

20. March 1919

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe. "WHATSOEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!"—Paul

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

We have already made allusion to that beautiful little book, "The Wonders of the Saints," by the Rev. F. Fielding-Ould, with a sympathetic Introduction by Lady Glenconner. We commend it to those who are not unfamiliar with the lives of the Saints because the ancient thaumaturgy and that of modern mediumship are here gracefully set together, while the whole history of such wonders, saintly and unsaintly alike, is put to the same ethical touch; and we commend it also to readers whose knowledge of the "miraculous" in Church biography is not only slight but may be more or less warped by hereditary or instilled prejudice. Sceptics need not entertain a fear that the reverend author will overstrain their hospitality to belief: "It is admitted that many stories of saintly miracles are absurd," he says, and adds: "Some are immoral from modern points of view, while others are told with almost identical details of half-a-dozen people." In different parts of the book are similar critical expressions. It is little known amongst Protestants how severe, protracted and repeated are the official investigations prior to canonisation; a sort of "Devil's Advocate," called the Promoter of the Faith, in the final round of examination of claims to saintship, not less than fifty years after the death of the proposed saint, doing his best (or worst) to disallow the canonisation. Of higher value than the intellectual satisfaction it affords is the truly spiritual quality of this little volume that is so much fuller than its size suggests.

* * *

"Is it within the experience of any reader of LIGHT," writes H. H. E., "that communication can be obtained with those 'passed over' without the help of mediums, clairvoyants and clairaudients?" The reply is all communication with "the other side" has to be "mediated" in some form for the purposes of the physical life. If H. H. E. is himself clairvoyant or clairaudient he need not, on general principles, seek the aid of any third party, as his own psychical faculty will serve him as the intermediary required. If he has no psychic faculties capable of response to influences from the unseen world then he must seek the assistance of someone who has. This would apply even in the case of a departed friend with whom, in whose life on earth, H. H. E. was in thorough sympathy. But in many persons there is a sensitiveness or power of response which enables a departed friend to communicate along interior lines, with the result that the friend on earth may now and again feel an impression from or sense of the presence of the departed one. This is a kind of deep mediumship often possessed by those amongst whom séances and

phenomena are unknown, or disliked. What are known as "psychic communications" are really the "externalisations" of these more interior modes and are only necessary because most people live so much on the external side of things that they are practically deaf and blind to matters that do not come within the range of their senses. The "inarticulate language of the Spirit" is not for them. It has, like the "Talking Oak" in Tennyson, to "answer with a voice" before they can understand.

* * *

The preceding Note leads us to another question from Mr. Charles Williams, who is not unnaturally resentful of those persons who, while claiming to receive communications from the other shore, disdain and denounce "ordinary Spiritualistic phenomena." It is rather suggestive of the attitude of the superior literary person who looks with contempt on those humbler mortals who find pleasure in the work of minor poets and authors of low grade. However, it is very human to be exclusive and superfine in these matters, and really there is something to be said for this class. They have the sense of form in a high degree and find something offensive in the best things unless they are presented in the best possible shapes. They are numerous amongst the artists of all kinds. As Spiritualists, their feelings in a democratic gathering at a séance or homely public service are rather akin to those of the High Anglican at a Salvation Army meeting. The proceedings jar upon them; they cannot enter sympathetically into the fervent joys of the men of ruder nerve and coarser fibre. It is not given to all to be catholic and inclusive—"all things to all men," as the Apostle put it. Caste is often denounced, but it has its roots deep in Nature. All we can ask is that while the "birds of a feather" obey their natural instincts by flocking together, the various groups will refrain from pecking at one another. And that applies not only to the attitude of the higher grade to the lower one, but *vice versa*. It is for the higher to set the good example—*noblesse oblige*.

RESIGNATION OF SIR OLIVER LODGE.

The daily papers of the 28th ult. contained the news that on the previous day Sir Oliver Lodge announced at a meeting of the governors of the Birmingham University that he had decided to resign his position as Principal at the end of the present session.

The statement, we are told, came as a great surprise to his hearers, but Sir Oliver reminded them that he had passed the professorial age limit (he is in his sixty-eighth year). He intended, he added, to devote the remainder of his life to the problem of the ether of space in both its physical and psychical relations.

In the region of conjoint physics and psychology there was much work to be done, and in devoting himself to studies in which his special training might be useful he was hoping to be able to do better service than by continuing to hold a position which was more fit to be held by a younger man.

We rejoice to know that while he is still in possession of his full strength and intellectual vigour Sir Oliver is going to devote a large portion of his time to a branch of research in which this journal is especially interested, and we trust that his patient study and investigation will go far towards clearing away some of the scientific doubts and perplexities regarding the conditions appertaining to disincarnate existence.

THE BIBLE AND PROPHECY.

By S. DE BRATH ("V.C. Desertis").

This little book* is "an attempt to show that every condition mentioned in Rev. xvi. 13-18 is in process of fulfilment," but being only a first part of the work, it deals, not with the Apocalypse, but with cuneiform inscriptions and the Higher Criticism, of which the author is a frank opponent.

The interest centres round the Book of Daniel, and an endeavour is made to prove its authenticity *as a whole*. It is questionable whether this is either good policy or sound scholarship. The Higher Criticism may be divided into two schools—that which ignores the modern psychic facts of clairaudience and prophecy, and that which does not. The former, in its desire to escape from a false supernaturalism, is apt to ignore the true; but its conclusions as to the composite nature of the book of Daniel are based on reasons too solid to be upset.

The Hebrew Bible is in three portions:—

- (1) The Law, corresponding to our books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Numbers.
- (2) The Prophets—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets which are included in one book.
- (3) The Sacred Writings—Psalms, Proverbs, Job, The Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Chronicles; and Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah (one book).

It will be seen, then, that Daniel was not placed among the prophets by the Massoretes who edited the Hebrew Bible; and there is good reason to suppose that the three main divisions above-mentioned were completed in that order, and not simultaneously. The book, therefore, is considered by scholars to be of late origin, and this is strengthened by several considerations:—

1. Ecclesiasticus, written about B.C. 180, makes no mention of Daniel in his list of Hebrew worthies.
2. The book is written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic; and it has in the Hebrew Bible three avowed additions—Susannah, Bel and the Dragon, and the Song of the Three Children. It has therefore obviously been very freely handled by the editors.
3. The mentions of Cyrus show that it could not have been written till after the Restoration.
4. There are many historical inaccuracies such as would occur by a writer living in an uncritical age long after the events.
5. The large space given, under the guise of prophecy, to the persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes is considered to fix the date of the book, *as it stands*, to 175-164 B.C.

It is, however, noticeable that Ezekiel, writing between the sixth and the thirtieth year of the Captivity (i.e., B.C. 581-557?), alludes twice to Daniel; and Christ Himself speaks of him as a prophet (Matt. xxiv. 11); and that there really is a nucleus of genuine prophecy unbedded in the book along with the quasi-prophecies whose full detail obviously refers to Antiochus, will appear from internal evidence.

In a book by Dr. Grattan Guinness, "The Approaching End of the Age," published about thirty years ago, the writer deduces:—

- (1) That the story of Nebuchadrezzar's Image whose head was of gold, his breast of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay, which was ground to dust by the stone cut out without hands which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth, refers to the whole course of human history and the Coming of the Kingdom of God.
- (2) That subsequent prophecies enlarge on this, and foretell that course of history up to and beyond the present time on the scale of a prophetic day to a year actual.
- (3) That the whole period is divisible on this scale into seven recognisable portions, dating from the founding of the Babylonian Era, B.C. 747, and the Captivities, B.C. 602.
- (4) That the years 1919, 1923, 1927 and 1934 would be crucial years in the rise of the New Era.

As this interpretation was made over thirty years ago it cannot have been prompted by recent events, and merits attention.

