

24 controlled

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATSOEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!"—Paul

No. 2,005.—VOL. XXXIX. [Registered as] SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 1919.

[a Newspaper.]

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

We are hearing so much about materialisation nowadays that it seems appropriate to refer to an old-time instance of a more than usually instructive character. It is related in "Shadow Land," a book which contains much of the autobiography of Mme. D'Espérance, an extraordinarily fine medium for this phase of phenomena. Mme. D'Espérance, by the way, is now residing in Copenhagen: we heard from her recently. One of the stories in her book tells how on one occasion there came to her circle in Newcastle two strangers, friends of one of the members. During the sitting a spirit appeared, "a tall man, rather well-made, with black hair, black moustache and beard, and a forehead rather high and broad." The spirit indicated that he knew one of the two strangers present. And then the following colloquy occurred:—

SITTER: "Who is it? Is it Phillips?"
SPIRIT: "No."
SITTER: "Is it Lynch?"
SPIRIT: "Yes. Emmanuel Lynch."
SITTER: "I never thought about Emmanuel. It was Frank I thought about; he died at sea."
SPIRIT: "No, I didn't die at sea; I died of consumption."
SITTER: "Yes, that's right. I meant Frank died at sea; but Emmanuel died at Hartlepool."

* * * *

This very ordinary kind of conversation in extraordinary circumstances continued. The spirit asked: "Do you know whether my father and mother are living? And is my wife alive?" adding other questions to which the sitter replied. The conversation proceeded to the subject of the fate and present whereabouts of several friends named by both the speakers. "What became of old Captain Wynn?" "Is Jack Rogers alive yet?" The sitter said he did not know the address of one of the persons mentioned, and the spirit gave it. They exchanged views and experiences, and the spirit sent messages to some of his friends. Even Mme. D'Espérance, accustomed to such things, for she was always conscious during a séance, was struck by the homely, matter-of-fact nature of the conversation. It was quite uncanny, but also very human. Both sitter and spirit were entire strangers to her, but they conversed just like two friends meeting after years of separation. The medium and sitters at that time had "imbibed the idea that spirits did not need to ask such questions as did Emmanuel Lynch." Sometimes they do. Not all are fully awake on the higher planes of consciousness, and the episode narrated by Mme. D'Espérance is very instructive on the subject of the limitations of some of the people on the other side.

* * *

When Andrew Lang, who, we are proud to recall, was a contributor to these pages, produced his "Letters

to Dead Authors," he succeeded with masterly skill in reproducing the styles of some of the writers he addressed. If in a fit of drollery (and he was a very droll writer) he had concocted spirit messages from these authors, nobody could have complained that they lacked "verisimilitude." They would have been far more convincing than some of the insipid compositions which in the past we have had sent to us as messages from the great dead. If we had nothing but this "skimble skamble stuff" on which to found a judgment we should have been in sorry case. Fortunately we could turn to much else that was evidential in matter and manner—fine passages that carried conviction, both from their lofty thought and diction and the circumstances in which they were received. We have two standards of evidence in this matter. One we apply to simple, commonplace communications that turn on some question of personal identity, and which demand, as a rule, collateral evidences. The other we employ in determining the value of a communication of doubtful authorship, but received from psychic sources. We look then simply at the message itself. If it conveys finely a fine thought we accept it, because then the personal question is relatively unimportant. It is the message which counts, whoever may have been the messenger. But it is really of no use to tell us that Pericles or Plotinus sends us his best wishes for the progress of spiritual truth or that Tolstoi is interested in the career of Spiritualism. It may be so, of course, but mere assertion of the fact is no proof of it. Anyone could say it. We have to choose between evidences of identity on the one hand or the statement of impersonal truth which carries its own conviction regardless of persons, on the other.

* * * *

In LIGHT of the 24th ult. we took for our leader the subject "The Future of Spiritualism." In looking over Dr. Crawford's new book, "Experiments in Psychical Science," we find the following question and answer bearing upon the same topic. It is worth quoting here. Dr. Crawford, in reply to the question "What do you think of the future in store for psychic research?" says:—

I think it will have a great future. All indications point that way. But there will have to be organised effort, and not merely the sporadic experiments of a few. The recent war, as one of its few welcome by-products, seems to have opened the eyes of a great many people to the importance of the subject, and the interest thus created is not likely to lapse. For, in the last analysis, psychic research, and psychic research only, is likely to determine in any definite way whether man does or does not continue to exist after physical death.

BETWEEN CHRIST AND PHARISEE.—The fundamental difference between Christ and the Pharisees was that they taught religion as an end in itself, whilst He taught it as a means to the Kingdom of Heaven. . . . Their Church was an organisation, His a fellowship; they excluded the people that knew not the law, He included the publicans and sinners; they disciplined acts, He disciplined motives; they suspected sin everywhere, He discovered goodness. The first disciples, who remained Jews, and Paul, who was both a Pharisee and a Christian, set the Church on lines which were at once ecclesiastical and evangelical. But there was very soon a temptation to relapse into formalism; and the history of the Church shows a constant struggle between its higher Christ-self and its lower Pharisee-self, between the tendency to sacrifice oneself to religion and the tendency to sacrifice even religion, if need be, to the love of God and man,—
"CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH."

TWENTY YEARS OF HOME COMMUNION.

WORK OF A MISSIONARY CIRCLE.

By "MISSIONARY."

[We should not have guessed the fact from her literary style, but the young lady to whom we are indebted for the following interesting narrative confesses to being still in her teens. The experiences recorded belong to the family life of Christian Spiritualism.]

"Your life on your side is but Chapter One—to be continued."—Statement by a Spirit Friend.

