

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

No. 1,520.—VOL. XXX. [Registered as] SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1910. [a Newspaper.] PRICE TWOPENCE.
Per Post, 10s. 10d. per annum.

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

Programme of Meetings for the Coming Week.

MONDAY, February 28th, 3 p.m. till 4.30 p.m.—
Informal Meeting for Social Intercourse.

TUESDAY, March 1st, at 3 p.m.—
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For further particulars see p. 94.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

It is occasionally useful to measure the present against the past, in order to see that we are really progressing, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary; and in this sense the Address recently delivered by Mr. J. W. Boulding to the London Spiritualist Alliance was a forcible illustration of the necessity for the splendid work for freedom and humanity which has been accomplished by sceptical men who loved truth at all costs. But we need not go a great distance on the backward track for evidence of the world's advance. Here, for instance, is a Spurgeon blast which has just been brought to our notice; spoken only about forty years ago:—

If I had ever been permitted to gaze within the sheet of fire which walls the gulf of despair, if I had ever been allowed to walk for one moment o'er that burning marl whereon is built the dreadful dungeon of eternal vengeance, then I might tell you somewhat of its misery. But I cannot now, for I have not seen those doleful sights which might fright our eyes from their sockets, and make each individual hair stand upon your heads. . . . Those bones of yours which you thought were of iron will suddenly be melted, that heart of yours which was like steel or the nether millstone will be dissolved like wax in the midst of your bowels, you will begin to cry before God, and weep and howl. . . . One of the miseries of hell will be that the sinner will feel that he deserves it all. Tossed on a wave of fire, he will see written in every spark that emanates therefrom, 'Thou knewest thy duty, and thou didst it not.' Tossed back again by another wave of flame, he hears a voice saying, 'Remember, you were warned.' He is hurled upon a rock, and whilst he is being wrecked there, a voice says, 'I told thee it would be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for thee.' Again he plunges under another wave of brimstone, and a voice says, 'He that believeth not shall be damned. Thou didst not believe, and thou art here.' And when again he is hurled up and down on some wave of torture, each wave shall bear to him some dreadful sentence which he read in God's word, in a tract, or in a sermon.

Are there six respectable preachers in England to-day who talk like that? Would the Rev. Archibald Brown risk it?

Some time ago we commented upon the reported general outflow of helpfulness and kindness amid the horrors of the San Francisco earthquake. Everybody, it was said, at once became a willing saviour and befriender. The same thing is now reported from Paris. One correspondent says:—

In the domestic relations of the country, class hatred, for the time at least, is sunk. How much of it has been drowned and washed away the future must show. But one certainly receives the impression that all classes of the community have been drawn closer together by the common danger, the common suffering, and, above all, the prompt succour and large-hearted charity extended on every hand to the homeless and ruined victims. Men are giving and women

are slaving to relieve the distress. The aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, as well as the poorest of the poor themselves, have come nobly to the rescue.

Subscriptions are taken up nightly in the theatres between the acts. Collections are made in the schools, every boy and every girl cheerfully giving up for the 'sinistrés' the week's pocket-money or the contents of their money-boxes. Working men and women pass round the hat at the dinner hour. Even the soldiers and sailors who laboured night and day to stem the torrents and rescue those in peril have contributed their mites. Amid all this generous effort and self-sacrifice animosities are forgotten. Perhaps no more striking proof of this could be given than the fact that even litigants are settling their disputes, shaking hands, and saying to each other, 'This is not a time to quarrel; we have something better to do.'

Business rivalries, too, were lost sight of in the general desire to be mutually helpful. The spontaneity with which opposing railway companies helped each other is warmly recognised by the public, and many other instances could be cited. Nowhere has there been any disposition to take advantage of the crisis for selfish ends.

We can readily believe it. A vast amount of human rivalry and selfishness is the surface result of the surface struggle for existence and the desire to excel. Deep down, 'every human heart is human,' and willing feet rush to help the living who are in peril, and the hat is lifted as the retired struggler passes to the home of the 'dead.' It is a very human world, and, at the heart of it, good.

The Rev. J. T. Sunderland concludes a thoughtful and consoling Paper on 'God and Great Calamities' with a thought which, though quite simple and obvious, is easier to believe than to be swayed by in the hour of need. It is natural and necessary that death should be more or less of a terror. It is Mother Nature's safeguard against frivolity and carelessness: but still it is permitted to us to win all the consolation we can from such a thought as this:—

Why should we imagine that death is a greater event in the sum total of an immortal career than is the going to sleep at night of a tired child in the sum total of the child's earthly life? And as to the pain connected with dying (usually there is little pain, especially in connection with sudden deaths; as a rule, Nature wonderfully anaesthetises those whom she calls to go), whatever it may be, why should we suppose it any more important, as compared with one's whole existence in this world and the next, than is the mental pain of the little child who must go to bed against its will when the time for bed arrives? Once get a perspective which takes in two worlds, and the shadows which make this world standing alone look so dark, pass away as a morning cloud.

We receive such a number of papers and magazines from all parts of the world, and we are so little able to go through them, that we often come upon matters which interest us only long after the arrival of the publication containing them. This has been the case with a letter from the writer we ventured to call the 'thirsty Virginian' (thirsty for knowledge, as the editor of 'The Progressive Thinker' kindly explains). This writer, quite a reasonable Spiritualist, sets the 'Indian Control of Medium Bailey' (Mr. Stanford's protégé) a difficult task. He suggests the magnetising in London of a portion of 'The Times' newspaper, and the dividing it in a zig-zag line; one portion to be taken as an apport, and the other

to be sent by mail, to the end that they may be identified. An excellent test, of course, and one we should be glad to have carried through.

The writer concludes thus: 'If Abdul and Selim, the Bailey controls, can give us any sensible reason why my plan cannot be followed, I am sure we should all like to hear from them.' There are about a thousand other 'tests' concerning which 'we should like to hear from them.' For some reason, these things cannot be 'ordered in' like vegetables.

There was recently celebrated in London the eightieth anniversary of the establishment of the Brahma Somaj in India. This religious society, founded by Keshub Chunder Sen, has struggled valiantly for success, but it is still not much more than 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness'; and yet it witnesses to an ultimate counsel of perfection, in the unification of all religions and the synthesis of all creeds.

In one of his brilliant Addresses, the Master said:—

Such is the New Dispensation. It is the harmony of all scriptures and dispensations. It is not an isolated creed, but the science which binds and explains and harmonises all religions. It gives to history a meaning, to the action of Providence a consistency, to quarrelling churches a common bond, and to successive dispensations a continuity. It shows, by marvellous synthesis, how the different rainbow colours are one in the light of heaven. The New Dispensation is the sweet music of diverse instruments. It is the precious necklace in which are strung together the rubies and pearls of all ages and climes. It is the celestial court where around enthroned Divinity shine the lights of all heavenly saints and prophets. It is the wonderful solvent, which fuses all dispensations into a new chemical compound. It is the mighty absorbent, which absorbs all that is true and good and beautiful in the objective world. Before the flag of the New Dispensation let the nations bow and proclaim the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. In blessed eucharist let us eat and assimilate all the saints and prophets of the world. Thus shall we put on the new man, and each of us will say, the Lord Jesus is my will, Socrates my head, Chattanya my heart, the Hindu Rishi my soul, and the philanthropic Howard my right hand. And thus transformed we shall bear witness unto the New Gospel. Let many-sided truth, incarnate in saints and prophets, come down from heaven and dwell in you, that you may have that blessed harmony of character, in which is eternal life and salvation.

Let not the banner-bearers of the Brahma Somaj be discouraged. They are witnessing to a divine truth, the realisation of which may not come in the way they expect; but it will come.

The following summary of the teaching of a Brahma in India comes very near to perfection:—

My creed is the science of God, which enlighteneth all. My gospel is the love of God, which saveth all. My Heaven is life in God, which is accessible to all. My Church is the invisible Kingdom of God, in which are the truth, the love and the holiness of all.

A member of this Brahma Somaj, Srijut Suresh Chandra Bose, speaking of its testimony, lately said:—

The jarring notes of the present age have unsettled men's old beliefs. It is no longer possible for us to look on men and things in their old relations. Beyond the narrow limits of race, caste, and creed looms the larger view of humanity, where all men are brethren, with one God as the Father of all. Matter is not the generating principle. In its various adjustments and unending progress the creation is but the working out of the Divine Mind, who is immanent in all things. The human spirit communes directly with the Supreme Spirit. There is no necessity of a mediator. The saints and prophets of the world form a brotherhood in the spiritual realm who show the different sides of the spiritual life. In the midst of the revelation of these truths men's religious ideas have broadened, intellect has become keener, and ideals loftier and all embracing.

So does Light still come from the East.

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, MARCH 17TH,

WHEN AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN BY

LADY MOSLEY

ON

'SPIRITUAL HEALING.'

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 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:—

Mar. 31.—MR. GEORGE P. YOUNG (President of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists), 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., on 'Pre-Existence and Survival: or the Origin and Fate of the Individual Human Spirit.'

MEETINGS AT 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.
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TUESDAY.—CLAIRVOYANCE.—On *Tuesday next*, March 1st, Mrs. Imison (Nurse Graham) will give clairvoyant descriptions, 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. March 8th, Mrs. Boddington.

THURSDAY.—THOUGHT EXCHANGE.—On *Thursday next*, March 3rd, at 5 p.m., Miss F. Sainsbury will speak on 'The Development of Clairvoyance,' with descriptions. Discussion.

FRIDAY.—TALKS ABOUT SPIRITS.—The fourth of a special series of short Addresses descriptive of the After-Death conditions of some typical spirits will be given through the mediumship of Mrs. M. H. Wallis, on *Friday next*, March 4th, at 3 o'clock prompt, when the subject will be 'THE CRIMINAL.' Questions will also be answered 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.

HINDUISM AND SPIRITUALISM.

