

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

'WHATSOEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!'—Paul.

No. 1,505.—VOL. XXIX. [Registered as] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1909. [a Newspaper.] PRICE TWOPENCE.

Per Post, 10s. 10d. per annum.

London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd.
110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.

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TUESDAY, November 16th, at 3 p.m.—
Members and Associates, 1s.; Friends, 2s.
Séance for Clairvoyant Descriptions ... MR. J. J. VANGO.
No Admission after 3 o'clock.

THURSDAY, November 18th, at 4 p.m.—
For Members and Associates only. Free.
Psychical Self-Culture Class. Conducted by MR. GEORGE SPRIGGS.
No Admission after 4.10 p.m.

THURSDAY, November 18th, at 7.30 p.m.—
Admission, 1s. Members and Associates Free, by Ticket.
At Suffolk-street ... MR. J. J. MOSE.
(Answers to Written Questions) (Under Spirit Control.)

FRIDAY, November 19th, at 3 p.m.—
Admission 1s.; Members and Associates, Free.
Talks with a Spirit Control ... MRS. M. H. WALLIS.

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, and FRIDAY, at 11 a.m.,
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For further particulars see p. 542.

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This Alliance has been formed for the purpose of uniting together persons interested in the study of Psychical or Spiritualistic Phenomena, which throw fresh light upon the nature of man, and reveal him as surviving the change of death. It also provides opportunities of investigation, and affords information by means of papers and discussions.

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Notices of all meetings will appear regularly in 'Light.'

E. W. WALLIS, *Secretary.*HENRY WITHALL, *Hon. Treasurer.*

In accordance with No. XV. of the Articles of Association, the subscriptions of Members and Associates elected after October 1st will be taken as for the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1910.

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CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way	541	Eusapia Loses Seventeen Pounds in Twenty Seconds	545
L. S. A. Notices	542	Meister Eckhart's Sermons ..	546
Clues to some Perplexities ..	543	The Mayas, the Egyptians, and Atlantis. Address by Madame Alice Le Plongeon ..	547
Professor James Advancing Slowly	544	Pre-Existence and Reincarnation not Identical	548
Varied Phenomena in a Private Circle	544	The Gospel for To-day	549
Transition of Mr. Robert Cooper	545	Jottings	549
Meaning of Mysticism	545	Spirits or 'Astral Shells': Which?	550
The Communion of Saints	545		

NOTES BY THE WAY.

Of course it is not for us to deny that Mr. Stead's 'Fortnightly Review' Article reports genuine cases of spirit communion. It may all have happened so: and Gladstone, Disraeli, Bradlaugh, Bright, Henry George, Forster, Palmerston and the Duke of Wellington may all have visited him and discussed the Budget and Tariff Reform. We do not deny it, but we cannot help feeling that this huge public outpouring is premature, to say the least. After all, we have only the word of an anonymous clairaudient for it, and the public will quite naturally call the medium a cheat and Mr. Stead a fool. Of course that does not matter; but what does matter is that a basketful of possible pearls may have been poured out before a herd of possible swine without doing any good.

Besides, we ourselves feel no particular pleasure in being told that the men we have named are worrying, or being worried, about our budgets and tariffs, and worrying in the way indicated in these reports of their speeches. Above all, we think it undesirable and utterly useless to cite them as witnesses and advisers. There will always be the uncertainty as to who they really are, and what they really know. The 'Diakka,' as A. J. Davis calls them, may always be out for a lark.

The Rev. Archibald Brown has taken no notice of our criticisms, and does not seem disposed to accept our offer: but his son has sent us a filial letter, deprecating what he calls 'the attack' upon his father. The letter does not in one instance touch our criticisms: it only protests against our 'abuse,' and informs us that the sermon which we put in the pillory (on page 522) was originally preached thirty years ago. If it was preached thirty years ago it has been lately reprinted and is still on sale.

As for our 'abuse,' we utterly decline to accept that. We had to confront a man who charged us with devilry and dealings with devils, and who told us that what we are doing is 'accursed of God'; that behind our mask is 'the withered face of the old hag of witchcraft,' and our Spiritualism is 'only waiting to be cast into the lake of fire.'

All we did was to quote this rabid nonsense and to ask Mr. Brown a few questions about it. But that is the way with these people. They feel at perfect liberty to defile our sanctuary and to hurl curses against our most sacred hopes, and then, if we reply, they call us 'abusive'! We have been patient long enough.

We note that Mr. Brown's son says: 'I have no wish to defend the argument adopted by Mr. Brown.' So far

good: why then did he intervene? We still await Mr. Brown's answer to our question; and our offer of space still holds good. Our question was: Do you really believe that 'the God of infinite love,' as you call Him, commanded, as you say He did, that every 'wizard' should be stoned to death? and, if you do, are you prepared to obey that command of God now? If not, why not? We repeat our questions: 'Why not, Mr. Brown? We want your answer. Why not obey your God?'

For ten minutes we turned into Hyde Park lately on a breezy Sunday afternoon, just to look at the old familiar sight of wagging heads and waving arms of enthusiasts who use the well-known spot as a safety valve on all kinds of subjects, from Socialism to Vivisection, and from Christian Evidences to Tariff Reform. Strolling around to catch a sane and persuasive tone, we stopped before a man who was really talking instead of ranting, and listened. He was, at the moment, pleasantly telling his audience that he was an atheist, and then proceeded to delicately chaff people who wasted their time finding reasons for believing in a future life. 'A man is like a fire,' he said. The fire goes out 'because the combustive elements have ceased to be combustive. It is the same with Charlie' (he must have been talking about someone before we arrived: and poor Charlie was now represented as an ended combustion). 'It is all a matter of material,' he said. 'There's nothing more in it': and then, in the pleasantest way imaginable, he besought his hearers not to waste their time over it.

The thought at once occurred to us to ask him why he wasted his time over such a dismal business as trying to wipe out a beautiful belief which at any rate does nobody any harm; and, further, to inquire whether love and hope and sympathy were all combustion, and whether there was not enough of the vast and intricate and wonderful in the universe to make a man hold his tongue if he could see nothing beyond a shovelful of dust and a gone-out fire. But we refrained, and, in another ten minutes, held communion with friends whose very presence was a benediction and the sacred promise of a life to come.

But we think with a kind of longing of that pleasant voice and the placid persuasiveness of the man who seemed content to sit before the ashes of Charlie's ended fire.

A short time ago attention was drawn to an Address delivered to theological students by President Eliot, of Harvard University. It was an Address from the heights, and on a subject of the first magnitude—'The Religion of the Twentieth Century.' Dr. Eliot's very high position in the United States led to a widespread discussion of what we may call his confession of faith, with the usual results that some people were shocked and others simply staggered, while many perfectly well understood that this man on the heights was only stating commonplaces after all—commonplaces, that is to say, for those who have been able and willing to read the signs of the times.

Our readers shall judge, for the following sentences

contain the substance of what this receptive observer and thinker said :—

The new religion will not be based upon authority, either spiritual or temporal; the present generation is ready to be led, but not driven. As a rule, the older Christian churches have relied on authority.

The new religion will not think of God as a large and glorified man or as a king or a patriarch. It will not deal chiefly with sorrow and death, but with joy and life. It will believe in no malignant powers, and it will attack quickly all forms of evil. A new thought of God will be its characteristic.

God will be so immanent that no intermediary will be needed. For every man, God will be a multiplication of infinities. The humane and worthy idea of God then will be the central thought of the new religion. This religion rejects the idea that man is an alien or a fallen being, who is hopelessly wicked. It finds such beliefs inconsistent with a worthy idea of God.

The new religion will laud God's love, and will not teach condemnation for the mass of mankind. Based on the two great commandments of loving God and one's neighbour, the new religion will teach that he is best who loves best and serves best, and the greatest service will be to increase the stock of good-will. One of the greatest evils to-day is that people work with hearts full of ill-will to the work and the employer.

There are now various fraternal bodies which to many persons take the place of a church. If they are working for good they are helpful factors. Again, different bodies of people, such as Spiritualists and Christian Scientists, have set up new cults. There are already many signs of extensive co-operation.

Finally, I believe the new religion will make Christ's revelation seem more wonderful than ever to us.

President Wilson, speaking to the graduates of Hartford Theological Seminary (U.S.), unveiled one of the most profound secrets of the age, turning upon the deeply significant fact that society is tending to the absorption of the individual. It is a very confusing age for a man of conscience, he says; and we may add, for a man of originality and strong personality. The mass is getting too strong for the man. Professor Wilson says :—

In the modern organisation of economic society, for example, no man is a complete whole, every man is a fraction. No man is an integer. His conscience has to reckon out for itself what part the fraction plays in the whole and what possibility of independent action there is for the fraction. The undetachable fraction lies embedded in the mass and cannot be entirely discriminated from it, and men have allowed their consciences to run down because the mechanism in them seemed to be affected by great magnets outside, which made it impossible for them to work independently. All their little individual compasses were disturbed by great masses—chiefly of gold—in their neighbourhood, and they have asked themselves how they could disengage their consciences and become independent instrumentalities in the sight of God. The task is so tremendous and so perplexing that many men have abandoned the effort and have decided that all they can do is to drift with the general movement of the mass. They are craving to have someone rediscover their spirits for them.

This, he goes on to say, is the minister's ideal work—to reveal God to man, and man to himself, to re-establish the spiritual kingdom in man's soul, and to proclaim that 'there is no explanation for anything that is not first or last a spiritual explanation.' It is a splendid function for a religious teacher; but we fear the idealists are few.

THE indebtedness of the clergy—if they knew their business—to Spiritualism is really very great. In the first place Spiritualism has rehabilitated the Bible. It cannot for a moment be denied that faith in and reverence for the Bible is dying out, in consequence of the growing doubts of people regarding the miraculous parts of the Bible. They are asked to believe in Bible miracles and at the same time taught that, outside of the Bible records, nothing supernatural ever happened. But now the whole thing has been reversed. People now believe in the Bible because of Spiritualism; they do not believe in Spiritualism because of the Bible.—REV. H. R. HAWES, M.A.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A meeting of the Members and Associates of the Alliance will be held in the SALON OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, SUFFOLK-STREET, PALL MALL EAST (near the National Gallery), on

THURSDAY EVENING NEXT, NOVEMBER 18TH,

WHEN

MR. J. J. MORSE

(Under Spirit Control)

Will reply to Written Questions from the Audience.

The doors will be opened at 7 o'clock, and the Address will be commenced punctually at 7.30.