My cradle was often brought into the private circle, and on many occasions I have been nursed and soothed to sleep by spirit friends, particularly by my ayah—an Indian nurse who used to soothe me when no one else could, and who remains with me, together with a North American Indian, as my guardian and guide. So I may say that I know a little about the subject which is creating so much controversy. Our little circle has always been quite private, just ourselves and one or two trusted friends; and it has been in existence for well over twenty years. It is a Mission Circle—and is conducted wholly for the relief of those on the Other Side who are in trouble.

The few experiences that I shall relate will explain what I mean. Many of you who peruse this little account will doubtless have seen Spiritualistic mediums go under control, probably with the usual shuddering and clapping of hands, their eyes being tightly closed all the time, while the room is kept in semi-darkness, and the sitters remain as quiet as they possibly can, so as not to "upset the conditions."

I should very much like those who have visited a professional medium to be present at one of our little meetings, and see the difference between the two. For instance, our medium's eyes are nearly always open when under control, and she can "go off" as readily in full daylight, or when the lights are up as when they are obscured, and also when we are all talking and laughing together during little meetings on week-days, when our friends visit us to play and sing. Of course, in some cases in the Mission the control does keep the eyes closed, but more often than not the manifestations are absolutely natural, and one almost forgets that one is speaking to a spirit.

During the years we have sat for spirit communion, we have had controls of every kind and condition—white, black, red, yellow and brown skinned—and from all corners of the earth. We have records of over three thousand controls, and, I should say, as many again who have given no clue as to their identity, but have just passed through our little meeting, like "ships that pass in the night."

When the circle was first started, I had not yet come into the world, but, as my father has kept records, I am able to tell something about it.

My parents, with a trusted friend, sat for many months, without result. However, they continued to sit regularly, and at last, one evening, my mother, who, by the way, was the most sceptical of the circle, suddenly and unexpectedly went under control, and began to talk rapidly in a foreign tongue. The control was very excited and vivacious, and my father, having had no previous experience, came to the conclusion that she was an "undesirable," and, as a test of her *bona-fides*, he asked her to sing a hymn, and began to play "Nearer, my God, to Thee." To his surprise the control came across to the organ and sang the hymn, with the most wonderful expression, and in a splendid soprano voice, rendering it in her own language. We subsequently learnt from her that she had been in the Italian Opera when on earth, and she whom we thought "undesirable" is now one of our dearest friends, and is known amongst those in trouble on the Other Side as "The Angel at the Gate!"

A little later, one Sunday evening, near the end of the year, my mother's face suddenly became transfigured, and a feeling of awe and deep reverence (which we have since learnt to associate with the coming of one of the very bright friends) came over those present. My mother's eyes lit up, and a male voice, of considerable richness and power, greeted my father and his companion from her lips: "In the name of God I greet you, friends!"

My father was very astonished, in spite of his previous experience, and the voice continued: "I am a male spirit, and the leader of a band of bright spirits who watch over you—for we have work for you to do, great and glorious work. We are engaged in rescue work in the spirit world, and minister to those in darkness and the bondage of sin, who may yet, by the infinite love of the Father, be lifted out of darkness into His eternal light."

This statement was so heterodox that my father asked him many questions about the spirit world, which, however, he declined to answer, and reprimanded my father for being idly curious, and inquired if he had nothing to ask as regards the welfare of his immortal soul! "Wait, and you will be told all that it is good for you to know. At present it is sufficient for you that Jesus died to give you all Eternal Life!" He gave my father and our friend many kindly admonitions, and after informing them that he would shortly

come again and unfold his plans respecting the work referred to, he pronounced the Benediction; my mother's face changed, and she became conscious.

To go through all that occurred after the coming of this beautiful spirit would fill volumes. Doubts and fears as to the genuineness of the spirit's words filled my father's mind for some time, until one evening, during service, a note in the organ happened to stick, and my father stopped playing and, turning to the others, laughingly explained what had happened. I may say that this service was being conducted in our own house, not in public. Almost immediately my mother's face changed, and that feeling of awe pervaded the room, while the silence was so intense that it could almost be felt!

As on the previous occasion, a man's voice spoke, through the lips of my mother: "In the name of God I greet you. I do not wish to reproach you, friend, but remember that this is a solemn service, and you must not allow any levity while approaching Him who is above all. You are the leader and are responsible. Observe the greatest solemnity and reverence when approaching Him. Do not be thoughtless. At all times remember that you are conducting Divine service. Praise Him and serve Him in the proper spirit of solemnity. Never forget this, and do not hinder your spiritual progress by thoughtless conduct. Great and glorious truths await you, seek earnestly for them, and do that which is right, and you will not fail. Praise Him who has chosen you for such a glorious work as that before you, you are favoured before many. Rejoice in God, and He will guide you. Pray without ceasing, and Light will come. In the name of God I greet you! Farewell!"

This bright spirit is known to us as the "Guide," and he only manifests at rare intervals, or for some special purpose; at the same time he has the entire direction of the circle under his control. Being a mission circle it is necessary that the medium should be well guarded, and, I am glad to say, the protection of the band is so perfect that, although those who are undesirable have often attempted to break through, they have always been unsuccessful.

Many, and very wonderful, are the proofs our spirit friends have given us of their genuineness and power to do good. These, of course, have been mostly of a personal and private nature, and have included instantaneous healing, accurate prevision, psychometry, proofs of identity, etc. Many prophecies have been startlingly correct.

As time went on my father was encouraged to ask questions about the spirits, as the Guide was now satisfied that he was not merely a sensation hunter. On being asked to describe themselves, without exception our spirit friends replied to the following effect:—

"I am a discarnate or disembodied spirit from the spirit world; I lived on your earth, as you do now; I passed through the change called death, and am now very much alive."