It is shown that the periods of prophecy—1260 and 2300 years—are real and exact astronomical cycles, as valid for the measurement of time as the solar day and year; and this, dating from a time when there were no astronomical instruments capable of accurate measurement, is a fact which goes far to establish true revelation.

Dr. Grattan Guinness's book, which is disfigured by much theological bias against Roman Catholicism and Mahomedanism, is now, I believe, out of print, but its conclusions have been embodied and supplemented in a new book, "Prophecy and the War in the Near East." The facts of the astronomical cycles throw a most interesting light on the "year-day" system of interpretation, which derives additional force from the concluding verses of the book of Daniel, that only in "the Time of the End" should these prophecies be understood.

* "The Sixth Vial," 78 pp. By the Rev. L. AROYLE, B.A., C.F., (Robert Scott).

Of course, there is no reason whatever to infer that any physical "end of the world" is implied; but it may reasonably be inferred to mean that we are now living in the end of an Age, or Era in its history.

Further, many attempts have been made to refer the prophecies to persons: Nero, Attila, Napoleon I., and the ex-Kaiser have shared with Mahomed and the Pope the doubtful honour of prophetic mention. "No prophecy," says St. Peter, "is of private (i.e., 'special' or 'personal') interpretation," and this agrees with the whole view of the Bible as dramatic history. According to this view, not persons, but principles are referred to, however much some personalities may embody the principles. The Antichrist (the Beast), is the principle of *materialism*; and the "False Prophet" is not Mahomed, nor the Pope, but is a principle for which it is difficult to find another name than *dogmatism*; it represents the mind which erects its own limited views into an orthodoxy and teaches them as absolute truth, condemning or even persecuting those who differ from it. These are they which "the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his presence" (II. Thess. ii. 8, R.V.); and if, as many think, this "Second Advent" should prove to be neither more nor less than the opening of men's psychic faculties to perceive the Presence that has been always there, that will put an end to the doctrinal literalisms which, calmly considered, carry their own refutation. Not till Materialism and Dogmatism are banished from the hearts of men will the causes of any real change come into operation, whatever Leagues of Nations may hope.

CREDULITY AND SPIRIT-COMMUNICATION.

It frequently happens that, when an investigator of eminent scientific or literary attainments, after many years of cautious and critical research, attests his belief in spirit-communication, some eloquent divine or distinguished man of science immediately makes use of the word "credulity." The critics appear in no wise to realise the misuse of language or the infringement of the laws of thought of which they thus render themselves guilty. It is true that a belief in the same proposition may arise as the result either of credulity or of profound and logical thought, but it is very necessary to distinguish between the two attitudes. An erudite and thoughtful divine, for example, after carefully weighing the respective arguments of Christian Apologetics and rationalistic criticism may adopt a belief in the Divinity of Christ, as also may an ignorant African negro on hearing for the first time what he regards as a beautiful story. Credulity might not be an unfair description of the mental attitude of the latter, but it would be a preposterous misuse of language to apply it to the former. Similarly, a person of uncritical mind who attends a doubtful public "séance" and, after witnessing weird performances of alleged spirit agency, immediately adopts and retains a belief in spirit-communication, may fairly be said to be animated by little else than a spirit of credulity. Such a case, however, is utterly different from that of a critical and competent investigator, who, after probing and testing the phenomena in the most stringent manner for many years, adopts the spiritistic hypothesis. It would be mere folly to stigmatise a belief so arrived at as the outcome of credulity, and this would still be the case, even though the spiritistic hypothesis should ultimately prove to be untenable. The "nebula hypothesis" of Laplace is now largely discredited by many modern astronomers, and it may be that Weismann's biological theory of the non-transmissibility of any after-acquired characteristics may ultimately prove to be unfounded. Yet no one could legitimately accuse these eminent men of credulity, merely because their conclusions might prove to have been erroneous.

In like manner, the mass of evidence on which the belief in spirit-communication is based is of so striking and varied a character (though largely unknown to the general public and the scientific world) that the spiritistic hypothesis remains a rational and logical deduction from the facts, and the charge of credulity merely indicates a mental failure to grasp the nature of the problem.

We can well imagine the great difficulty which Darwin would have experienced, if called upon to defend his doctrine of natural selection against a critic who knew next to nothing of natural history. Yet a similar difficulty is faced by the cautious psychological investigator who has to meet attacks on the spiritistic hypothesis by critics, scientific or otherwise, who have but the slightest acquaintance with the phenomena and evidence on which this hypothesis is based.

E. W. DUXBURY.

THERE can be no peace—social, personal, or international—until the spiritual basis of life is openly acknowledged: there is no solution for the ills of society save in the redemption of the spiritual. If I am spirit, then, too, my brothers are spirits; they are not mere "labour," nor "hands," nor the "mob"; they are individual spirits going the same road as all of us, and their wealth is not in pittance that they earn, but the love that they hold in their hearts.—"Self Training," by H. ERNEST HUNT.

THE LATE MR. J. J. MORSE.

THE FUNERAL.

The interment of the remains of the late editor of the "Two Worlds" took place on Monday, the 24th ult., at the Southern Cemetery, Manchester. The rites were attended by a great concourse of friends, including Mr. J. Knight, Mr. T. Tyrrell, Mr. J. T. Ward, Mr. M. Harwood, Mr. J. Jackson, Mr. A. W. Orr, Mr. S. M. S. Davies, Mr. H. Hobson, Mr. C. G. Rickards, Mrs. M. A. Stair, Mr. F. Hepworth, Mr. J. H. Meal, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Bentley, and other prominent workers in the movement. After the singing of a hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," an address was delivered by Mr. Ernest Oaten, who paid a glowing tribute to one who for fifty years had been a trusted servant of the spirit world, and whose work had been the means of bringing that world nearer for thousands of those dwelling in this one. He had laboured long and strenuously for the cause he served, and now that he had laid aside the worn-out material form he had passed to a life in which he would reap his exceeding rich reward for his labours on the earth. They could congratulate him on his ascension to those brighter realms, feeling only joy that he had gone to join the hosts of arisen workers who, like him, had been the servants of the spirit world. The ceremony terminated with the singing of "Blest be the tie that binds." Many beautiful floral offerings were sent by friends and sympathisers.

SOME TRIBUTES AND A SUGGESTION.

Mr. J. J. Vango, of 56, Talbot Road, Richmond Road, Bayswater, W.2, writes:—Our cause has sustained a great loss by the passing to the higher life of our old and respected friend, Mr. J. J. Morse, the editor of the "Two Worlds." I have been closely associated with him for the last thirty-six years, during which time I have personally known not only his fine public work, which will always stand out in the history of Modern Spiritualism, but a great deal of private work which has been done without fee or reward. For as long as I have known him his life has been self-sacrificing. I have told him for years that he was working far too hard, and that he ought to curtail his exertions, but his love for the cause he nobly represented was much too great for him to do so. I, with thousands of others all over the country, am deeply sorry that he was not destined to remain with us long enough to see the fiftieth anniversary of his labours, at which time he was to receive a testimonial from the hands of the Spiritualists' National Union. As Miss F. Morse, his daughter, is the only surviving member of the family, I would suggest that the testimonial be allowed to go on and be presented to her. Miss Morse has been her father's right hand for a long time, for his health has not been so good as the public were led to believe. She also nursed her mother during a long and trying illness. I am sure that nothing would give Mr. and Mrs. Morse more pleasure than for this suggestion to be carried out.

