development of Spiritualism,' and he challenges Methodism to look in that direction. 'Methodism,' he says, 'has all the necessary machinery and the most complete and perfect organisation and the means to accomplish a grand spiritual revival. God can use the simplest and the most unlikely means. It may be that from this church someone will go forth in the name and strength of God, as a flame of fire, breathing into the churches vitality and renewed vigour.'

In this, we bid Methodism and all other isms *God speed*.

'Focus' announces a 'Spirit-Faking Competition,' with a view to showing that supposed spirit-photographs can be manufactured. Does anybody doubt it? Experts may or may not be able to explain the supposed spirit-photographs, but that is hardly the important matter. What really matters is—the conditions under which the pictures are obtained.

'Focus' presents a report of an interview with Mr. Blackwell, whose abundant (some say, whose over-abundant) collection is well-known to some of our readers; but the puzzle remains. The Editor of 'Focus,' though shy and sly, is by no means unfriendly. Here is a specimen of his criticism:—

The reader may well ask what are the views of 'Focus' upon this question? Well, in the first place we are convinced of the sincerity of Mr. Blackwell, and do not for an instant doubt his good faith. Nor must it be supposed that we deny the existence of psychic manifestations. We have never seen a ghost ourselves, but that is no argument against such things. We have never seen the other side of the moon; yet we are not open to a charge of lunacy by asserting that we believe the nocturnal luminary really *has* another side, and that it is not a glorified dinner-plate. The fact is there are far too many well-authenticated instances of supernatural happenings to admit of any sneering on the subject.

Every son of the morning, in every church, being judge, we are all moving out of the old fog-bank of the baptized Paganisms. Not many are left behind to sigh for brimstone and to send heretics to hell. We are all getting liberal and charitable and pleasant,—too much so, some say, for perfect frankness and honest truth. But it is a pleasant change, anyhow.

This, from an enlightened preacher of one of the old churches, is like the balm of Gilead after the scorching of Gehenna:—

I make no attempt to formulate the creed of the future. I only know that we are coming to an age when no church can burn or hang us for learning; and to an age when no man will care a fig whether the priest damns him or not—provided he is sincere and honest. Yet I venture to suggest that in this religion of the future, we shall have a growing disregard for rewards and punishments. The schedule of salvation will be no longer discussed, while we strive to live nobly and deserve well. The human soul will be the plane where God and man walk together. The language there spoken will be the language of conscience—a language which both God and men speak.

The Rev. F. C. Williams refreshes us with his beautiful utilising of the somewhat dry notion of one's 'subconsciousness.' He calls it 'the river' and cites the winsome summer verse, 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.' He sees it by faith, and feels it, 'just under the surface of all society and of each human life,—the secret source of personal and social human growth.'

We like the thought. The 'subconsciousness' is probably what we have been calling 'the spirit' or 'the soul': and, to that, it is good to add the thought that this spirit or soul lives in God's vast psychical 'river' whose streams are always refreshing and renewing us, and whose blessed invigorations will one day make us all 'glad.' It is a delightful faith, and therefore likely to be true.

INTERESTING EXPERIENCES.

A contributor to the Russian journal, 'Rebus,' reports his experiences with Mr. C. E. Williams during a recent visit to London.

During the four days of his stay in London he managed to have six séances, one of which took place on an afternoon in April last, in the private house of a lady friend. Including the medium there were seven people present, four ladies and three gentlemen.

Besides Mr. C. E. Williams there were two private mediums who rarely sit with public mediums, but did so on this occasion as a personal favour to the writer of the report, who says that although the room was darkened with heavy curtains, the day being bright, the light let in through some small apertures enabled the sitters to distinguish one another. He says:—

'On the right of Mr. Williams (holding his right hand and foot) sat Mr. K. (a highly educated and sympathetic Englishman). Under the same conditions I sat on the left of the medium. Mr. Williams was fully conscious throughout the séance, never went into trance, and there was *no* cabinet of any kind. There were on the table illuminated slates, pencil and paper.

'At the commencement we heard spirit voices, and felt the touch of spirit hands. I was stroked on the face by two hands, one small and one large. Simultaneously a voice was speaking to my neighbour in Swedish, and another was whispering in English to me. This voice gave me a startling message, a message I had received thrice in the course of six weeks in different countries and languages, and through different mediums. These preliminary items lasted a quarter of an hour. Then we had the "lights." They took the form of stars, circles, clouds, and eventually of a cross, which was brought quite close to us. These beautiful illuminations were followed by materialised faces, which were made visible by the aid of the luminous slates, and some of them whispered a word or two to the sitters. This portion of the séance lasted an hour. After an interval of a few minutes a spirit voice told me to let the lady sitting next to me come close to the medium. I was thus left free. The medium being left at the table in charge of two sitters, the other four of us were pulled or dragged with considerable force to the opposite corner of the room, fully eight yards away from the medium, and no sooner were we there than we were surrounded by spirits who spoke to us, touched us, and showed their faces. It seemed as if our number was doubled, and that we were eight or nine living beings instead of four. The commotion was great, and some of the ladies, although accustomed to séances, began to feel nervous, so we had to break the conditions and return to the table.

'After a while I was asked if I had any question to ask as the conditions were good. I was unprepared, or I would have asked to be lifted up to the ceiling (no light task this, considering I am a big man), but I did ask a materialised form to go up to the ceiling and show his face there, also to show the illuminated slate at other parts of the room, which was quickly done. This second part of the séance lasted an hour, so that altogether we had been sitting for two hours and a quarter.

'Although naturally sceptical, I was obliged this time to admit the facts.'

THE MEDIUM BAILEY.

SÉANCES HELD BY THE SOCIETY OF PSYCHICAL STUDIES
AT MILAN.

(Translated from 'Luce e Ombra'.)

The following is a summary of the official account of the first three sittings with Mr. Bailey, the celebrated Australian medium, conducted by a committee appointed by the Milan Society for Psychical Studies. The committee consisted of seven gentlemen, including doctors, an engineer, and others of scientific attainments. On one occasion three other gentlemen were present by invitation.

The first sitting, held on Friday, February 26th, was a preliminary one, and the phenomena consisted merely in speeches by the controls.

At the second sitting, on Tuesday, March 1st, the doors being locked, and the room illuminated by a dull red lamp, the medium went into trance, and the control asked that he be searched. His coat, vest, and shoes having been removed, one of the committee passed his hand carefully over the medium's body, with firm pressure, while others examined the contents of his pockets. His garments were then replaced, and the company were asked to seat themselves in a semi-circle, about two yards from the medium. The control suggested that the medium should be enveloped in a bag with sleeves, leaving his hands alone projecting, and free. (This suggestion was renewed at the third sitting, because the removal of his clothes during the search made the medium feel the cold painfully. On the latter occasion it is stated that this first control, who superintended the preliminary arrangements, was 'Dr. Whitcombe'.) The control asked that strict attention be paid to requests as to light, and stated that female influence was of value among the sitters, but that persons of advanced years were not so suitable.

'Abdul' was the next control, and spoke in broken English, with Hindostani phrases, which he explained in English. He requested that the light should be put out, and after a long wait, first some, then all, of the sitters saw a vague, uncertain phosphorescent light, that approached and retreated from them, and placed itself on the level of the table; its movements were irregular, following a zigzag line, with sudden starts and jerks. Three of the sitters were under the impression that the light approached quite near, almost touching them: whereas to another it appeared never to move further than about a yard away from the medium.

The form of this faint greenish light, during the appearance of which the medium clapped his hands to show that they were free, varied considerably, as did also the strength of it, which never surpassed that of an exceedingly faint phosphorescence, disappearing and reappearing several times. Writing was obtained from 'Professor Denton,' and 'Mr. White' spoke and recited some verses.

'Abdul' now returned, and asked for a table-cloth and a fan. The former was provided, and the fan promised for the next sitting. 'Abdul' asked for darkness, then for the red light, and those present observed in his left hand a small bird's nest, about 2½ in. in diameter, and 1½ in. deep, woven out of small straws or grass stems, mixed with tufts of cotton. Three gentlemen ascertained that the nest was warm to the touch; it contained a small egg, the size of a hazel nut, which the medium took between his fingers and showed to the company. The control explained that it was the nest of the 'munia'—a little white Australian bird, known also in India.

The nest having been placed on the table-cover, another personality came and spoke for twenty minutes; then 'Abdul' returned, and, thinking that the egg might better be hatched than destroyed, took away the *appart*. 'Dr. Robinson' came and spoke of the great value of Bailey's mediumship, and on the reality of the spirit world as a higher and more stable expression of the human personality. The report of this sitting is signed by the seven members of the committee.

At the third sitting, Friday, March 4th, after similar preliminaries, the search being a very careful one, with not the slightest

trace of the presence of any hidden object, 'Abdul' came and announced that 'Professor Robinson' had gone to Babylonia to bring an inscribed tablet; that 'Professor Denton' and the Indian, 'Selim,' were present. He asked for darkness, saying that 'Selim' would bring twelve small precious stones, uncut, from his own country in the Himalaya mountains.