During the first four years, control was "normal," i.e., without trance, and the changes of personality, from one spirit to another, or several others, and back to the medium were effected with remarkable rapidity. My father and our earthly friends were sometimes entertained by a three-cornered conversation between the medium and two controls, and it was quite a common experience when my mother and father were alone for two or three controls to join in the conversation. This occurred not only at home, but in the street, omnibus, or anywhere and everywhere; yet they were never put to any inconvenience in consequence, as when it was necessary the medium always returned to her normal state. A friend once carried on a continuous conversation with us through the medium's lips, while another friend, using her hand at the same time, wrote an address upon a different subject. As long as the conversation continued, the writing proceeded readily, but the moment we ceased talking the writing ceased until we commenced again.

THE LEVITICAL LAW AND SPIRIT COMMUNICATIONS.

At the close of his address on "The Higher Aspects of Psychic Research," delivered at the house of Susan Countess of Malmesbury, on the 29th ult., Dr. Ellis Powell effectively replied to the objection of a member of the audience, who quoted the Old Testament injunction against consulting the dead. The following passage, which we take from "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism," by "M.A. (Oxon.)," gives in essence the point urged by Dr. Powell:—

"Is it pretended that we, living in the nineteenth century, are bound by the enactments of the Levitical Law as regards dealing with Spirits? If so, we are prepared to enforce on our accusers the whole of its provisions. We decline to allow them to pick out what suits their purpose and reject the rest. The whole or none, if our opponents please; and by the time they have accepted and obeyed the whole law they will not be in a position to find much fault with us."

RESENTMENT nourished may undermine a constitution.—HELEN M. BOULNOIS, in "The Healing Power,"

GOD AND THE MAN.

"THERE IS NOTHING SMALL TO A GOD SO GREAT."

By B. M. GODSAL (San Diego, Cal.).

When reading a book of spirit communications, printed in 1852, my attention was caught by the confession of a spirit, "I considered God severe rather than merciful, hence my character partook of the same in some degree." This brings out very clearly the fact that the estimation in which we hold the Deity is the nucleus around which our philosophy crystallises, and the keynote of our character.

Hence one is led to inquire, what light does Spiritualism throw upon the nature of the Divine attributes? Every world-teacher has taught that if we would draw nigh to God we must approach Him in a spirit of humbleness and obedience. Now it happens that these are the qualities most highly prized by tyrants of all kinds—in their subjects; and even between men of the same standing it is the selfish who are most insistent upon unselfishness in others. What is more natural, therefore, than to suppose that God, who seems to demand so much humility and unselfishness in others, is Himself a tyrant with the characteristics of a bully—seeing that He requires of His children the meekness that such people exploit? That this is no exaggeration is shown by a recorded incident of not long ago: when certain Spiritualists had complained to a dignitary of the Church that they were too much expected to grovel before the Almighty, he replied that for a long time he had been looking for the precise term to express our proper attitude towards God, and he thanked them for giving him the very word he had sought—"grovel."

In the light of Spiritualism this shocking conclusion is seen to be false—to be, in fact, the very opposite of the truth. Jesus tells us that God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped according to the laws of Spirit. And Spiritualism deals with these laws, and teaches, as a fundamental truth, that spirits are drawn towards one another by the character that they possess in common—a law of attraction not less universal in the spirit world than the law of gravitational attraction in the material universe. We know that this is true, not merely because we are continually told it by spirits of all degrees, but also, and chiefly, because our own experience at séances has repeatedly proved it. Whence it follows that God is whatever there be in us that draws us towards Him; and He is not whatever quality of ours fails to attract us Heavenwards. From this we learn that if simplicity, sympathy, and humility draw men to God, then He is simple, loving, and of a lowly spirit. And, conversely, if we be not uplifted Godwards by arrogance, severity, pomp, nor, on the other hand, by grovelling and an abject spirit, then we know of a surety that these characteristics are not in any degree to be found within the compass of His Being. This conclusion is not reached by deducing consequences from an assumed goodness of God; on the contrary, it is derived from direct observation of the most elementary facts of every séance, where the interaction between mortality and spirit may be studied by the discerning mind, and where the facts of spirit communion teach us that certain qualities which we call good attract spirits the likeliest God, and so draw us ever upwards towards Him. This truth, that God is simplicity itself, and therefore is not attracted by pomp and flattery and the ingratiating arts of courtiers, should not seem at all strange when it is remembered that even in this world simplicity of character goes with greatness of soul, whereas exclusiveness and pride are ever associated with pretensions derived from external and adventitious titles to honour. How immeasurably simple, therefore, how easy of access to the meanest intelligence, must Infinite Wisdom be! And even between man and man it is recognized that "to know all is to forgive all"; are we, then, to suppose that God is either less informed or less forgiving than the best of mortals?—unless, indeed, perfect knowledge takes the place of forgiveness.

But it will be asked, do we not at any time enjoy intimate personal association with our Father in Heaven? The answer, founded upon the same evidence and line of reasoning, is, Yes. The fact that no two of us, throughout the entire Universe, are quite alike means more than that our various personal identities are composed of different combinations of the same qualities. Within each of us there exists something not possessed by any other soul—a vital essence which constitutes our own particular self. This differentiating essence, which perhaps is a Divine spark implanted within each of us, finds, by the law of spirit attraction, its sole counterpart in the source of its being. Thus is established an inviolable privacy between each individual soul and his God.

One has heard the question put, is it conceivable that the Ruler of the Universe could, or would, concern Himself with the personal affairs of every insignificant mortal? But it does not exalt the Almighty to limit, in any direction, His power or His interest. With truer appreciation of what constitutes a loving Omniscience it might rather be asked, what could more greatly magnify our conception of God than the knowledge that He is sensible to the infinitesimal cares of each individual creature? It has been said truly, "there is nothing small to a God so great."