Mr. Thomas Blyton, of Babington Road, N.W., sends the following reminiscences:—Some readers of LIGHT will recall Mr. Morse's early training in an upper chamber of Mrs. Main's premises in Bethnal Green, to which the faithful in those days flocked in goodly numbers; and these meetings, in conjunction with those of Mr. Robert Cogman, were instrumental in the cultivation of Mr. Morse's trance mediumship until he placed himself under the tutelage of Mr. James Burns, at Southampton Row, W.C. A large number of Mr. Morse's trance addresses are to be found in old copies of the weekly journal "The Medium and Daybreak." While resident at 53, Sigdon Road, Hackney Downs, he presided over the closing destiny of the old Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, the meetings of which were well sustained for a considerable period during his tenure of office. During his sojourn there he installed his first printing press, composing, printing, and issuing a monthly sheet, and thus gaining a kind of foretaste of his future literary usefulness to the movement. His fraternal attitude towards all sections of the spiritualistic cause won for him an innumerable company of warm friends, a marked feature of his long career. In passing from our midst he has doubtlessly received a warm welcome from a host of spirit friends who preceded him, and he will continue his services on our behalf.

Miss E. P. Prentice (Sutton) writes: It was with profound regret that I read of the transit of Mr. Morse, to whose paper I have been a contributor for a number of years. The silver lining to this cloud is the meeting with his beloved wife in the beyond. I think his daughter should be the recipient of any money collected for the Memorial Fund. It would certainly be his wish, and many will be willing to assist by giving their mite.

INDIAN MAGIC AND THE ROPE TRICK.

The paragraphs we have quoted from the Press with regard to Indian magic, especially the famous rope trick, have drawn two communications on the subject from lady correspondents. B. M. writes:—

"In Jaccoliot's book he makes a point which I do not think has been mentioned—viz., that the Indian fakirs who perform these feats are a distinct grade of men acting for the Brahmanic temple worship. Some become teachers, others wait in the temples, others go out to continually arouse wonder and awe amongst the people. That is why no money bribes them, nor foreign patronage—but where they find earnestness and a desire to know they are free to offer their knowledge—as the fakir did in Jaccoliot's case."

For a very full account of the rope trick, accompanied by valuable comments, we are referred by our second correspondent, Mme. Isabelle de Steiger, to Madame Blavatsky's "Isis Unveiled," Vol. I., page 473 *et seq.* Mme. de Steiger herself accepts the solution offered by some witnesses of the trick that the whole audience is hypnotised. She says:—

"I remember a statement made some years ago by an officer which somewhat confirms this solution. He wished to join the sightseers at a certain hour at which they were to assemble to meet the fakir, but was detained, and when he did arrive he found them already arranged, so he resolved not to break the circle, but to remain outside, a quiet observer of what happened. Nothing at all happened, so far as he could see, but the spectators manifested such extraordinary emotion at something they apparently saw that he was filled with amazement and curiosity and on inquiry he was informed that they had just witnessed the rope trick. Further inquiries at the time and since caused him to come to the conclusion that they were all hypnotised and the whole scene was an illusion."

But while entertaining no doubt that this is the true explanation Mme. de Steiger regards such a feat as far beyond the capabilities of the ordinary skilled mesmerist:—

"It is one to be performed only by a philosopher who has reached without any doubt the power of controlling the mental vision of minds on a lower level of consciousness. And this power is of the rarest and highest. Madame Blavatsky's allusions to it are neither far-fetched nor untrue."

"It is quite within one's understanding that the very few fakirs who had achieved certain magical powers, as they would be called, would be held in both reverence and fear by their rulers, whether political or religious; and that these would hide such members of the community somewhat in the background, be very much opposed to their coming out of their usual retirement, and most averse to them 'trading' with their magical knowledge or allowing any exhibition in their own or any country without great caution and only on special and rare occasions."

With regard to the other feat to which reference has been made, the miraculous growth of the mango tree, Mrs. de Steiger reminds us that about three years ago she contributed an article to the "Occult Review" in the course of which she quoted some paragraphs from a very rare little book, the history of Mlle. de la Sarré, a mediaeval French lady occultist of high birth and position. This lady recounts in one of her letters the experiments she made with her teacher and cousin, Monsieur Olévier, with regard to his possession of the "universal fluid" by means of which a little pot plant, a tulip, grew and blossomed in a few hours. "It is," says Mme. de Steiger, "by the understanding and use of the 'Universal Fluid' that the magical process with the mango plant by the fakirs is supposed to be effected. Both the 'Universal Fluid' and the 'Elixir of Life' possess life-giving power and both are properties, unknown to scientists, inherent in the cosmic ether."

NEXT week we hope to publish an appreciation of the late Mr. J. J. Morse, from the pen of our Scottish contributor, the Rev. Stanley Gordon, who first met him in 1878, in which year Mr. Morse gave an address in Glasgow at the Trongate Hall.

LIKE the fat boy in "Pickwick," the clever lady who writes under the pseudonym of Frank Hamel is evidently bent on making our flesh creep. We have no difficulty in accepting the characters in "The Luminous Pearl" (Grafton and Co., 6/- net)—the real, human characters, that is—as genuine portraits of men and women: they are natural and life-like; but the story itself, which is run through with the breathless rapidity of a cinema film, is an odd mixture of the natural and the grotesque; the most ordinary incidents of everyday life, as most ordinary mortals are acquainted with it, alternating with a queer, incredible phantasmagoria of horrors, in which a beautiful, soulless enchantress, who is sometimes woman and sometimes fox, plays, with other similar creatures, a leading part. The why and wherefore of everything that happens we were unable to fathom, but it was satisfactory to find that no powers of ill, however fearsome and blood-curdling in their manifestation, can in the end prevent true love from coming into its own. This, at least, can be said for the story—that once begun, it is not easy to put it down till finished.

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"SPIRITUALISM, IGNORANCE AND RESPECTABILITY."

In the December issue of the Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, Professor Hyslop indulges, under the above title, in some plain speaking regarding both Spiritualism and its critics.

He begins by observing that he has received perhaps hundreds of letters from people who, having protested that they are not Spiritualists, at once proceed to narrate experiences "which are exactly the same as those on which Spiritualists base their right to name their creed." In short, as he shows in some remarks on church membership, the question is one of respectability, and he notes that "respectability is not limited to external matters. It is quite as much associated with intellectual beliefs and attitudes, and as a consequence influences many people towards their neighbours as much as dress or other manners."

Spiritualists, the Professor points out, have made no attempt to conciliate these feelings. He does not criticise them for this, but he sees that "it is a fact which has operated against any general acceptance of their creed." They "have kept aloof from the organised systems of respectability and fought or antagonised them without compromise." Now the established and organised religious bodies always or usually attract to themselves the respectable elements of the community, and that ensures "the cultivation of forms that do not offend taste." Later in the article Professor Hyslop makes a definite charge:—

The Spiritualists have been slow to recognise the real cause of their failure to conquer the world. They have sacrificed science, dignity and æsthetics to a shibboleth much as have some other religious denominations, and though they have not lost the fundamental claim to experimental proof of survival after death, they have forfeited the allegiance of all who want to see dignity, real science and intelligent treatment of facts the primary business of respectable people. It is quite possible that æsthetic considerations would have weighed less in the opinions or feelings of the public, had the Spiritualists protected themselves against the jibes and ridicule of the conjurer and the scientific man. But they have taken care to bring down upon themselves the unmitigated contempt of the one class that should have no place in the study of the phenomena and of the other that has the sole right to pass judgment upon them.

Dr. Hyslop has several other severe things to say. We take the following amongst them: "If the Spiritualists had had any intelligence they would never have allowed the term Spiritualism to lose its high philosophical significance as the proper antithesis to Materialism. If they had realised that only severe critical thought and investigation would be their salvation they would never have depended on the raps and knockings of the Fox sisters for their 'religion.'"

Spiritualists, says the Professor, should have taken up the scientific method and forced the fight with Materialism in a scientific manner. As it is, "they have lost the initiative and chosen to remain in the limbo of dark séances and indiscriminating performances which carry no weight with any intelligent man. I say nothing of the non-evidential and inspirational stuff on which they place the highest value." "They worship twaddle as if it were a revelation of the highest order of knowledge."