As was mentioned in 'LIGHT' of the 12th inst., the subject of reincarnation has been amply discussed in our columns of late, and we must now call a halt. We are unable to find room for further letters upon this subject at present. The statement made by Mr. Sbishir Kumar Ghose, the editor of 'The Hindu Spiritual Magazine,' that 'the Vedas not only ignore rebirth, but proclaim the spiritual theory in unmistakable terms, saying that men live for ever in the spirit world after the death of their dear ones,' was called in question by Mrs. Ransom in 'LIGHT' of August 28th last, and by other correspondents. The Rev. Holden E. Sampson, in a letter which is too long to print, states that 'Mr. Ghose's assertion that rebirth is not taught in the Vedas is contradicted by the Vedas themselves, and by the testimony of Hindus galore, whose authority is as great as Mr. Ghose's.' In 'LIGHT' of November 6th, we quoted a letter from a correspondent who affirmed that 'the doctrine of rebirth on the earth is to be found plainly and positively stated in the Vedas in straightforward phrases.' In 'LIGHT' of January 29th, we summarised Mr. Ghose's reply, in which that gentleman again states that the theory of rebirth is not to be found in the Vedas, the most ancient literature in India, and contends that the Hindus got their idea of rebirth from Buddhism. Further, Mr. Ghose quotes passages from the earlier Veda, as given in Hunter's 'Rural Bengal,' which show that the Hindus, in the circle round the funeral pyre, 'sang with the firm assurance that their friend went direct to a state of blessedness and reunion with the loved ones who had gone before. Thus: "Do thou conduct us to Heaven (O Lord), let us be with our wives and children. . . In Heaven, where our friends dwell in bliss. . . Place me, O Pure One, in that everlasting and unchanging world, where light and glory are found. Make me immortal in the world in which joys, delights, and happiness abide."' (*Atharva Veda*—for references see 'LIGHT,' page 26.) Our critic, however, says that, in his reply, Mr. Ghose 'has not produced any proof that the Vedas do not teach the doctrine of terrestrial rebirth. To do this he must either show the necessity of expunging from the Vedas the well-known texts on the subject, as the result of a learned critical inquiry, or he must produce some scholar who has already done this.' In 'LIGHT' of the 12th inst. we quoted from some lectures delivered by Mr. K. Chakravarti on 'Hindu Religion,' in which that gentleman clearly sets forth the great similarity of Hinduism and Spiritualism, and says that, according to the Gita, there are five *Koshas*, or receptacles for the soul—spirit bodies, in each of which successively the soul acquires greater powers of perception and fulness of divine knowledge, as it passes through the corresponding five *lokas* intervening between the earth and the abode of Brahma, and that up to the very last stage the soul 'can reincarnate for the good of the worlds beneath. These reincarnations, called *avatars*, take place according to the necessities of the worlds.' But a permissive and occasional reincarnation of an individual great soul or teacher, for a special purpose, is an entirely different idea from the assertion that every human being *must* be re-born on earth, not to teach but to learn. It would appear also that some passages of the Gita are relied upon as teaching reincarnation which are quite open to a different interpretation, as, for instance, the verse: 'As a man throws away old garments and takes others (that are) new, so the embodied casts away old bodies and puts on new ones.' This may mean that the spirit man throws off the coarser garments or *koshas* to clothe itself in successively finer and more spiritual ones as it advances from sphere to sphere, or plane to plane, in the spirit world. Further, Mr. Ghose's contention seems to be that the rebirth theory does not appear in the oldest (earliest) Vedas—that it is a later introduction—and that Hindu sacred writings have shared the fate of all other venerable documents, and interpolations and mistranslations have to be reckoned with.

We are not concerned to defend or to attempt to disprove either Mr. Ghose's position or that of his critics. But it occurs

to us that Mr. Ghose, being a highly educated Hindu, should surely know whether his own scriptures do or do not teach reincarnation. Passages from the Bible are sometimes quoted as teaching reincarnation, but 'authorities' differ as to their true meaning, and the moral of the whole matter seems to be that nothing can be *proved* by quoting texts, or by relying upon 'authorities.' The doctrine of reincarnation may or may not be true—but its truth will not be established by evidence that it is taught in the Vedas, neither will it be disproved by evidence that the Vedas do not proclaim it. If reincarnation be true it is a fate which cannot be evaded; but that it is true has not been and apparently cannot be proved by evidence—not even by such evidence as spirit-manifestations supply in disproof of materialism and in proof of personal survival after bodily death—of conscious, rational, affectional, and spiritual life and progress in the after-death world.

THE CHRIST AS THE GREAT LOVE.

Mr. Macbeth Bain's books take us into a mystical region where we would willingly linger long and oft, and he himself sets us a practical example of the lessons we should bring back from it when we return to earth, as needs we must. He tells us that all may freely use his writings, even without acknowledgment, 'for they are no more mine than they are thine, human soul, dear to thy Christ, the Mother of the ages of our race.' This phrase strikes an introductory keynote to his latest book, 'The Christ of the Holy Grail,'* which is described on the title-page as supplementary to 'The Brotherhood of Healers,' and to be followed by 'The Hymns of the Christ-child to the Christ-Mother.'

What is Christ, or what are these Christs, according to the 'composite of intuitions or inspirational feelings' so modestly and faithfully offered by Mr. Macbeth? And what is the Holy Grail in this same presentation? The word 'Christos' (anointed) is used 'to present the Holy One of our blessedness under the double aspect of manifestation as the macrocosmic, transcendent, Great Christos of our spiritual universe, and as the microcosmic, immanent, inborn, or little Christ of the human soul. . . Now the Christos is the Great Love, and the Great Love is the Christos; and it matters not whether we speak of the Holy One of Blessing as the Christos or as the Great Love, inasmuch as our Holy One virtually transcends all our ideas of personality.'

The Holy Grail is described as a Body of Service, or vessel of the service of Love, visible to the spiritual seer in the form of a chalice or cup, which is formed when purified human souls, incarnate or discarnate, have come together to receive and communicate good, and are unified in the Spirit of Love so that they become one soul in the act of willing. Those who allow themselves to be thus constituted into a Body of Service become vessels for the mediating of the Power of Life which ever flows from the Christos and is manifested in the soul as the Great Peace of the Great Joy, rich in divine fecundity by virtue of which the soul can bear the fruit of blessing.

The author, in beautifully poetic forms of expression, represents the Christos as the good Spirit of the earth-soul, from whom proceed all spiritual light and warmth, all joy and blessedness, and without whom there could be no light for the body or soul of man. The work of the Christos is to bring every human soul unto the birth of his own principle of life, 'for the Christ is the very vitality of the soul, the one living principle in the individual consciousness.' To some this book might come as the inspiration or confirmation of a great hope, to others as an incentive to service; and the author himself says: 'I have proved well the power of my Holy One to save me from despair, aye, and from the deep darkness of the shadow of death.'

X.

* 'The Christ of the Holy Grail, or the Great Christ of the Cosmos and the Little Christ of the Soul; being a word of spiritual doctrine to the practical mystics of our day.' By JAMES L. MACBETH BAIN (James Macbeth). The Theosophical Publishing Society, 161, New Bond-street, W. Price 2s. 6d. net.

REALITY OF PSYCHIC PERCEPTIONS.

We are accustomed to divide perceptions into objective and subjective, meaning thereby that some are produced by a 'real' external impression, capable of being shared and confirmed by other persons, while subjective impressions are those which are peculiar to ourselves, and are supposed to arise in our own imaginations; they are, therefore, regarded as incapable of confirmation and as being possibly unreal and hallucinatory. Now, if some of these subjective impressions can be proved to be due to a real cause, not necessarily perceptible to others, we have a third or intermediate class of perceptions which are objective as far as the percipient is concerned, though they may be regarded by other persons as subjective, because they only affect the percipient himself. Psychic sensitives and mediums affirm that they are in touch with real influences, personal or impressional, which are not outwardly perceptible to those around them; and all physical phenomena and apparitions depend upon the temporary objectivity of these usually 'subjective' influences. The reality of these influences, in different forms of manifestation, is discussed by three writers in the 'Annals of Psychical Science.'

Mr. H. Dennis Taylor, who, in the previous issue, gave reasons for supposing that an apparition which seemed to be fixed amid its real environment, in spite of movements of the percipient's eyes, could not be regarded as purely hallucinatory, now proceeds to give instances in illustration of his contention, and argues that, for an apparition to be visible to one person and not to another who is present, two things are needed: that there should be a partial objective materialisation, and at the same time a heightening of the visual sense of the percipient. This supposition answers an objection raised by Miss Alice Johnson in her paper on 'The Education of the Sitter' in 'Proceedings of the S.P.R.,' Vol. XXI., namely, that 'the spirit hand appears to one person like a hand, to another like a luminous cloud, while to a third it is invisible altogether.' Miss Johnson asks how it is that the hand reflects light that affects the retina of one person and not that of another, and says: 'If these hands had been completely invisible to some person with normal sight looking directly at them in a good light, we should then have good evidence that they were hallucinatory.' Mr. Taylor replies that this could only be true if every person's eyesight were limited to the same range of the spectrum, and he argues that an extension of range is possible, whereby some may see what is invisible to others, by means of ultra-violet rays outside the range of the normally visible spectrum. Moreover, what is 'normal'? Is it what the person with least range of vision can see, or is it determined by some more or less fallacious estimation of average vision? At all events, it is certain that people differ as regards the limits of their perception of the visible spectrum, just as they do in almost everything which depends on the acuteness of the senses. Mr. Taylor concludes by saying:—

Not a hundred books like those of Dr. Abbott, Dr. Thomson J. Hudson, and others, professing to explain all so-called Spiritistic phenomena (and especially materialisations) by fraud and hallucination or telepathy, can alter the convictions of the more intelligent Spiritualists who have investigated the phenomena for themselves, and also given due weight to the experiences of others, whose opinions do not depend only upon professional sances. Such writers habitually leave untouched the more weighty evidence. There is a good deal in the procedure of the merely destructive critic that always irresistibly reminds one of the bullying schoolboy who boldly attacks the small fry he feels he can master, but severely lets alone those of larger growth, whom he knows he cannot safely challenge.

In further illustration of the objectivity of psychic perceptions, the 'Annals' reprints an account, taken from an old book, of the phantom of one lady appearing to another, the day after death, in 1705, with such perfect naturalness that a conversation was carried on for nearly two hours without the percipient having the remotest suspicion that she was not conversing with her friend in bodily presence.

Mr. F. C. Constable describes a case which he has personally investigated, in which a Mr. Louis Gregory, living at Sligo, Ireland, had a partly symbolical dream intimating

that an accident had happened at the colliery at his native place, Midsomer Norton, near Bath. He at once wrote home giving an account of his dream, and naming one of those who was killed in the accident, which had really happened; the dream occurred before the news of the accident could have reached Sligo. Mr. Gregory is also reported to have dreamed of the disaster at Galveston, when that city was swept away by a tidal wave.