PSYCHIC MESSAGES: A "MORE EXCELLENT WAY."

By R. DE HOLTE.

In my paper, on page 154, dealing with spirit communications, I mentioned some personal experiences of table movements, ouija-board and automatic writing, with a view to giving an opinion, after a lapse of years, as to the evidential value of such psychic phenomena and their relative value as means of communication with the spirit world. For about ten years I had taken no very active interest in the subject when circumstances demanded that I should review my position. Ten years is long enough for any passing phase of mind or any transitory interest to die out; only reasonable convictions or the strongest prejudices can remain through such a period.

I found that with the passage of time my convictions had strengthened rather than otherwise, and that I was able to take a more dispassionate view of the matter than formerly. I found also that the power of automatic writing still remained, but that the inclination to make use of it had almost entirely passed away, being superseded by another method of communication, even as it had superseded those which had preceded it. This new method of communication, I may call, for want of a more suitable name, "mental conversation." Perhaps some reader can suggest a better term. The script I had received by automatic writing was somewhat extensive and covered a wide range of religious and philosophic thought; this has been to some extent supplemented by the "mental conversation." When apparently alone in quiet surroundings, I become aware that I am not alone, and if I direct a question to the unseen personality, I get a clear answer impressed upon my mind. Though there is no sound, this impression is as clear and distinct as if someone spoke to me.

From an evidential point of view this method would be the least convincing to the critical or the sceptical. In fact, I do not see how anyone but the sensitive recipient of the message can be certain that the message is anything else but an illusion or imagination, or the work of the subconscious or subliminal mind. To me nothing could be more clearly defined than the difference between my own thoughts and a message thus received, but I cannot conceive how I could convince anyone of this if he doubted my sanity or honesty. It would seem that the more refined, that is the less material, the means of communication become the less evidential they become to those who are not actually the recipients of it. But if only those methods were pursued which convince the sceptic, little progress would be made, and we should everlastingly be in that stage in which "nothing new is told us" or "no communication of any value is ever received." Speaking from my own experience, I have found that progress from the relatively crude methods of table communications to those of a more advanced kind has been definitely characterised by an increasing advance in the quantity and quality of the communications received.

It is almost impossible to express in words the mental effect of communications thus received so as to be understood by those who have not experienced anything of the kind, but to those who have their psychical powers more or less developed it will not be so difficult. If anyone can separate in thought the mental effect of a word spoken from the mere sound of the word, he will have some idea of what I refer to, and if he can in the same way separate the mental effect of a sentence from the physical sound of the sentence, he will have a still clearer idea. It would seem that in the higher spheres communication is carried on, not word by word, as with us, but a complete thought is transferred *en bloc*, as it were, from mind to mind, and the method of communication which I have called "mental conversation" is of this nature.

The presence of sympathetic helpers is most valuable for obtaining table movements. I have written with ease automatically in the company of those who were neutral, but for mental conversations silence and even solitude are essential to obtaining the best results, and no place so good as a quiet church in the early morning. I have known those who would have been horrified to have been called Spiritualists who have developed a considerable power in this direction, and, in what they have called meditation and colloquy, have had much help, which, however, it is not easy to distinguish from what I have referred to, either in nature or in quality.

The messages I have for the most part received have referred to the higher life. I never ask whether it will be a fine day, nor do I attempt to force communication with particular persons, with the result that things have been beautifully managed from the other side and much valuable information relative to the future or higher life has been given.

In her struggle to hold fast the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith the Church has forgotten the Angels. It has been a grievous error for which she has been made to pay a heavy penalty. That is what is known as Spiritualism, which, with all its faults, has yet borne witness to a truth which, in its purified and sanctified form, is essentially Christian.—"Angels Seen To-day," by G. Maurice Elliott and Irene Hallam Elliott.

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THE OBJECT LESSON.

SOME HINTS TO INQUIRERS.

During the many years in which we have addressed readers on this page, we have endeavoured to cater for minds of widely different outlook. LIGHT has recently had a large accession of readers who are more or less new to our subject, and to these we address our remarks this week.

Many of them have been bewildered by the misrepresentations so common of late in the general Press. We ask them to reflect that these pronouncements come from writers who are not only uninformed, but who do not even pause to reflect upon the things which they attack. Some of their objections would disappear if they stopped to think about them, and, having done so, faced without fear the conclusions thus arrived at. Let our inquirers reason out carefully the facts with which they are confronted, and then there will be little danger of their becoming over-enthusiastic and proclaiming as proof positive things which will not stand close scrutiny, or of receiving as pure truth statements which rest only on the *ipse dixit* of some communicator in the unseen world, who, however well-meaning, must be very far from infallible.

Let us quote by way of illustration an experience recorded by Andrew Jackson Davis, the "Poughkeepsie Seer," in his book, "The Present Age and Inner Life."

Davis relates that on one occasion he had been writing on the benefits and penalties of human experience, and had set down his conclusion that "those who prematurely pass away to the spirit land are deprived of that wholesome foundation of experience which is essential to normal mental development."

That was a sound and sensible conclusion. We would that all the conclusions put forth in the name of our subject were as reasonable. But to continue. While reflecting on the question Davis passed into what he calls the "superior condition," and became aware of the presence of two spirits—one a handsome man, an Italian, the other a little boy of about five, whom he led by the hand.