After this outburst, the Professor, with scientific impartiality, turns on the opposition, dealing his first blow at the critic who sneers at the Spiritualists but who is himself usually ignorant and snobbish.

But at this point we may break off, and turn to consider briefly some of Professor Hyslop's points.

First, then, we do not forget that the Professor is writing in an American environment; America is a great nation, but it is still very young, and its primitive and crude energies are apparent in many other fields of thought than Spiritualism. It has been our hard lot for many years to have to read much of the literature of Spiritualism as presented in America—we say nothing of some of the "New Thought" and allied cults which flourish there in luxurious profusion. We prefer to say no more on the point than that side by side with much that is lofty and inspiring we have had to read some of the most maudlin nonsense that ever offended the eye of Reason.

As to Spiritualism in this country, the Professor's criticism touches us, but not so closely. Much that he says applies to the Spiritualism of thirty or forty years ago. To-day we have the spectacle of many thousands of people of education and refinement either in strong sympathy with us or actual adherents of the subject. But we have clearly seen that had the movement depended upon them in the first place, we should have been in sorry case. No, let us be honest, and honour those strong, rough souls, without any sense of art, literature, and the other refinements and niceties of life and conduct, who held the lines of advance for an unwelcome and unpopular truth. *They* stood in the front line; *they* fought in the trenches. We of to-day are reaping the benefits of their work. It is quite easy to pick holes in it. They did what the educated, the scientific, the critical and cultured not only did not do, but would never have dared to do. We of *LIGHT* have always recognised this, although we have never been able to see eye to eye with those to whom Spiritualism is a religion, and have several times protested against the idea of regarding the Spiritualistic movement as something that had its head and source in the Hydesville knockings and the Fox sisters. Why, it is only a few months ago that we gave an account of Arago, the French scientist, and his investigation of a case of physical mediumship in 1844—three years at least before the Fox sisters were heard of.

"Spiritualists," says our Professor, "have been slow to recognise the real cause of their failure to conquer the world." But when did Truth ever come as a world conqueror riding over all her enemies with all the resources of science, learning and intellectual skill at her back? Truth is usually championed by one poor man, often a rough one, against ten thousand far cleverer than he; she comes handicapped by every kind of obstacle and disability, having, as often as not, as hard a struggle against the stupidity of her champions as against the wit of her foes. No, the strategy and tactics of the Spirit are far other than those of man; they are sometimes the exact antithesis. It is only when we look back on the career of psychic science that we can understand a little of the true workings of the matter, and see how the very things that we supposed to tell most heavily against our movement at the time have proved later its means of strength and salvation. Its very defects have been used as a means of protection.

The Professor writes as a scientist, as always. But the purely scientific view is always a sectional one. Life is a larger thing: it takes in emotions and aspirations, and uses them to even more splendid effect. It was Science which presided over the Great War. But it was *not* Science which won it. It was the moral sense of Humanity.

Spiritualism for us, and we have said so many times before, is concerned solely with the reality of a Spiritual order of humanity and its interaction with the humanity of earth. It is so vast a truth that it can carry with it the most splendid attainments of religion, art, science and philosophy as well as the most absurd superstitions, the most besotted stupidity, the most crass ignorance and vulgarity. It carries them all lightly, and it will proceed to "conquer the world" in its own way.

THERE is a power in to-day to rival and recreate the beautiful yesterday.—EMERSON.

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL SERVICE.

A short time since I received through the Parish Church some vigorous pamphlets in support of the "Life and Liberty" movement of the Church of England. They explained very convincingly the need for release from Parliamentary control of religious questions, so that the Church might deal with the inequality of benefices, the removal of notoriously inefficient clergy, the revision of the Prayer-Book, and other matters. No. 9 of these pamphlets, "When the Church is Free," looks forward to great social activity—though why that should not come first is not very evident. It says, "The Church is commissioned to bring to bear on all phases and problems of life—political, social and economic—the Mind of Christ." "Excellent," I said. "Now we may hope for a real recovery of that influence whose loss Churchmen deplore: if the Church-people throw themselves heart and soul into this we shall soon see the spiritual influence regained."

Our parish contains a large number of well-to-do members in its residential area, and also a large number of poor in mean streets much overcrowded. There is no Non-conformist or Roman Catholic chapel. A communal kitchen would be a great boon to some of the hard-worked women; it would be a training school for girls and young wives; it would improve the feeding; it would reduce the cost of living; it would give more leisure and much-needed rest. Or a free library, with arrangements for lantern and cinema lectures and a restaurant bar after the pattern of the Y.M.C.A. and a billiard room, would make a social club where men and women could spend pleasant evenings in a social atmosphere.

Another scheme has been proposed—for a War Memorial, to take the form of a village institute more or less on the above lines with a recreation-ground. This latter is especially needed, the children have no play-ground but the street. The aim is to give the large number of the artisan class the opportunity of social life, interesting lectures, and the employment of their increased leisure in healthy and congenial ways. "Now," I thought, "here is the opportunity of showing, in one place at least, that we Church-people mean what we say and do not deal in nebulous phrases." It was therefore with much pleasure that I heard that a parish meeting was to be called to decide on the form of a War Memorial.

The proceedings were opened with a prayer for the guidance of the Holy Ghost. It soon appeared, however, that the decision of the Holy Ghost had been already anticipated: the Church Council had decided on a Lady-chapel to be added to the church, and on an enlarged vestry; they had the architect's plans ready and the estimate—£2,500 in round figures, being £600 for the memorial chapel, £1,500 for the vestry, and £400 for removing and re-erecting the organ. The meeting was really called to endorse the decision and to register subscriptions. Some proposals for more vigorous aid to the social scheme were set aside, though it was pointed out that money given for the one scheme would probably be lost to the other. The meeting, in which the artisan element was very slightly, if at all, represented, supported the church plan. When the result was reported in the mean streets, the comment was made, "The gentry don't look beyond themselves."

The criticism seems to me just.

The Church has thrown away one opportunity for leadership after another. The clericals opposed the geologists, they hounded Colenso out of the Church, they anathematized Darwin, they abused the Higher Criticism and Biblical research, they still, as a body, refer the psychic facts to the Devil or to illusion: they preached contentment to men on the border-line of the submerged tenth. There are now offered to them two opportunities—one is the reception and study of those psychic facts and guidance into a true interpretation of them—a real and immediate "resurrection" in which each soul really reaps as it has sown; the other is true social service. The chaplains have done splendid work in the war; can this work not be continued in peace?

The temple of God is not made with hands, but of flesh and blood, and no beautification of the mere edifices is "to the glory of God" while brothers and sisters have no light in their lives. As every ounce of effort was required to win the war, so every shilling is required to win internal peace. Here the opportunity has been partially thrown away; will it be so generally? Will Lady-chapels and altars and reredoses and suchlike ecclesiastical decorations be adopted as War Memorials, or will the Church exhort the congregations to spare neither money nor work to provide the mechanism of social progress without which the spirit cannot act? Who can say? But this is certain: the Mind of Christ, who said "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of these least ye have done it unto Me" would most certainly set the social service far before everything else. If the artisan class, which now passes religion by, were to see that Mind animating the whole Church, there would very shortly be no cause to lament loss of influence. If it is not seen, the verdict will be, "The gentry don't look beyond themselves"; and the verdict will have consequences.

Civilisation might be defined as that state of life in which all citizens are freed from the incessant struggle for mere subsistence which leaves neither time nor energy for development towards the true evolutionary goal of the soul. Till

the better life is possible for all honest workers we are not a truly civilised nation. The Church claims a mission of civilisation in the highest sense. Let her take the means—"Faith without works is dead."