Admission by ticket only. Two tickets are sent to each Member, and one to each Associate, but both Members and Associates can have additional tickets for the use of friends on payment of 1s. each. Applications for extra tickets, accompanied by remittance, should be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Secretary to the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

Meetings will also be held in the SALON OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East, S.W. (near the National Gallery), on the following Thursday evenings :—

1909.

Dec. 2.—MR. L. STANLEY JAST, on 'The Place and Purpose of Ritual in the Spiritual Life.'

Dec. 16.—MR. E. WAKE COOK, on 'The Purpose of Existence.'

1910.

Jan. 6.—REV. T. RHONDDA WILLIAMS, on 'Towards Unity.'

Jan. 20.—Social Meeting at 110, St. Martin's Lane (at 3 p.m.).

Jan. 27.—MRS. C. DESPARD, on 'The New Womanhood.'

Feb. 10.—MR. J. W. BOULDING, on 'The Ordination of "Doctor Sceptic," or the Value of Critical Examination in Matters of Belief.'

Feb. 24.—MR. ANGUS MCARTHUR, on 'The Psychic Element in the Greek Testament.'

[This Lecture neither assumes nor involves any knowledge of Greek on the part of the audience. The Lecturer, however, believes that by using the original text he can throw a clearer light upon the psychic problems of the New Testament.]

Mar. 17.—LADY MOSLEY, on 'Spiritual Healing.'

Mar. 31.—MR. GEORGE P. YOUNG, on 'The Trend of Modern Science towards Spiritualism.'

Apr. 14.—MR. EBENEZER HOWARD (Garden City Pioneer), on 'Spiritual Influences toward Social Progress.'

Apr. 28.—REV. JOHN PAGE HOPPS, on 'The Ministry of Angels.'

May 12.—MR. EDMUND E. FOURNIER D'ALBE, B.Sc. (professionally).

May 26.—MISS E. KATHARINE BATES, on 'Mind and Heart in Psychological Research. True Scientific Methods.'

MEETINGS AT 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.,

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CLAIRVOYANCE.—On Tuesday next, November 16th, Mr. J. J. Vango will give illustrations of Clairvoyance, at 3 p.m., and no one will be admitted after that hour. Fee 1s. each to Members and Associates; for friends introduced by them, 2s. each. On the 23rd and 30th, Miss Florence Morse.

MEDIUMISTIC DEVELOPMENT.—On Thursday next, November 18th, at 4 p.m., Mr. George Spriggs will conduct a Class for the Development of Mediumship, for Members and Associates only. Also on December 2nd and 16th.

THOUGHT EXCHANGE.—On Thursday, November 25th, at 4 p.m. Discussion.

TALKS WITH A SPIRIT CONTROL.—On Friday next, November 19th, at 3 o'clock, Mrs. M. H. Wallis, under spirit control, will reply to questions relating to the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism, mediumship, and life here and on 'the other side.' Admission 1s.; Members and Associates free. Visitors should be prepared with written inquiries of general interest to submit to the control. Students and inquirers alike will find these meetings especially useful in helping them to solve perplexing problems and to realise the actuality of spirit personality.

SPIRIT HEALING.—On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Mr. A. Rex, the healing medium, will attend between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., to afford Members and Associates and

their friends an opportunity to avail themselves of his services in magnetic healing under spirit control. As Mr. Rex is unable to treat more than a limited number of patients on each occasion, appointments must be made in advance by letter, addressed to the Secretary, Mr. E. W. Wallis. Fees, one treatment, 7s. 6d.; course of three, 15s.

MEMBERS have the privilege of introducing *one* friend to the *Friday* meeting without payment.

In accordance with No. XV. of the Articles of Association, the ordinary annual subscriptions of new Members and Associates elected after October 1st will be taken as covering the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1910.

CLUES TO SOME PERPLEXITIES.

In an early report on Mrs. Piper and her phenomena, contained in 'Proceedings of the S.P.R.' (Vol. VI.), entitled, 'A Record of Observations of Certain Phenomena of Trance,' there are some cogent and suggestive comments by Sir Oliver Lodge which are not as well known as they deserve to be. They throw light on some of the causes of suspicion which disturb inquirers when they begin to investigate for themselves.

When a medium 'goes under control' we all know that the utterances or writings which follow are, as a rule, by no means all relevant. Frequently amid some, perhaps many, correct statements there is plenty of irrelevant matter, and the impression conveyed is that there is a good deal of 'padding.' Sir Oliver Lodge refers to this in connection with the earlier experiences with Mrs. Piper, when she was under the Phinuit 'control.' He says:—

He [Phinuit] seems to be under some compulsion not to be silent. Possibly the trance would cease if he did not exert himself. At any rate, he chatters on, and one has to discount a good deal of conversation which is obviously, and sometimes confessedly, introduced as a stopgap ('Proceedings,' Vol. VI., p. 450).

In this paragraph we get a hint which may account for many such experiences. What if it be actually impossible to keep the medium entranced without a continuous flow of mental activity of some kind from the control? * If this is the case, much rubbish is bound to accompany 'control' whenever the conditions are not very good. On the same page Sir Oliver Lodge says:—

Phinuit does the best he can, but it would be a great improvement if, when he realises that conditions are unfavourable, he would say so and hold his peace. I have tried to impress this upon him, with the effect that he is sometimes confidential, and says that he is having a bad time; but, after all, he probably knows his own business best, because it has several times happened that after half an hour of more or less worthless padding, a few minutes of valuable lucidity have been attained.

He then goes on to say that in the case of Phinuit there is generally (in his experience) more valuable matter than padding, though this is not always so.

Here, then, we have an illuminating suggestion: and one which should make us patient under this sort of disconcerting experience, since it gives us a hint of the possible cause.

In addition to this 'padding' we are apt, at times, to be disquieted by apparent 'fishing' on the part of the medium or the control. Now this may, of course, be due in some cases to want of honesty, but there are other reasons which may also account for it. Again we turn to Sir Oliver Lodge's article, and we find that he has some light to throw on the point. He says (p. 450):—

* Since writing the above, it has occurred to me that the foolish vagaries of dreaming may serve some such useful purpose. It is possible that it is necessary to maintain cerebral activity in some degree during sleep, and that the complete cessation of this would make it very difficult for the Ego to regain control over the brain.

It has been asserted (I do not know whether correctly or not) that we dream all the time we are asleep. If this be so, as Nature generally economises energy in an organism, it seems probable that the cerebral activity which causes so many senseless dreams is not devoid of purpose. It has occurred to me that the purpose may be to facilitate the resumption of full control.—H. A. D.

Personally, I find that Phinuit can hardly help this fishing process at times. I have laid much stress on this fishery hypothesis, because it is a fact to be taken into consideration, because it is occasionally an unfortunately conspicuous fact, and because of its deterrent effect upon a novice to whom that aspect is first exposed.

From the remarks made by Sir Oliver Lodge in this connection, there arises the suggestion—though I am not sure whether this is what *he* means to imply—that it is possible that Phinuit has to 'fish' in order to discover what are the points on which the sitter wants him to obtain information. We have no right to assume that Phinuit is independent of such clues to what is desired, and this apparently desultory conversation, this 'groping' and 'floundering' and 'padding' may enable him to get on the right track. We may illustrate the point in this way.

Let us suppose that two persons meet for the first time in a London drawing-room: both of them have friends in Australia, but in order to discover this, and perhaps to give information respecting their mutual acquaintances, there must be a certain amount of preliminary conversation which is very like 'fishing.' Mr. A. has to ask leading questions, or, at least, put out feelers, so to speak, in one or two directions and so find out who are the mutual friends, where they live, &c. Having made his advances in this way, he is able to give Mr. B., with whom he is conversing, news of these mutual friends, or perhaps to give their addresses and bring him again into communication with them.

There is no suspicion of fraud in all this: but if Mr. A. were not in the flesh and were, through a medium, to ask these leading questions, he would at once be open to suspicion of fraud, *i.e.*, it would be suggested that the 'control,' or the medium, was trying to get information from the sitter in order to pretend that he was in touch with the sitter's friends. We thus see how easily fraud may be falsely imputed.

We have all experienced the fact that a question asked by a sitter will apparently switch the medium on to a particular set of associations, and the question may be necessary to effect the connection. Fishing, *i.e.*, asking questions on the part of a medium or control, may effect the same end. Sir Oliver Lodge further says (p. 449):—

It is as if he (Phinuit) were in a difficult position—only able to gain information from very indistinct or inaudible sources, and yet wishful to convey as much information as possible. The attitude is then as of one straining after every clue, and making use of the slightest indication, whether received in normal or abnormal ways; not indeed obviously distinguishing between information received from the sitter and information received from other sources.

This remarkably penetrating and far-seeing interpretation of phenomena which have puzzled many thoughtful students may be found in an article which appeared as long ago as 1890.

It seems that at times Phinuit also appeared to be guessing. 'Sometimes,' says Sir Oliver Lodge, 'he ekes out the scantiness of his information from the resources of a lively imagination.' In so doing he behaved as many persons are apt to do on this side. It is not always an indication of dishonesty when a person thus acts. If Phinuit derived the information he imparted by a species of thought-transference from the discarnate spirits of the friends of the sitters, it is quite conceivable that he would not always be able to distinguish between the thoughts which came to him from those in the body and thoughts which came from those out of the body, and it is similarly conceivable that he may not always have been able to distinguish between these and the imaginations or guesses of his own mind.

These reflections should make us slow to form conclusions which involve attributing to fraudulent intentions things which are capable of quite other interpretations. Of course, dishonest persons, whether in the body or out of the body, may use the complexities of mediumship as a shelter for their dishonesty, but this does not justify the investigator in jumping to the conclusion that there is deceit whenever he meets with circumstances such as those here described.

H. A. DALLAS.

PROFESSOR JAMES ADVANCING SLOWLY.

We had hoped, after Professor William James' report on the Piper phenomena in a recent number of the 'Proceedings of the S.P.R.' (see 'LIGHT,' pp. 387, 391), that we might claim him as definitely, though cautiously, committed to an opinion favourable to the claims of Spiritualism, but in 'The American Magazine' he pronounces a verdict that may be described as cautious in the extreme, and not remarkable for definiteness. He declares that after twenty-five years' study of the literature of psychical research, and spending, as he says, 'a good many hours (though far fewer than I ought to have spent) in witnessing, or trying to witness, phenomena,' he is 'theoretically no further' than he was at the beginning, and, he continues:—

I confess that at times I have been tempted to believe that the Creator has eternally intended this department of Nature to remain *bafling*, to prompt our curiosities and hopes and suspicions all in equal measure, so that, although ghosts and clairvoyance and raps and messages from spirits are always seeming to exist, and can never be fully explained away, they also can never be susceptible of full corroboration.