Having given his name, and some particulars of his family, the elder visitor entered into conversation with Davis, showing that he was interested in the subject upon which the seer had been writing, and desired to assist him. This he did by allowing Davis to question the little boy, who was desired to communicate by vibrations or "raps" instead of the method employed with the Italian, *viz.*, speech from mind to mind. And then we have this instructive passage:—

Immediately he [the boy] drew near the table and raised himself about two feet above its level. Still the gentleman held his left hand. His right hand being at liberty, he moved it rapidly in several directions for a few minutes, then brought it in a calm, firm manner at a right angle with the surface of the table. His hand had not been in this posture more than three minutes, remaining fixed as by the strongest effort of will, when I saw a current of amber softness pass down from the middle finger to the table on which slight concussions were instantly produced. The phenomenon was very beautiful. But I saw how difficult it was to make them [the raps] loud or rapidly as he and I desired. The concussions were caused by the fine current proceeding from the hand of the spirit, directed by will power, coming into sudden contact with the electricity which reposed like latent heat in the interstices of the board—in the spaces between the particles composing the top and standard of the table.

Davis then relates that he asked the little boy to spell out his name by raps. The little fellow hesitated, and, looking at him closely, it occurred to Davis that he very much resembled a little boy he had known in his earlier

days at Poughkeepsie, named Edward. Almost immediately the seer saw the spirit child rap out the name he had in his mind—Edward.

Davis, from this and another instance that followed, soon detected the fact that the thoughts in his own mind were influencing the child's answers. Let our inquirers make careful note of that fact and remember it in their own investigations.

Subsequently Davis asked the child where he was born. The little fellow replied that he had never been born, but had always lived in the spirit world, and that the Italian was his father.

The Italian meanwhile looked gravely on without interfering. This was to be an object lesson to Mr. Davis of some of the elementary laws of spirit communication—elementary laws of which some of our present-day authorities are grotesquely ignorant, although professing to teach others.

When the experiment was complete the Italian spoke. He began by pointing out that the little boy, who was not related to him, had died shortly after birth, had no knowledge of the uses of the physical senses, no memories of his parentage, and supposed his origin to be unnatural. Here we may quote the remarks of the elder spirit:—

Unless the mind receives a knowledge of things through the physical senses, and unless those senses are used properly, and as long, too, as they will serve the soul, the condition and culture of the spirit is impaired, and it must return to earth to see, to learn, to feel, and to reason. Thou hast had during this interview an illustration of the cause of many spiritual contradictions, *viz.*, spirits coming near the earth to learn of things, reading the mind of the medium or questioner, and responding in accordance therewith, not knowing oftentimes anything to the contrary—believing it to be the truth, thus leading men to confusion and to doubt. This is all traceable to the absence of the right kind and right quantity of true experience in the communicating mind.

Here, again, we have a lesson full of right reason and sound sense. Let our investigators hold firmly to such standards, and they will soon be free of the perplexities that come of vague speculations put forth as facts, of romantic and fantastic theories out of harmony with the laws of Nature and of Reason, but delivered pompously as revelations from the Unseen World by good people who become very indignant if one disputes the validity of their teachings, because they have not outgrown the love of personal authority. These truths of ours rest on the authority of no man or woman. We must see for ourselves the conclusions to which our facts point. No one can see them for us. If we weakly surrender our own judgment to that of others we shall infallibly be led "to confusion and to doubt." The duty of self-knowledge, self-development, self-reliance—these things are part of our New Revelation.

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"THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS."

(FROM "LIGHT" OF JUNE 8TH, 1889.)

The "Religio-Philosophical Journal" is severe on Washington Irving Bishop: "He has gone to his reward." We have in mind the teaching of our philosophy, and prefer, remembering the dictum, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, to say that he has gone to his own place. And we shall all do the same.

(FROM "LIGHT" OF JUNE 15TH, 1889.)

Mr. Stuart Cumberland has been writing another novel, "The Vasty Deep." The "Pall Mall Gazette" says there may be a "good deal to be said in favour of reading a novel backwards." And we have read it; read it with great care." A doubtful compliment. Mr. Cumberland, warned by the fate of his former master, Irving Bishop, may probably leave psychical antics alone, and take to novels that can be read backwards like some of his former "subjects."

OCCULT KNOWLEDGE AND THE INNER LIFE.

By J. CHILLINGHAM DUNN (Yokohama).

The word Occult has been a somewhat abused one, associated with much that has brought it into disrepute, and at the outset I would like to emphasise the idea of true occultism as concerning the bringing to the knowledge of us, boxed up in the relative darkness of the flesh, some measure of information in respect of the things of inner and more radiant realms. The tremendous pressure of widely distributed facts is steadily compelling an increasing percentage of the thinkers of to-day to the recognition that within and around us is an occult world; a world which can be described as occult, or hidden, not because it is a thing of darkness, but because the sense organs of perception of most living people are not yet organised to respond to the impinging vibrations which would reveal the radiance amidst which we live and move.

Sight for a blind man simply means that he has to become able to respond to vibrations which have been all the time playing upon a previously unresponsive organ of vision. Clairvoyance, or an extension of vision sufficient to reveal superphysical objects, simply means, in turn, a capacity to respond to a still greater variety of vibrations, subtler ones. Some men can hear the squeak of a bat, others cannot, this being due to varying degrees of the power to answer to those vibrations translatable into hearing. An extension of power in this direction means clairaudience. There is really nothing weird or unnatural about these things, and as the course of the future provides more numerous examples of people exercising wider capacities of perception, the sense of strangeness, due to unfamiliarity, will vanish.

There are directions in which superphysical research wonderfully strengthens, or perhaps I should say confirms, religious faith. Compare, for example, the relationship between telepathy and prayer. When it is known that a thought pictured by the mind of one living person can be transmitted to another living person situated thousands of miles away, it is not hard to believe that a prayer, which is a thought formulated for a definite purpose, can be of efficacy, the end being achievable in some wonderful way by vibratory agency.