V. C. D.

THE BORDERLAND OF MATTER.

A NEW CONQUEST FOR SCIENCE.

By E. E. CAMPION.

There is more than one borderland. There is a borderland of war. A stream of brave souls has flowed over it. But there is another borderland. Scientists stand near it. The most notable advance leading to the very frontier of matter was identified with the Crookes tube and radium. The emanation from a vacuum tube may be the first flight across the scientific borderland—between matter and what lies beyond it.

Chemical affinity causes electricity to flow in a Voltaic cell. The resulting current circuiting through water produces electrolysis or a loosening of chemical affinities between oxygen and hydrogen. If it is true that the two processes are the reverse of each other we would not be surprised to learn of other antitheses. If one such should be to bear out in the laboratory the theory that energy and matter are convertible and fundamentally the same or simply two aspects of the same, the relations between life and matter and between soul and body would become comprehensible.

Those who are not actually experimenting, as the routine of their life and thought, can only speak on purely scientific subjects with diffidence. The writer sets the highest value on first-hand knowledge. He would, however, from the standpoint of the pupil, ask the scientific readers of *LIGHT* one question which may have an important bearing upon the relation subsisting between energy and matter. It is this. When cathode rays are deflected and become Röntgen rays, has the ion changed its character? From being a part of an atom does it become pulsation? If this were so the borderline between material and force would seem indicated. Should it be placed beyond doubt that matter has become changed into ether pulsation the proposition that ether pulsation may be changed into matter would seem but the reversal of a natural process, though very different conditions might be necessary. Our knowledge of matter is progressing. The more one examines the facts the nearer one comes to the realisation that the so-called materialist only need be thorough-going enough to blossom forth into a first-class Spiritist. Stagnation and prejudice—two names for one thing—are the enemies.

There is reason to believe that all scientists would not assent to Röntgen rays being described as pulsations in the ether. If they are not of this nature, what then are they? If the rays are not pulsations, neither are they the original ion, for their character has changed. If they are neither cathode rays, ions, nor pulsations, are they simply a flight of the constituent parts of the ion? That is, just as particles called ions make up an atom, is the atom not only disintegrated into its electrical constituents, but are these ions likewise susceptible of further disintegration? And is that disintegration accompanied by, or does it actually result in, a new form of matter composed of ion fractions? The ion is apparently the last analysis of matter, but is it the last analysis of *all matter*? Who shall say that there is not in Nature a principle or substance which, though it may have escaped detection, yet does exist, its properties and potentialities being unrecognised? Electricity was working its wonders since the world began, and yet was practically unknown till the time of the pioneers of the science. A finer sort of matter may exist as the vehicle of psychic phenomena. "The baseless fabric of a dream" may turn out to be perfectly material, though the matter of which the vision is composed does not react to such tests as we can apply.

If it be proved that matter and force are one, and that that dual unity may explain the possibility of a hidden universe only open to exploration by thought or by the introduction of the change called death, the ground upon which Spiritualists stand should be as firm as faith (which is thought) and as assured as the fact that the sun shines. Ultimately it may be proved by a scientific explanation simple enough to be taught in elementary schools.

The spiritual man will adopt a spiritual scale of values, often at variance with that of the world at large, and he will look at things not so much in their phenomenal aspect as in the light of their eternal values. By so doing he will lose nothing of the best that this present world can give; he will be no ascetic or kill-joy, but simply a sane, poised, and broad-minded individual; he will be happier far than those who mistake excitement or entertainment and luxury for happiness, for he knows that the kingdom of the heart holds within itself its heaven and its hell, and that it is not in places above or below that these are situated, but in the state within.—"Self Training," by H. ERNEST HUNT.

RECONSTRUCTION AND THE CHURCHES.

By H. A. DALLAS.

All loyal members of the Church will heartily endorse Mr. Wake Cook's desire that the Church may "keep abreast with the new order of things" and "following Christ's own example" may transcend past teachings, "enriching them with all the wondrous revelations that have been pouring from the Eternal Fount," but certain sentences in his article surprised me and seem to call for some comment.

It surprised me that he should think that the preaching of endless torments is still at all typical of the teachings given in the pulpit; I have not heard this preached for very many years, and I have been a regular attendant at various churches. But what surprised me more was this sentence: "The doctrine of eternal torments preached by Christ Himself stands unrepealed in the New Testament. . . . Think of these brave fellows, Christ-like, making the supreme sacrifice of laying down their lives for the right, and that others might be saved from hell-like horrors, being possibly damned to all eternity because they have not met the requirements formulated by the Church."

Is it possible that he can think that there is anything in Christ's teaching or in the New Testament to support such a notion? A little further on he says it is a notion "inconsistent with the whole spirit of Christianity which is the fairest flower of human aspiration."

He who said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend," and who taught that men will be judged, not by opinions but by their conduct towards one another (see St. Matthew xxv. 31-46), never said anything to justify the notion which Mr. Wake Cook speaks of with such just horror.

That mankind will "reap what it sows," that wicked doers will be punished, is of course taught in the New Testament, and indeed it forms a part of the teachings of all great religions, and the human conscience demands it, but the idea that Christ proclaimed "endless torments" even for the wicked seems to rest on a misapprehension of the significance of the words He used. In the passage in St. Matthew to which I have referred He says, "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

The Master's words have been much misunderstood, they have been interpreted in a sense contrary to "the whole spirit" of His teaching (surely this should be considered unjustifiable in the case of any teacher or writer; phrases should be interpreted in the light of the general teaching and not as isolated sentences). Dean Farrar showed clearly in his valuable books that "eternal" is not a word synonymous with "endless" and that "no Jew ever understood by 'Gehenna' a punishment from which none who incurred it would escape; and therefore that our Lord—unless He expressly explained that He was using the word 'Gehenna' is a new sense—could not possibly have attached to it the attribute of necessary endlessness." (See "Mercy and Judgment," p. 183.)

There are Greek words which denote endlessness but "eternal" is not one of them. Moreover, when Christ speaks in this parable of eternal punishment, He uses a word which signifies remedial punishment, not vengeance; to express this another Greek word would have been used. The editor of "The Jewish Chronicle" says: "Endless torments has never been taught by the Rabbis as a doctrine of the Jewish Church" ("Mercy and Judgment," p. 206). It is therefore entirely improbable that Christ should have taught this doctrine. When He speaks of the worm that dies not and the fire that is not quenched He was quoting from the prophets, the classics of His day (Isaiah lxvi. 24; Ezek. xx. 47; Jeremiah xvii. 27, xxi. 12), and when we refer to the sources of these phrases we see that the fire that should not be quenched was used as a parable of the judgment on Jerusalem which obviously could not continue for ever, since the prophet held out hopes of future restoration. There is, however, a sense in which we may be thankful that there is a Divine fire of judgment which man cannot quench, which will burn until it has purified the dross out of the hearts of men. Both worm and fire are purifying agents and therefore Christ says, "Every man shall be salted with fire" (the fire acting not only as a destroying, but as a purifying agent).

One could say much more on this matter, but this must suffice.

Has any great Teacher been so misunderstood as He who came to show us Love as the true religion for mankind?

There is one other point. Mr. Wake Cook quotes the words, "I am not come to send peace, but a sword," as if they were inconsistent with the angelic song "Peace on earth" and the title "Prince of Peace." But "the Prince of Peace" was only facing and stating a fact which all experience confirms, namely that he who raises the standard against wrong is sure to meet with opposition, that to be faithful involves contest and struggle, and often persecution.

VAMPIRES: FABLE AND FACT.

By CROM. H. WARREN.

The conception of vampires, old as the Babylons, and mentioned by Horace two thousand years ago, is not without its significance, apart from its more modern forms, of werewolves, *revenants*, ghouls, and strigæ; and the epidemic of 1730 in Hungary.