Darkness being produced, a greenish light was observed moving about, brighter and farther from the medium than the one seen on the last occasion. 'Abdul' spoke in an unknown tongue to 'Selim,' and in broken English to 'Professor Denton,' who, it was explained, was represented by the light. At one time the light rose nearly to the ceiling of the room, which was twelve feet high; the control asked 'Denton' to come down, and the light descended on to the table, covered with a cloth, which stood in front of the medium. The light was round or egg-shaped, about four inches across, but now changed to a streak about eight inches long by one inch across. The medium asked if those present saw 'Denton's' hand. They said 'No'; then the streak seemed to condense to form a rude figure of a hand with fore-finger extended; this was observed by all present. The luminosity then disappeared, and the control asked for the red light, and showed some small stones on the Japanese fan which lay on the table, from which he caused them to patter down, without touching them with his hand, onto a sheet of paper which he laid down on the floor to his right. After the séance there were found to be eleven small stones, which, on examination by an expert, proved to be genuine rubies. (A photograph of the stones is given.)

'Professor Denton' then announced himself, and said that the room was not sufficiently well ventilated, which was indispensable for the production of spirit phenomena. Then he spoke of the intended *appart*, saying that although thousands of tablets had been discovered, there were as many more not yet found; in Melbourne there were hundreds of tablets which had been brought by spirit agency, and which had been found to be different from any yet dug up. He explained what the tablets were, and said they must beware of preconceived notions as to the possibility of matter passing through matter. After a time a smart thud was heard as though a stone had been carelessly flung on the table, and when light was obtained a tablet was found, still enveloped in a hard coating of sand. Directions were given by 'Professor Robinson' as to its being carefully cleaned, and how this could best be done, after it had been dried, by two or three days' exposure to the air; but now the professor stood up, and delivered a lecture on the tablet, going through the motions of carefully examining the writing, stopping to pick and blow away particles of dirt (the coating, however, was not really disturbed) and translating the inscription, saying it was in commemoration of an expedition by Sargon the Second, in the eighth century B.C. (A photograph of the tablet is given, taken after it had been cleaned, and showing the cuneiform characters.)

Another control, named Abdallah, sang a Bengali song, some questions were asked and answered, and the sitting closed.

The account of the fourth séance is not given in this number. A note at the end states that Mr. Bailey left Italy rather unexpectedly, on account of his health, after two sittings at Rome, of which only the first gave appreciable results. Some disappointment is expressed, as it was hoped that the results there and elsewhere would have supplemented those obtained at Milan, which are spoken of as only of 'comparative' value.

TRANSITION.—Mr. William Armstrong, aged eighty-nine, one of the pioneers of Spiritualism in Newcastle-on-Tyne, passed peacefully to spirit life on Tuesday, the 5th inst., after but a few days' illness. His mortal form was interred at the St. Andrew's Cemetery on the 7th inst., in the presence of a few of his old friends.

UNCHANGED BY DEATH.—All testimony from the unseen world confirms the conviction that he who passes through death finds himself wide awake . . . the same being as of old. He is conscious of his continued personal identity. Death ushers us into no foreign world. All that is essential to human life here will be found there. Death makes no break in the continuity of character. It works no miracle. A man is the same here and hereafter. The physical transition that we call death can make no essential difference whatever in the spiritual reality that we call character.—REV. HEBER NEWTON.

WORDS AND THOUGHT-SYMBOLS.

I think Mr. Venning ('LIGHT,' June 25th, p. 302) is substantially in agreement with myself and others who have written on the inadequacy, and on the non-necessity, of words as means of conveying thought. The difference lies in the understanding of terms, and especially as to what is meant by 'conveying' ideas. Thought may be imparted by words in either of two ways, the direct and the indirect, the statement and the inference. The direct manner is when every word is correctly used and understood in its exact logical or dictionary meaning. But how seldom is this strictly the case! Often, even when correct words are used, the hearer fails to grasp their exact shade of meaning (non-comprehension); or attributes another and incorrect sense to them (miscomprehension); or again, in spite of these difficulties, or of incorrect expression, the hearer may after all perceive the idea intended to be conveyed. In these cases it can scarcely be said that the words, as such, have conveyed the meaning; if this be grasped, it is not because the words are understood in their literal sense, but by a transference of thought *over* rather than *through* the spoken words, and in spite of their inadequacy rather than on account of their adequacy. Thus the words which are not literally understood fall rather into the category of spoken gestures, leading the mind into the right channel by a process independent of the dictionary interpretation of the words.

This is what I had in view when I said on p. 195 (April 23rd), that 'those peoples who are most accustomed to express themselves by gestures are the quickest to apprehend the meaning of a stranger when the spoken word fails to convey it.' I referred especially to the Italians, who have a marvellous power of grasping the sense of words which convey little or nothing in their literal form. In these cases it is not the words *as words* that convey the meaning, but rather the lingual gesture which brings the two minds into a kind of telepathic sympathy; the real transference of the idea takes place on a plane outside that of the physical organs of speech and hearing, as in Mr. Venning's dream. Hence the inadequacy of the words as words, and the necessity (as Mr. Venning rightly puts it) for a 'condition of the percipient mind'—a peculiar perceptive faculty which does not reside in the dictionary portion of the intellect, but in a higher phase of mentality—'a sense which sees through and comprehends all word-symbols,' just as it comprehends gesture-symbols, or any other hint or indication of meaning.

We all know how, by an adroit conjunction of ideas, a further idea is expressed 'when more is meant than meets the ear'; what is it that it meets? We might say that the intersection of two ideas, or what we call lines of thought, results in a figure or point that is appreciable by the idea-senses, though not defined in grammar by the words themselves. (Apropos of the line just quoted from Milton, it may be interesting to recall that it refers to the inner meaning of ancient myths and romances.)

I might go further and say that it is probably by means of some such process that we convey our meaning to dogs and other animals, who certainly seem able to comprehend phrases they have not heard before, especially if accompanied by gestures; my belief is that by repeating the words we act on our own mental self, causing a sharp and well-defined thought-image to be produced, which is sensed by the 'percipient mind' above referred to, which is perhaps more fully developed in some animals than in some men. Man, in developing his senses and his reason, has atrophied his instinctive faculties, and is now prone to deny their existence, or to call them abnormal.

A curious instance of the ambiguity of words is afforded by Mr. J. K. Crawshaw's comment (p. 324) on Mr. Girdlestone's expression. Is there really any difference between 'extemporised atomic body' and 'materiality' with which the 'spirit body is clothed for a short time'? There is in the former expression no hint that the spirit body was extemporised, only its atomic 'materiality.' We should try to understand each other's meaning, without carping too much at expressions. For want of exact terms, each referring to a distinct plane, we

are obliged to use the term 'body' to denote both the spirit-body and its manifestation on the outward plane, and we have to denote the latter by such phrases as 'atomic' and 'material,' without, however, meaning to deny that, as regarded from its own plane, the spirit-body may be quite as material as our bodies appear to us, and equally possessed of an atomic structure.

J. B. SHIPLEY.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have read, with great delight, the admirable article, 'Better than Speech,' on p. 330.

THE MASTERY OF FEAR.

IV.

Since No. II. of this series was published in 'LIGHT' my advice has been sought regarding a sensitive who has developed as an automatic writer, and has become so absorbed in the exercise of her powers that she seems to think of hardly anything else. Ordinary duties are performed in a perfunctory and absent-minded way, and little interest is shown in other people or the affairs of daily life. Evidently her attention and thought are mainly given to the messages she receives, and at times she will suddenly cease from what she is doing and say, 'Someone wants to write,' and go at once to give the spirit the opportunity to write out the message. Naturally enough the friends of the sensitive are becoming anxious. They think that the practice of her mediumship is taking too strong a hold upon her and engrossing too much of her time and thought.

So far as I am able to ascertain, there is no cause for complaint regarding the character of the communications or their source, but apparently the lady is becoming unfitted for ordinary daily life, and her friends are perplexed and do not know how to deal with her.

As there may be others in a similar condition, I will, with the consent of the Editor, give here the advice I should give if I could speak to the lady herself. I should probably say to her:—

'You are acting unwisely in devoting so much time and thought to your writing, and your spirit friends must be either thoughtless or indifferent, or unaware of the effect of their influence upon you. In any case it is your duty, to others as well as to yourself, to act more discreetly and temperately, and not shut yourself off from *this* world and your friends here as you are doing. It is not good for you physically, mentally, or spiritually, to exclude all other interests from your life and devote yourself so entirely to the people on the other side. Neither is it right on their part to be so continually in your sphere and making such constant demands upon your time and strength. In all probability they, like you, feel so delighted that the way for communion has been opened that they do not realise the injurious effects which you will have to endure if your present course of conduct is persisted in. It is your duty, therefore, to tell them that the present arrangement must stop. That in future, more definite, regular, and limited periods of time for the sésances must be agreed upon. That *except at such times* there must be no writing by them. You must not *attempt* to obtain messages save at the specified times set apart for orderly intercourse. If you wish to develop your powers satisfactorily and to enjoy them, you must avoid the excessive devotion of time and thought to the practice, by which you are simply frittering away both your time and your psychic energies. Not only so, but you are failing to fulfil your duties in *this* world—how then can you expect to be fit for the duties and privileges of the *next*?