There is a fact of tremendous ethical importance which emerges from a study of these deeper matters, namely, that we can affect others by what we permit ourselves to feel and to think, and our moral responsibility for conduct is accordingly enlarged to include thought and feeling as well as the outer physical action. This again has a bearing on religion and shows the sound reason for such precepts as, for instance, those urged by the Founder of the Christian Religion on His followers when enjoining upon them to love their enemies, and not to look upon a woman with lust. Why? It would appear that the underlying reason is that when an undesirable thought or feeling is entertained about another, this thought or feeling can reach them and produce an effect upon them vibratorily, provided there is anything in them of a nature in tune with the influence projected to them. If, therefore, someone directs against you a harsh remark accompanied with a corresponding thought, the meeting of these undesirable vibrations with a soft answer accompanied by a thought of love will tend in the direction of a diminution of the turmoil, whereas if vibrations of anger are met with a deluge of similar ones, things will be apt to get worse!

There is no doubt that thought affects the body. One thought will cause a face to turn grey with apprehension, another thought will cause it to flush red. It is scarcely necessary, therefore, to point out that if it is desired to avoid a disease the mind should not be permitted to imagine the symptoms. From what has just been pointed out it will become clear that true occultism most decidedly embraces the conception that there is in us a consciousness which is greater than the reasoning mind. The picture-making mind could no more control itself than a man could stand in a basket and pick himself up by the handles of it. The fact that we can stop the mind thinking of a dog and compel it to think of a cat shows it to be amenable to control by something stronger than itself which is able to exercise that control. It is just this that makes it possible for a man to obey the injunction to return a soft answer to wrath. The average mind, in response to an insult, will immediately frame an answer of a retaliative nature, but the consciousness which is greater than the mind may stop the mind's first attempt to do this, compel it to frame a "soft answer" and the lips to utter it. The ability to control the mind and the knowledge that it can be done can be an enormous comfort in life. A great deal of unnecessary misery is simply due to the mind running again and again over a recollection of something unpleasant, whereas if the consciousness can obtain sufficient governance of these mental activities to stop the process, the trouble will immediately cease. In fact, concentration and the power to dominate the ratiocinative mind is of enormous value all round. A man in the throes of drink, for instance, will be able to throw off the vice much more quickly if he gains the strength to compel his mind not to picture the alluring thing when it is not before him.

Through the avenue of our larger consciousness lies the grand pathway to God, Whose kingdom most assuredly

is within us, a glorious fact, and utterly true. Upon analysis, it will always be found that happiness is that which arises within us as sweet incense from the altar of the heart. Whether it be while listening to exquisite music, observing some wonder of Nature, or seeing a face that is much loved after long absence, always *within us* arises that response which makes our heaven. Most of us have scarcely begun to sound the possibilities of the capacity for happiness that lie with us, in that deeper nature beyond the senses, beyond the reasoning mind. It has been written that "In the tranquillity of the senses and the tranquillity of the mind, a man may behold the majesty of the Self," and I believe that nothing less than realisation of our own Divinity is the goal before us, our destiny to be co-sharers of God's bliss.

The happiest moments in a lifetime are those during which the intensest love has been felt, and when it is said that realisation of our oneness with God, who is Love itself, is an experience that spiritual unfoldment leads to, we can perhaps dimly imagine how very well worth while is every effort at spiritual living. This is the true basis of Universal Brotherhood, the stupendous fact that as flames from a central fire are one and the same in essence with each other, so is humanity divinely one in God.

THE PROBLEM OF PUNISHMENT.

I was much interested in Mrs. Louise Berens' letter in *LIGHT* of the 24th ult. I am convinced that neither Spiritualism nor occult philosophy teaches retributive punishment. "As a man sows so shall he reap" does not apply to things evil only, but also to things good. Spiritualism and Occultism teach the Brotherhood of Man, not the equality, and under that principle there must be some in the human family more evolved than others, just as in the ordinary family the eldest brother may just have taken his degree at the University whilst his little brother aged eight is going to school. The elder knows that the younger will have to pass through experiences which he himself has gone through, while the father will be mildly tolerant of many faults in the child which he would not expect to see in the elder son. So with us. Let us trust our loving Father. He knows our circumstances, our state of evolution and our efforts, so that His law of Cause and Effect works with perfect justice. Here on earth we judge hastily both ourselves and others. The French say "*tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*"; we know so little and make our decisions on very imperfect evidence. The Father sees to it that our good deeds and good thoughts have their reward. I object to the attitude of "we are such miserable, helpless sinners." We are not; we are pilgrims on the path; when we fall we must pick ourselves up, strive on again and avoid similar pitfalls. We must never sit down and say we cannot go on.

God is love, and He loves us so that after the transition of death we go to the place, or state, we are fitted for; that means, in most cases, one of happiness. We would be miserable out of our suitable state, and there are not so very many people whose lives deliberately force them to states of unhappiness. Hell is remedial, and people only go through hell in order to have purged from them the evil habits they cultivated in lifetime.

In conclusion I would say that the Scriptures tell us not to make hasty judgments. Let us trust God the Father, and not look on Him as more deficient in common sense than an earthly father. A book called "Fourteen Lessons in Yogi Philosophy," by the Yogi Ramacharaka (published by John M. Watkins) might perhaps help readers in similar perplexity.

H. G. T.

A SPIRITUALIST'S CREED.

We have received the following creed from Mr. A. T. Connor, hon. secretary of the London Lyceum District Council:—

"I believe that God is Infinite Spirit, revealed to us by the manifestation of life, love, wisdom and power in the universe; that I am a spirit, an individual consciousness, and in my spiritual attributes a sharer in the infinity of God; that after the death of my physical body I shall continue, in spirit life, my conscious individual existence as a human being, and that I shall be able to communicate with friends and others left behind in this life.