Then Professor James bethinks him that it is hard to believe that the Creator has put phenomena into the world merely to defy and mock the scientific temper, and suggests that it is easier to conclude that students are too precipitate in their hopes of solving these problems at first sight, and that we must be content to mark progress by half-centuries. If we look at other subjects we find the same 'bafling' of attempts at a solution.

The atom had already been a subject of speculation and contention for centuries when Lucretius, fifty years before the Christian era, summarised the discussion in a poem; yet no one has ever suggested that the Creator made atoms on purpose to 'baffle' research. Perhaps one of the things that thoughtful men have to be most thankful for is that this universe is so replete with 'bafling' problems, for the education of our intelligence, that is, for the calling forth of those higher powers of the human mind which would for ever have remained in abeyance had all knowledge been divinely revealed to us without effort on our part. The legitimate curiosity of scientific men is being gratified by slow degrees, and each new fact or principle is discovered when the mind has been prepared for it, and not until then. On the same principle, if psychic problems seem baffling now, it is because we are not yet developed up to the point at which we can discover and comprehend their solution; we may have the solution in front of us, and yet not have the faculty for perceiving it. Again, if these problems remain baffling after the material world has been thoroughly explored (a long look ahead), our successors may have cause to be thankful that there are still some problems left for them to attack, some riddles for them to solve. But we foresee that long before that time arrives both physical and psychical science will be very different from what they are at present: they will have wider outlooks, more intelligent perceptions, greatly improved processes of experiment, as well as more enlightened methods of appraising the results obtained. Therefore let us be content to learn what we can—as much as we can, not as little—in the present, and to leave something for future generations to call 'bafling,' even as simpler problems baffle us now.

What we have arrived at so far, let Professor James tell us. Speaking for himself, he says that as Eusapia Paladino's phenomena have been proved, in part at least, to be real, there is no longer any reason to doubt other phenomena on the score of impossibility: 'Eusapia will throw retrospective credit on Home and Stainton Moses, Florence Cook, and all similar wonder-workers. The balance of *presumptions* will be changed in favour of genuineness being at least possible' in regard to psychical phenomena.

Professor James thinks that too much importance may be attached to fraud, and not enough to those phenomena which cannot be ascribed to fraud; and that when imposture, coincidence, normal knowledge, and 'fishing' have all been allowed for, 'there is a residuum of knowledge displayed that can only be called supernormal; the medium taps some sources of information not open to ordinary people.' To cry 'bosh' and

dismiss the subject with a sneer, he says, does not add to the sum of human knowledge. Imposture is always imitative: 'you can no more create an absolutely new trick than you can create a new word without any previous basis. Try, reader, yourself to invent an unprecedented kind of "physical phenomenon of Spiritualism." When I try, I find myself mentally turning over the regular medium-stock, and thinking how I might improve some item.'

The conclusion to which the Professor has come is that 'there is "something in" these never-ending reports of physical phenomena,' though he has not yet 'the least positive notion of the something.' It becomes, to his mind, 'simply a worthy problem for investigation.' This at least is a definite advance on the attitude of certain distinguished scientists of thirty years ago, who said that the phenomena, even if real, did not interest them. Professor James points out that 'every sort of person is liable to' a kind of fictitious or dramatic activity, 'as vast as it is enigmatic.' He says:—

Our subconscious region seems, as a rule, to be dominated either by a crazy 'will to make-believe,' or by some curious external force impelling us to personation. The psychical researcher realises the commonness of the phenomenon, while the less informed person thinks it so rare as to be unworthy of attention. *I wish to go on record for the commonness; and next, for the presence, in the midst of all the humbug, of really supernormal knowledge: knowledge that cannot be traced to the ordinary sources of information.*

There is a hint conveyed in some further paragraphs that we are all potential mediums in this sense of having sources of information other than through the senses, and that 'when one works downwards from the feats of really strong mediums into less brilliant regions of the automatic life,' one tends to interpret many slight but odd coincidences with truth as possibly rudimentary forms of this kind of knowledge.' In an eloquent passage he maintains that just as trees and islands mingle their roots and bases underground, or under the sea, so there is 'a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds but accidental fences, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea or reservoir. Our normal consciousness is circumscribed for adaptation to our external earthly environment, but the fence is weak in spots, and fitful influences from beyond leak in, showing the otherwise unverifiable common connection.' The detailed problems arising from this conception are almost endless; 'hardly as yet has the surface of the facts called psychic begun to be scratched for scientific purposes. It is through following these facts, I am persuaded,' Professor James concludes, 'that the greatest scientific conquests of the coming generation will be achieved.' But he does not appear to mean that a 'common reservoir' is to be substituted for the survival of individual consciousness; it is rather a bank in which all personalities, incarnate or excarnate, have current accounts to which all contribute, and upon which all can draw more or less freely; the nature, 'structure,' and conditions of this 'mother-sea' constitute a problem which was first formulated by Myers, and which Professor James thinks ought, therefore, to be called 'Myers' problem.'

VARIED PHENOMENA IN A PRIVATE CIRCLE.

Mr. J. C. F. Grumbine, in a letter to the 'Progressive Thinker,' says:—

Recently I have had the pleasure of conducting certain séances under the very best conditions, with just three or four persons present, and without a professional medium, and we have witnessed some extraordinary phenomena. We have heard audible whistling, intelligent raps, felt cold, icy hands touching us, cold breezes, listened to trance messages, had wonderful exhibitions of spirit power in the form of raps under our feet resting on the carpet or rugs, and heard drumming in distant parts of the room. And to cap the climax, we have had writings, flowers have been brought to us, and matter, with its limitations, has dissolved as though it were a mist to allow other objects to pass through it. Mottoes have been taken from the walls and placed at our feet. Only a few nights ago, September 1st, a spray of fern broken from a fern plant in another room sixty feet distant, was brought through closed door and walls, and a hand brushed it about our faces and on our hands in the most loving manner. And these things happened and happen in my own home, with friends, who eliminate all possibility of collusion and fraud, and whose integrity and honour are exemplary.

TRANSITION OF MR. ROBERT COOPER.

On Friday of last week, the 5th inst., we received a letter from Mrs. W. Ayres, one of the daughters of Mr. Robert Cooper, saying that her father passed to the higher life about 6 a.m. that day. He had a paralytic stroke a few days before and did not regain consciousness. The money which our readers have so kindly contributed to the fund instituted in 'LIGHT' a fortnight since has been of great service, and Mrs. Ayres desires gratefully to thank the kind donors. She says that she and her sister would not have known which way to turn to meet the funeral and other heavy expenses that have been incurred during her father's long and trying illness.

The following sums have been received and forwarded to Mrs. Ayres, since the former acknowledgment in 'LIGHT,' viz.: 'S. F. E.,' £2 2s.; 'J. H. M.,' £1; Miss E. L. Boswell Stone, 5s.

Mr. Robert Cooper was born at Rotherhithe, but spent nearly the whole of his life in Eastbourne, where as a chemist, and subsequently the proprietor of a brewery, he made a considerable fortune. He founded and edited the 'Spiritual Times,' became associated with the Davenport Brothers, and frequently gave explanatory addresses before their sésances. After the loss of his fortune a fund was raised from which he received a small income for some years. Mr. Cooper was the composer of the music of several hymns and songs. He leaves two sons and two daughters. His mortal form was interred at Brookwood Cemetery on the 10th inst. in the presence of a few friends.

THE MEANING OF MYSTICISM.

The 'trend towards mysticism,' at present distinctly noticeable, is spoken of by 'Current Literature' as a 'revival'; but like other ancient tendencies of thought which are taken up from time to time, it is probably something more than a mere renewal of interest in old-time mystical writings. It involves or includes that, but it is more practical and definite; it is an application of mysticism to the living problems of the day. That this should be possible, implies that mysticism is itself a living principle, and, indeed, when correctly understood, it is found to be so. 'Current Literature,' after noting the spread of movements having a mystical tendency, from 'Christian Science' to Vedanta, says:—

In spite of its pervasiveness, very few can define mysticism. The vaguest ideas as to its real meaning prevail. There is a mystical tradition, and the mystical attitude is now fairly clearly formulated. Practically all authoritative writers on the subject emphasise, as one of its essential aspects, the conception of the soul as something that can see and perceive the spiritual verities as the body can grasp material objects. . . . The dynamic part of the mystical principle may be said to lie in its quickening of the desire for direct intercourse with God. It has also, however, its purely human implications.

The search for ultimate reality brings to light the fact that we can nowhere find that reality, except as exemplified in all that we see around us; and the nearer we approach to a glimpse of that reality the more we find that it is the point of union of all men and all creation; it is the underlying principle of which all these are the exponents. Therefore a rational mysticism must always bring us back to earth with a truer understanding and a deeper love of all our fellow-beings. As the Rev. E. J. Brailsford wrote in the 'Quarterly Review':—

There is a growing feeling that each generation should live for those who are to follow. Before every worker in this passing day there has arisen a vision of a federated humanity—a living association of men so welded together as to make one perfect unity. So many of diverse minds and at different times have seen this sight that we may be certain that it is no unsubstantial dream.

The intuitive vision of a mystic unity as a reality which needs to be brought into actuality, and of this need as a purpose to be kept ever in view, is the essence of mysticism as an active impelling force in the world of to-day. All the more powerfully will its operations be felt when it is realised, as Spiritualists do, that this 'solidarity,' this joint responsibility of purpose and activity, includes the spirit world as the frequent prompter of the actions of the incarnate, and that

every effort for the improvement of mankind, physically, socially, mentally, and spiritually, is in itself an outcome of a sane and healthy mysticism—of an outlook on human affairs from the standpoint of spiritual unity.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

Apparently no good custom can exist for any length of time without deteriorating, and we are not surprised to find a Vicar of the Church of England raising a protest against the practices associated with Harvest Festivals. The Rev. A. M. Mitchell, Vicar of Burton Wood Parish Church, says:—

The All Saints Festival is the rightful General Thanksgiving Day of the Church of God. A chaste solemnity and holy peace pervade this season of rest and gladness, in such strange and beautiful contrast to the gross irreverence and religious rowdyism of the Harvest Festival, which, as the annual Show Day of the Churches, is responsible for the introduction of 'scrambling competitions, where the sanctity of peace should reign.' The exaltation of the material festival has meant the depreciation of the spiritual.