'While in this state of being it is your duty—to yourself and others—to take an active, intelligent, and useful interest in your surroundings and to exert a cheerful, helpful, and healthy influence on all with whom you associate. It is not your duty to seek to "take the kingdom of heaven by force" for your own pleasure; nor to gratify the unthinking spirits who come to you, forgetful of the interests and happiness of those around you. It is quite probable that your spirit friends come to you more often than they otherwise would because they see that you are negative, open, and unprotected, and to prevent others, less kindly or less wise, from intruding upon and injuring you.

'You must now concentrate your mental energies and safeguard yourself. Stop thinking so exclusively about the people on the other side. Come back into, and take an active interest in, this world—its duties, people, pursuits, pleasures, and opportunities to do good—and let your intercourse with the friends "over there" be a series of happy interludes in the doings of this life and do not seek to make it continuous.

'Say to your beloved spirit friends: "We have been making a mistake. I will, in future, act more reasonably, more wisely, and I ask you to kindly co-operate with me so that we may do things orderly and happily. I will set apart half an hour on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays for our interviews, and I hope you will protect me from intrusion by other spirits, and refrain from attempting to write through me yourselves, except on those days and at the time specified. When I do sit for you to write I will give you the best possible conditions, and I hope you will be prepared to utilise the time to the fullest advantage."

'I do not wish to try and frighten you, or to dwell upon the risk you run of disorderly manifestations if you dissipate your psychic powers and surrender yourself so entirely to the people on the other side. I am confident you only need to *know* what is right to *act* rightly, and I am equally confident that your spirit friends will also realise the wisdom of the more temperate course I now suggest for both you and them to follow. I do, however, plead with you earnestly to realise that while you are in this world your duty is to live your life wisely, happily, usefully, and for the good of others. *This is God's world, as much as the next; we are here for but a brief season. He has blessed us with many powers and privileges. He has made this world fair and beautiful. He calls us to service. Every struggling, sorrowing, suffering being—aye, everyone in the home or elsewhere to whom we can render ministrations of love and help—affords us opportunities for doing His will. The occasional messages from the beyond and the side glimpses of its glory that we receive, are intended to assist and encourage us, and to prompt us to more happy and zealous efforts to bless and comfort those around us, and to thus sweeten daily life by a happy and appreciative spirit; they are not intended to take us off from our duties; to make us discontented or neglectful, nor to fill our minds and occupy our thoughts to the exclusion of all practical and human interests. No, no. Use your mediumship temperately and it will bless you. Fuller developments will come as the result of conserving your energies and working understandingly and wisely. Something of the sweeter spiritual life will glorify this world, and round out your spirit in joy, so that you will not take less, but more—because deeper and truer—interest in everything and everybody here. Life will then be full of delights, for you will be strengthened to fulfil its duties by ministering spirits who seek to help you to be "faithful over a few things" here and now, that they may welcome you into the fuller life of usefulness in the beyond.'*

ANTI-FEAR.

INSPIRATION AND OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE.

BY JAMES ROBERTSON.

We cannot prove, perhaps, that Shelley, Wordsworth, and Burns were conscious of special inspiration, but from the experiences of many who have come close to our spiritual facts, whose eyes have been opened to see their inspirers, we might accept it as true that many of their rich thoughts were prompted from another sphere and impressed on their responsive minds, which gave them forth again with their own local colouring. All life is truly inspirational, and never was true book written or wise and truthful line penned that could honestly claim the copyright of exclusive authorship. When the rush of melody comes to our heart, when the eye of the mind sees clearly some potent truth, we are conscious of inspiration and we walk gladly in the strength of it for many days. But few of us can retain at all seasons the memory of what has been. If in the hours of depression we would seek to recall our visions, doubts creep in and our trust fades away. If such experiences were associated with some objective bit of evidence, if we felt the spirits' touch and heard their whispers, there would be something we could lean on to prove that those moments of exaltation, when we felt heaven was round about us, were not tricks of fancy but spiritual facts.

JACOB BOEHME AND REINCARNATION.

I cannot agree with 'Vide et Crede,' in last week's 'LIGHT,' as to what constitutes a 'categorical denial.' The passage to which I called attention, italicised by your correspondent, amounts simply to this: 'We know nothing about it,' with the addition that it is not a revealed truth. When Boehme denies anything, he does so with a vengeance, and exposes the fallacy from the deepest ground of principle. But controversially, he is concerned only with the thought-environment of his time, to which, in the West, the idea of reincarnation did not belong. All illumination is similarly limited to the immediate and proximate need. Evidently, his mind only just touched on this point as a possibility, which he dismissed without deeper consideration, as beyond the scope of recognised experience and authority. He is not intent upon it. He says not one word to show that the idea is at variance with the principles of his own positive information; and as his real disputation is always exegetic of opposed truth, no stress is to be laid on his very slight and casual reference to this subject. I may mention that one of the most profound students and devotees of Boehme, the late Mrs. Penny, came at length, and very reluctantly, to the admission that the argument for reincarnation was convincing.

'Vide et Crede' quotes from the answer to the twenty-sixth 'question concerning the soul,' in order to show that Boehme had a deeper ground for denial. This passage refers to the first of the three classes or conditions of souls which he distinguishes, viz., to those 'which have not yet attained heaven, and so stick in the source, in the principle, in the birth; they have yet the human essence, with the works in them' (italics mine). We are told that after a period of active solicitude about their earthly interests, that is, when 'their astral spirit is consumed,' they 'fall into their rest,' and then they 'touch not the turba, neither seek what is in this world,' and so on, as quoted by your correspondent. But does the latter suppose that 'the turba' means 'the source, the principle, the birth' in which they died, or that with the consumption of 'the astral spirit' (which here means the astral body of consciousness), this source, principle, or birth is also extinct? In that case truly there could be no return. Boehme does not say this, nor does he draw that inference. The turba is the tumult of that disordered cosmic and individual consciousness which 'sticks in the source,' not the source itself. The 'rest' is like our sleep, which suspends the source or principle of our daily cares as to its active functioning and relation to exciting occasions, but leaves that source or principle in its ground in us, as our daily 'birth' of this world, which accordingly revives in due diurnal periodicity. Although Jacob Boehme knew nothing of reincarnation, the passages cited are so far from proving 'that once the soul has left this plane of existence it does not return' that I find in them a direct suggestion of the analogical argument for reincarnation, of the larger cycle of periodicity with its alternations of waking and sleep; of waking and sleep on the larger scale of our circular experience.

I yield to no one in rational admiration of Boehme, of whose writings I have been a diligent student for many years; but is your correspondent, who so exalts his illumination, aware of the awful finality which he allows to this one little life of ours, in accordance with the narrowest religious conceptions of his time? Boehme gives no more countenance to any scheme of progress for the soul beyond this life than to reincarnation. But he sees that it is the principle of radical desire or attachment that determines the state, or, so to speak, the locality, of the soul, and that religion is concerned with our liberation from this 'source' or principle of existence in this world as of it. And just therefore is reincarnation not a religious doctrine, but one of untoned Nature. It is only a generalisation of our present experience of Nature and of life. The mistake is not to see in all statements of this life as finally determinative, that 'this life' includes all its repetitions.

C. C. M.

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MRS. BESANT, MOTHERLY.

At a private meeting, a few days ago, we had the pleasure of hearing Mrs. Besant address a meeting of some sixty persons, in a London Drawing-room, on her educational work in India. We had not seen her for several years, and must be forgiven if a part of our interest was personal. What intensely curious and instructive lines and mouldings are produced by that subtle sculptor, Time! Here was the old winsomeness, we said, but with what beautiful records of brave thought and strenuous effort! There was always something masterful behind that winsomeness, but the masterfulness, in prevailing, has given us something as unexpected as it is delightful.

When we last heard Mrs. Besant we seemed to be watching an attempt at flight with the help of only a consuming anxiety or a commanding will, and we could see very little worth the attempt. The experimenter appeared to be dealing with arbitrary abstractions, 'signifying nothing' and ending nowhere; and the speaker's face suggested, in the main, stress and strain, in the effort to find out the answer to a stupendous riddle. What a change! The head, grown superbly masculine, stronger, older, simpler, is the head of an administrator, not of a visionary, suggesting no longer a dreamer of dreams, but a dealer with affairs. But that is not quite it, after all. There is something else—something to account for that comfortable smile. Now we have it! This is the face of a resolute keen woman who is no longer working out occult problems but who is occupied in—mothering.