"I believe that I am endowed with free will to choose my path in life, and that I alone am responsible for the motives that prompt my choice.

"I believe in the impartial operation of natural law; that I must always reap as I have sown, and that I myself must work to eradicate my spiritual imperfections—but that in every spirit resides the power, and to every spirit belongs the right, to progress eternally in wisdom and love.

"I believe that it is my duty to develop my divine attributes to their highest power of expression; to act always from the highest spiritual motives; to conduct my life so that it shall be of assistance and encouragement to others, and to do my utmost to hasten the day when a true fellowship of love and mutual service shall reign upon the earth."

THE PROBLEM OF THE EMPTY TOMB.

BY THE REV. F. FIELDING-OULD, M.A.

The question as to *what became of the physical body of Jesus the crucified*, the problem of the empty tomb, will perhaps never be answered and solved with unanimity. There is an old legend that certain archangels removed it, the common report at the time was that the disciples stole it away while the guard slept, but Christians have believed that the physical body was transformed and spiritualised, and that it was in this very form that Jesus came forth from the sepulchre. Here is yet another instance in which the investigations of Spiritualists enable them to take a new view of its method, while still holding the old fact. The fact is that Jesus survived death and rose again on the next day but one after His burial, visibly appearing to His mourning followers—the new method suggested is that the appearance was achieved by means of *materialization*. Dr. Ellis Powell has, in his lectures, called attention to some significant points. First, the “touch me not” injunction to Mary of Magdala, it being well known that a materialized form, unless it be a very stable and solid one, melts away under the grasp of a hand. The subsequent invitation to the Apostles, “handle me and see . . .” would not invalidate the theory, as spirits at séances, when prepared and fortified against the test, often invite the touch of sitters. Secondly, we must note that the appearances as recorded all took place in subdued light: “Early in the morning while it was yet dark”; “towards evening, when the day was far spent”; “by the lake, when day was now breaking,” and in the upper room, where there would certainly be no blaze of light. If materialization was what took place, a very great difficulty, which has been the stumbling-block of commentators in every age, is removed at last: I refer to the fact that the disciples did not recognise their Master, “supposing Him to be the gardener,” “their eyes were holden that they should not know Him,” “none of the disciples durst inquire of Him, who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord.” Those familiar with materializations know the difficulty of attaining an exact likeness and of the communicating spirit’s delight when it is recognised. It has been thought that Peter, James and John, the favoured three who were chosen to be with Jesus on so many important occasions, may have been what we call mediums, and that at the Transfiguration, for instance, the representatives of the Law and the Prophets borrowed their temporary bodies from them. Was the semi-materiality of the visible angels in Gethsemane due also to these three, who again had “slept” just before the apparition? The fact that the wounds were visible in the hands and feet is no argument against the latest theory, for any wound or blemish is easily reproduced in a materialization. No doubt the Great Spirit who could collect from the pregnant atmosphere materials for the feeding of the five thousand could dispense with a medium, though it would accord with His methods to use what was to hand rather than to work unnecessary marvels, but the point is important lest one should imagine that the Christ were dependent on a human medium for appearances since that day and even in our own.

It is to be noted that so far we are no nearer solving the original problem, for the disappearance of the physical body is still unaccounted for. Dr. Powell suggests that the body was de-materialised, that it melted into its prime factors. The position of the headress on the rocky bed seems to point to this—it lay where the head had rested, and the Greek seems to mean, some think, that it was still twisted into the shape of a turban. Freedom from the common humiliation of corruption had been promised to the Sinless One (Psalm xvi.-10, Act ii.-27) and would have been avoided by some such process as that indicated—which had, perhaps, already been granted to Enoch and Elijah. St. Paul’s prediction as to those who should be living on earth at the Christ’s second coming, which he probably confidently expected in his own life time, “We shall not all sleep (*die*) but we shall all be changed in a moment” (1 Cor. xv.-51) may have implied some similar change.

I would only add that this article had been sent to *LIGHT* before the writer heard Dr. Powell, but some alterations have been introduced.

THE POWER OF SUGGESTION.—We should welcome Mr. H. Ernest Hunt’s little “Book of Auto-suggestions,” even if it were only concerned with the promotion of cheerfulness. But that is only, so to speak, a by-product of its main purpose, which is mind building. In the first chapter we get an explanation of the meaning of auto-suggestion, followed by sets of phrases for use in producing the required state of mind and moral courage. The author is careful to explain that there is no magic in the mere use of the phrases. The mind must be strongly impressed with the idea underlying each, until the obedient subconsciousness responds to it and reacts on the conscious mind. The phrases are accompanied by well-selected quotations from various writers, which reinforce by philosophical statement the formal sentences chosen. (Rider and Son, Ltd., 1s. net).

FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

Under the heading, “Dismay Society: Horrible Thing Ahead,” the “Daily Mail” recently had an amusing little account of the forty-seventh conference of the Prophetic Society held in Sion College, London, at which the members were “torn between dismay over prevailing wickedness and anticipation of the approaching end of the world,” “one learned that everything and everybody is drifting to the devil,” and “prophetic vision and platform eloquence combined to produce a state of depression, which even the summer sunshine could not wholly dispel.” After this we are glad to learn that “the Rev. C. S. Hull entertained the audience with some personal experiences of spiritualistic phenomena, thereby relieving the prevailing gloom.”

We hear great accounts of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s last tour, on which he spoke in Doncaster, Huddersfield, Manchester, Rochdale and Crewe. Everywhere the audiences were deeply interested, and so enthusiastic that it was clear the vital message had gone home. The effects are manifest in a great wave of activity and inquiry. From Glasgow we learn that the interest is so wide and deep that the Society there have had to take the Town Hall, which holds 3,000, for their ordinary meetings. Here, in the South, people are more phlegmatic, and London is a very unwieldy centre. But the movement is beginning to show signs of fire and life; the quickening will be sure, even if it is a little slower.