This worthy Vicar goes further, and we commend his words to the Bishop of London, the Rev. F. Swainson, and others. He says:—

The dishonour cast upon the festival of All Saints is responsible for the practical repudiation by nominal Christians of the most true and comfortable doctrine of the Gospel—the Communion of Saints.

Ordinary Sunday congregations are not in touch with the unseen; angels to them are no living bright realities in whose worship we join; the fortunate departed are nothing better than ghosts or shadows, who remain for ever and ever unknowable and unknown. If Churchmen were one half as eager for the commemoration of the faithful departed as is the religious mob for the observance of the Harvest Festival, they would realise that sweet assurance for which devout, loving souls so intensely long—the oneness of the seen and unseen—the identity of life here and on the Other Side—the nearness of the angels and those who have passed over and, therefore, the certainty of fellowship and the hope of invisible help in time of need. This is the sure way to real and abiding happiness, to never-failing thankfulness and peace of heart, to the spirit of praise and thanksgiving, for the departed are not dead but alive for evermore: *we* shall not die but live, live once more visibly, as now invisibly, with those who are not lost but gone before.

'I believe in the Communion of Saints,' in the communion of the living incarnate with the living discarnate. It is a grand confession. It is no 'cramping form of creed,' let it but be preached clearly, bravely and tenderly from our pulpits, in all its breadth and fulness, and there will follow, not an age of miracles and wonders, but of 'greater things than these.'

EUSAPIA LOSES SEVENTEEN POUNDS IN TWENTY SECONDS.

Mr. Hereward Carrington, writing in 'Mc Clure's Magazine,' for October, with reference to his experiences with Eusapia Paladino, says:—

During the experiments in Milan it was found that the medium lost weight in a manner that could in no way be accounted for. The medium and chair in which she was sitting were placed upon the scales, and their combined weight was carefully measured. She was then watched carefully, to see that she threw nothing away, and also to see that she derived no support from the surrounding surfaces—the floor, &c. Nevertheless, in the course of from twelve to twenty seconds Eusapia lost about seventeen and a-half pounds in weight. At the fifth sitting a similar reduction was observed, under conditions which the investigating committee considered perfect.

No one who has seen the effects of a sésance upon Eusapia Paladino could doubt its genuine character, as far as the medium is concerned. At the conclusion of a sésance she is faint, dizzy, nauseated, extremely weak, occasionally vomits, and remembers little that has occurred during the sésance; while her face becomes deeply lined, greenish yellow in colour, and appears to be shrunk almost to half its natural size. Moreover, many abnormal occurrences take place, quite apart from the phenomena themselves. Thus, during one sésance, Professor Morselli, of Genoa, normally right-handed, became left-handed, while Eusapia herself, normally left-handed, became right-handed.

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MEISTER ECKHART'S SERMONS.

Eckhart, a famous preacher of the thirteenth century, was one of a band of men who, in their way, went to the root of the matter before the fight for Church doctrine and polity began, as the battle of 'The Reformers.' He was a good enough Catholic for his day, and an honoured scholar and priest, but he did not escape the worried scrutiny of the Inquisition, which eventually managed to get certain statements of his officially condemned: but that made no difference to him, for, when the disciplinary edict was published, he was dead.

The fact is that Eckhart was a mystical rationalist, or rational mystic, and, as such, he may now be regarded as very modern—in truth, as an old teacher of 'The New Theology.' Mr. R. J. Campbell probably knows a good deal about Meister Eckhart, whose thoughts concerning God are quite City Temple thoughts, plus some quaint old-world theology.

Eckhart, with all his mysticism, was something of an agnostic. God, in Himself, he quite excluded from human understanding. He could be known only in what we call His manifestations, which were, in reality, God becoming self-conscious, and chiefly in Man: and, as for Man, his one true endeavour should be to destroy the sense of selfness, and return to God as his true centre and very life. Hence, the Son of God is all that the Godhead has produced, minus 'The Father' who also was an outcome of the Godhead, until then unconscious. But we are getting into cloudland, and hasten to take refuge in a small book which has started us on this old quest. The book (published by H. R. Allenson) is a first translation into English of seven very short Eckhart Sermons. Judged from our modern point of view, most of them are not sermons at all, except in the High Church seven minutes sense: but they are noteworthy as containing remarkable glimpses of ideas which are to-day often put forward as being 'New.'

The present-day familiar phrase 'The Immanence of God' would have been too weak for Eckhart. He held that Man was actually a God-emanation or expression, and dared to say, 'There is a somewhat in the soul that is, as it were, a blood-relative of God'; and Christ, he says, draws us by means of affinity, 'that affinity which brings creatures of the same species together, and like to its like.' 'Humanity is, so to speak,' he says, 'the Son of God born from all eternity.' 'If you ask me whether, seeing that my spiritual birth is out of time, I am an eternal son, I answer "Yes" and "No." In the everlasting fore-

knowledge of God, I slumbered like a word unspoken. He hath brought me forth, His son, in the image of His eternal fatherhood, that I also should be a father and bring forth Him.' The last few words are startling—a daring bit of mysticism which must indeed have worried the Inquisition.

In another Discourse he says: 'All that the Eternal Father teaches and reveals in His being, His nature and His Godhead, which He manifests to us in His Son, and teaches us that we are also His Son.' So much His Son that the ultimate ideal is to be practically merged in Him. 'The eye with which I see God,' he says, 'is the same with which God sees me. My eye and God's eye is one eye, and one sight, and one knowledge and one love.'

This might very easily be construed as Pantheism, and, indeed, a Preface to this book says that 'this theology is really Pantheism': but that is an error which Eckhart, in the closing sermon, repudiates. He says: 'If we regard the soul as the formative principle of the body, and God as the formative principle of the soul, we have a profounder principle of ethics than is found in Pantheism. The fundamental thought of this system is the real distinction between God and the world, together with their real inseparability, for only really distinct elements can interpenetrate each other': and Eckhart farther protects himself against the charge of Pantheism by insisting upon the vast unknown Infinite Being from whom all things emerge and back to whom, according to Nature, all should go: and He has predestined all things, even to the denial of a half-hearted and unearnest prayer which He foreknew from all eternity. 'He saw the earnest prayers which thou wilt offer to-morrow, but He will not listen to them to-morrow, because He heard them in eternity, before thou wast a man at all.' This forestalls John Calvin, and, in truth, presents us with a fatalism which somewhat surpasses that more wary thinker's arbitrary God.

What is the object of it all? To achieve consciousness for the Godhead, through myriads of responsive, aspiring and loving souls. But what of the unresponsive, the un-aspiring and the unloving? And what of their separateness? And what if their separation become permanent? There is apparently no answer: at all events no answer beyond this—that the desired end is the sinking of self in God, through emancipation from all earthly clingings and companionships, through sorrow and travail, until all is lost in God;—a hard saying! made no easier by the confession that no one can fully attain to it, and by the repeated statement that he who sorrows most rises most. 'Sorrow is the root of all virtue.' Again a hard saying!

But there is joy among the angels. 'A question arises,' he says, 'regarding the angels who dwell with us, serve us and protect us, whether their joys are equal to those of the angels in heaven, or whether they are diminished by the fact that they protect and serve us. No; they are certainly not; for the work of the angels is the will of God, and the will of God is the work of the angels:—their service to us does not hinder their joy nor their working.' If God told an angel to go to a tree and pluck caterpillars off it, the angel, he says, would be quite ready to do so, and it would be his happiness, if it were the will of God: and, notwithstanding what he says about the preciousness of sorrow, he adds: 'The man who abides in the will of God wills nothing else but what God is, and what He wills. If he were ill he would not wish to be well. If he really abides in God's will, all pain is to him a joy; all complication, simple: yea, even the pains of hell would be a joy to him.' This extravagance may be the logical result of the main doctrine that the chief end of man is to be

utterly surrendered to God and, in fact, to be merged in Him, but we must draw the line somewhere short of it, though there is a shining spiritual truth at the heart of it. We must be merciful to these old mystics. They were afloat on the dismal waters of a half pagan Theology, and they were students of the spiritual stars. A church with an Inquisition held them, but they were on pilgrimage—spiritual seekers after God.

THE MAYAS, THE EGYPTIANS, AND ATLANTIS.

ADDRESS BY MADAME ALICE LE PLONGEON.

On Thursday evening, the 4th inst., at the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, to a large gathering of the Members, Associates, and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Madame Alice Le Plongeon delivered an Address entitled 'Dr. Le Plongeon's Discoveries Concerning the Mayas and Egyptians and Atlantis.'

MR. H. WITHALL, Vice-President of the Alliance, presided. In the course of some preliminary remarks referring to the fascination which the subject of 'the lost Atlantis' possessed for many persons, he said that although they could not help being attracted by it, there was an entire lack of any positive knowledge regarding that lost continent. All they had to rely upon were statements and theories of various kinds. Plato, for example, claimed that his grandfather had received from certain Egyptian priests information concerning the existence and eventual destruction of a great continent. It seemed possible that these priests derived their information from trance mediums, because, in those days, Egypt knew a great deal more about psychical matters than London did to-day, and that source of information concerning 'the lost continent' was still available. For several years he (Mr. Withall) had been in close association with a spirit who claimed that in his earth life he had belonged to Atlantis. One would think that the law of progress in the spiritual world would have carried spirits of such ancient origin far beyond the range of earth, and, that being the case, any communications from them to the material world could only be made through relays of 'medium' spirits. In messages of this kind, therefore, it was necessary to allow for a certain percentage of errors due to misunderstanding or other causes, consequently they could not regard such messages with entire confidence. Indeed, all messages purporting to come from prominent and historical persons on the other side should be received with considerable reserve. There existed, however, a certain amount of physical evidence of an indirect kind in the well-known peculiarities of conformation in connection with the sea-bottom of the Southern Atlantic. There were found in that region mountain ridges and elevations which could not be attributed to the mere accumulation of detritus from rivers, and which seemed to point to the fact of a great subsidence of land having taken place at some remote period in the past. The Chairman, in introducing Madame Le Plongeon, referred to her late husband's researches and discoveries in archaeology, and also to the fact that she belonged to a family which had been intimately associated with the Spiritualistic movement.

MADAME ALICE LE PLONGEON, whose lecture was illustrated by some excellent lantern views, commenced her remarks by a reference to her husband, Dr. Le Plongeon, the archaeologist, who was born in the island of Jersey in 1826, and who passed to the higher life in December, 1908.