The Lecture proved it. It turned out to be an appeal for sympathy and help on behalf of a Hindu College at Benares whose wonderfully successful work points the way to a vast field in which incalculable good may be done. This College was established, at first in a very small way, by Mrs. Besant and a few Hindu friends, but is now an Institution of national importance. Already, £30,000 have been raised, and as many as 450 boys and young men enjoy the advantages of the College, its connected Boarding House, and as much of Mrs. Besant's mothering as is necessary. Chemical and physics laboratories are in course of construction, and strong efforts are to be made to turn the attention of parents and boys to the revival of the industries and arts of India, instead of to the over-crowded learned professions and Government service.

The department of the work, however, which chiefly interests us is that which relates to religious and ethical instruction. English education in India has hitherto been procurable only in Government schools and in the schools

of Christian missionaries. In the former, nothing but secular instruction is given: in the latter, of course, the Christian religion is taught, and, also of course, these schools are not acceptable to the overwhelming majority of the people of India. On the other hand, young men leave the Government schools only to become irreligious or agnostics where they cease to care for the old religion of their parents.

Mrs. Besant's ideal is to interest these young men, and to interest boys, in their country, their history, and the ancient religion. In that she sees hope for the future of India. Pursuing this idea, and by her past life and experience being specially qualified for the work, Mrs. Besant has prepared a small book which might be called 'Meeting Places for Hindus,' setting forth the central spiritual truths that underlie or run through all the sacred writings. This we take to be specially wise and practical. We agree thoroughly with her that what the manhood of India wants is to stand firmly upon its nationality, and to be proud of its past, its work, its traditions and its religion. There need be no attack upon Christian missions, and Mrs. Besant makes none; but all the world knows that all the missions in the world will never make India Christian. Why should they? The old religions of India have all that is necessary for life and conduct, and for the spirit's nourishment. Why not encourage Young India to build on its past? So far as Mrs. Besant's venture has gone she has shown that it can be done, and with marked success.

Young India is awake and alert; is scientific and super-critical; is getting rather restive under India's treatment as 'a conquered country'; is 'off with the old love' so far as the old love is the old religion, and is by no means 'on with the new' so far as the new love is the Christian missionary. But it wants a centre, and that centre must be in the neighbourhood of ethics and religion; and ethics and religion, for Young India, must be, not musty and verbal, but fresh and vital; not the importation of conquerors but its own: and it is quite the likeliest fact that a wise and friendly lead back to the old wells of water may give Young India precisely what it wants. It is just here that Mrs. Besant may be unspeakably useful. In fact, one might easily believe that all her previous life, with all its apparently contradictory stages, may have specially fitted her for this work of bringing Young India out of the darkness of Agnosticism and Materialism, with all the shady by-paths from those dim roads, into 'the marvellous light' of that which lies at the heart of all religions—the reality of those stupendous conceptions which our poor symbols try to indicate when we say, God, Spirit, Prayer, Religion, and the Immortal Life.

BUDDHA.

In an illuminating article in the 'Banner of Light' on 'Buddhism,' Mr. George A. Bacon says of Buddha that:—

'No more notable exponent of religious thought in its deepest expression is to be found in the annals of religious history. In his desire for the salvation of his kind, in the depth of his convictions, the spirit of his teachings, the catholicity and comprehensiveness of his doctrines, his high morality, his loyalty to womanhood, his wisdom-like philosophy, and in the purity of his life—where shall we find his superior? He did not deny or quarrel with existing religions, but pointed out a more excellent way; did not directly seek to lower the higher or exalt the lower classes. He was considerate of all, intolerant to none.

'Hudson Tuttle, referring to the Dhammapada (Path of Virtue), which shows the great moral character and lofty spirit pervading the teachings of Buddha, justly says: "There is nothing in sacred literature exceeding the grandeur of its moral teachings, and the catholicity of its views of humanity. The sublime activity it teaches, whereby the accidents of time and place are cast beneath the feet of the triumphant spirit, is incomparable."'

CREEDS AND CREDIBILITY.

The subject of creeds is looming large in the arena of religious controversy at the present time. The English Church is longing to get rid of one of its creeds, while some Spiritualists are trying to formulate a creed that shall be acceptable to themselves and their fellow Spiritualists. The mention of creeds suggests several questions.

First, what is a creed? A creed is a definition of belief, for the benefit of the individual member of a Church, his fellow members, and the world at large.

Secondly, what is the use of a creed? As regards the member, it reminds him that he has the support of his fellow members in upholding these beliefs; as regards the membership, it is a point of agreement between them, and a definition of the latitude which may be permitted to individual belief without disruption; with regard to outsiders, it is a statement of position and of the terms of admission to the Church.

Thirdly, is a creed desirable? Here we may point out that it is mainly an instrument of external organisation, and, like other bars and barriers, it is rather an irksome necessity than a welcome adjunct to the religious mind, for true religion is personal, private, and needs no creed, for it seeks neither support nor quarrel.

In the 'Hibbert Journal,' for July, the Rev. Dr. Cobb points out with great force that not only is belief distinct from faith, but that the matter-of-fact trend of thought demands something concrete, something definable, to which to attach itself; in short, the externalisation of religion, the substitution of a mental belief for a spiritual faith.

'But the most significant example of the thesis before us is to be found in the almost universal belief held by those who profess and call themselves orthodox, that belief is identical with faith, instead of being its shell, and sometimes its extinguisher. Indeed it may be said that no single fact has done so much to turn Christianity into the wrong channel as the want of a verb cognate in origin to the substantive "faith," whereby it has come to be accepted as a matter of course that to say "I believe" is all one with saying "I have faith." Yet the most superficial consideration should be enough to show that no necessary connection exists between the two. I may believe all the historical articles of the Apostles' Creed, and yet be wholly devoid of that faith which the Lord laid such stress upon. On the other hand, I may be a man living in the light of the inward faith I have, loving the Son of God above all earthly persons or things, and ordering my daily life after the pattern of His, in all humility and with many backslidings and weaknesses, but quite honestly and perseveringly; and yet I may as a trained thinker have grave doubts whether the case, say for a physical resurrection or the Virgin Birth, has been made out beyond all doubt. As things are, the Church (if her forward sons are to be followed) wants the former type of man, and would extrude the latter. Yet she bears the name of Christian!'

Dr. Cobb says further: 'Materialism, in short, which as a scientific philosophy is dead, is enshrined in the temples of English Christianity.' He considers that the religious papers afford proof of 'the delight which the ordinary Christian takes in the externals of religion; of his standing, that is, at a lower stage of the evolution of religion than that to which he is called by the Master Himself.' And we fear that this is true. We do not say this from any hostility to religion in any form, but to remind our brethren that what is not spiritual is not religion.

Another point with regard to creeds is the question of credibility. At present, assent, even though it be formal or credulous, is demanded by conventional religions. It is a sin to ask for proof, and a heresy to believe that, in religion, dogma is capable of proof. We are asked to believe statements, not because they are impossible, but because they are unprovable. But this is not Faith.

'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' (Hebrews xi. 1). Faith is persuasion

(ver. 13), and is therefore higher than a mere belief without certainty, because it involves (same verse) the assurance of promises which by it are seen afar off, though not yet received. But creeds, as a rule, are expressions of belief only, and we are all too prone to give up the realising sense of their truth as a thing not required of us, and to content ourselves with external assent.

Spiritualists are not content with this; they demand and strive after a realisation, sometimes on the outward plane and sometimes on the inward, which is the higher of the two, because outward phenomena may leave us mentally doubtful, which true spiritual experience never does.

If we examine the traditional creeds of the Church of England, we find that they combine much that was originally meant in a deeply spiritual sense with much that refers to the 'historical' life of Jesus. The creed used in the Communion service is much more spiritually worded than the Apostles' Creed, for which it is allowed to be substituted. But it defers the resurrection until the end of the world, presumably in order to reconcile it with the idea of the raising up of the physical body.

The Athanasian Creed, which is now being warmly discussed, has been shown to be a compound document. It may be divided into four parts. First, the comminatory clauses, which after all are only a label, saying, 'This is a creed; believe ye it.' Secondly, it is a creed by virtue of the 'historical' details which it possesses in common with the other creeds. Take away these portions, and there remains an ancient canticle, in two parts, the first defining the Trinity, the second relating to the Incarnation.

The theory of the former may be told in a few words, without undue iteration. First in logical sequence, though not in order of time as we understand it, comes the Father, including the totality of the Essential Being, called Substance, a word which in our usage is no longer a translation of the Greek *hypostasis*; then the Son, 'begotten' out of the same Essence, and therefore equal with the Father; then a third aspect or manifestation ('person') of the same Essence, the Holy Spirit. All these are co-equal and co-eternal aspects, not to be confounded, of an Essence which is not to be divided ('neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance').

As to the Incarnation, Christ is God and Man, just as man is rational soul and body; and the character of Christ's oneness is 'not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood (humanity) into God; not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.'