Mr. Hereward Carrington discusses the psychology of planchette writing, and shows that the communicating intelligence exhibits human characteristics and moods, independent of the operator. It is usually unwilling to give information about itself, refuses to tell secrets relating to other persons, and shows anger or impatience if unduly pressed on either of these subjects. As to the means by which the board is acted upon, Mr. Carrington thinks that there is a possible theory which has not been considered, and he states it as it was enunciated in a message received through Planchette itself. Briefly, it is that spirits who are *en rapport* can always communicate with one another, even if one of them be embodied. Again, the embodied spirit can act upon the matter composing its body, because it is *en rapport* with that material body:—

If then you are in a susceptible condition, a spirit can not only get into *rapport* with your spirit, and through it with your body, and control its motions, but if you are at the same time *en rapport* with this little board it can, through contact of your hands, get into *rapport* with that, and move it without any conscious or volitional agency on your part. A spirit may also come into *rapport* even with the particles of material bodies near you, and may thus, even without contact of your hands, move them or make sounds upon them.

Mr. Carrington thinks that the remarks thus briefly summarised form the most interesting and suggestive explanation that he has met with, apart from Mr. Myers' speculations in 'Human Personality,' and that they have a wider application, extending to all forms of movement without contact, and perhaps to more complex phenomena also.

PSYCHIC MANIFESTATIONS AS TEACHERS.

A thoughtful, reverent study in the Gospel according to St. Luke, entitled 'The Kingdom Within,' by Agnes Stanley Leathes (Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, price 3s. 6d.), deserves to be widely circulated. The style in which it is written is particularly pleasant; there is no wordiness to weaken the force of the clear thoughts, which are tersely and directly expressed in simple, unlatinised English. In the 'Foreword' a note is struck which at once attracts a believer in spirit communication. The writer tells us:—

I know nothing about St. Luke, as one who would teach, I only know what he has taught me. I know him, may be, but if so, as a friend and myself as a follower. He has, I believe, taken me in hand at one stage of spiritual development and been for the time my interpreter of Christ.

Whether this argues for a direct spirit teaching or not I am ignorant: I only know that there grew up an affinity between my soul and the words he wrote down on earth, which has its analogies only in the truest spiritual affinities here below.

It may well be so. Why not? We suspect that the first disciples of the Master may have realised the reality of this sort of intercourse much more vividly than we usually do now.

The book deals solely with the portions of the life and teachings of Jesus which have been recorded exclusively by St. Luke. The writer points out that the Gospel of St. Luke is full of notes of joy, of persistent calls to put away all fear. The chapter on 'The Freemasonry of the Kingdom' is particularly good. In it we are reminded that:—

With Him the positive outweighs the negative. Some genuine trait of love and service or of active faith, and all else is lost sight of. We learn a wholly new standard of values. . . We learn, too, to discern our comrades and to reach out the right hand of fellowship. . . Let us own . . . sinners, publicans, thieves, and vagabonds, if need be, to be part of the Fellowship; for those only who grow daily in inclusiveness are safe to keep Christ, since His incarnation changes

daily, and we need ever to be prepared to find Him afresh in commonplace men and women close at hand.

There are several points at which the book touches the subject which specially interests the readers of 'LIGHT.' For instance, on pages 188, 189 we are reminded that modern funeral customs may be making it harder for those who have died to 'truly rise and live beyond that veil' of death:—

What a new realm of opportunity and possibility it opens out to us, when friends leave us for the great supreme adventure, if we recognise that it lies with us to speed their passage into larger, freer spheres than ours! . . . We must make all speed to learn, and let go the old things which keep us back, that we may co-operate in their grand enterprise, and never for one moment hinder their glorious flight.

This is very stimulating, and there is more to the same effect, particularly in the last chapter on 'The Continuity of Life.' The whole book will repay quiet and careful perusal.

Amid so much that calls for appreciation it seems an ungracious task to point out any blemish: but there is one connection in which the interpretation is not convincing, and shows less penetration than we find in other parts of this study. We refer to the chapter headed 'Psychic Manifestations as Teachers,' where the final lesson of the story of Dives and Lazarus is applied to 'modern psychical research, and that which is most often claimed to be its special value.'

This special value the writer takes to be the proof afforded of communication with the 'dead,' and she proceeds to point out that the teaching of the parable shows that it 'is useless to devise shocks or sensations from the outside to awaken the higher nature.' There seems to be some confusion here. Most of her readers would agree with her that the parable undoubtedly emphasises the fact that souls dead in selfish absorption in the things of this world are not likely to be awakened to a sense of reality by apparitions or communications such as those which 'modern research' claims to have verified. The brothers of Dives were evidently men of this description—men whose unbelief was moral rather than intellectual. But modern psychical research does not claim to be a gospel for such as these.

What *does* result from the work which has been done so patiently, *i.e.*, the work of collecting evidence for the existence of a spirit world and for the possibility of communication with it, is that men who have been intellectually materialists are now in many cases believers in the spiritual interpretation of the universe and in the future life which lies before them. In the opinion of many this outcome of research is of 'special value' indeed; and they venture confidently to claim that He who gave to His own doubting disciples testimony of an objective kind, testimony to survival of which their senses could take cognisance, cannot have intended to teach that this kind of evidence is not calculated to produce valuable effects on the convictions of sincere minds, effects which are likely to be the more lasting because they are not due to coercion but to a careful and serious exercise of intelligence and judgment upon verified facts.

'What He seeks,' says the author, 'is hearts, and these cannot be coerced into subjection.' Most certainly they cannot; it was with no thought of coercion that the Master gave to His first disciples 'many infallible proofs' of His survival of bodily death, neither need such a consideration deter His followers at the present time from striving, as He did, to make the evidence for the continuity of life as positive and as incontrovertible as possible. If in the course of so doing some truths which hitherto 'He has seen fit to keep hidden from the ages' are revealed, this will, in part, fulfil Christ's prediction that 'there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known,' and His promise that He who seeks shall surely find.

As the author adds that she does not intend by her remarks to depreciate research, we may conclude that she does not recognise that the application she makes of the parable has this depreciatory effect, her real object being to check sensationalism. With this object all sensible persons will be in agreement. The spirit of sensationalism is quite out of keep-

ing with the great issues involved in psychical research, which is a response of the human spirit to the challenge of the Divine Spirit, a challenge imperatively felt in the 'riddle of this painful earth'—'God's riddle,' it may with all reverence be called. 'Never,' says Archdeacon Wilberforce in one of his stimulating sermons, 'never be a giver up of God's riddles.'

H. A. DALLAS.

A VERY HUMAN DOCUMENT.

The following expressive letter illustrates very forcibly and pathetically the difficulties experienced by the writer and by many other solitary and disturbed thinkers, and shows, too, how necessary are the evidences which Spiritualism affords of continued personal existence:—

If ever there was a born sceptic in this mundane sphere seeking for enlightenment, it is the one writing you now. Oh, that I could add to my diminishing stock of faith the knowledge that there is a Heavenly Father and a glorious after-life for us all, it would indeed help to quell the strifes of my mind and lighten the burdens of this weary world! Here am I, living in a country village, asking for the bread of life and offered sermon platitudes which convince nobody except those gifted souls whose faith could remove mountains, and the rest of the population consider religion as the dreariest subject on earth, to talk about which is so much waste of time and bottled moonshine. Good Lord, why was I cursed with a brain that is ever asking the whence, why, and whither, revolving like a squirrel in its cage, and coming to no definite, settled conviction of the spirituality of life? I read dozens of Spiritualistic works which are intensely interesting, and are probably true, every word of them, but in my own personal experience I never get so much as the faintest movement of a planchette or the weakest of spirit raps; yet objective facts of this nature would be as manna from Heaven to my hungry soul. Is it not possible to become mediumistic alone? If not, I shall have to wait until I shuffle off this mortal coil before I realise the truths of Spiritualism. I hear people assert that everyone in good health can communicate with their departed friends by means of instruments advertised for this purpose, but this is simply deceiving serious inquirers like myself, for I have sat for hours at regular times with a communication board and no response have I ever obtained. I should be glad if you could enlighten me on the subject. I, in my innocence, thought that the good God above us showered His gifts on all alike (if this is a gift!) but I have been sadly mistaken. As St. Paul says, 'there are diversities of gifts,' and mine are of another order, I fancy.

'If a man die shall he live again?' Outside of Spiritualism I do not see how anyone can answer this question, do you? I do not know, I would to God that I did! it would make my existence more endurable and brighter. The very idea of a self-existent First Cause is unthinkable, and I think this is the chief reason why Jesus the Christ is so much to a religious mind; someone tangible, someone for the mind to grasp and idealise. Well, I can only pray for light, more light, for Heaven knows I have a darkness that can be felt.

A. B. C.

We would that it were in our power to help this friend, and, indeed, all others who, like him, are distressed in mind and anxious for the light. Unfortunately, he does not appear to be sufficiently mediumistic in temperament, or sufficiently peaceful in mind, to be receptive to influences which would affect him psychically, and appeal to his inner powers of spiritual realisation, consequently physical phenomena—the outward and visible signs—seem to be indispensable in his case, but mediums for these manifestations are all too few. Our correspondent is so circumstanced that home circles are out of the question, and evidently he does not possess the mediumistic power which is needed for successful use of communication boards. Possibly his spirit friends could make their presence known to him through a medium or a clairvoyant, but his isolated position renders this impossible. Perhaps some reader of 'LIGHT,' who is gifted in this way, may feel 'the spirit move' him, or her, to try to help our correspondent in his earnest desire for 'light, more light.'

UXBRIDGE AND COLCHESTER.—We shall be pleased if any reader of 'LIGHT' can put us into communication with Spiritualists residing at Uxbridge, and at Colchester. Address the Editor, 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
LONDON, W.C.
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26th, 1910.

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

COMMUNICATIONS intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, Office of 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. E. W. WALLIS, Office of 'LIGHT,' to whom Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable, and should invariably be crossed
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THE BLUE BIRD.

'The Blue Bird: A Fairy Play in Five Acts,' by Maurice Maeterlinck, which all London is wanting to see at the Haymarket Theatre, is published by Methuen and Co. in a prettily printed volume, and is one of the few Plays that are really pleasant to read. In fact, it is a new and charming form of fairy tale: and some people might be better pleased by reading it than by seeing it performed, although the double impression will doubtless be the most lasting.