Passing next to the country of the Mayas, Yucatan, the peninsula in the southern part of Mexico—some views of the country and its people were shown on the screen, while the lecturer gave a brief description of the place which now forms part of the Mexican Republic. Yucatan had been invaded by various nations during the early part of the Christian era, and the invaders had intermarried with the aborigines, who still, however, retained the name of Mayas, just as the various races absorbed by the United States call themselves Ameri-

cans. The term 'Maya' (as Dr. Le Plongeon had observed) had an etymological significance of an almost universal character. Tracing this out, Dr. Le Plongeon had discovered that the Maya people had sent colonists to various parts of the world, carrying their modes of thought, language, and customs. He did not, however, claim to know from what part of the world they started. He had also found some remarkable parallels between the ancient Mayas of Yucatan and the old Egyptians. The most remarkable link was seen in the fact that the alphabetical forms of the language were practically the same in each case. Scientists, however, had shown a strange lack of interest in this particular discovery.

A notable peculiarity in the ancient Maya statues of kings, found in tombs examined by the Doctor, was that they were always shown in a posture obviously designed to imitate the shape of the peninsular country over which they ruled.

Except for a few undulatory tracts in the west, Yucatan had a remarkably level surface. Its staple agriculture took the form of hemp growing, and a great part of the more fertile tracts were covered with hemp fields. Hemp, indeed, formed the entire wealth of the country. Amongst other present-day aspects of Yucatan, noted by Madame Le Plongeon in passing, was its remarkable freedom from earthquakes. In this respect it bore out the contention of the elder Pliny that a country might escape earthquakes by the process of sinking wells, which would allow a vent for the dangerous gases imprisoned in the earth. Yucatan, in fact, while largely destitute of any surface stream worthy of the name of river, abounded in wells, nearly all of them of natural origin. One of these wells—the one at Chichen—had a circumference of 900 feet, the water being 100 feet below the brink. Caverns were also found in various parts of the country, many of them abounding in beautiful stalactites, and in some of them were large sheets of water in which lived fish that were totally blind owing to the absence of light.

Dealing with a vast structure of ancient date, a picture of which was shown, Madame Le Plongeon alluded to an old tradition that some of these early monuments were built by a race of giants. In this instance colour was lent to the legend by a glance at the steps which led up to the structure, every step being eighteen inches in height. It was believed also that the stones used in a part of the edifice had a chronological significance, each stone (there were one hundred and eighty in all) representing a period of thirty-six years, so that the whole gave a period of six thousand four hundred and eighty years. In viewing this picture the spectators were requested to note the posture of an Indian who had his arm laid across his breast, the hand resting on the opposite shoulder—an attitude indicating reverence or respect. This was another curious link with ancient Egyptians, for the gesture with them had the same significance. Another striking discovery by Dr. Le Plongeon was that the ancient Mayas employed a lineal measure corresponding to the metre.

A further interesting parallel between the inhabitants of Ancient Egypt and the Mayas was seen in the fact that the New Year of both commenced in the month of July, and that both considered five days in the year to be unlucky, and abstained from commencing any business on those days.

Just as the Chinese and Japanese, while speaking different tongues, are able to decipher each other's writing, so it seems to have been with the Egyptians and Mayas in the light of the Doctor's discoveries, for however their spoken languages varied, there was no doubt about the remarkable resemblances in the writing of each of them. Indeed, it was his discovery of the fact which enabled Dr. Le Plongeon to read the inscriptions on the Maya monuments, a point which was illustrated by some remarkable pictures thrown on the screen. An inscription which had been deciphered by the Doctor, appeared to have reference to a human sacrifice, for it alluded to the body of a 'crushed man' as being 'an acceptable offering on the altar.'

The exploration of the ancient relics of this mysterious country was an adventure fraught with danger, not only owing to the jealousy of the natives in respect of these memorials, but to the fact that they were in a state of rebellion at the time. Accordingly the authorities gave Dr. and Madame

Le Plongeon a guard of one hundred soldiers to convoy them through the affected districts, but this bodyguard made such a tumult with drums and trumpets during their progress that the two explorers were glad to dismiss them, retaining only the companionship of the leader, an Army lieutenant.

Showing a photograph of the interior of a chamber in one of the ruins surveyed by the party, Madame Le Plongeon stated, as an example of the photographic difficulties, that the Doctor had spoiled no fewer than twenty of the wet collodion plates employed (owing to the heat and dust the plates had dried too rapidly). It was only by the device of mixing honey with the collodion that he had at last succeeded in making the picture.

Of especial interest were the carvings on certain tombs which bore representations of the trunks of elephants. Both amongst the Egyptians and the Hindus similar sculpture was found, the elephant being a sacred figure and a symbol of power. In the particular tomb shown, while the entire figure of the elephant was not given, different parts of the face of the animal were used as letters to represent the animal's name.

Another significant feature of the Maya sculpture was the 'horned snake,' which also connected with the ancient Egyptians, for it had an especial symbolic meaning to them, being invariably used to signify royalty.

One of the monuments inspected was found by Dr. Le Plongeon, from a perusal of the inscription upon it, to have been erected by a certain Queen M'oo (alluded to in a book by Dr. Le Plongeon, entitled 'Queen M'oo and the Egyptian Sphinx') in memory of her royal consort. Excavations at this place brought to light an altar, supported by caryatides (the figures—usually female—used in ancient sculpture to support entablatures). Pictures were taken of these, and they were carefully re-interred by the Doctor, who hoped thus to preserve them from destruction. In a chamber at the back of this altar the explorers found, to their delight, a number of paintings, one in particular (shown on the screen) having a profound ethnological interest, since it depicted the art of divination by means of the entrails of animals, a rite practised amongst several of the races of the old world. In the picture a haruspex (diviner) is seen in the act of opening a fish in order to pry into the future by an inspection of its viscera. Another picture showed a group of figures arranged in such a way as to leave no doubt that an experiment in mesmerism was being practised. And here, too, was another connection with the Egypt of the Pharaohs, for similar pictorial representations have been found there. A striking feature of the lantern illustrations was the production of pictures from ancient Egypt enabling the spectators to observe these resemblances.

One of the illustrations of Maya monuments depicted pillars in the form of a serpent, with mouth agape and covered with feathers. The feathers were intended to indicate royalty, since the royal personages amongst the ancient Mayas were accustomed to dress in feather garments.

A further suggestion regarding the origin of the Mayas was seen in the custom of the natives of to-day in laying offerings of provisions on the tombs of their dead.

Of occult interest was the story narrated by the lecturer of the unearthing by the explorers of a large statue of one of the ancient kings, the shape and posture of which before it was completely disinterred gave rise to considerable speculation. During the work of excavation the lieutenant, who had been studying a book on Spiritualism, took an empty box to serve him as a 'tipper' or séance table, and after spelling out a message from it, gravely announced that the figure when unearthed would be found to be neither sitting, standing, nor recumbent. 'And the funny part of it is,' said Madame Le Plongeon, 'that it turned out to be quite true.' The posture of the statue (a picture of which was shown) was, in fact, found to be of a nondescript character. The discovery of the statue became famous in the annals of archeology, and it was ultimately taken to Mexico. The task of removing the monolith, however, was one of immense difficulty, owing to its enormous size, and it was conveyed on wheels made,

under the Doctor's instructions, of sections of tree trunks. Pictures and casts of the figure have been deposited in various museums, both in Europe and America. A peculiar feature in connection with this statue was the discovery that the base of it contained sixty-two javelin points, some green and some white.

(To be continued.)

PRE-EXISTENCE AND REINCARNATION NOT IDENTICAL.

In her Address to the London Spiritualist Alliance, Mrs. Besant wisely said that she thought that differences of opinion are desirable in that they help to bring forward different aspects of one immense and vital truth; and on the question of reincarnation there can be no doubt that widely divergent opinions are entertained among both Spiritualists and Theosophists; but the expression of different views need not, and should not, be construed into unfriendliness or want of sympathy, or as constituting a quarrel. For our part, we believe in the fullest and friendliest discussion of all the points involved, and we have devoted much space to the threshing out of this problem because it involves issues which are of immense importance.

Dr. J. M. Peebles, in a recent article in the 'Chicago Tribune,' says:—

The theory of reincarnation, imported from India and generally repellent to science and the deeper psychic research, has quite a number of believers in the arena of modern thought, and while not taught in the holy Vedas, it is almost universal as a belief among Hindus and Buddhists, but the forty millions of India's Mohammedans reject it with scorn, pronouncing it a mischievous heresy. Shishir Kumar Ghose, a noted magazine editor of Calcutta, informed his readers a few months since that 'the doctrine of re-births was invented about Buddha's time.'

Whenever the theory was invented, reincarnation had nothing to do with original Theosophy as taught by its founders while living and writing in America; but on reaching India and sensing the Hindu pulse, they quickly became its converts and advocates. At best reincarnation is but a quaint Oriental speculation. Think of it—reincarnated again and again to battle with enticing temptations and vicious environments, with the possibility—aye, the probability—of sinking deeper into sin upon each bodily replanting. And then a plurality of unremembered past lives, however numerous, with their experiences, could not serve as preventives of further wrongs, nor could they be incentives to virtue. Shri Sumangala, of Colombo, Ceylon, informed us that Gautama Buddha passed through 48,000 re-births before attaining the exaltation of Nirvana.

No array of great names is the equivalent of demonstration, and it is deplorable that a class of wordy writers persist in using the words reincarnation and pre-existence interchangeably. They are not synonyms. Exaggerations weaken instead of strengthen arguments. Pythagoras, Virgil, Ovid, Lessing, Taggart, Wordsworth, Browning, and two-thirds of the other great names often mentioned as bolstering bulwarks in support of reincarnation did not believe in it, as a series of returning re-births or ego-rotations. They did believe, however, in the soul's pre-existence and descent into mortality, a well-grounded and, by the way, a rational belief.

We are spirits now; enshrined, imprisoned in physical forms. And each conscious spirit, the inmost ego, the Atman of the Sanskrit scholar, doubtless did pre-exist as a semi-detached portion of the infinite spirit, God; and in consonance with the divine will it incarnated for clearer individualisation and manifestation into the material with its multi-realizations. This is utterly different from being thrust on to the re-birth wheel of a merciless Karmic fate, returning and re-returning fleshward; and all this, too, with better opportunities hereafter, with heavenly teachers and stellar realms to explore in those unseen and immeasurable immensities.