The inner meaning of vampirism has a greater significance for present-day life. The purely visual side of this concept has almost vanished, but the inception which probably gave it original birth in the reasoning mind of an age-old unconscious psychologist has developed, and can be now more properly understood. Vampirism to-day is of a totally different, more insidious, and sometimes quite unconscious, nature, but none the less real—and like all present-day under-currents, ignored, or practically unthought of, by a mercenary, materialistic world.

We are beginning to realise at last that man is more than a mere self-contained machine to be exploited by the earth's favoured ones for their own gains; man is a very sensitive instrument—receiver and transmitter combined. His body is a housing for intelligent forces, more subtle than the muscles, his brain is the instrument for receiving cosmic impressions, the real fuel, and is the medium to his muscles. Each one of us lives on the other, apart from materiality. One of these insidious man-forces has already been partially formulated—thought transference—but its tangible resultants have not been fully considered. Thought acts on brain, brain acts on brain, through unconscious intangible channels. Each human entity is a store-house for energy, coming in, going out, the residue absorbed by itself for its daily functions.

Some give out more energy than they receive from others; some (veritable absorbers) suck in from others more than their share, which, added to their own low-grade store, keeps them going; and others, consciously or otherwise, derive all their apparent energy this way—dangerous condensers, they are generally abnormalities, in size and otherwise, who have this terrible power of sucking vitality out of others—it may be an unconscious power, it may pass unnoticed in a none too observant world, but sometimes it is realised by those who possess it, and used as a means of earth-advancement. Nerve-suckers, brain-suckers, life-suckers, absorbers of all adjacent energy which can be used for their own ends, these creatures—and they do exist—are the true vampires—the ghouls of human nature.

I have met one or two of these energy-absorbers and watched their lives; those I have met were often ignorant, conceited and undersized—compelling in business, arrogant in home life. To a well-organised community, apart from their self-interest and possibly the interest of those using them, they are a serious danger by redistributing energy in a way detrimental to the general good; and a more enlightened world with eyes well open to the possibilities of psychological action would curb their energies, or at least try to neutralise their selfish activities.

Of course adequate control of these vampires can come about in no other way than by public opinion. No human law can reach such subtle, insidious forces, more dangerous than actual offences against the law. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." One can guard against a man who is coming at you with a knife, but there is no protection against contact with suppressed smallpox.

These, the real vampires, are probably what some long forgotten philosopher meant in his discourses, and what an ignorant world cloaked in a more tangible form—the world wants something to see and handle before it believes. The mind may eventually come into its own, who knows?

Study human nature, and vampirism will be found permeating all communities, high and low; it is the key to abnormalities, the fuel behind conceit.

SIR OLIVER LODGE ON ETHER AND MATTER.

On Friday, the 28th ult., at the Royal Institution, Sir Oliver Lodge gave an address on the electrical theory of matter. He spoke of spatial ether and the difficulties of ascertaining either the speed or direction of the heavenly bodies through space—a fact which had led to the doctrine of Relativity of all motion. In the last portion of his address he referred to various theories now under discussion regarding the constitution of the atom. Not only was matter extremely porous, but possibly the atom had no solidity. He suggested that the difference in the chemical elements lay in the number of positive electrons forming the nucleus of an atom and the number of negative electrons revolving about the nucleus. This theory closely corresponded with the elementary atomic weights and pointed to the possibility of adding only four new elements to our present list. An immense amount of knowledge on the subject was accumulating in the meantime on the structure of the atom and its relation to ether. We might speak of the astronomy of an atom and the astronomy of the solar system in their many points of resemblance.

W. E. B.

THE PRESS AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

The interest manifested in our subject in the press continues unabated. The report of the Cardiff séance alluded to in last week's "Notes by the Way" has been followed by an account in the "Star" of the 26th ult. of a private sitting held in a small room in a cottage in Merthyr, and attended by a representative of the "Evening Express" of that town (who furnishes the description and who is stated to have been a confirmed sceptic), and by five other persons. The medium, a young woman, was securely roped to her chair, and the reporter declares that there were no trick knots. When the light was put out the usual physical phenomena followed. A musical box was wound up and played, a host of small objects were thrown about the room, bells were jingled, and the visitor felt the fingers of a small hand, evidently the hand of a child, pass from his knee up to his face, tap his temple and comb his hair. When the candle was again lit the medium was discovered still securely bound as before. The newspaper representative wisely offers no explanation, contenting himself with affirming that "the actual occurrence of the phenomena was unquestionable."

This reticent attitude is not shared by Mr. Neville Maskelyne or by "Truth." They know how these things are done! In the "Daily Mail" of the 26th ult. Mr. Maskelyne informs the readers of that paper that it is exceedingly difficult for anyone who has not learned something about knots to tie up a man in such a way that he cannot get free, and "Truth" wants to know what the heads of the Cardiff police present at the séance with the brothers Thomas were about not to have turned on their lanterns at the critical moment. The suggestion in both cases clearly is that the medium escaped from his bonds, but no attempt is made to explain how he performed the much more wonderful feat of getting into them again. Collier and cottage girl are credited with conjuring abilities more than rivaling those of the trained prestidigitator. Mr. Maskelyne gives two séance incidents told him by his father—one of how the latter very nearly mistook a piece of sheet lead cut into the shape of a hand for the medium's hand of flesh and blood laid on his arm, and the other of how a whole company of people were so absent-minded that it did not occur to one of them as surprising or worthy of remark that the door of the room which was locked by Mr. Stead at the beginning of the séance was found to be unlocked at the end. These mental marvels put mere physical phenomena in the shade.

An advertisement by a lady "possessing unusual powers," who undertakes to free haunted buildings from the disturbing influences which affect them, gives occasion for some perfectly legitimate fun-poking by a writer in a recent issue of the "Star," in the course of which he offers suggestions, quite in the style of Gilbert's "John Wellington Wells" ("number seventy, Simmery Axe"), as to how the professional ghost-layer can best bring his or her claims to public notice. The more this kind of thing is held up to ridicule the better.

One is impressed by the patience, as well as effectiveness, with which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle deals with his critics. Replying in the "Evening News" of the 28th ult. to Mr. Ben Nathan, the well-known actor, who on the eve of undergoing a critical operation inquired what comfort belief in Spiritualism could afford to the soldier going into battle or to persons like himself, Sir Arthur, after expressing a kindly hope that Mr. Nathan had come through his ordeal all well, writes:—

"I can assure him that the test he has chosen about Spiritualism is the one which it can best bear. I have had a letter from one officer who had already won the Military Cross saying that the front trench had been a different place to him since I had half-an-hour's talk with him. Another senior colonel remarked that he had absolutely lost all fear of death. It is, above all, the creed for the man who is 'going over the top,' for no true Spiritualist could possibly look at death save with pleasurable anticipation."

As to Mr. Nathan's objection to the "degrading idea" of those on the other side communicating with us by "beating drums and tambourines and rapping tables," Sir Arthur quietly informs him that he "will find other things than crude phenomena if he looks for them though they are a good and obvious starting-point for the materialist."

A revival of the old endeavour to explain the phenomena of Spiritualism by conjuring has drawn from Sir Arthur the following rejoinder: "This continuous reference to conjurers leads me to remind those who write letters to 'The Daily Mail' that Houdini, Bellachini, and Kellar, whose names may certainly bear comparison with any living rivals, all admitted that the spiritual phenomena were something beyond their art. They examined Home, Eglinton, and the best mediums of their time. The absurdity of the conjurer explanation becomes more manifest when one considers spirit photographs, clairvoyance, clairaudience, automatic writing, and all the other manifestations of forces outside ourselves. It is clear that whatever the explanation of them may be, it must be one single source from which they all flow. The spiritual explanation does cover them all. But what has conjuring to do with the clairvoyance which, in a single case which I have examined, has described correctly a large number of our dead soldiers, imparting great consolation to their parents? Read the Rev. W. Wynn's 'Rupert Lives,' and ask what conjuring has to do with that."