'The Blue Bird' is the symbol of Happiness, but, as the oak tree is made to say, it is 'the great secret of things and of happiness, so that man may make our servitude still harder.' Man seeks happiness in possession, and he kills it in the search. Once it was in Nature, with the animals and the trees; but Man has despoiled both, and both are now afraid of him, and he is 'alone against all in this world'; and the souls of all are against him. Once, too, it was with Night, and her stars, her dreams, her perfumes, her mystic glimmers, her dews, and her songs of nightingales; with the dead also who live in loving memory. But it is not here in the light of our common day, and from our birds the blue fades with our selfishness, our envyings and our fears.

The Play is the story of a dream-search for the Blue Bird, by two children, Mytyl and Tytyl, a girl and a boy. The boy has a bird, but it is not blue. He is masterful and selfish, and gives his sister 'a miserly little place on the stool,' when, in the dream, both are trying to stand on it to catch a sight of a gay entertainment across the road. It is Christmas Eve, and a Fairy takes them away in their sleep to seek 'the grass that sings' and 'the bird that is blue.' Have you got these? asks the Fairy. 'We have some grass, but it can't sing,' says the boy; and he has a bird, says the girl. 'But I can't give it away,' says the boy. 'Why not?' asks the Fairy: and then comes the fatal human answer, 'Because it's mine!'

By the Fairy, the souls of most things in the house are liberated—the dog, the cat, bread, sugar, water, milk, fire. The dog is attached to the boy and is loyal, devoted and affectionate; the cat cuddles to the girl and is selfish, artful and spiteful. The dog at once bounds up to its master, and cries, 'My little god! Good morning, my dear little god! At last, at last we can talk!' The cat, 'with much ceremony and circumspection,' says 'Good morning, Miss,' and pays her a little compliment. Then they all go in search of the Blue Bird with Light for guide: and Bread

carries the cage. Two immense symbols, these: Light as the true guide to happiness, and Bread as the mistaken holder of the cage ('Man shall not live by bread alone'). All along, Bread is a sycophant, a self-seeker and a coward, and pompous withal: and when, at the end, he surrenders his empty cage, which never had anything in it, he says: 'Here, master, now that my mission is drawing to an end, I restore it to your hands, untouched and carefully closed, as I received it'; a delightfully satirical touch.

So forth they go to find the Blue Bird; and first the two children are sent alone to 'The Land of Memory,' where they see grandfather and grandmother, and their 'dead' sisters and brothers, alive and well: but the emphasis is far too strong upon the idea that the 'dead' are asleep until someone in earth-life thinks of them. The two old folks say many suggestive things: 'The Living are so stupid when they speak of the Others.' 'Nothing's different when we're able to kiss each other.' The boy uses the word 'dead'; and the old man asks what that means. 'Why, it means that one's no longer alive.' 'How silly they are up there!' is the old man's only reply.

With the old folks there are most of the old things, even their old blackbird, now quite blue. So the children think this is the end of their quest, and they beg the bird. The old man is willing but he is doubtful. 'Mind you, I won't answer for the bird,' he says, 'I'm afraid he will never get used to the restless life up there,' and, sure enough, when they have bidden good-bye to 'the dead,' and are finding their way back, this happens:—

'It's this way, Mytyl.'

'Where is Light?'

'I don't know (looking at the bird in the cage). But the bird is no longer blue! He has turned black!'

'Give me your hand, little brother, I feel so frightened and so cold.'

Next they all go to seek for the Blue Bird in The Palace of Night where are hidden, in separate places, all the dreadful secret things—the filmy ghosts, sicknesses, wars, mysteries, and their stern denkeeper, Silence. It is a terrible time, but the boy, representing Man, compels Night to reveal everything; 'You have no right to refuse them to Man when he asks you for them. I know that.' 'Who told you that?' asks Night. 'Light,' says the boy. 'Light again!' she cries, 'Always, Light! How dare she interfere?' Then the dog says to him, 'Shall I take them from her by force, my little god?'

After the horrors are exhausted, one secret remains—the place of the stars, the dreams, the perfumes, the mystic glimmers, the dews, and the songs of nightingales. That also is revealed, and then comes the flood of splendour, with Blue Birds innumerable. 'Thousands of blue birds! Millions! Thousands of millions!' screams the boy. After capturing armfuls, they leave the garden with their struggling birds—every one of them dead. There was one that might have lived in the daylight, but that escaped. The boy weeps. Light comforts him. The dog says, 'Are they good to eat?'

They then go to Nature, to the animals and the trees, for they have heard that the Blue Bird is there. But the animals and the trees remember Man's despoiling of them, and, instigated by the cat, they resolve to kill this young representative of the human race. Then there is a furious fight: the dog standing by his master though bound by Ivy. 'True to the gods,' he cries, 'to the best, to the greatest!' But the girl is still attached to the sleek, treacherous and spiteful cat.

Last of all they go to the graveyard, for they are told that one of its inmates is hiding the Blue Bird in his tomb.

at midnight the 'dead' are evoked, and appear in a scene of heavenly beauty. They seek in vain for the graves. 'Where are the dead?' asks Mytyl. 'There are no dead,' says the boy.

Then, after a visit to the Kingdom of the Future in the unseen world, where all the coming good things are being prepared and where everything is blue, the children awake in their bed, greatly amazed but supremely happy: and lo! the boy's old bird is blue. A poor neighbour's sick child has a longing for the bird, and the converted boy joyfully gives it to her. It leads to her perfect recovery. She comes to thank him, bringing the bird with her; but the boy is startled and not happy, and begins to worry about feeding the bird, and moves to take it from her. 'The Dove escapes and flies away.'

After all, it seems, according to Maeterlinck, that perfect peaceful happiness is only in the beautiful, poetic, mystical past, in the enchanted Garden of Night, in the Land of Memory, or in the Kingdom of the Future. Is that quite so? But it is a lovely book.

THE ORDINATION OF DOCTOR SCEPTIC.

On Thursday evening, the 10th inst., Mr. J. W. Boulding delivered an address on 'The Ordination of "Dr. Sceptic," or the Value of Critical Examination in Matters of Belief,' to the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance at the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East, Mr. Henry Withall, vice-president, in the chair.

(Continued from page 89.)

The views that were at one time entertained concerning hell itself were more like the frenzied imaginations of madmen than the conclusions of sane and sober minds. Read the descriptions of the place and condition of lost souls as they are recorded in the works of preachers, and note especially the unconscious savagery with which they are delineated, and you will be amazed when you realise what hell was like as it was elaborated by priests and believed in by people of by-gone times. Fire, of course, was the chief element, and it was not symbolic fire, but real fire—fire that burnt but did not consume—fire that seized on the miserable victims but did not destroy. There is no agony so excruciating as that produced by fire—and this fire was declared to be eternal—fastening its tongues upon a body that was pronounced to be more sensitive than even this material body and for ever and ever devouring that body which, nevertheless, was incapable of being burnt up or destroyed—a kind of Salamander that lived in fire, and yet the fire was not its element but its enemy. When you realise this awful picture as it was realised in its appalling literalness by Christian people of a by-gone age, does it not strike you as a product of religious madness, which could only be produced by a diseased imagination, in an age of unreason, and by a people which had individually and collectively been seized with the delirium of a religious frenzy? So general and universal had this madness become that the whole intellect and genius of Europe were employed in depicting these excruciating agonies.

It was these horrors that fired the imagination of Dante; that occupied the pencils of artists of every kind and degree; that stimulated the eloquence of preachers, both renowned and unrenowned, so that every church was filled with pictures that illustrated the gruesome subject, and crowded with listeners whose minds were maddened by its awful details: while every now and then some saint in his cloister came forth to declare he had seen in vision those torments of the damned: the sulphurous sea that was ever boiling round the forms of the lost; demons of fearful aspect hovering about them, and mocking them as they writhed in the intolerable flame: anon casting them into cauldrons of brimstone, or

plunging them deeper into the sulphurous surge, and the ghastly scene of suffering and pain enveloped in a blackness denser than any midnight the earth ever knew: for the fire gave no light but wrapped the victims in a pall of gloom, darker than the darkness of a polar night, with no aurora to lighten the sky or prophesy the dawning of a future day.

It is a singular fact that the men who painted these inconceivable agonies were supposed to represent a gospel of peace, and hope and love, yet they regarded these scenes with complacency, nay, more, revelled in them with unconscious savagery of thought and emotion. Their ideal of happiness was to be themselves sheltered in the safety of heaven, and to contemplate from that secure distance these torments of the damned, so that even Tertullian could exclaim: 'How shall I wonder! How shall I rejoice! How shall I laugh!' *laugh* at these miserable creatures in their extremity! *rejoice* over these agonised victims in their pain!—when you think of all this am I wrong in saying that these men were thrown from their mental balance, that their reason had become disordered, that they were in fact religiously demented and mad? No wonder that Julian exclaimed: 'There are no wild beasts so ferocious as angry theologians.' No wonder that men who could survey these scenes with complacency and delight could also invent the thumbscrew and the 'boot,' the 'maiden' and the 'rack'; could exult in the persecutions of the Albigenses and Waldenses, and chant *Te Deums* over the awful massacre of St. Bartholomew; and while they made the history of the Church a path of death, could lie down in it like tigers who had feasted on their prey.

Do not you think, then, there was need for Doctor Sceptic to arise and put an end to these inhuman scenes of torment? Do not you think he did a good service to humanity when he dared to challenge the veracity of these doctrines? Do not you think he was a kinder comforter and a truer friend than the priest who invented them or the preacher who proclaimed them? Do not you think he was the true evangelist and the preacher of the real Gospel of God? I think you will agree with me that when he showed the baselessness of these theological dreams; when he proved they were merely a religious delirium, and lifted the incubus from the appalled and trembling heart of the world, that he proved his credentials as a messenger of Heaven, and that to him could be applied those words of the prophet with greater appropriateness than to any mitred bishop or tiarated Pope: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth.' (Applause.)