'Special creation,' outlined in the Babylonian tablets and partially systematised in the book of Genesis, is now a back chapter in the minds of advanced Christendom. Evolution has been substituted by scientists for the word creation. But evolution implies a preceding involution. This admits of no doubt; neither does the philosophy of heredity, which rationally accounts for all inequalities and diverse human characteristics. There is not a 'genius' born which pre-natal influences, impinging environments, and impressions from invisible

sources will not reasonably account for, without resorting to the speculation of reincarnation.

The literature of this reincarnation cult abounds in the repeated, the stereotyped phrase, 'the inequalities of life,' which inequalities, considered from the viewpoint of the whole, are among the choicest blessings. The reverse of inequality is sameness or deadly monotony. A forest of trees the same in kind, shape, and height would induce a distressing mania. If all births were equal, if there were no ignorant to educate, no vicious to reclaim, reformers would be denied the pleasure of aiding the ill born and lifting up the depraved on to the higher planes of moral consciousness and a better life.

The test of a speculation, or of any theory, is its practicability. What, then, is the result of a 2,000 years' belief in reincarnation upon Hinduism?

Did the Hindus discover the potency of steam, did they put the railway system in practice, did they discover the Morse telegraphic communication, did they discover the telephone, or the spectroscope, or the liquefaction of oxygen, radium, wireless telegraphy, electric light? What has the reincarnation cult done during centuries for the overthrow of child marriage, for removing the curse of caste, and for the physical and mental education of India's millions?

As an imported theory from the dreamy, imaginative East, reincarnation may be thus summarised: It is not based upon one well-established scientific fact; it sets at defiance the law of evolution as ascending step by step through mineral, vegetable, man, angels, seraphs, gods; its 80,000,000 of believers in India, Tibet, Corea, Burma, constitute the most superstitious people on earth; it annihilates or stupefies memory for long periods of time; it degrades the aspirations of the spirit by rotating it back again and again into the meshes of matter; as a Karmic force it knows nothing of mercy or forgiveness, mercilessly punishing souls in this life for wrongs committed in some previous existence; in brief, it is a mingling of Hindu magic and Tibetan superstition, eclipsing the mind and deepening every mystery of the universe.

THE GOSPEL FOR TO-DAY.

In 'The Coming Day' for November, in an Address on 'God in His World,' the Rev. J. Page Hopps says:—

Here, then, is the Gospel for to-day—that we are all the varied manifestations of the One Universal Power, in whom we all live and move and have our being, and who lives and moves and has His being in us. This is the unifying thought for all sciences, all philosophies, and all theologies, as, one day, it will be the unifying thought for all politics: and Religion is simply the working out of this in personal and co-operative life.

Come, then, let us help God! That is the message for to-day. We can help, and He needs it. This is the only thing that counts, compared with which all our metaphysical and theological refinements are like the triflings of a child.

The belief that God is one can become fruitful only as that One is God in Man—only in so far as God and Man meet and blend. Then you get the unity of God in his millions of incarnations; then you get God into Bethnal Green; and then you may understand that immense saying of John, 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'

In the following passage, taken from another Address on 'The Hidden God,' there is a note of pathos, also of triumph, in the personal references. Mr. Hopps says:—

Everywhere I feel the mighty heart beneath—the inner intention, the invincible purpose, the hiding of the Power:—and everywhere the heavenly kingdom comes, and the heavenly will is working, working—waiting to be done. Why should not we follow this right to the end? Will the Eternal change to us? Will there not everywhere and always be for us the hiding of His power? What will happen to me soon, I know. The dusk will close about me. The sharp senses will become dull. The years will bring their pathetic message. Faculty after faculty will lose its tenacity and grip. The days will drag, and the nights be long; and the last few months will draw nigh. All will look like failure, desolation and decay: and presently the last days will come, and I shall count them: at a glance—the few last precious golden pieces in my hand. What of it? I say the hiding will be only the hiding of His power—the hiding of His power in my *spirit-self*—His power to steer me through: His power to bring me out of darkness into light; His power to be shown afresh in my splendid new life. So will I sing in the words of the olden time: 'I shall fear no evil, for thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff—they comfort me.' Fear! Why should I fear? When I shut my eyes in my last great sleep—there will only be the discovery of what was once the hiding of His power.

JOTTINGS.

We have received a considerable number of letters of protest against Mr. Stead's action in publishing details of his interviews with well-known political leaders who have passed on. Most of these letters were intended for publication, but we feel that our own comments in 'Notes by the Way,' on page 541, should suffice to show our attitude in this matter. We may say, however, that our correspondents express both pain and surprise that Mr. Stead should have acted as he has done after the very positive assurances, which he has repeatedly given, that Julia's Bureau should be simply and solely used for the purpose of bringing help and consolation to the afflicted and bereaved. This, however, is a matter for which those who are working the Bureau are alone responsible.

In the advertisement of his last Sunday's address to the members of his Bible class, the Rev. F. Swainson quoted I. Timothy, iv. 1, and asked, 'Are we living in the latter days? Is Christ's second coming near at hand?' and answered the questions as follows: 'The extraordinary wave of Spiritism which is now flooding the country is a sure sign that we are living in the latter days.' Of course these days are the latest—at present, but in Matthew, xxiv. 3, 34, we read that 'the end' was to come almost immediately—that 'this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled!' In I. Peter, iv. 7, we read 'the end of all things is at hand'; and in James, v. 8, 'The coming of the Lord draweth nigh'; and in I. John, ii. 18, 'Little children, it is the last time'; and it was expected that the second coming would take place before the disciples could visit all the cities of Israel (Matthew, x. 23). Consequently the latter days referred to have passed and gone hundreds of years ago—or else the predictions failed.

The Rev. C. L. Tweedale, in his book 'Man's Survival After Death,' p. 258, refers to those who roundly declare that spiritual phenomena are the work of demons and evil spirits, and says: 'Even if these things were the work of demons, the proving that the said "demons" have a definite existence is proof of the *spiritual*, and thus destroys at once the whole materialistic position. Apart from the above consideration this view is utterly illogical, and ignores the facts of the Bible. Those who hold it may well be asked on what grounds of evidence they are able to affirm that the spiritual happenings described in the Bible are not also the work of devils. To this question they can give no logical answer. They put a sword into the hands of the enemy, for if present-day appearances of the departed and other modern psychical phenomena are the work of evil demons, then alas for the Apostles who "were glad they saw the Lord" (John xx.), and alas for Christian evidence, for how were they and how are we to know that the appearances to them were not the work of evil spirits likewise?'

Are those who condemn Spiritualists, because of obsolete Biblical commands, prepared to apply logically all the injunctions in the Bible to themselves as well as to us? If Spiritualism is witchcraft, as they say it is, are they prepared to kill all mediums, as the Bible instructs? Are they willing to carry out the commands practically? If so, they must not eat pork, hare, nor any flesh with the blood in it. They must stone to death their disobedient, gluttonous, and drunken children. Circumcision must be generally practised. Men must not shave off the corners of their beards, or mourn for their wives. Unless prepared to conform to these commands, they are not consistent in quoting passages against us from the same books. Will they prove their faith by removing a mountain and casting it into the sea at command? Will they call together the elders of the church and anoint their sick friends with oil and pray over them? If not, why not? The Bible commands them to do so, and promises that—as the prayer of the righteous man availeth much—the sick man shall recover. If they reply that the command was only given to those of the primitive church, we answer, the same thing may be said of all the passages quoted against Spiritualists. They were not said to us but to the early Jews. They were injunctions to the children of Israel, limited to the times and practices of a superstitious and idolatrous people, and not intended to stretch across the centuries to bind the liberties and limit the spiritual powers of the people of this age.

THE UNION OF LONDON SPIRITUALISTS will hold a Conference meeting at Grovedale Hall, Holloway, on Sunday next. At 3 p.m. Mr. G. T. Brown will read a paper for discussion. Tea at 5 o'clock. Speakers at 7 p.m.: Messrs. G. Tayler Gwinn, G. T. Brown, G. Osborne, and G. F. Tilby. Local Spiritualists please rally.

SPIRITS OR 'ASTRAL SHELLS': WHICH?

On p. 527 of 'LIGHT' Mr. L. A. Bosman says: 'We can always communicate with them (spirit people) by means of thought, without disturbing or evoking them, and thereby preventing their progress,' and he asks: 'Why should your correspondent's friend wish to retard her lover's progress?' He further says: 'If she wishes for proof, there can be no harm in endeavouring to obtain it.' What! not if it disturbs and retards her lover in his spiritual progress? Mr. Bosman winds up with these precious words: 'There is always the fear of deception, either unconsciously on the part of the medium or consciously on the part of the "control." What slaves we are to our craven fears! We manufacture 'bogies' and then cringe before them in terror. What about the probability of self-deception when communication with spirits 'by means of thought' is supposedly set up? How can one identify the communicators?'

Apart from the foregoing illogical statements, I wish to enter a strong protest against the Theosophical contention that it is wrong to hold communion with spirit friends because by so doing they are hindered in their upward progress. What kind of progress is that which sacrifices love and friendship, and presses on to the attainment of solitary grandeur? One of the sternest and strongest condemnations of the orthodox heaven was based on the hard-hearted selfishness of the 'saved,' who delighted in their own happiness and callously disregarded the sorrows of their loved ones in hell—yet here is the same idea of personal advancement and glorification regardless of all ties of affection, presented to us in the name of higher wisdom! Even if the progress of the 'lover' were retarded, what would it matter so long as his beloved on earth received comfort and blessing? How could the sacrifice of selfish desire for progress, in order to help and enlighten a loved one on earth, be spiritually hurtful? Surely true happiness is alone secured by making others happy! Besides, what does it matter, in view of eternal progression, whether one is retarded for a few years or not? Is it not infinitely more important that the love-links which unite true hearts in mutual affection and fellowship should be preserved and strengthened, than that one should rush forward and 'get ahead' and leave the other to endure the tortures of desertion and doubt?

Further, Mr. Bosman talks of 'evoking' the dead; but Spiritualists do not 'evoke,' they invite. If spirits come to us they come willingly, not under compulsion—we leave that to 'occultists.' We welcome the helpful and consoling ministrations of our loved ones; who prove their love and identity by their sympathy and service, and we believe that such affectionate help will neither prevent nor retard their spiritual progress; but, even if it should do so, we realise that they would gladly make the sacrifice if, by so doing, they could lighten our load and give us encouragement. As to the 'dangers' and 'fears,' we have done with 'bogies.' True hearts, strong wills, and clear, level heads are all that are needed to banish, or vanquish, these.