Now these verses of the Athanasian Creed, if taken by themselves, apart from the conventional setting, which is a later accretion, signify just what the first verses of the Gospel of John signify, if read apart from application to any specified character. They symbolise the essential purpose of religion, the raising of the Self to the Divine state by the realisation of its divine origin and essential nature, and its ultimate At-One-ment with the Infinite Eternal. That which is attributed to Jesus in realisation is potentially valid for every man that cometh into the world, through the illumination of the Christ-Spirit which was in Jesus. 'Christ is all, and in all.'

S.

A CURIOUS DISCOVERY.—A clergyman from the province of Novgorod, Russia, sends the following account of a curious phenomenon to 'Rebus': 'As a few workmen were digging at the foot of a hill they came across an old grave, which gave way at the first knock of the spade, and there came to view the body of a woman, which, although buried forty years ago, was very well preserved, the hands were folded on her chest, the cheeks were rosy, and the whole appearance lifelike.' It is to be hoped that in the interest of science the case will be investigated.

WHY DOES THE SOUL INCARNATE ?

Abstract of a Lecture by Mr. W. J. Colville on 'If the soul is pure previous to incarnation on earth, why does it come into material existence at all?' delivered in the Rooms of the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., on June 25th, 1904.

The question 'If a soul is pure previous to incarnation on earth, why does it come into material existence at all?' can only be rationally treated as we learn to distinguish between negative and positive purity; and on the basis of this highly necessary distinction in terms we shall hope to, in some measure, elucidate a problem the solution of which seems impossible if such discrimination be disregarded.

Some of the most ancient ideas concerning the human soul, as a pre-existent entity prior to terrestrial incarnation, are now being prominently brought into view through the general discussion of Theosophy, or Gnosticism, which is now usually prevalent; and while many Spiritualists and others are decidedly averse to any theory of reincarnation, they are, in very many instances—as in the case of Dr. J. M. Peebles—quite willing to consider the question of an anterior as well as a post-mortem spiritual life for humanity. Whence, what, whither? This is the mighty three-fold inquiry concerning human destiny which is ever fresh and recurrent in the annals of history, and it is well said that the theme is necessarily one of perennial interest. What we actually know of our essential life is very meagre if we take into account only that knowledge of which we are objectively or intellectually conscious; but deep below this surface consciousness lie hidden depths of interior understanding which only gifted seers seem able to penetrate. The immortality of the human soul is so thoroughly a stock phrase that we scarcely ever seriously dispute it; while an equally familiar expression runs 'I change my mind.' Between soul and mind (*sol* and *mens*) there must be a vast as well as decided difference.

The soul considered as the true Ego, the essential spiritual entity, incapable of dissolution into component elements, because an absolutely simple unity, can readily be conceived as uncreate as well as indestructible, and there is no logical escape from the conclusion that absolute immortality means immeasurably more than indefinitely continued individual existence. Many honest, spiritually-minded agnostics reverently leave themselves in the hands of the Infinite All-Good, and do not attempt to speculate further than just across the border-line of physical transition into that 'next' world, which is no more permanent, in the strictest sense of the term, than is our present physical condition. Modern sensitives, in company with ancient seers, often teach the immortality of the soul in its true estate, and though there is a wide difference between some inspired teachings and others concerning various embodiments of the Ego in this or in some other world, the object of incarnation is usually granted to be the gaining of some definite experience and the fulfilment of some predetermined destiny.

There are two senses in which the word 'pure' may be correctly used. In the first place it may be employed to signify a simple, incorruptible, unchangeable essence or substance; in the second place it may be applied to those heroes who have left innocence behind them, and having met and mastered numberless temptations, have reached those heights of spiritual attainment whereon they stand as masters, elder brethren of our race. If both these definitions of purity are borne in mind it will at once appear quite possible that previous to any incarnation a soul may be perfectly pure in the first sense but not in the second, and that the work accomplished by means of incarnation may be the first step in the process whereby cherubim and seraphim are converted into angels and archangels, and all those celestial companies of whom we instinctively think as having undergone every imaginable trial and difficulty, and are now in positions of authority in the universe which no simply incarnate entities can occupy. Many very beautiful pictures of the Christian Madonna are also representations of Sophia, who is far greater,

in the esteem of Gnostics, than Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who can have been but a holy woman, limited in space and time as all other women have been limited. The little cherub heads surrounding the universal Mother signify to Gnostics the unborn souls awaiting incarnation, while the fully-developed and truly magnificent young men who are portrayed as announcing angels in Christian art are significant of souls who have passed through earthly discipline and won for themselves the white and dazzling raiment in which they are made to appear by the most inspired among the artists with whose paintings we are familiar. The human aura, which many clairvoyants declare they can sometimes see, is descriptive, as well as emblematic, of the condition of its generator, and as Mr. C. W. Leadbeater has shown in his fascinatingly illustrated book, 'Man, Visible and Invisible,' the aura of an artist displays almost every shade and tint of colour, while it is essentially a robe of white; but the ordinary human auras, ranging from very dull to comparatively bright, display no such extreme variety of colour. Raiment is a word we have inherited from the same root as radiant and radiation, and this derivation is being brought prominently forward by many students who are engaged in learning all they can concerning that effluence of humanity which is generally designated aura.

The figurative wings of angelic messengers, typical of strength and power of flight, and even Michel Angelo's 'horns' on the head of his painting of Moses, are traceable in artistic studies to a time when psychic insight enabled famous artists to portray vastly more than merely physical objectivities. The state of a soul in its expressed embodiment has always been interpreted symbolically by the quality and radiance of its emanations and its drapery. Adam and Eve, as mentioned in the Pentateuch, naked and unashamed, represent the earliest conceivable expressions of the soul on earth. Innocence and ignorance of any distinction between right and wrong may well go hand in hand. The ancient serpent is a symbol of the entire material world through which the soul passes in order to undergo that trial and testing which must be experienced in order that the latent energies of the Ego may be called forth into definite activity. In the New Testament the Evangelists distinctly state that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness, where He was tempted, and three distinct kinds of temptation are described as being met and vanquished by Him before the commencement of His public ministry.

According to some of the most ancient works treating of occult science, there are four necessary initiations, and these are often named respectively trials by earth, water, air, and fire. The three earlier trials are alluded to in the story of the temptations in the desert; but the fourth initiation is reserved for the scene on Calvary. The first great lesson which has to be learned is how to master all external appetites. This is instanced by the tempting appearance and flavour of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and by the suggestion that stones be converted into bread. The first Adam, or any man in his primitive sensuous condition, experiencing physical sensations keenly, has to meet and conquer every animal impulse; by conquest is not meant destruction, but consecration and elevation. The old superstitions concerning sacrifices as food for divinities can be readily explained in view of knowledge of the esoteric significance of religious symbolism. In order to provide the soul with a vehicle or instrument through which to manifest its dormant powers, that entity must gather up and transform into an instrument for its use the elements of the lowest or most external objective world. To the Adam state of human expression everything is first that Adam may subdue it and transmute it. The great trial which constitutes the first initiation is met by all men everywhere when they see two possible courses of action opening out before them, one involving sense gratification, and the other demanding victory over every carnal appetite. Having conquered the senses, those senses are henceforward the servants of their conqueror. The second of the four great trials is intellectual, and has to do entirely with subjective mental states. When thought is so subdued that it has become the obedient servant of will, then the second temptation is left behind

and the advancing neophyte is approaching a master's height. The third temptation is on entirely moral ground, and deals with ethical problems. Here imagination is confronted, and the candidate for spiritual honours must learn to relinquish all desire for earthly fame and grandeur, because he has come to realise that there is a far higher goal of attainment to be pursued than the acquisition, or retention, of any terrestrial possessions. The mysterious Satan, who is often identified with the serpent, is by no means an evil personage essentially (this, the Book of Job distinctly shows), but an impersonation, for the dramatic purposes of a sacred story, of all those external influences which make war upon the soul and which, according to the Bhagavad Gita, the spiritual warrior, Arjuna, must slay on his road to perfect victory over the gross matter of the exterior earth, and also over the psychic planes which intervene between the simply natural earthly state and that celestial realisation of oneness with Divinity which is heaven or Nirvana, a condition of rest and happiness, but by no means one of idleness or of individual extinction. The fourth initiation, or trial by fire, is the meeting and surrendering to the highest of all our affections and desires—making the complete atonement, at which point the soul becomes the diviner of all its vehicles, and has gained unlimited dominion over the unseen heavens and the visible earth.