Not only did the Church condemn to eternal torment all who were not visibly in its pale, but it made the rite of baptism the necessary door of entrance to that Church, so that children dying unbaptised were pronounced (and are still pronounced by many priests and teachers) to be eternally lost. Think for a moment of the world of misery which this doctrine must have inflicted upon many parents whose children were suddenly snatched away before the rite of baptism could be performed. Listen to one of these writers as to its necessity. 'Be assured,' says this priest, 'that not only men but little children who have died before birth, or, having been just born, have passed away without the Sacrament of Baptism, must be punished by the eternal torture of undying fire.' Another theologian dares to assert that he 'doubted not there were infants not a span long crawling about the floor of hell.' Conceive, if you can, the anguish of the parents, who really believed this teaching, as they looked upon the faces of their newly dead, and transferred those faces by imagination to the fiery prison of the damned—conceive their unspeakable horror as they pictured the innocent and beautiful forms of their precious babes writhing in the torments of eternal fire, without even the ability to know wherefore they were so tormented, or the language to cry with their older fellow-sufferers: 'Send some angel with a drop of water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'

Was there no need, then, for Doctor Sceptic to come from some college of Nature where reason was president, and

common-sense the teacher—and, armed with the deductions of natural philosophy and the conclusions of natural religion, to expose the fallacies of an ignorant priesthood, reveal the laws of a righteous God, and pour the balm of a divine consolation into hearts which a false religion had wounded and a lying Church had driven to despair? It is our joy to know that we who are Spiritualists have done our best to abolish these cruel dogmas. We declare that no Church has any power to condemn anyone, whether infant or man, and that no creed is true which pronounces any human spirits—even the worst—to be irredeemably consigned to eternal torture. (Applause.)

Towards such teaching Spiritualism, which stands for true religion, is an absolute, an uncompromising and irresistible foe: a foe that has facts for its weapons—incontestable, undeniable, unanswerable facts. It does not join in the general and irrational saying: 'As a tree falleth so shall it lie,' a passage, by the way, which has no reference whatever to the condition of the soul, or even to the soul at all: and, occurring as it does in the Book of Ecclesiastes, which is a record of the opinions of a sensual materialist—the chief article of whose creed was that 'the dead know not anything'—it could have no value as evidence, even if it did contain the sentiment usually ascribed to it. If we allow that it does refer to the posthumous condition of the soul—even then as a mere illustration it is lamentably imperfect. A tree if it falls cannot get up again: but I presume a soul can do that; even a body can: and I suppose a fallen soul would have at least as much power to get up as a fallen body has, and I should hope as much sense to wipe off a little of the dirt it had contracted by its tumble. But even a tree is not allowed to lie where it falls. It is speedily sawn up, planed, and employed for useful purposes, and thus it lives again.

Doctor Sceptic has analysed the meaning of those other awful words that seem to predict the final and fatal doom of the soul: 'The worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched.' He has made them give up their secret, and the world that was appalled by them has breathed again with eternal hope. Outside the walls of Jerusalem, in the Valley of Hinnom, all the refuse of the city was cast, where it naturally bred worms, and a fire was kept constantly burning there to consume the refuse, of which fresh deposits were continually being made: and so the worm never died and the fire was never quenched. This, and nothing but this, was what the passage meant, and Jesus used it simply as a symbol of the corruption of evil and the fire of remorse: the worm of sin and the purifying fire of the conscience: and we need not go even beyond the bounds of time to find the parallel to this Vale of Hinnom, for it exists in every soul where corruption abides and in every conscience where remorse exists: so that hell is here and now, and the worm dieth not, till corruption is consumed: and the fire is not quenched till the sin is atoned for and its effects are therefore dead.

It is the literal interpretation of symbolic words that has been the source of so much religious error and so many theological mistakes. For instance, Tertullian said that God could never forgive an actor, because Christ said: 'No man by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature,' which statement the actor falsified by putting on high-heeled boots, and a mask, or 'make-up,' thus falsifying his face as well as his feet. St. Thomas Aquinas, however, was more charitable than Tertullian, though the reason he assigned for his charity was equally foolish. He said that he believed an actor would be forgiven, because it had been revealed to the blessed Paphnutius that a 'clown' was to be his companion in heaven. I suppose the blessed Paphnutius was a melancholy soul, and needed a clown to cheer his dulness, though it might also be because the saint was nothing but a clown himself, and another clown must therefore come to keep him company. Besides, if all the clowns—and the natural fools—are to be excluded from Heaven, I fear the population of that blessed place will be very thin indeed. But even clowns have their uses: take all the clowns out of Shakespeare, and Shakespeare would be poorer for the loss of them. Wit was a divinely-given faculty, laughter a divinely-appointed function, amusement a necessary and healthy exercise of the powers and

capabilities of human life. Take all the clowns out of the world and life would be duller. We need them if only as a relief to the very wise people, some of whom are so terribly solemn, and silent, and dull. The fact is, tragedy and comedy were married at the Creation and no sharp lawyer or solemn judge has been able to divorce them, nor ever will.

Returning, however, from this digression, I remark that the state of things to which I have referred was the direct result of a wrong belief—the belief that the Bible was true, literally true, verbally true, infallibly true, subject to no revision, superior to all criticism, the sole and sovereign light of the world. 'Thus saith the Lord' was the first word and the last in every controversy, and whoso denied it was excommunicated and in danger of losing his life. I have only time to refer to one other instance of religious mania. Read the history of the Church as regards its persecutions, and if, after you have read it, you can pronounce its actions reasonable and sane, it can only be because you are incompetent to judge, or educationally prejudiced, or wilfully blind. Almost all Europe was for centuries deluged with seas of blood—blood shed by the Christian Church on the absurd pretext of killing men's bodies to save their souls. More than thirty-one thousand persons were burnt by the Spanish Inquisition; fifty thousand were put to death in the Netherlands in the reign of Charles IX.; twenty-five thousand under the reign of his son: indeed, it is impossible to estimate the numbers that were put to death by the Church not only in Spain and other countries, but in our own land and every part of Christendom by the deliberate and solemn sanction of that body of believers who were professedly the lovers and saviours of mankind.

Think for a moment of those who perished under the laws that were passed against what was called witchcraft. Thousands of human beings, many of them women and young girls, were burnt and drowned and subjected to diabolical insults and more diabolical tortures preliminary to their murder—and all as the result of what? An ignorant interpretation of an old fossilised enactment in the Mosaic law, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'—an enactment which had no more divine authority or future application than the command to destroy the women and children and domestic animals of the enemies of Israel, who were also ordered to be killed by the same barbaric and inhuman law. All nations and all creeds were united on this question—the destruction of witches. Even Martin Luther exclaimed, 'I would burn them all.' John Calvin was as ferocious as Luther. The Reformed Ministers of Scotland were as bad. So were the Puritans in England. Seven thousand poor creatures were burnt at Trèves—six hundred by a single bishop, nine hundred in one year by the Bishop of Wartburg. At Toulouse four hundred perished at a single execution. A judge of Nantes boasted that he had put to death eighteen hundred witches in sixteen years. The executions that took place in Paris in a few months were almost innumerable. In Italy a thousand were executed in the province of Como. In fact, it would be impossible to recount the thousands upon thousands of these cruel martyrdoms. And this was not the worst part of the affair, for the tortures they were subjected to before they were executed were so fearful in their details that they beggar description, and one marvels at the human ingenuity that could devise such inhuman and diabolical cruelties.

And who were these witches? Many of them no doubt were men and women who had seen visions and heard spirit voices, to whom spirits had returned, and the head and front of whose offending was, that they revealed the fact that 'the dead' were not dead, that they brought life and immortality to light, that they were the messengers of the angels who were saying then what they had been saying since the first passing away of human life on this planet: 'We are not here, we have risen!' A great deal of fuss is made about the martyrs for the Christian religion—sometimes Catholic martyrs, sometimes Protestant, as the balance of power shifted from sect to sect: but what of these martyrs—our martyrs—the martyrs that were not martyred for their creeds, or any creed—the martyrs of the world's universal hope—the martyrs of the true resurrection

of the dead—the martyrs who died for the dead who were alive—the martyrs, in a word, of Spiritualism? They were all victims of a wrong belief—the belief in a miserable fragment of Jewish bigotry, which ought never to have been retained in the Christian Bible, unless as a specimen of the narrowness and maliciousness of a barbaric age when men could kill the very witnesses of the truth and think they had done God's service, though they had only gratified their ignorant intolerance and their savage thirst for human blood.

Now when you think of and try to realise all these dreadful atrocities, you will, I am sure, agree with me that they were due to a religious madness, an aberration of mind inconceivable in sane humanity, and needing the sceptic with his keen analysis to expose the insanity of ecclesiastical thought and to strike at the roots of ecclesiastical power. And the sceptic came. In the person of Voltaire and others of his school the sceptic arose and headed the intellectual insurrection of mankind. No matter how great was the persecuting power, Voltaire launched against it the lightnings of his scathing eloquence: no matter how poor and insignificant the victim, Voltaire shielded him with the ægis of his mighty name. Logic, sarcasm, humour, wit, invective, denunciation—every weapon in his mental armoury was employed to resist and overthrow the oppressor, and every weapon was polished till it blazed like lightning, and wherever it struck, it struck home and killed. So great indeed was his influence that no persecutor could lift his head but the indignation of mankind was concentrated upon him: the inquisitor dare not torture, the prisoner was set free; and for the first time in the history of the Church the persecuting ecclesiastic appeared in his true colours as the enemy of his species, and was loathed and abhorred as the destroyer of mankind. Whatever faults may be laid to the charge of Voltaire, and however men may point to his personal defects—to the spots on the sun of his genius—they cannot but say that he destroyed the destroyer, that he routed the hosts of intolerance and oppression, won for Europe the battle of religious liberty, and proved that while the ordination of the priest was of doubtful authority the ordination of the sceptic was genuine and divine. (Applause.)

It is to Voltaire that even the actor in France owes the privilege of a decent burial and an honoured grave. Before he came on the scene the actor was outside the pale of the Christian community, and doomed, if he died as an actor, to eternal damnation. On this point the doctrine of the Church was clear and positive: the actor, in fact, needed no excommunication; he was already excommunicated by the profession he followed. 'Very hard on the actor,' I hear you say. Yes, it *was* hard that after spending all his life in amusing his fellows, adding to the gaiety of nations, and whiling away the hours of leisure for overworked humanity—making men forget for a little while their own sorrows in the fictitious sorrows of the stage, or chasing away the clouds of human despondency with the sunshine of happy laughter—the man who had conferred these benefits on his species must die without comfort, be buried like a dog, and go to perdition under the curse of the Church! A Church, mark you, whose priests were often more immoral than he, and whose ministrations to the comfort and happiness of mankind were always less human and often less divine. The dramatic poet shared a similar fate. Racine, appalled by the doom that awaited him, withdrew his dramatic gifts in the zenith of his fame: but even so his epitaph could not escape the ecclesiastical brand; for after recounting his virtues as a man and his merits as a poet, it recalls the fact, as an indelible stain, that he had once been a dramatist, and had written for the stage! The actors entreated the Pope to remove the ban, but in vain: and so far did the Church carry its insane censure that when a *Te Deum* was sung in Paris for the recovery of Louis XIV., and every society was represented in the national cathedral, the actors were solely and absolutely excluded. The Archbishop of Paris refused them marriage, and then reproached them for the illicit unions of which he was himself the cause. When a lawyer denounced the prohibition as an injustice, his pamphlet was burned by the

public executioner and his name erased from the advocates' list. So sweeping was this curse on the society of actors and authors, that Lulli, the first great musical composer of France, was denounced by the Church as unfit for its Communion, and he could only obtain pardon for his offence by burning with his own hand the opera which that hand had composed.