F. S. L.

With reference to the question raised by your correspondent as to the harmfulness of communicating with spirit-people, I may say that it is not easy to hold direct intercourse with all individuals on the other side, as, owing to the almost infinite degrees of progression in the spiritual state it is often necessary for the messages to be passed on through several intelligences before they reach the medium, but there is no danger of harm unless the recipient places too much reliance upon the message. It is essential that inquirers should cultivate will power, observation and discrimination. No action should be taken on spirit advice without carefully weighing up the probabilities of the result, for the one who acts is responsible, and not the one from whom the suggestion comes.

It is possible that impersonation may take place on the discarnate side, and it is clear that there are rogues on both sides of death, but it is absurd to refrain from the endeavour to gain knowledge because there are obstacles in the way. Still, inquirers would do well to read and study the books which deal with the subject before they attend séances or make experiments, and persons who are nervous, or afraid, should be dissuaded from attending séances. Normal affairs will be quite worrying enough for them until they have discarded or outgrown their fear of the powers of darkness and gained a wholesome faith in the angel world and the saving power of the Christ.

F. FLOOD.

I am much interested in the correspondence now going on in your columns with reference to Mr. Leadbeater's belief as to communications with astral shells, &c. I, also, was much upset when first I read Mr. Sinnett's 'Esoteric

Buddhism,' which sets forth the same views; but on asking Mr. Colville a question about it one day at the Alliance, he consoled me not a little by telling me that Theosophists had recently modified their views on this point, and *did* allow that actual spirit communion was a fact in many cases. There were two points in Mr. Sinnett's book which specially troubled me, and one was this: That it is a significant fact that in many instances, when first our loved ones pass over, the personal element enters freely into all communications from them, but as time goes on this element grows weaker and weaker until at length the communications become mere generalities. Mr. Sinnett explains this by saying that the astral shell, being at first saturated with the personality of its late inhabitant, can respond to the thoughts and feelings which belonged to it recently, but that as time goes on the astral shell becomes exhausted or used up, as it were, and then the result is nothing but the reflections probably of the medium's subconscious self. (I have not Mr. Sinnett's book by me, so am only quoting roughly from memory.) By the way, what *is* an 'astral shell'?

The second point is, that if, in rare instances, we really do come into touch with the actual personality of the spirit we knew, yet it is very wrong to seek such communication, as we retard the spirit's progress by dragging it back into the earth's condition. I put these questions to my own guides, and subjoin extracts from their answers which may possibly give a little help to others troubled in like manner.

... 'As the spirit progresses from sphere to sphere it sheds the more material constituents or particles (or principles), and thus accumulating its spiritual affinities it ascends into those spheres where communication with earth is very difficult. It is quite true that our life here renders us very inapt at coming back again into earth's conditions once more, but at the same time where any strong earthly affection exists that cord of affinity always draws the spirit back to the power from whence it comes; and according as to whether the love is pure and unselfish or selfish does that love hinder or help the spirit on this side. Now as to the question of writing or otherwise communicating with such spirits? You are very wise not to be always seeking it. Some earth spirits will constantly seek their friends on this side, and such perpetual attraction to the earth's atmosphere is bad for them and hinders their progress. But in a pure and unselfish love there can never, NEVER be any wrong. I say "pure and unselfish," mind. For in unselfishness lies the secret of progress. . . Leave it as much as you can to us. . . We understand the conditions much better than you can. . . but don't, oh! DON'T seek to drag those you love back into your lower conditions. By that I mean, don't just seek them because you wish to talk to them about mundane matters. As to subjective vision, &c. (Mr. Sinnett says when clairvoyants describe spirits they really see them in their own spheres) . . . in some cases, doubtless, mediums do see spirits in their spheres and not on the earth, but more often the spirit is in the lower spheres, and therefore on the astral plane.'

E. P.

According to Theosophists, it would appear: (1) That the attempt to communicate with spirits drags them back and retards their progress; (2) that it does not bring them back at all, but only their 'astral shells.' If I were disposed to accept either of these statements I could not believe them both. I am reminded of the old proverb, one nail drives out another.

DILEMMA.

THE REV. FRANK SWAINSON, of St. Barnabas' Church, Holloway, has been repeating his gratuitous advertisement of Spiritualism by attempting on Sunday last to give it 'three black I's,' and to prove it responsible for infidelity, insanity, and immorality. As an example of the first, he quoted from an old book which has been out of print for nearly forty years, and never had any authority whatever among Spiritualists. Mr. Swainson forgets that clergymen of his own Church who are Spiritualists may resent his attempt to blacken them in this special respect. As for insanity, the quotation from Dr. Forbes Winslow is upwards of thirty years old, and has often been disproved. Under the third head Mr. Swainson had the bad taste to refer to conduct which Spiritualists themselves deplore and discountenance quite as much as good Churchmen deplore scandals in their own midst. In his sensational challenge to produce phenomena he takes no account of the proofs already obtained by men of the highest scientific standing, and he appears to believe that mediums use 'a long telescopic tube extending eight or ten feet, which will, when necessary, telescope up into a size not much larger than a coin, which can easily be palmed.' Prodigious!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

Colours in Dreams.

SIR,—During the past four years I have been greatly impressed by constantly dreaming of the following colours: Deep black, which has usually been followed by sickness; white, which usually precedes a passing out of the body; bright crimson, which brings in its train other troubles; also purple, after which I usually experience great joy.

I have made note of these experiences as they struck me as being very curious, and I am anxious to know whether anyone can give me any other explanation, or recommend me a book dealing with this subject.—Yours, &c., R.

Unfoldment.

SIR,—It is often asserted by those beyond the veil that it is far better for us to progress whilst still incarnated than to do so after discarding the fleshly body. In other words, that the experience learnt on the earth plane is more efficient for our advancement than experience gained on the spiritual planes. What is the explanation of this, if it be true?—Yours, &c.,

A. K. VENNING.

Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.A.

Why?

SIR,—While a party was sitting at a table in my house a few nights ago, the wife of Mr. —, a local minister, manifested her presence. He put a number of questions to her mentally, which were all answered satisfactorily. I asked if I might put a question, and received an affirmative reply. I put my question. Several attempts were made to answer, but all proved failures. Why was this? My question was a simple one: How many children had the minister?—which would mean the same as if I had asked how many children she herself had.—Yours, &c.,

VRON—Y.

Striking Phenomena in a Home Circle.

SIR,—In my own sitting-room, with two friends living at the time under my roof (in fact, one, a medium, has so lived with me for six years), we have had various manifestations of spirit power, apports being brought from the Congo State, and while we three have been sitting before a large fire the medium (a civil engineer) has been controlled and, in the trance condition, has taken from the grate flaming lumps of coal in each hand—particles of the burning substance dropping on to the goat skin hearthrug, which took fire in two or three places. On placing the burning coals again in the grate, the medium, under the control of an African spirit, would stir up the fire with his hands without the slightest injury.—Yours, &c.,

G. W. M.

Wellington, New Zealand.

Two Visions.

SIR,—I have been a seer of visions and apparitions all my life, and am quite convinced, from the experiences I have had, that there is another world. Three months previously to my late husband's decease I awoke one night feeling someone touch me on my left shoulder. When I looked up I distinctly saw a tall figure in white standing by the bedside. His left arm was curved over his head, and the right arm hanging down, but I saw no hand. I looked steadfastly into his face, and he had the brightest eyes I ever saw. While I was looking at him, he vanished, and then I saw, suspended in the air, a white garment which was slowly enveloped by two clouds of intense blackness. I was as wide awake as I am at this present time; it was no dream, and when I laid down I said to myself, 'This is nothing earthly.'

One night, a few weeks afterwards, I heard my husband say 'spectacles,' and not knowing what he meant, I asked him, 'Have you left your spectacles about anywhere?' He did not answer for some little time, but continued looking towards the fireplace. When he lay down, he said, 'I have seen my Uncle Alexander standing by the fireplace, he had spectacles on, and the same old-fashioned dress he used to wear, and he vanished up wards, his face disappearing last.'—Yours, &c.,

M. A. E.

Help for Mrs. Weedemeyer.

SIR,—Kindly allow me to thank the following friends who have promptly responded to my appeal in 'LIGHT,' of October 9th, on behalf of Mrs. Weedemeyer, of Hackney: 'Emma,' £7 15s.; Mr. Richard, 20s.; 'Incognito,' 20s.; Mrs. Hazelton, 2s. 6d.; E. L. B. Stone, 2s. 6d.; 'M.,' 20s.; Captain McLaren, 4s. 6d.; 'Friend,' 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Moyes, 1s.; Mr. W. F. Smith, per Mr. Rist, 2s. 6d.

Further contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by—Yours, &c., WM. THOMSON.
18, Stamford-hill, London, N.

Life's Inequalities.

SIR,—Mrs. Besant, in her eloquent address (page 536), speaks of super-human 'Devas' as 'natives of the intermediate world,' and says, 'Many of them have never passed through human life at all, have had 'no experience of the limitations of human life,' and that 'we are under limitations that do not apply to the Devas.' Now, sir, reincarnation is recommended to us on the ground that it explains away human inequalities and restores justice to God. But I ask in all seriousness: How comes it that these 'Devas' who 'have never passed through human life' are in the enjoyment of the spiritual world and its bliss without having passed through the 'limitations of human life'? How unjust it is that there should be this unequal distribution of Divine favour! Why should we be 'here in the body pent' while these Devas, normally at home in that world, enjoy liberty, power and delights they have not had to toil and suffer to win? Why should they escape the treadmill round and the inequalities while so many of us are imprisoned and unhappy here?—Yours, &c.,

NOT A DEVA.

Spirit, Soul, and Body.

SIR,—A society of Spiritualists received the following communication in reply to a question regarding the distinction between spirit and soul. As readers of 'LIGHT' have often asked the same question, I send it to you:—

'There could not be a soul without a spirit, for the soul is to the spirit what the body is to the soul. A soul could not be created apart from spirit, as it is the covering of the spirit. To define spirit itself is beyond my powers. Life and spirit are one. In the highest realms of being the life forms cannot have spirit distinct from soul, for it is by the soul that the atom of life manifests. Spirit or life is invisible, so is soul invisible until it becomes visible by the clothing or body it draws to itself on every plane of life it has to pass through. Consciousness is seated in the atom of life, the experience on each plane of life passes through the body and soul into the spirit life atom, and so develops the consciousness.'—Yours, &c.,

R. G. BENNETT

33, Devereux-road,

Wandsworth Common, S.W.