In the light of its esoteric significance the whole Bible becomes immediately luminous, and equally intelligible also become the sacred scriptures of the remoter Orient, the classic fables, the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead,' and all the many mysterious works of art which, though universally admired in Europe, are but little comprehended. If we realise that we are living in a school, a workshop, a laboratory, as we certainly are, and are surrounded by necessary materials to work with in accomplishing the evolution of what is involved in our constitution, then the vicissitudes of our career become intelligible; otherwise life as known on earth has no definite significance. Incarnation cannot endow an entity with aught that it does not previously contain, but opportunities may, through incarnation, be afforded for the outworking of hidden potencies, and as no workman, however skilful, expects to work without tools, and no artist, however truly a genius, expects to paint pictures without handling canvas, colours, brushes, and other necessary materials, so also no soul can reasonably expect to express its inward possibilities without coming somewhere, at some time, into actual contact with those very things which seemingly are adversaries, but are in truth the occasions for most perfect glorification. The most enigmatical of the seven sentences uttered on the cross: 'My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' can only be understood when taken as an inquiry, not as a complaint; and then, as esoteric versions of the everlasting Gospel tell us, the answer comes from Heaven: 'In order that thou mayest truly be glorified.'

The practical lesson that we all need deeply to learn is the usefulness and beneficence of our trials. Tribulations and difficulties come, and it is for us to master them instead of being mastered by them. Herein lies the enormous difference in doctrine between heroic and inane views of the theory of Karma or any other theosophical idea. If we believe that we are born on earth to be punished, humiliated, or made to suffer needlessly, then we can never hope to rise higher than the baldest Stoicism which boasts of resignation to a hard inevitable. On the other hand, if we learn to regard whatever comes to us as something for us to master, then we shall make circumstances our obedient subordinates, and, without denying the existence of a seemingly adverse environment, learn to so regard it that we convert the apparent foe into a certain friend. All pessimistic tendencies in philosophy are injurious to all who entertain them, and the only remedy for depressing pessimism among seriously thoughtful people is the acceptance of the truly optimistic and entirely reasonable view of life which teaches that every experience is a part of our needed discipline, and that we must master the material which environs us ere we can show forth our glory in fulfilling the involved destiny which we are embodied to evolve.

EXPERIMENTS IN PSYCHOMETRY.

We have received the following interesting details of some recent experiments in psychometry with a psychic who is well-known to us.

The article having been handed to the sensitive, who was unaware from whom it had been received, the following 'impressions' were recorded:—

1. I see earth rocks. Yellowish red soil, turned over and carted away. (2) Hear clanking of chains, and see great cranes at work. Is it the surface of a mine? Am near a mine, for I see men about, coal begrimed. (3) Yet think more of bricks than coal, and see man covered with brickdust. See a brick-field, and bricks piled high in stacks ready for transit.

4. Now I see barges, laden with these bricks, passing through canals to Birmingham and Wolverhampton. I get both names.

5. See fair country; houses, cottages, but mostly long sheds. Though everything is so red with dust, I get a strong impression that below this red earth there is a large bed of coal.

6. I can see goods trains and hear their rattle.

7. Are blasting operations in progress, for there is a low, distant rumbling? It seems on my left, but though I hear the noise I do not seem very near it.

8. Are women employed in the brick-field? I also see women picking potatoes in fields hard by. Ploughing has been in progress, as the soil is upturned. I seem to see below the surface of the soil, and sense coal.

9. I look over a vast, fair, open country, high chimneys dotting the landscape.

10. Now I sense something new to me; the persistent sound of women chattering; and I see women whose hands and finger-nails are stained with the red brickdust. Are married women employed in the brickyard? for I see the wedding rings upon their fingers.

11. Did a married woman handle this specimen—as if somebody's husband had brought it to her to present to the sender? Why do I see the same hand that handled the specimen shake her pillow?

12. Does someone (the collector) work in a pottery or brick-field? I get the essence of brick rather than coal.

13. Am rather muddled and mixed up with a horse and cart—a baker's—as if it came from Dudley, for I am in a baker's cart trotting through small villages and along country roads.

GENERAL REMARKS.—Is there any *known* reason why the bedridden Dudley lady should come in here? I see a baker. I go upstairs into a bedroom, and see my unknown invalid friend, a little less strong than last year, but more peaceful and in a happier state of mind, waiting with a patient gladness to meet the dear, dear mother, whose benign presence is hovering so close about her. Has she been writing or speaking about me? I seem often in her thoughts. I come so close beside this patient, suffering, unknown friend, that I am almost frightened.

COMMENTS BY THE SENDER OF THE SPECIMEN.

In order to make my comments on this report intelligible, it is necessary to say first that the impressions contained in the report are almost entirely, if not *wholly*, of a personal nature, and are germane to the personality of the *collector* of the specimen rather than the specimen itself. He is a young man who works at present in a coal mine, but has formerly been very much employed in a brickyard, which is situated only a short distance from the site whence the specimen was taken. As recently as last spring this man was engaged in blasting operations at the brickyard in question, and at a rather more distant period he was engaged in the brick-kilns, where the heat is often very great, and not to be borne for any lengthened period.

Notes 1 to 3. This is a fair description of the brickyard in which the young fellow worked, and which is very near the spot whence the sample was taken. There is a bed of coal underneath the brickyard, and the surface of a coal mine is so close to the brickyard that they almost mingle together.

4. I believe it is quite possible to see boats passing on a canal at some little distance from the brickyard. I also believe the canal is part of the Birmingham Canal. The brickyard does business with Wolverhampton.

5. The scene described is quite correct, excepting the long sheds, which I do not at present understand. There is a bed of coal beneath the clay.

6. There is a railroad quite close to the brickyard which is exclusively devoted to goods traffic, viz., conveying the coal and other ores from the adjacent mines.

7. There was a good deal of blasting done about five months ago in the brickyard, in which the collector of the specimen was engaged.

8. Yes, women are employed in the brickyard regularly, and also occasionally in the fields. The scene is semi-rural, so to speak, arable and pasture lands alternating with cottages and gardens and the mines. Practically everywhere around the spot has coal beneath the surface.

9. The last note explains this impression. The 'high chimneys' would apply to the chimney 'stacks' to the boilers at the mines.

10. It is quite correct; women, both married and single, are regularly employed in the brickyards.

11. No person whatever handled the specimen except the collector and myself, but a married woman was present whilst I was packing it. However, the impression is quite correct, for the collector has shaken my pillow several times lately.

12. The collector worked for years in a brickyard, but of late years he has gone into the coal mines, in which he is now employed. He was recently married to a shopkeeper, a widow; they live quite close to the spot whence the specimen was taken, and the shop is supplied daily by a baker's cart, which comes from Dudley, which probably accounts for these jumbled impressions.

GENERAL REMARKS.—I should think it very probable that the reason this unknown Dudley friend comes in is, that the day before the specimen was brought to me I received a letter from her by hand, brought to me by her sister, in which she asked me certain questions relating to this psychometrical work. I know from this and other indications that she very often has the psychometrist in her mind. The impressions as to her increasingly failing strength and resignation are, I believe, from what I hear of her, perfectly correct.

MAN AND BRUTE: DO BOTH SURVIVE?

Mr. G. B. Ferris, in his article in 'LIGHT,' of June 25th, upon 'Animals in the Spirit World,' has raised in one reader's mind certain questions in addition to the one he directly discusses.

For one thing, he refers to the 'spirit' and the 'physical body' just as though, between them, these two elements embraced alike the whole of man and the whole of a brute; and further, as though the relations between them were direct and immediate.

To me, however, it seems more likely, judging by the evidence, that equally a man and a brute is, to use a chemical figure, a 'ternary' compound, consisting of (a) physical body, (b) spirit, and (c) spiritual body, or 'soul'; and further, that it is only by the aid of the 'soul' that the 'spirit' and the 'body' can influence each other.

Mr. G. B. Ferris also supposes that a brute's life is 'as much' an expression of spirit as is a man's life; and from this premiss he infers that a brute is just as likely to live for ever as is a man.

About the above 'as much' there is some ambiguity. If the term implies merely that the fact of 'expressing spirit' can be predicated with equal truth of both kinds of life, I have no objection to offer; but if, as the context seems to imply, Mr. Ferris meant to affirm that brute life is as full an expression of spirit as human life is, then I venture to raise a doubt as to the soundness of the position.

Other things being equal, there must be, I should think, some proportion between length of life and strength of life; and strength of individual life must, on the one hand, be in part proportioned to its ability to resist dissipating and disintegrating influences, and on the other hand, to the degree in which its whole nature co-extends with the nature of the one Source of all life.

Now, so far as I am aware, in the whole known universe there is only one thing that is capable of resisting the influences of its environment and its antecedents, and of following some line other than that of the least resistance; and that is the liberated human will. And if, as (I suppose) most readers of 'LIGHT' would hold, the main aim of human life, both incarnate and—so far as we can trace it—excarnate, is the achievement of moral freedom and perfection—if, in other words, mental progress and evolution are the law of our

being, despite occasional interludes of retrogression—we shall, all of us who yield to this law, become constantly better able to resist such forces as make for disintegration.