But at last their Redeemer came. And who was that Redeemer? Not the Pope! Not any religious sect, religious teacher, or religious person! But the sceptic! He fought for them the unequal battle, and won their long-delayed freedom. When Voltaire led the insurrection of the sanity of the world against the insane religionists who had inflicted such a wrong upon an innocent class, and the French nation with one voice removed these disabilities and lifted the actor to the position of a man, it was a proof not only of the advocate's influence, but of the much more important and evident fact, that the credentials of the priest's authority were not human while the ordination of the sceptic was both human and divine.

Now I think that this society exists to show the importance of right thinking and to encourage you to sift men's beliefs to ascertain if they be right, and, personally, I feel it a great comfort to know that I am speaking to a society of sceptics. In the pulpit where I used to preach I could not speak with freedom. My mouth was gagged by creeds, and muzzled by conventionalities. But now I am free and, fearing no man and no body of men, I am able to declare what, in a higher sense, I believe to be 'the whole counsel of God.' Like yourselves, I have thrown off my shackles, and welcome all truths from whatever source they come. (Applause.)

Like Goethe, we only pray for 'Light! more light!' but we are resolved that no man and no body of men shall cloud the light we have received. We are not dogmatists but students, earnest learners of the mysteries of Nature which are the secrets of God. To everyone that comes here we say, 'Search for yourself, try and test: prove all things, and hold fast those which you have proved and found to be good. Do not accept anything you hear unless you prove it for yourself. Cultivate independence of judgment, exercise your own reason—in a word, be a man and not a slave, master of yourself, of your mind and your heart, and believe and follow only those facts which you have demonstrated and those directions which you have proved to be from heaven. Stand out in a dignified and responsible individuality, and to every man who would blind you with theologies and creeds reply, "I also am a man, with a reason of my own and a judgment capable of giving a verdict on the evidence before me." While an Englishman in all that is specially English, be in this particular quality a courageous Greek. Dare to doubt and learn to wait, and be bold to be singular, if to be singular is to be true! In this way you will escape both evils that threaten you, the rock of infidelity and the whirlpool of credulity, and while for your personal comfort you will find yourself sailing the waters of a serene content, you will also do your part to save the world from the quicksands of dogma, ignorance, and superstition; the reign of evil will be curtailed, the throne of falsehood shaken, and the golden age of humanity be advanced; when good shall prevail and freedom flourish, the rights of men be universally acknowledged and right conduct be universally practised, and you will become, so far as your influence extends, a moral and religious benefactor to mankind.' (Loud applause.)

At the close of Mr. Boulding's address, after a few comments from several members of the audience, the proceedings terminated with a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

AFTERNOON SOCIAL GATHERING.

On Thursday, March 10th, at 3 p.m., a Social Gathering will be held at 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C. At 4 p.m., Miss S. McCreadie will give clairvoyant descriptions. Tea will be served during the afternoon. Admission to this meeting will be confined to Members and Associates. No tickets required.

QUESTION DEPARTMENT.

THE POWER OF SUGGESTION.

[Answers are solicited from readers of 'LIGHT' to the following questions which have been sent to us by correspondents.—ED. 'LIGHT']

1. I have often read of spirits manifesting their presence in empty houses, where there are no inmates, consequently no mediums, and I have wondered why have I not had some evidence of spirit presence at home. Can any reader of 'LIGHT' tell me?—H. M. K.

2. Will some reader of 'LIGHT' kindly tell me of some method of self-protection? I have been in company and work with persons who either consciously or unconsciously draw upon my vitality and leave me feeling weak and weary. I have maintained a sympathetic, good for evil, mental attitude towards these people, whose dispositions are decidedly vindictive, revengeful, and over-mastering. Am I right in so doing, or ought I to be positive, stand-offish, and contemptuous towards them? How can I close myself psychically? Will some trained occultist give me the desired information or tell me of a reliable book to read?—H. M. D.

3. I have reason to believe that hypnotic influences have been and are being exerted against me. My mind is disturbed I cannot rest at night, and I feel that I am in danger. I am not a Spiritualist, and the distressing experiences through which I am passing are not due to any obsessing spirit, but to someone in the body. I am told to be positive, but it seems to be the object of the unseen opponent to weaken or destroy my will power. What can I do to defeat this evil intent and break through the net which I feel is being woven around me?—L. M.

4. Having obtained table movements which we thought were due to spirit power, at the suggestion of a relative the sitters all fixed their minds on any subject they pleased, and an outsider took down the letters indicated by the movements of the table, with the result that we could get nothing but a silly repetition of letters, sometimes the alphabet being gone through two or three times. Then we tried whether one of us could control the message, and the result was that part of my thoughts and part of my sister's were hopelessly jumbled up. We are beginning to think that we have been foolishly deceiving ourselves. Can any reader of 'LIGHT' make any suggestions or give an explanation of our experience that will be helpful?

GROWTH OF THE PSYCHO-THERAPEUTIC SOCIETY.

The Psycho-Therapeutic Society, having been incorporated under the Companies (Consolidation) Act, 1908, has arranged for the taking over, on May 1st, of larger and centrally situated premises, with the additional accommodation urgently needed to enable it to cope satisfactorily with its ever-increasing philanthropic work. The acquisition of these new premises will involve the society in a considerably increased expenditure, not only for rent, lighting, heating and cleaning, but for furnishing and fitting up the rooms. The funds at present in hand are barely sufficient to meet existing liabilities, and an appeal is made for increased membership and for donations to the amount of about £200 to meet the special expenses in connection with the new premises. The society has made steady progress during its nine years' existence, and has much scope for further usefulness, the services of all workers being given entirely without fee or reward. Donations may be sent to Mr. George Spriggs, president; Lady Coomara, treasurer; or Mr. Arthur Hallam, hon. sec., at the office, 3, Bayley-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

SHEFFIELD.—The local Spiritualist societies in the Sheffield district have an active and efficient organiser in Mr. Ernest W. Oaten. He has accepted invitations from Congregationalist, Unitarian, and Socialist bodies to address them on Spiritualism, has been well received, and invited to 'come again.' During the past year he addressed upwards of three hundred meetings, attended twenty-nine circles, and conducted nine interments. Mr. Oaten is evidently the right man in the right place, and the Spiritualist movement should grow rapidly in this district, as his efforts are being ably seconded by the local workers.

On Monday evening, the 14th inst., at Caxton Hall, Westminster, Dr. Forbes Winslow delivered an address before the members of the Psycho-Therapeutic Society, of which he is a vice-president. Dr. Winslow said that some persons were more liable to suggestion than others. 'Fashion' was nothing more or less than 'suggestion'; it was an indication of sanity to be able to resist it, and a symptom of mental weakness to be hypnotised by the sight of an innovation in dress. More than half the ills to which flesh was heir could be cured, and half the world could be laid low, by suggestion, which was the primary mover in everything we did, whether pleasure or work, and played a prominent part in politics and athletics.

Dr. Winslow described Dr. Bérillon's establishment in Paris, in which infantile vices, the drug habit, inebriety, want of confidence and self-control, were effectually cured without medicine; nothing but psycho-therapeutics was practised there. Suggestion, like medicine, required careful dispensing, as it could be employed for good or ill. It was not everyone who was blessed with the power of so acting on the mind of man as to reflect on the symptoms and alleviate the condition. In nervous affections the action of suggestion played a prominent part. The late Dr. Andrew Clark had a favourite prescription which worked chiefly through suggestion, and a dispenser at a large London hospital recently stated that a vast number of the patients had recovered by the use of coloured water or bread pills. Some called this faith healing, but he (Dr. Winslow) called it suggestion. The pioneers who were bold enough to contend that cerebral influence exerted itself over the bodily system have conquered and silenced the unbelievers who denied the power of suggestion in the treatment of disease.

JOTTINGS.

The Belgian Spiritualist Federation invites Spiritualists from all parts of the world to a Universal Spiritualist Congress, which will be held at Brussels between May 14th and 19th, 1910. At the International Exhibition which is to be held there this year, space will be reserved in the scientific section for an exhibit, showing up-to-date methods of studying spiritual phenomena, with proofs of some of the more interesting manifestations hitherto obtained. In the photographic section there will be an exhibition of various plates and films taken during sittings with mediums. In the fine art section will be shown collections of water-colour sketches and pastels produced through mediums.

The programme of the Congress will include all aspects of Spiritualism. Spiritualistic associations or organisations are invited to send reports to the Congress showing their views on the following points: How best to overcome public scepticism; how to combat and suppress fraud; how to extend our knowledge of the unseen world, and develop mediumship for this purpose; the study of photography in dealing with spirit phenomena; and the best means of establishing international relations among Spiritualists. Representatives from various countries are expected to be present, and further particulars can be obtained from Chevalier Le Clément de St.-Marcq, 43, rue de la Petite Ourse, Antwerp, Belgium, or from the office of 'LIGHT.'

One of the peculiar features of spirit manifestations is that they occur spontaneously in unexpected places. 'The Sun,' of St. John, New Brunswick, for January 17th, relates some extraordinary 'occult demonstrations' in Prince Edward Island. A young woman, named Chinene, who kept house for her brothers, objected to the intended wife of one of them, and became highly excited. That night there were inexplicable noises in the house; Miss Chinene was heard to shriek, her brothers rushed to her room and found her floating in the air several feet above her bed, and talking incoherently. In the morning she remembered nothing of it. The same thing happened on the following night, and she subsequently fell into trances during which she was clairvoyant. These trances are accompanied by rumblings and muffled knockings. The manifestations are, of course, put down to diabolical agency, especially as fires are said to have broken out at three farms in the neighbourhood.

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.

George Eliot and Mrs. Elma Stuart.