D. R.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: WHAT IS IT?

I have read with interest the letters, on page 60, relative to the meaning of the saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." As an occasional speaker on the Spiritualist platform I have more than once chosen the words as a text, believing them to afford strong support to our teaching. The question, "When shall these things be?" put to the Master, indicates that His questioners anticipated some startling, outward and visible event, which His reply, "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation," shows to have been an error. But the usual interpretation of the words that follow, "The kingdom of heaven is within you," has fostered an error quite as great, namely, that the kingdom of heaven is merely a "state" or "condition," and not a community of intelligent beings. It should be noted that the words were addressed to the Pharisees, whom Jesus likened to sepulchres, fair without but inwardly full of uncleanness. Thus, it would have been wholly incongruous to have said that the kingdom of heaven was "within" them. I think there can be little doubt that the word translated "within" is more correctly rendered "in your midst" (R.V.) or "among"—the kingdom was not "within" the individual, but "within" or "in the midst of" the community. This view is confirmed by the fact that the miracles of healing, etc., which accompanied the preaching of "the kingdom," are constantly referred to as attesting its *presence and activity*. In Luke x. 9-11 we find the injunction, "Into whatsoever city ye enter, heal the sick and say, the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you; but into whatsoever city ye enter and they receive you not, say, . . . notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Again in Luke xi. 20, Jesus is reported as saying, "If I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." Thus we find Jesus and His disciple pointing to the miracles as evidence of the presence of the kingdom just as Spiritualists do to-day. We thus see the identity of the gospel of the New Testament and the gospel of modern Spiritualism.

Of course, not all inhabitants of the "expanse" are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. There is another kingdom there; and citizenship in the heavenly kingdom implies a certain "spirit" or disposition, just as real citizenship in the British Empire does. Hence we may be said to "enter" the kingdom or to be "far from" it, according to the spirit we display.

J. STODDART.

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE.

The current issue of the "Strand Magazine" contains an interview with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle on "Life after Death," written by Hayden Church.

In the course of the interview Sir Arthur referred to the now well-known case of Mr. Richard Wilkinson and the evidential messages from his son, described in *LIGHT* of October 6th, 1917. He also gave some of his own experiences and told of the discovery of the lost Edgar Chapel, as described in Mr. F. Bligh Bond's "Gate of Remembrance." One of his remarks, as recorded by the interviewer, is worth quoting: "I may lead a movement, but there is something ahead which is leading me."

From a recent letter from Sir Arthur we gather that he has a full programme of activities for the present year and is likely to give several addresses in London in the autumn but of these matters particulars will appear in due time.

IS THE HOUR OF DEATH PRE-DETERMINED?—Mr. R. B. Sargeant writes: Referring to the above question, I should like to ask Mr. Fielding-Ould how he accounts for the accidents on a large scale, such as a shipwreck drowning hundreds of beings, a big railway disaster, or an earthquake, which sometimes has sent to the spirit world thousands of earth-clad beings within a few minutes. Does he think it possible that the pre-ordained moment has come for *all* the victims? Is it reasonable to believe that, say, five hundred people, of all ages and states, whose hour has come, arrange in ignorance to voyage by a certain ship, on a certain day, from a certain port?

TRANSITION OF A VETERAN.—Mr. Ernest Meads writes:—Known to many of us, who esteemed him highly, Robert J. Barker (of Finchley Road, N.W.) passed away on February 25th, at the age of 84. A man of exceptional vitality and devoted to sport in early life, Mr. Barker became an ardent Spiritualist about fifteen years ago, as the result of conversations with myself, and finally of a sitting with Mr. A. Vout Peters, on which occasion his mother controlled the medium. Through the mediumship of Robert Bournsnel, to whom he was sincerely attached, he got photographs of most of the members of his family, who had gone before, including his mother; and himself became a medium of exceptional development, his intense Christian faith making him the channel for some of the highest and most helpful influences. The funeral took place last Saturday, at Hendon Park Cemetery, when his mortal remains were laid near to those of his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Everitt, for whom he had a profound admiration and respect."

THE CONSOLATIONS OF FAITH.

DR. PATERSON-SMYTH AND DR. F. B. MEYER ON THE
HEREAFTER.

Two books have recently been published, the teachings in which are based entirely on interpretations of New Testament texts—texts from which in many cases quite opposite deductions have been made in the past, and among certain narrow sects are still made. That is not to say that we in the least discredit the newer readings (we have no doubt that they are the true ones), but we are inclined to think that the widening thought of these latter days is due far less to a more correct rendering of inspired texts than to the inspiration of the human heart—that which Tennyson calls “the likeliest God within the soul”—which will not rest satisfied with the old God-dishonoured dogmas. So we find Dr. J. Paterson-Smyth in his deeply interesting work, “The Gospel of the Hereafter” (Hodder and Stoughton, 2/6 net), quoting Bible authority for the statement that no man has ever yet been finally judged: no man has ever yet gone to heaven, no man ever yet gone to hell: but when he proceeds to discuss the inferences to be drawn therefrom he comes back in his perplexity to his own sense of the Divine love and justice: “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” It seems a little inconsistent that after making the discovery alluded to he should later tell us that he has known men who were in hell here, and sweet unselfish lives that are in heaven here. But of course in this case he is speaking from experience and not from texts. The picture of heaven and hell as two vast furnished rooms kept waiting tenantless through thousands of years is certainly an odd one, and one would imagine that there was little need for a formal judgment in the very far distant future when the soul has already been judging itself for ages, experiencing the joy of progress on the one hand, or the misery of slow moral and spiritual deterioration on the other. But we are grateful for the many passages of beauty and insight with which the book abounds. We meet much the same lines of thought in Dr. F. B. Meyer’s “Where are the Dead?” (National Free Church Council, 1/6 net). Death, Dr. Meyer tells us, is the gate to fuller life; he is assured that the love of the departed enfolds us still in its warm embrace. But, after giving, on the authority of Dr. J. M. Neale, a story of spirit guardianship almost word for word identical with that narrated of Ruskin in our issue of October 12th, 1918 (p. 321), he declines to see in such cases evidence of any law:—

“They only prove that under exceptional circumstances, known to our Lord, He will commission one of the blessed to return to the earth-sphere on a defined errand of mercy.

But all direct communication with them, either by the exercise of psychical power or through the medium of another, is absolutely prohibited. For the most part the lower ranks of disembodied spirits are the only type that linger within the call of earth. All the nobler ones gather nearer to the throne of God.”

From this we may understand that thought has no relation to spiritual presence or its manifestations, that the “throne of God” is necessarily far removed from this poor earth—probably somewhere in the Milky Way—and that bodies of flesh and blood never can be temples of the Holy Ghost, but only of that carnal mind which is at enmity with God. Of course Dr. Meyer does not believe this, but why talk as if he did, or as if the Master whom he reverences were some earthly potentate, who occasionally issues special permits to His subjects to exchange visits with friends and relatives in other parts of His realm—even for a mother to shield her children from an instant peril? Why imagine any other permit than that of sympathy and love, the same authority by which Dr. Meyer holds himself free to give his message of comfort and assurance to those “on whom the anguish of the war lies heavily”? Love will always take risks—and we will not deny that there are risks in this case even as there are risks in crossing the Atlantic—but to the pure at heart and sound of head they are not so great as Dr. Meyer would have us believe.