Past and Present Piety.

SIR,—Mr. Stead's lament about our modern decadence in Sunday piety, quoted in 'LIGHT,' page 514, is, I think, one-sided, pessimistic, and hardly justified by facts. It is true we do not take our Sunday pabulum in the form at one time in vogue, and many have thrown overboard outward observances such as daily prayers, grace, and Sunday hour and a-half sermons, but if we take a comprehensive view I submit that there is as much piety in the world as ever, only it may be spread over a wider area and have become permeative. A fairly good proof, compared with thirty or forty years ago, is the immense increase of religious literature, and above all the enormous sums given or bequeathed for religious and charitable purposes, as compared with the long ago 'when we were boys together.'

I often take a bicycle tour on Sunday, and while awheel repeat the 23rd, 103rd, 19th Psalms, and Addison's 'Ode' off by heart. The bicycle and cheap trains on Sundays are rare means of grace. Are not the voices of the shore, the forest trees, and the wide landscape ministering spirits crying out to us to bless the Lord? Mr. Stead should not be down-hearted: 'God's in His heaven; all's right with the world.' There are myriads of happy souls with whom God walks and talks in the garden of the Soul and the paradise of Nature. O happy era and happy children of a newer spirit age! Our fathers ate sour grapes—articles, and catechisms and creeds galore—but we are gay and happy with the new wine of a broader, deeper, sweeter, and happier piety. Let us rejoice and be glad that it is so. Why not?—Yours, &c.,

THOS. MAY,

Eastwood-road, Rayleigh, Essex.

National Fund of Benevolence.

SIR,—Permit me to express my sincere gratitude for the generous response to the appeal for a National Benevolent Sunday Collection, and to thank the undermentioned donors for their sympathy and support during October: 'C.H.R.', 2s. 6d., also wool shawl and scarf for the old people; Mrs. Stell's circle, 7s.; Mrs. J. Greenwood, 5s.; 'J.B.S.', £1 1s.; 'Friends,' £5 5s.; 'Anon.', 1s.; Miss E. L. Boswell-Stone, 7s. 6d.; 'L. and E. B.', 2s.; Mr. A. Sutcliffe, 1s.; 'J.C.', Bradford, 10s.; 'L.R.', Shipley, 1s. 6d.; 'E.', 15s. 3d.; 'A Salford Widow,' 5s.; Mrs. France, 5s.; 'V. N. T.', 3s.; Mrs. Ellis, 2s. 6d.; Mr. J. Eccles, 5s.; Mr. A. J. M. Burden, 5s.; 'Emma,' £2 15s.; Mrs. Vesel, 2s. 6d.; total, £13 1s. 9d. Mr. J. Wadsworth kindly presented the circulars for the appeal. As several societies have not yet sent in the returns, I am deferring publication of society list until the end of November, when I hope all those societies who have not yet responded, will do so.—Yours, &c.,

9, High-street, Doncaster.

A. E. BUTTON,
Hon. Finan. Sec.

The Bishop of London and Madness.

SIR,—Your correspondent 'Puzzled,' when referring (page 540) to the Bishop of London's unsupported and unfounded charge that 'Spiritualism eventually leads to madness,' quotes, apparently in refutation, Parliamentary statistics regarding the number of persons detained in prison—sixteen thousand of whom declared that they were members of the Church of England and only one was a Spiritualist. Now this puzzles me. Does 'Puzzled' wish to imply that prisoners are madmen, or did he mean to give the numbers of the inmates of asylums? Can he obtain for us the official figures as to the number of insane persons in this country and the proportion of Spiritualists among them?—Yours, &c.,

INQUIRER.

Belief v. Knowledge.

SIR,—In Mrs. Besant's able address to the London Spiritualist Alliance she defined belief as 'that which is accepted on testimony regarded as reliable,' and knowledge as that which is 'obtained by direct investigation—by direct perception.' Further, Mrs. Besant said that she was a 'convinced believer in reincarnation.' Now, sir, it would have been interesting if Mrs. Besant could have informed her audience on whose testimonies to reincarnation her belief rested.—Yours, &c.,
P. L. CHAMBERS.
Maidstone.

SIR,—Mrs. Besant, in her address, reported in the two latest issues of 'LIGHT,' spoke somewhat disparagingly of the acceptance by Spiritualists of the testimony of communicating spirits, which she described as 'belief' on the part of the former, and contrasted this with the superior methods of Theosophists who, she said, investigate the facts of life in the intermediate and heavenly worlds by direct entry into them, and in this way glean knowledge of super-mundane things. But where does all this lead us? To refuse the testimony of responsible spirits, whether incarnate or discarnate, is to narrow down our mental outlook and to impede intellectual growth. Personal testimony is the warp and woof of the mental fabric of our civilisation, and its discouragement would be an error of the first magnitude.

In seeking knowledge of the higher worlds, the Spiritualist has the testimony of the vast number of the great minds that have gone before. To say that the latter are less qualified to impart their knowledge to us than we are to obtain it by super-normal excursions into their realm on our own account, makes, to put it in the best light, great demands upon our receptivity. The few Theosophists who claim to have penetrated the super-mundane worlds naturally expect their testimony to be received: but why should the testimony of the dwellers there be discredited?

Mrs. Besant stated that super-human beings are to be met in the intermediate world, but what proof does she possess, or offer us, that such is really the case? Did she take the testimony of the spirits themselves? Super-human beings are well-nigh unthinkable outside the teachings of orthodox religion.

Human development in the super-terrestrial planes of life during the vast ages since the world began may have produced beings apparently superior to the human race as we know it, but that would not justify the claim of their non-human origin. Who can assign a limit to human progress, or bind man to the possibilities of three worlds only?—Yours, &c.,
J. W. MAHONY.

1, Bishopton-road,
Bearwood, Birmingham.

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.

MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—*Cavendish Rooms*.—On Sunday last Mr. J. W. Boulding delivered a powerful and educative address on 'Thoughts of God.' Mr. George Spriggs presided.—*Percy Hall*.—On the 1st inst. Mr. George Spriggs gave successful clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, see advt.—D. N.

SPIRITUAL MISSION; 22, Prince's-street, Oxford-street, W.—On Sunday evening last Mrs. M. H. Wallis spoke forcefully on 'Spiritualism in regard to Religion.' Mr. Stanley Beard's solo was much enjoyed. Sunday next, Mr. E. W. Beard.—67, George-street, Baker-street, W.—On Sunday morning last, through the mediumship of Mrs. Wallis, much help was given. Sunday next, Mrs. Ord.

BRIXTON.—CARLTON HALL, TUNSTALL-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Petz gave a beautiful address on 'The Makers of Men.' Mrs. Droxler rendered a solo. Sunday next, Miss V. Burton.

CLAPHAM.—RICHMOND-PLACE, NEW-ROAD, WANDSWORTH-ROAD, S.W.—On Sunday last Mrs. Irwin gave an address on 'Is Spiritualism a Religion?' and clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., circle; at 6.45 p.m., Mr. McBeth Bain, address.—C. C.

STRATFORD.—WORKMAN'S HALL, ROMFORD-ROAD, E.—On Sunday last, afternoon and evening, addresses by the speakers of the Union of London Spiritualists were much enjoyed. Sunday next, Miss Florence Fogwill on 'How Spiritualism Teaches Duty to Humanity.'

HIGHGATE.—GROVEDALE HALL, GROVEDALE-ROAD.—On Sunday morning last Mr. Abrahall conducted a circle. In the evening Mr. Harry Pye gave an excellent exposition of 'Spiritualism.' Sunday next, at 3 and 7 p.m., London Union speakers. Helpers wanted at 11 a.m. to distribute pamphlets.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. W. E. Long gave a splendid address in defence of Spiritualism. Mr. John Adams presided. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., circle; at 7 p.m., Mr. T. Olman Todd, address. Thursday, 8.15, public circle.—H. B.

HACKNEY.—240A, AMHURST-ROAD, N.—On Sunday last Mr. R. Boddington's address on 'When there is no Open Vision the People Perish' formed a vigorous appeal on behalf of the National Propaganda Fund. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. E. M. Walter on 'Religions, Ancient and Modern,' illustrated by original drawings.—N. R.

PECKHAM.—LAUSANNE HALL.—On Sunday last Mr. Sarfas gave an address and clairvoyant descriptions. Miss Travers' solo was much enjoyed. On the 4th Mrs. Irwin gave an address and psychometric delineations. Sunday next, at 11.30 a.m., Mr. Winbow; at 7 p.m., Mr. D. J. Davis. Thursday, 8, Mr. G. R. Symons. 21st, Mrs. A. Webb, clairvoyante.—W.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Wesley Adams, president, gave an address on 'Spiritual Progression,' and well-recognised clairvoyant descriptions. Record attendances; fourteen new members. Sunday next, at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7, Mr. J. Blackburn. Monday, 7, ladies' circle. Thursday, 8.15, public circle.—W. Y.

STRATFORD.—IDMISTON-ROAD, FOREST-LANE.—On Sunday last Madame Hope gave an inspiring address on 'The Communion of Saints (Spirits),' and clairvoyant descriptions, fully recognised. On the 2nd Mr. J. J. Vango gave clairvoyant descriptions on behalf of building fund. Sunday next, Mr. S. A. Wilkins, address. Thursday, Miss Ellis, clairvoyante.

BRIGHTON.—MANCHESTER-STREET (OPPOSITE AQUARIUM).—On Sunday last Mrs. Jamrach gave good addresses and successful clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m. and 7 p.m., Mr. E. W. Wallis on 'Spirit Communications' and 'The Christ of God.' Mondays, 8, and Wednesdays, 3, clairvoyant descriptions. Thursdays, 8.15, public circle.—C.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—SURREY MASONIC HALL.—On Sunday morning last Mr. W. E. Long, under control, gave personal messages from spirit friends. In the evening Mr. G. Brown delivered an inspirational address. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., questions answered; inquirers welcome. At 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long, on 'Spirit Communion.' November 22nd, social evening in aid of Benevolent Fund. Tickets 1s. each.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—73, BECKLOW-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday morning last Mr. Love gave clairvoyant descriptions; in the evening Mr. Baxter spoke on 'Why I am a Spiritualist,' and answered questions. On the 4th Madame Hope gave well-recognised clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 10.45 a.m., public circle; at 6.45, Mrs. Alice Webb. Thursday, 7.45, Mrs. Podmore. Wednesdays and Fridays, 8, members' circles.—J. J. L.