SIR,—As one who had the privilege of intimacy with Mrs. Elma Stuart, and knowing how deeply pained she would be at any word of disparagement of her beloved friend, even though it take the form of sympathy with herself, I beg you to allow me to correct the unfavourable impression which, for want of fuller knowledge, you have given of George Eliot in your review, on page 57, of her letters to Elma Stuart.

Mrs. Stuart's nature was to give and to give generously to all whom she loved. She was never wholly dependent on her art, and indeed learnt wood-carving expressly to have something to give George Eliot which she considered worthy of her. Many of these gifts, especially those which were the work of her hands, were given before the great illness which crippled her; it would have hurt her inexpressibly had they been refused. Had your reviewer read further, he would have come upon this passage (page 142): 'He left me the beautiful letterweight, which, with all my gratitude to you for your sweet, loving kindness, is rather a weight on my heart, because your affection is more than my share without any material signs of it, and you have so many creatures who draw at your heart—and purse—strings.'

I, too, thought the letters might be wanting in interest to those who had no personal love for either of these noble women, but found instead that they were much enjoyed by people to whom I have lent them. If George Eliot had written to all her friends letters full of the 'original thought' and 'literary references' that your reviewer sought in them, she would hardly have found time to give us 'Middlemarch,' and the fact that she suffered so constantly from headache and yet worked so hard is a fine lesson in fortitude.

But besides the charm and grace of the letters of thanks, there are others which are surely of interest to the world at large, as the one on page 75 on the subject of right being right without theological sanction, and pages 164-166 declining to dissuade a friend from joining the Roman Catholic Church.

It is a thousand pities that Mrs. Stuart's own letters, always original and racy, have not been preserved, the more so as George Eliot herself kept them, and they were ruthlessly destroyed after her death instead of being returned to the writer. The beautiful rich braid and all her letters to her son, religiously preserved by him, were destroyed by fire in his absence from home.

You will, I hope, excuse my criticism, as it is the heart and not the intellect of George Eliot that was harshly judged, and it was her large heart that was the source whence flowed the beneficent stream of her genius.—Yours, &c.,

Florence.

JESSIE VESEL.

The Influence of Mothers.

SIR,—I have read with much pleasure your report of Mrs. Despard's address and the after words of the Rev. Page Hopps, and am in full sympathy with their views upon the woman question. I greatly wish that speakers and writers on that subject would make it their most important business to impress upon the maidens and young mothers among their hearers the responsible position they have the privilege of occupying in the nation.

My contention is that if we want better men we must have better mothers. Is it not an acknowledged fact that all our 'great' men have had good mothers—superior to their class? When we reflect that every anti-suffragist of to-day was at one time a helpless babe slumbering in a cradle rocked by a woman's hand, that his training for the first seven years of life was from a woman's lips, may we not suppose that there was something very crooked in that training, judging by the result around us? Men are what women have made them, whether intentionally or not.

How often the baby boy is given his first lesson in tyranny and injustice when he tumbles over a stool and is told to 'beat naughty stool for hurting dear baby!' When his long-suffering kitten, in self-defence, scratches him, it is driven from the room as 'a nasty spiteful beast.' When his childish sympathy is aroused to tears by his own or another's troubles, he is told not 'to cry like a girl'; and so on, until by the time he is old enough to go to school he has become a full-fledged young despot, regarding his sisters as quite inferior beings. Women are, of course, quite as much entitled to votes, and are as capable of voting, as are men, but ten thousand votes will not give them one jot more influence and power in their kingdom

of home and nursery than they now possess. Let them see that they make proper and wise use of that power and influence.—Yours, &c.,

(MRS.) JENNIE C. BRACE.

First Garden City.

A Scarf-Pin Twice Lost and Restored.

SIR,—In 1904 I lost a scarf-pin in long, damp grass by the river-side; some nine months afterwards my grandson, a boy with clairaudient gifts, heard a voice say: 'Go into the garden and look under the plum-tree'; and there, quite clean and dry, in a part which he had noticed the day before as having been recently sown with parsley seed, on a small spot flattened as if by a beater, lay my pin; an account of which circumstance, with more details, appeared in 'LIGHT' for February 25th, 1905, page 96.

On Sunday, January 16th last, after Church and Sacrament, I took a short walk in deep snow, and on returning home I found that the same pin, which I know was in my scarf when I went to church, was again abstracted. As I had on a great coat, buttoned, I felt sure that I had not lost it in an ordinary manner; and, remembering its previous restitution, as an apport, I put no other pin into this Sunday scarf, and quietly awaited developments.

On Sunday last, February 13th, exactly four weeks after my loss, I put on the same scarf with no pin in it, which fact was noticed at breakfast by my relative who lives with me. After breakfast, happening to stand before a mirror in the dining-room, to my astonishment there was my pin, clean and bright, and inserted in my scarf. I immediately went and showed it to my relative, who had retired into the drawing-room. As she has psychic powers, she said: 'Your guide tells me to tell you that in order to demonstrate the reality of the guides and their power over matter, he himself purposely took your pin a month ago, by dematerialising it, and rematerialised it while you were at your meal by my magnetic force, my eyes being purposely directed away from you, that the pin might be replaced in your neck-gear in silence, for the reason that speech might have spoilt the vibrations necessary for the materialisation and definite hardening of the pin.' It seems to me that the fact of the same article being twice dematerialised and rematerialised is a very uncommon one.

As I stated when I mentioned the previous loss and restoration of the pin, I have had no experience of 'phenomena,' have never attended séances with public mediums, which, as a High Churchman, I considered a questionable proceeding; but honesty compels me to record my experiences, and to state that it would be well for many who, like myself, have disbelieved in the occurrence of miracles in this twentieth century, and have regarded Spiritualism as something diabolic, to remember that the same evidences of the occult, and of the unseen world, accompanied the revelations through the earliest Christians, 'a sect everywhere spoken against'; and that candid investigation should always precede the condemnation of anything new or uncommon, or which happens to be unorthodox or unpopular.—Yours, &c., OPHIS.

Dematerialisation Phenomena.

SIR,—I wrote to Colonel Begbie respecting his offer in 'LIGHT,' of February 5th, to pack and seal another box of chocolates in the presence of two or more of my friends, asking him if these witnesses would be allowed to indicate the manner of packing and to initial or otherwise mark the covering or coverings of the said box, and I also named one of the witnesses I proposed.

I have received a reply from him further resenting my criticism of the case, on behalf of himself and the circle, and referring to his offer, he now states: 'They (the circle) are averse to the test box of chocolates being brought to our meeting,' but he says he will 'pack, tie, and seal up a box of chocolates in the presence of the Editor of "LIGHT" and anyone else he may appoint and place it on the table of our weekly meetings,' and adds, 'If the chocolates are again dematerialised, the box will be made over to the Editor of "LIGHT" for any remarks he may choose to make.'

As Colonel Begbie, in his letter to me, declines to have any further dealings with me in the matter, I must now leave it in your hands, and trust that nothing will occur to prevent this last suggestion of the Colonel's from being successfully carried through.—Yours, &c.,

Plymouth.

S. B. McCALLUM.

[A box of chocolates has been examined, and securely tied and sealed by us, in the presence of two witnesses, at Colonel Begbie's request.—Ed. 'LIGHT'.]

An Occultist's Desire.

SIR,—I am an occultist of many years' standing, and have been a subscriber and contributor to 'LIGHT,' and I am wondering if, through the mediumship of your journal, I can get into personal touch, while I am in London, with advanced thinkers and mediums who do not use their gifts as a means of livelihood; not that I wish to cast any sort of reflection upon professional mediums, for I recognise their point of view. I shall be pleased to receive letters addressed to your care.—Yours, &c.,

OCCULTIST.

'Magnetic' or Spiritual Healing.

SIR,—About a year ago you published a letter from me in 'LIGHT,' intimating that I was willing to give healing treatment to sufferers free of charge. Permit me to say that I am still able and willing to do this. Although I give about forty treatments every week, I have not yet had to treat any person twice for gout, sciatica, lumbago, carbuncle, sprains, &c. A bad case of insomnia was cured in three minutes. The sufferer, who could only walk with the aid of two sticks, owing to a complication of complaints, was told at the hospital that she would never be cured, but she is now in a normal state of health, and is very grateful.

I have received several applications from persons who are developing healing power—one last week from South Africa. I would suggest to the writer the right hand is positive and the left negative; that contagious diseases will not affect a system which is well supplied with natural magnetic force; but when it may have been exhausted by manipulating a patient, or is negative through want of food or exercise, the healer may be in danger. It is important, therefore, that magnetisers should never enter an infected dwelling, nor approach a fever patient, while the magnetic power is in a low or weak condition, but when it is in full force the healer may brave contagion with impunity. He must remember, however, never to expend the whole of his power on a patient, as he may not have sufficient left for his own needs, and his system may thus be left open for bad influences to affect him.—Yours, &c.,

C. BROWN.

Elm-crescent, Kingston-on-Thames.

Helpful Spiritual Experiences.

SIR,—Some years ago a spirit came to me giving the name of a young girl whom I had known in my youth, and who fared forth into the larger life at the age of sixteen. After a time she informed me that on my passing out of the body we should be together for all eternity, our love for each other continually increasing in force and purity, and that it was this attraction which caused her to come.

I may mention that she had then been in the spirit world for nearly twenty years. Nearly every medium described her minutely in almost the same words, her description being a very uncommon one, and I was fully convinced of her identity. Doubts, however, crept into my mind, and I asked how I was to know that it was really and truly my old friend, and not some masquerading spirit.

She replied that true love is the grandest and most durable thing in the universe, and that to imagine that it could be left at the mercy of foolish, unprogressed spirits is absurd and unthinkable; that I should consult the feelings of my own heart and trust to its judgment. She further said that when I was fully convinced of the truth of Spiritualism she did not wish me to sit in circles nor with mediums, but that I should try to unfold my own sensitiveness by aspiration, meditation on high themes, and living a pure, unselfish life in the service of others; she would then be able to come to me direct.

When I asked if I could prevent her progress or drag her down to material interests, she replied: 'No, you would not drag me down, but I can help you to rise.'

All this was acceptable to my interior judgment, and from that day I have been blessed exceedingly by angel help and guidance. I trust your readers will pardon these personalities, which some seem to think should be hidden away in the depths of the heart; but I am unable to feel that way, and rejoice at being able and privileged to give my experience if it can help anyone. 'Freely ye have received, freely give.'