MR. H. P. RABBICH, of “The Kraal,” Paignton, Devon, president of the Paignton Spiritualist Society, writes us that a recent letter of his to the “Daily Mail” has brought him such a flood of correspondence from all parts of England and Scotland that he finds it impossible to deal with it all. He will be very grateful to any Spiritualists in the following towns who will write him giving him permission to put them in touch with one or more of his correspondents who live in their respective neighbourhoods:—Twyford, Torrington (Devon), Mapperley Plains (Notts), Bromley (Kent), Newquay (Cornwall), Derby, Swansea, Bideford, Exmouth, Mansfield, Salisbury, Ironbridge (Salop).

LITTLE ILFORD.—The Society of Christian Spiritualists, Little Ilford, held their annual general meeting on the 25th ult. The balance sheet showed that the society is in a good financial position. The following officers were elected:—President, Mr. Watson; vice-presidents, Mr. Tillett and Miss Stephens; secretary, Mrs. Marriott; assistant secretary, Miss George; organist and treasurer, Mrs. Watson; Union delegate, Mrs. Jamrach; Lyceum conductor, Mr. Radford; assistant conductor, Miss George; Lyceum secretary, Miss Tillett; committee, Mrs. Hewing, Mrs. Tutt, Mrs. Hodges, Mrs. Robertson, Mr. Marriott, Miss Pattenden.

“TO HIS OWN PLACE.”

Conceive a person thrust by circumstances into a position for which he is unfitted, a sporting squire consecrated to a Diocesan See, a practical business man made Poet Laureate or, to take a more likely example, some woman with no particular philanthropic or social genius who should as the wife of a politician or a parish priest find herself drawn into a thousand uncongenial activities. They might be excellent people in every way, but of a temperament quite unsuited to their environment, “fish out of water,” “square pegs in round holes,” as we say. Such people might force themselves to work in accordance with what was expected of them in a brave conscientiousness and from a cold sense of duty. But who could exaggerate the secret unhappiness of such a lot, the panting of the soul in the rarefied air, the continual revolt and consequent self-reproach, the heroic striving to play a part which it sees and approves but cannot feel!

So the uneducated man, taken from a mean street, would feel if compelled to associate with a superior class whose manners, habits of thought and more refined traditions clashed at every turn with his own personality.

There can only be ease where there is a more or less perfect adjustment; a man can only be himself among his equals, among those in whom he recognises some measure of affinity and likeness to himself. There can be no heaven for us above that level for which we are fitted. If the average man, or for that matter the most advanced, were, when he died, to find himself transported to the unimagined dwelling-place of archangels, his pains would equal those of hell itself, and he would fall upon his knees and implore a merciful God to banish him from the radius of a light which scorched and tortured his unresponsive spirit.

It is, after all, a merciful decree which sends each to his own place. There he will “find his level,” there he will realise for the first time, perhaps with disappointment and surprise, exactly what he is. He will see his face reflected in his surroundings and the little measure of his own personality written on every side. Presently a mental vision will arise of what he might have been and of what he still may be, and if he is wise he will set himself to struggle towards that higher possibility. But as he slowly and patiently approaches his ideal the landscape will melt and change around him, and, as in the magic rays of the golden sunset, every common thing will begin to glow with a new beauty. In this transformation of his surroundings, which is due solely to his own enhanced faculty of vision, the man will recognise the record of his own advance.

F. FIELDING-OULD.

“THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS.”

(REPRINTED FROM “LIGHT” OF MARCH 9TH, 1889.)

SUDDEN DECEASE OF THE REV. J. G. WOOD, F.L.S.—We regret to record the decease of the Rev. John George Wood, F.L.S., the well-known naturalist. He died with great suddenness on Sunday night, at Ivy Cottage, Coventry, the house of his old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bray. Mr. Wood was a Spiritualist of much and varied experience, and his knowledge dated from the earliest days of the movement. He was born in 1827, and graduated at Merton College, Oxford. He was best known by his many works on natural history, especially his “Common Objects of the Sea Shore,” and his “Homes without Hands.” The bare enumeration of his works fills more than one-third of a closely printed long column in Crockford’s “Clerical Directory.”

A SAINT is simply one in whom more truly God is mirrored than in other men. “O God, wonderful art Thou in Thy Saints.” To admire and love the Saints, as St. Francis pointed out, is a very sorry substitute for imitating them; but it is the first step in that direction, whereas not to love and reverence them is to confess oneself blind on one side of our nature, as who should say, “I do not care for music,” or “I do not like children.”—“The Wonders of the Saints,” by F. Fielding-Ould, M.A.

THE HOME CIRCLE.—In my opinion the home circle is the place at which one should attempt to communicate with one’s nearest and dearest. A good home circle meeting for an hour or an hour and a half once a week, and composed only of the members of one’s own family or of close friends, is in the end productive of more satisfactory personal results than an eternal hunt after advanced professional psychics. Certainly everyone should take opportunities for witnessing advanced phases of phenomena, but no reliance should be placed on such occasional exhibitions for anything in the way of personal communion with particular persons in the Beyond. Materialisation, direct voice, etc., are very useful in bringing home to one’s mind the reality of the next life, but the harmonious home circle with its table-tilting, bits of clairvoyance, clairaudience, and so on, and minus the professional medium, is the best means of getting into touch, even though it may be only in a fitful way, with one’s own relatives.—Dr. W. J. Crawford in “Hints and Observations.”

TO-MORROW'S SOCIETY MEETINGS.

These notices are confined to announcements of meetings on the coming Sunday, with the addition only of other engagements in the same week. They are charged at the rate of 1s. for two lines (including the name of the society) and 6d. for every additional line.

Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour-street, W. 1.—6.30, Mr. Robert King. March 16th, Mr. A. Vout Peters.

The London Spiritual Mission, 13, Pembroke-place, W. 2.—11, Mr. Ernest Meads; 6.30, Mr. Percy Beard. Wednesday, March 12th, at 7.30, Mrs. M. H. Wallis.

Lewisham.—*The Priory, High-street.*—6.30, Mr. and Mrs. Brownjohn.

Harrow and Wealdstone.—*Gayton Rooms, Station-road, Harrow-on-the-Hill.*—6.30, address.

Kingston-on-Thames, Bishop's Hall.—3 and 6.30, Mrs. E. Neville, address and clairvoyance.

Walthamstow.—*342, Hoe-street.*—7 p.m., Mr. Walker, address and clairvoyance.

Croydon.—*117b, High-street.*—11, Mr. P. Scholey; 6.30, Mr. George Prior.

Camberwell, Masonic Hall.—11, church service; 6.30, Mr. Maskell, address and clairvoyance, Miss Maskell soloist.

Battersea.—*45, St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction.*—11.15, circle service; 6.30, address and clairvoyance. 13th, 8.15, Mr. Wright.

Holloway.—*Grovedale Hall (near Highgate Tube Station).*—11.15, Mrs. Brookman; 7, Mr. H. Boddington. Wednesday, 12th, 8, Mrs. Fielder. Saturday, 15th, Grand Social and Dance, 7.30 to 10.30.

Brighton.—*Windsor Hall, Windsor-street.*—Mrs. Jennie Walker, addresses and descriptions, 11.15, Windsor Hall; 7, Athenæum Hall, North-street; 3, Lyceum. Monday, 8, healing circle. Wednesday, 8, public meeting.

Brighton Spiritualist Brotherhood.—*Old Steine Hall.*—11.30 and 7, Mrs. Mary Gordon, addresses and clairvoyance; 3, Lyceum. Monday, 7.45, address and psychic reading, Mrs. Gordon. Tuesday, 7.45, lecture, "Astrology," Miss Samson. Thursday, 7.45, inquirers' questions and clairvoyance. Friday, Guild. Next week-end, Mrs. Marriott. Forward Movement. —Athenæum Hall.—Sunday, 3 p.m., Mr. Ernest Hunt, lecture, "Practical Issues of Spiritualism"; chair, Mrs. Mary Gordon.

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