When, however, we come to compare brute nature with human, we do not—do we?—find that brutes live individually under a law of progress in anything like the same degree in which men do; nor do we find that they are morally responsible beings and able to resist successfully an anti-moral environment. True, a puppy or a kitten can be taught *ab extra* honesty, *i.e.*, if its owner strengthens the motives impelling it to honesty till they outweigh the seductions associated with theft; but it is quite incapable of altering its own habits and bringing them into harmony with a loftier ideal in the way that a human being can learn to do. You may predicate of its acts morality or immorality of an objective sort, *i.e.*, by comparing them with an external standard; but from a subjective point of view the brute itself is neither immoral nor moral, but as much a mere piece of mechanism as Determinists assure us that the noblest man must be.

If, then, Novalis is right in saying that the strength and oneness of a human being's character lies in the perfection of his will, and if brutes are devoid of 'will' in the moral sense of the word—as a self-controlling power capable of overcoming circumstances in the moral sphere—the spirit of a brute, at the close of its earthly life, must surely be less favourably placed for resisting disintegration than the spirit of a man, whose education in self-mastery has at any rate then begun.

When we compare brutes with men in regard to intellect and feeling we find that the difference is one of degree rather than of kind, whereas in the field of 'will' the difference is qualitative. It is there, as I believe, that we find the essential distinction between the brute and the human natures.

Then, if we proceed to apply the second test referred to above, namely, which of these two natures most perfectly co-extends with the All-Spirit's nature, and is in widest and deepest *rapport* with it, however impossible we must feel it to be for the finite to comprehend the infinite, it must at least seem obvious that man, who, as compared with the brute, stands alone as the possessor of the noblest of all his qualities, must by virtue of that fact be in closer relations with the sole Source of eternal life.

If, again, we compare the most brilliant human endowments and performances, mental or physical, with a single virtuous choice made freely, and perhaps in resistance to almost irresistible forces on the other side, we cannot but see that the quality of 'moral beauty'—the highest quality conceivable by the human heart—is predicable of the latter alone; the latter possessing 'merit,' whereas there is no more merit in the genius of a Shakespeare than in a Samson's thews. Is it not Dr. A. R. Wallace who cites the notable saying that the rise and fall of a whole material universe must be of less interest in the eyes of the All-Good than the smallest moral victory gained by a single man?

Mr. Ferris's argument, again, drawing as it does no distinction between one and another expression of spirit, seems to assign immortality not less to invertebrate than to vertebrate animals, if not indeed to plants and stones.

Elsewhere he speaks of the human race as having descended, or ascended, directly from the animal world. But this language is ambiguous. If he means that the human body has been evolved link by link from animal bodies of lower types, no doubt he could bring much evidence forward in support of his theory. But man is more than a physical body; he has a soul and a spirit as well; and as regards the human 'spirit,' I have never met with any proof of its being derived either from the spirit of a brute or from the human brain which is its earthly instrument. The June 'Contemporary' contains an article headed 'The Riddle of the Universe,' in which the author—a thorough-going evolutionist—'protests against the erroneous view that out of matter and energy consciousness and thought can be produced by any conceivable evolutionary process.'

Well, then, if man's mind is not derived from body, either his own or the brute's, is it an outcome of the brute's mind? In the total absence of all positive evidence *pro* or *con*

this view, the theory that each human spirit comes direct and fresh from the Father of Spirits—the beautiful theory which Tennyson embodies in the 'Epithalamium' which closes 'In Memoriam'—seems to harmonise much better with the faith of Spiritualists.

To what extent it is the 'spirit,' and to what the 'soul,' which contributes to personality and to survival, is a question of interest on which light would be welcome. It is difficult to see how the unity and personality of a spirit could be preserved in the absence of some insulating envelope—a body of some sort, no matter how tenuous its texture.

Sutton Coldfield.

E. D. GIRDLESTONE.

THE COLLECTIVE SPIRITUAL ENTITY.

BY JOHN B. SHIPLEY.

III. THE SPIRIT OF NATIONALITY.

In the preceding paper of this series we used the idea of the Family to illustrate our conception of a Greater Individuality; we now pass on to the self-governing units, and first have to speak of the Community in its simplest form, that of the Parish or Municipality. This is the unit of popular self-government, and in foreign countries it has had almost continuous recognition, though in England this ancient idea has only of late years been revived as a practical working unit, by the establishment of Parish Councils. And yet this is the most convenient and obvious unit for purposes of combination for securing the benefits of mutuality in the provision of many of the factors of civilised life, and in the parish or municipal council we have the first object-lesson in the duty of serving the common interest of a body of people considered as an individual whole.

But we must pass on to the Nation, in whose parliament are assembled the representatives of the smaller units, or of groups of such units. The nation is objectively represented by the King, or other chief of State, and subjectively by National Policy, National Honour, and other expressions indicative of National Existence. The late Lord Salisbury used words which are deeply significant of a spiritual reality underlying ordinary phrases, when he said, "There is arising a state of things perfectly new to the world, a condition in which an Empire is slowly arising out of the sea, an Empire that has behind it the feelings and affections of some of the most effective, some of the most vehement races of the world. The flow of opinion and affection will go on, and these in their own irresistible power will evolve combinations which, I have no doubt, will cast into the shade all the glories which the British Empire has hitherto displayed." We do not quote these words in a Jingo spirit, but as implying the existence of a National or Imperial Entity, arising out of the combined national sentiment of its people. This National Entity, once formed, has something of a vitality of its own, and it is the duty of every citizen to nourish it in all proper respects, and to add to its good qualities by seeing that his contribution to it is pure and right, making for justice and equity, national and international.

On this basis of a National Entity we can now make some attempt to answer the question raised by Mr. E. Wake Cook, in his admirable lecture on Joan of Arc. The lecturer ably set forth the view that, under present conditions—which, being limited and imperfect, are not to be judged from either too high or too low a standpoint—war is a necessity for the attainment of certain ends, even those with which it appears to be least in accord. 'War and warlike trade are Nature's scorpion whips compelling organisation; and through organisation, and the equilibrium it will bring, the practical brotherhood of man will be attained.'

From the point of view we have sketched, this organisation must proceed from the unit towards the universality, therefore as the formation of the family and local self-governing units are steps towards the formation of the national unit, so the spirit of national unity may be expected in time to evolve that of international unity, as it has already evolved the idea of Imperial unity. But

as yet nations have only learnt to recognise their individual existence as national units, though there has been talk of United States of Europe, of Zollvereins, and racial combinations. At present, we must be content to recognise that there is throughout history a deeply-rooted inference that each nation has a collective individuality of its own. These national entities have a very real sense of their corporal integrity, and resist dismemberment and dissolution by every means in their power. The national spirit, once fully constituted and vitalised, can scarcely ever be extinguished; and the only way in which the Imperial idea can overcome this consciousness of national existence is by recognising it, obtaining its confidence, and inducing it to amalgamate with other national entities in the way foreshadowed by Lord Salisbury. Repression and dismemberment have always proved futile policies. To hold a nation forcibly in subjection to a yoke which it feels to be alien only ends in confirming the national spirit in the determination to assert its existence and to resist the attempt to subdue or destroy it. Whether in children of a domineering parent, or in nations subject to a greater power that rules by the sword and the bayonet, the result is the same. Enforced obedience is smouldering rebellion; voluntary obedience is the result of sympathy and confidence. And whichever of these states prevails it is the expression of the sense of individuality in one or other form.

We might draw many examples from past and contemporary history, but this would be beyond our scope. We will only complete the historical allusion by saying that it appears to us that the Maid of Orleans, whatever her actual inspiring agencies may have been, expressed and embodied through them the national spirit of France, which ultimately proved more powerful than the ambition of an English regent or the jealous separatism of the Burgundian ruler. The latter, however, had this for an excuse, that he represented a half-absorbed minor national spirit, which a thousand years before had itself been a potent and domineering entity, and which to this day is not unmindful of its continued existence. Even Napoleon Bonaparte, in his earlier days, was the champion of the same spirit in Corsica, and regarded France as the alien oppressor of his island country.

And the bearing of all this? Simply to illustrate the lesson that we are combinable entities; we are individuals, if you like, but we are something more: we are members of families, communities, nations, empires, and each one of these is a collective entity, ranking as an individual in respect of its fellows, yet merging its individuality in the next higher group, and finally in that of mankind as a whole; that in these capacities we have our duties to perform, whether as individuals towards every other individual, or as members of the collectivity towards that composite body on whose united expression we have always an influence, which it is our duty to use in such a manner that the group may in its turn exert a right and useful influence both on its fellow-groups and on the larger national entity of which it forms an integral part.

And whatever influence we exert on any of these, it will come back to us in the reaction which the family, national, or human spirit exercises upon every one of its personal manifestations, on ourselves, and on our neighbours, filling us with peace, and love, and joy, and smoothing away the difficulties from our path.