I would say to inexperienced investigators, hold a high ideal before your eyes and be genuine, and nothing can hurt you; pay no attention to soulless, materialistic, or mystical vagaries and inconsistent assumptions, but go ahead fearlessly. Sanity and level-headed reasonableness will make co-operation with one's friends in the lovelier, brighter, and less limited life a joy and privilege of unspeakable worth. Evil can only come to those who have evil in their hearts.—Yours, &c.,

A. K. VENNING.

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

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. W. J. Leeder's address on 'Death' and his successful clairvoyant descriptions were much enjoyed. Mr. Leigh Hunt presided.—*Percy Hall*.—On the 14th inst. Mrs. Place-Veary gave convincing clairvoyant descriptions and spirit messages. Sunday next, see advt.—D. N.

SPIRITUAL MISSION: 22, Prince's-street, Oxford-street, W.—On Sunday evening last Mrs. M. H. Wallis gave an eloquent and spiritual address on 'Inspiration and Revelation.' Mr. Otto sang, with 'cello obbligato by Mr. Stanley Beard.—67, George-street, Baker-street, W.—On Sunday morning last Mrs. M. H. Wallis delivered a fine address on 'Spiritual Gifts,' and gave well-recognised clairvoyant descriptions after each address. On the 16th inst. Mrs. Fairclough Smith gave helpful replies to questions. Sunday next, see advt.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. John Adams and Mr. H. Boddington gave addresses. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., circle; at 7 p.m., Mr. Richard Boddington, address.—H. B.

STRATFORD.—WORKMEN'S HALL, ROMFORD-ROAD, E.—On Sunday last Mr. W. H. Shaddick gave an interesting address on 'Fact versus Fancy.' Mr. Geo. F. Tilby presided. Sunday next, Mrs. A. Boddington, address.—W. H. S.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—SURREY MASONIC HALL.—On Sunday last, morning and evening, Mrs. Beaurepaire conducted the services, and gave personal messages. Sunday next, at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long.—E. S.

BRIXTON.—84, STOCKWELL PARK-ROAD, S.W.—On Sunday last Mrs. Neville's address on 'Prayer' and psychometric delineations were highly appreciated. Sunday next, Mrs. Campbell. March 6th, Mr. Symons. 13th, Mrs. Boddington.—A. B.

SHEFFIELD PSYCHOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.—On Monday, March 14th, the twenty-first Annual Conversation and Ball will be held in the Cutlers' Hall. Exhibition of photographs, drawings, &c. Addresses, music, demonstrations of clairvoyance, &c. Tickets 2s. each.

CLAPHAM.—RICHMOND-PLACE, NEW-ROAD, WANDSWORTH-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Gilbert gave an address on 'The Possibility of Spiritualism.' Sunday next, at 11 a.m., circle; at 6.45 p.m., Mr. P. Smyth, address; March 6th and 7th, Mrs. Gilbert, of Derby.—C. C.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Manners spoke on 'Jewels and their Settings.' Mrs. Wesley Adams gave recognised clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Mr. Harry Pye, address. Monday, 7, ladies' circle. Thursday, 8.15, public circle.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.—ASSEMBLY ROOMS, HAMPTON WICK.—On Sunday last Miss Violet Burton gave an address on 'The Two Spiritual Doors' and answered questions. Miss Welbelove sang. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Jamrach, address and clairvoyant descriptions. Madame Duvergé will recite.

BRIGHTON.—MANCHESTER-STREET (OPPOSITE AQUARIUM).—On Sunday last Mrs. Jamrach gave interesting addresses and good clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., circle; at 3 p.m., Mr. Severn; at 7 p.m., Mr. Clarke. Monday, 8, and Wednesday, 3, Mrs. Curry. Thursday, 8, circle.—A.M.S.

HIGHGATE.—GROVEDALE HALL, GROVEDALE-ROAD.—On Sunday morning last Mr. A. W. Jones spoke on 'Phrenology.' In the evening Mr. J. Blackburn gave an address on 'Occultism, and Jesus.' Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., Mr. J. Abrahall; at 7 p.m., Mr. J. G. Nicholson. Wednesday, Mrs. Jones.—J. F.

THE UNION OF LONDON SPIRITUALISTS will hold a conference meeting at 447, Katherine-road, Forest Gate, on Sunday, March 5th. At 3 p.m. Mr. C. W. Turner will open a discussion on 'The Public Demonstration of Spiritualism.' Tea at 5 o'clock. Speakers at 7 p.m., Messrs. G. T. Gwinn, Wright, and M. Clegg.

HACKNEY.—240A, AMHURST-ROAD, N.—On Sunday last Mr. J. A. Wilkins made an earnest and convincing appeal to non-Spiritualists. On Saturday a concert, excellently arranged by Messrs. Robert Wittey and O. Kottnitz, was much enjoyed. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Robert Wittey, address. Monday next, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Imison (Nurse Graham), clairvoyante.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—73, BECKLOW-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday evening last Mr. Baxter gave a good address on 'The Philosophy of Life' and answered questions. Sunday next, at 10.45 a.m., public circle; at 6.45 p.m., Miss Violet Burton. Thursday, 7.45, Miss Sainsbury. Tuesday, healing. Wednesdays and Fridays, 8, members' circles.—L.

PECKHAM.—LAUSANNE HALL.—On Sunday morning last Miss N. Brown gave psychometric readings. In the evening, at the Lyceum anniversary, officers and members gave addresses, solos, &c. On the 17th inst. Mr. F. Fletcher gave a lantern lecture. Sunday next, at 11.30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Mrs. F. Roberts, of Leicester, clairvoyante. Thursday, 8.15, Mrs. F. Roberts, psychometry; 6th, Mr. T. Timson, clairvoyant.

PORTSMOUTH.—MIZPAH HALL, WATERLOO-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. W. J. Nicholls gave an address and psychometric readings.—G. E. R.

SEVEN KINGS, ILFORD.—5, SPENCER-ROAD.—On Sunday last members gave readings, and on the 15th inst. related personal experiences.—E. G. D.

LINCOLN.—ARCADE, UPPER ROOM.—On Sunday afternoon last some of our lady members spoke; in the evening Mr. Hylton gave an address.—C. R.

KENTISH TOWN.—17, PRINCE OF WALES' CRESCENT, N.W.—On Sunday last Mr. Swift gave an interesting address on 'Do Spirits Help Us?'—J. A. P.

SOUTHEND.—SEANCE HALL, BROADWAY.—On Sunday last Mr. Rundle, under control, gave an interesting address on 'Work in the Spirit World.'—A. J.

SOUTHSEA.—LESSER VICTORIA HALL.—On Sunday last Mrs. L. Harvey gave interesting addresses and convincing clairvoyant descriptions.—J. W. M.

EXETER.—MARLBOROUGH HALL.—On Sunday last Mrs. Lethen spoke on 'The Unfolding of Consciousness,' and gave clairvoyant descriptions.—E. F.

WINCHESTER.—MASONIC HALL.—On Sunday last Mr. E. Walker, of Bournemouth, gave an inspiring address on 'What Spiritualism is and what it Means.'—A. W. H.

ROYDON.—SMALL PUBLIC HALL, GEORGE-STREET.—On Sunday last Mrs. M. Davies gave an eloquent address on 'The Larger Consciousness and Its Value,' and excellent clairvoyant descriptions.—O. B.

FINSBURY PARK.—19, STROUD GREEN-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Roffe and Mr. Jones gave addresses; Mrs. Baxter spoke and gave clairvoyant symbols and answered several questions.—A. W. J.

FULHAM.—COLVEY HALL, 25, FERNHURST-ROAD, MUNDER-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Abbott spoke on 'Standardised Life,' and Mrs. Imison gave clairvoyant auric readings.—R. P. H. A.

EXETER.—MARKET HALL, FORE-STREET.—On Sunday last, morning and evening, Mrs. Christie, of Torquay, gave addresses on 'Some Conceptions of God' and 'Dangers of Spiritualism,' and clairvoyant descriptions.—H. L.

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.—MILTON-STREET.—On Sunday last, morning and evening, Mr. E. W. Wallis gave highly appreciated addresses on 'Mediumistic and Psychical Development,' and 'The Spiritualism of the Bible.'—H. E. V.

READING.—NEW HALL, BLAGRAVE-STREET.—On Sunday evening last Mr. P. R. Street gave an address on 'The Powers of the Soul.' On the 14th inst. Mr. G. R. Symons and Mrs. Street gave clairvoyant descriptions.—A. H. C.

SOUTHPORT.—HAWKSHEAD HALL.—On Sunday last Mr. Grindley delivered thoughtful addresses on 'God is Not Mocked' and 'The Great Interruption.' On Monday afternoon and evening Mrs. Dixon gave psychometric delineations.

MANOR PARK.—CORNER OF SHREWSBURY AND STRONEROADS, E.—On Sunday last Mr. R. Boddington gave an excellent address. On the 16th inst. Mrs. Imison gave clairvoyant descriptions in aid of the Shilling Fund. On the 17th Mr. Glennie spoke.—C. W. T.

PORTSMOUTH.—VICTORIA-ROAD, SOUTH.—On Sunday last, morning and evening, Mr. Hector Lacey delivered illuminating addresses on 'Consciousness and Divine Unfoldment' and 'Why Investigate Spiritualism?' and gave recognised clairvoyant descriptions.—G. McF.

BRADFORD.—TEMPERANCE HALL.—On Sunday morning last an address was given on 'The Gospel of Divine Humanity.' Clairvoyance by Mesdames Rothern and Moss. In the evening, opening of Yorkshire Union's Three Months' Mission; various speakers and replies to questions. Large audiences.—W. G.

BIRMINGHAM.—30, JOHN-STREET, VILLA CROSS, HANDSWORTH.—On Sunday last, morning and evening, Mr. Robert Davies delivered addresses on 'Live for Something' and 'God's Holy Angels,' and gave clairvoyant descriptions. On Saturday and Monday Mr. Davies gave psychometric readings.—D. L.

BOURNEMOUTH.—ASSEMBLY ROOMS, TOWN HALL AVENUE.—On Sunday last, morning and evening, Captain Greenaway spoke on 'Reincarnation' and 'Spiritual Man.' Mr. F. T. Blake and Mr. H. Mundy gave good clairvoyant descriptions. On the 17th inst. Mrs. Harvey gave an address and clairvoyant descriptions.

WALTHAMSTOW.—182, ST. JOHN'S-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Symons gave an inspirational address on 'The Vision of John at Patmos.'—J. A. N.

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