'DO ALL FOR OTHERS.'—How true it is that our motives affect the value of our actions; that the objects we have in view largely determine the quality of our services. If we regard life and labour solely from the selfish standpoint we get just such narrow and unsatisfactory impressions as we have prepared ourselves to receive; but if we think of ourselves as stewards of our powers on behalf of others; take delight in administering to their happiness by our work, and feel that we are privileged to contribute to their well-being by our example and influence, then life becomes to us 'full of holy uses' and we extract good and joy from what seem to be unpromising materials—from even the most trying experiences and uncongenial conditions. Toil gives us pleasure when 'love lightens labour,' or when it is the means to the end of securing the happiness of others. The spirit in which we perform our tasks—that of desire to serve, or of grudging, complaining discontent—makes all the difference to ourselves as well as to others.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

Good Tests of Spirit Presence.

SIR,—The articles that have appeared recently in one of the London daily papers illustrate and emphasise the fact, well-known to old Spiritualists, that investigators get what they make conditions for, and discover what they seek—be it truth or fraud. I have no wish to defend frauds if they exist, but if I go to a medium I do so with my eyes open, and as it is my money I spend, I fail to see why it should interest others how I apply it. I have had the most perfect tests with Mrs. Fairclough Smith, amongst which may be mentioned the reproduction of the tones of the voice of my wife and all her mannerisms, by the medium when under control. Again, a lady friend of mine who came to a public meeting after me, and whose turn came later in the evening, produced a lock of my wife's hair, hoping my wife would control a second time, but 'White Dove' quickly discovered that the hair belonged to one who had already controlled her medium that evening, and pointed me out as the one to whom she came.

It is a privilege to sit with Mrs. Fairclough Smith, who has endorsed what others have told me, and although I have sat with many mediums, no one has given me such help and joy.

AN ARMY OFFICER.

Coincidence, or Thought-Transference?

SIR,—On reading 'LIGHT' of June 25th, the passage 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness' seemed to come home to me as an echo of my own thoughts; and when you again referred to it on July 2nd I felt it 'confirmation strong as proof of Holy Writ,' for that had been my particular passage for study during the first week of your bringing it forward. Call it a coincidence or what you will, I am inclined to consider it in the nature of 'thought waves.' The reason it made such an impression on me was because my little friend 'Linop,' from 'Up,' as she quaintly puts it, tells me that 'thoughts are things in the spirit-world,' and that here our thoughts are not our own, but that they go out into the world for good or ill, hence the paramount necessity for having them well under control, which I, for one, found great difficulty in doing, but by persistent effort have now largely succeeded in keeping vagrant thoughts in check; they will come, but I decline to harbour them; and I find the best way to combat them is not to argue, but do just as you would in a case of poison—give the antidote; so if I incline to feel uncharitably towards anyone I at once say to myself very firmly, 'Charity is kind,' &c., and I make that my mental companion for the rest of that day, with very good results to myself, and, I sincerely trust, with good also to the person thought of. It was 'Linop' suggested the plan to me as a means of developing any gifts I may possess, and now I find in a morning that it comes quite naturally to me; sometimes it is only one word, it may be meekness, gentleness, or love, but whatever it is, I take it along with me to business, and it flavours my conduct for the remainder of the day. All my preconceived notions of thought seem to be quite altered now, and no wonder. When one comes to think of it, all the work of man's hands is first thought, secondly action, giving it shape and form; and, as Tom Hood said: 'Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart.'

Mansfield.

BARU.

SOCIETY WORK.

Notices of future events which do not exceed twenty-five words may be added to reports if accompanied by six penny stamps, but all such notices which exceed twenty-five words must be inserted in our advertising columns at the usual rates.

CHISWICK.—AVENUE HALL, 300, HIGH-ROAD.—The annual outing on the 9th inst. was an unqualified success. Mr. Thurstan's kindness in making the party his guests was greatly appreciated. On Sunday last an open meeting was held at the society's rooms, speakers, Messrs. J. Imison, Collins, and Rolfe; and on the 11th inst., Mr. P. Preyss continued his interesting lecture on 'Cranial Psychology.' On Sunday, the 17th inst., Lyceum at 3 p.m.; Mr. H. Brooks at 7 p.m. On Monday, the 18th, at 8 p.m., Miss E. Bixby.—K.

FULHAM.—COLVEY HALL, 25, FERNHURST-ROAD.—On Sunday last, Mr. T. B. Frost, the president, delivered an address on 'Inspiration.' On the 6th inst., Mr. W. Ham gave an instructive address on 'The Evidences of Spirit Return.' Speaker on Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Robert King.—W. T.

CAVENDISH ROOMS.—51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday last Miss MacCreadie's control, 'Sunshine,' gave excellent proofs of spirit return: fourteen spirit friends were minutely described and messages full of help and comfort were given in almost every case. Mr. Fred Spriggs presided very ably. On Sunday next Mr. E. W. Wallis will deliver a trance address on 'What Spiritualism Stands For.' Doors open 6.30 p.m.—S. J. WATTS, Hon. Secretary, 18, Endsleigh-gardens, N.W.

CLAPHAM SPIRITUALIST INSTITUTE, GAUDEN-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Fielder delivered an earnest and impressive appeal to Spiritualists to work for the establishment of the kingdom of goodness and justice on earth. He was ably supported by Mrs. Boddington, who drew attention to the uncharitable treatment she had been subjected to by professed Christians on Clapham Common. On Sunday next, at 3.30 p.m., she will speak on the Common; at 7 p.m., in the hall. On Thursday, at 8.15 p.m., public circle for psychometry and clairvoyance.

LIVERPOOL.—Mr. W. J. Colville's visit proved very successful. Excellent audiences gathered on Sunday last in Daulby Hall at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., and in Farnworth Hall at 9 p.m.; also in Daulby Hall on Monday last.

COLNE.—CLOTH HALL.—Mr. W. J. Colville addressed crowded audiences on July 7th and 8th, on 'Can Man Sin against God?' and 'A Spiritual View of the Trinity,' and answered many questions.—C.

CATFORD.—24, MEDUSA-ROAD.—On Sunday evening last Mr. W. Millard delivered an excellent trance address on 'Man: the Flesh, and the Spirit.' At the after-meeting Mr. W. Herbert gave interesting clairvoyant descriptions.—R.

BRIXTON, S.E.—FAITHIST COMMUNITY.—On Sunday last a successful service was held, part of the meeting being devoted to a mass ceremony for unprogressed spirits, each brother and sister addressing them on the Way of Life.—W.

BRIGHTON.—BRUNSWICK HALL, BRUNSWICK-STREET EAST.—On Sunday last Mrs. Russell-Davies very ably and effectively dealt with four subjects chosen by the audience, giving a splendid lecture upon them.—A. C.

PLYMOUTH.—BANK-CHAMBERS, BANK-STREET.—On Sunday last an excellent address was delivered by Mr. Glover, and Mrs. Trueman was successful in giving clairvoyant descriptions.

PLYMOUTH.—ODDFELLOWS' HALL, MORLEY-STREET.—On the 8th inst., at our annual members' meeting, all the officers and committee were re-elected; Mr. A. W. Clavis, president, Mr. Milman, secretary, Mr. Sleep, treasurer, Mr. Martin, librarian. On Sunday last Mr. Lashbrooke, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, discoursed eloquently on a 'Living Universe.'—C.

LITTLE ILFORD.—CORNER OF THIRD-AVENUE, CHURCH-ROAD, MANOR PARK.—On Sunday last Miss F. M. M. Russell delivered an instructive address on 'Reincarnation and Religions,' and ably answered questions. Mr. H. J. Abel presided. A good after-circle was held.—A. J.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD, HENLEY-STREET.—On Sunday last, in the absence of Mr. D. J. Davis, Mr. Adams gave an interesting account of his visit to the conference, and Mr. Hough gave a thoughtful address entitled 'Comparisons and Contradictions,' after which our usual public circle was held. No services on Sunday next.—N. B.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—TEMPERANCE INSTITUTE.—The weeknight meetings have been successful and well attended. On Sunday evening last Mr. J. Stevenson's address on 'Some Thoughts on the Higher Aspects of Spiritualism' was listened to attentively by a good audience. Many friends stayed to the after-circle.—J. G. W.

HACKNEY.—YOUENS' ROOMS, LYME-GROVE, MARE-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. Ronald Brailey delivered a trance address on 'Immortality Unveiled' to an appreciative audience, and gave clairvoyant descriptions of a convincing character, every one of which was recognised. No service on Sunday next.—H. A. G.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—SURREY MASONIC HALL.—In the absence of the leader (Mr. W. E. Long) upon his annual holidays, the morning circle was conducted by the members of the church, who were blessed by great spiritual power and most harmonious conditions. At the evening service an earnest address upon 'Unity' was given by Mrs. John Checketts.

BOLTON.—TOWN HALL-SQUARE.—On the 4th inst., upwards of a thousand people attended an open-air meeting, at which Mr. G. H. Bibbings gave an eloquent lecture on 'The Spiritualism which Spells Victory.' He held his audience for more than an hour, and although questions or discussion were asked for, neither was forthcoming.—G.