The institution of summer time is very awkward for astrologers, as it leads to erroneous birthtimes being recorded and inaccurate nativities being “cast” or calculated. The difficulty is referred to in this month’s “Modern Astrology,” and readers are advised to enter in a notebook the summer time periods for successive years and in different countries for future reference. It is confusing. As an old south-coast boatman once observed, “this here summer time upsets everything; the moon, the tides and even the time-ball worked by electric current from Greenwich!”

E.S., a Glasgow correspondent, is puzzled by the fact that Spiritualists do not take advantage of their communication with people of the unseen world to obtain light on the authorship of mysterious crimes and on other strange happenings. Our correspondent does not seem to understand the human character of life on both sides of the veil and that the people on the other side have their limitations as well as ourselves. Furthermore, we have reason to believe that in the economy of the universe it is ordained that the duties appertaining to each sphere of life shall be performed by the people belonging to that sphere, and, as a friend remarked the other day, why should we expect the spirit world to act as a branch of Scotland Yard?

“THE PROOFS OF THE TRUTHS OF SPIRITUALISM.”

Perhaps we have too many books; certainly we have too few. There may be too many of the sort that are more or less variants of one another, but not nearly enough of the kind that deal with a limited field of inquiry in the most conclusive manner possible. This condition of our book market should be taken due note of by future authors, if they would do their best for the welfare of their productions and of their readers. Some authors of the variant class of books seem to be poorly informed regarding their predecessors; others exhibit a considerable knowledge of these: most of them, if not all, appear to be unaware of the truth that psychological art is no less requisite than literary art in such work.

To write a comparative appraisal of those variant books would be an odious task of dubious profit. Doubtless each has its special appeal, point of view, associations. Nevertheless, the law of verbal economy applies no less to the multiplication of books than to their separate production, and whilst the latter application is now fairly common the former is almost disregarded.

Our reverend author’s work deals with the phenomena of Spiritualism in general, both from the personal and experimental point of view and from the experience of others. His quotations are numerous and sometimes at unusual length. The book is copiously illustrated, and should especially interest investigators affiliated to the churches, as it is particularly suited to readers unacquainted with earlier books of the same class. A gentle spirit pervades the work, a disposition to have faith, upon which the believer and the sceptic may look astigmatically. “Beethoven’s *Songs Without Words*,” p. 30, is surely a reference in need of revision.—W.B.P.

* “The Proofs of the Truths of Spiritualism.” By the REV. PROF. G. HENSLAW, M.A. (Kegan Paul, Trenchard & Co., Ltd. Price 7s. 6d. net.)

THE SPIRITISTIC ISSUE.

By E. W. DUXBURY.

There are doubtless innumerable individuals who are in a state of mental bewilderment regarding the Spiritistic theory. This must be especially the case with the many thousands who have neither had any personal psychical experiences nor encountered anyone who has, and who are deterred, through their avocations or the lack of leisure, from making any close study of the question. Accustomed for many years to the habit of accepting on trust from the scientific world truth regarding natural phenomena, they find themselves bereft of their usual guidance. Though, it is true, certain eminent men of science stoutly support the Spiritistic theory, yet other distinguished scientific workers vehemently repudiate it, and the people are left halting between two opinions.

There are, however, certain considerations which should help to guide such persons to a definite conclusion. The history of hypnotic phenomena may be used as an aid in the solution of the problem. Though the comparison has often been made before, the analogy is a useful one, since hypnotic phenomena were of a similar obscure character, were subjected to similar charges of fraud, imagination, and self-deception, and were emphatically repudiated by the learned scientific societies of the day. More than fifty years elapsed before the reality of these phenomena was definitely established, yet to-day incredulity concerning them would merely amount to a confession of ignorance. The intellectual sin of the scientific world of that day lay in its failure to recognise that certain questionable and repellent incidents concealed genuine phenomena of serious import. It remains a conspicuous example of the manner in which intelligence can be stultified by prejudice, the "blind spot" of the mind.

In considering the Spiritistic theory, again, it is well to remember that, though its scientific apologists may not be large in number, they are and have been, in general, men of pre-eminent scientific distinction, representing practically every branch of science, including the new science of psychology, and are distributed among the leading countries of the Old and New Worlds. The "kink in the brain" theory, however plausible it may sound in the case of an individual man of science, rapidly leads to a *reductio ad absurdum* when it is attempted to apply it to a dozen or more of the leading scientific workers of the world. If, moreover, the psychology of the scientific and other eminent protagonists of the Spiritistic theory be closely studied, it will be found that they were mostly men of a sceptical habit of mind, who found it difficult or impossible to give credence to religious beliefs readily accepted by many able minds. Their caution in arriving at a definite conclusion is attested by the long precedent periods during which they conducted their researches, ranging from forty years to nearly a dozen. Though there are, doubtless, exceptions, the differentiation among men of science who uphold or reject the Spiritistic theory is mainly between those who have made an exhaustive study of the subject and those who have made next to none. It should be remembered, in this connection, that an expert can only speak with authority on his own speciality. We do not consult a doctor for the elucidation of a knotty point of law, nor a lawyer for a diagnosis of disease.

An impartial study of the writings of the principal scientific and other defenders of the Spiritistic theory can hardly fail to reveal the logical and dispassionate manner in which they marshal their facts and arguments, and the caution and reserve with which they advance their tenets. Anything more remote from the spirit of credulity or the vagaries of perfervid imagination it would be difficult to conceive. Indeed, the coldly intellectual temper of one or two well-known psychical investigators who support the Spiritistic theory may, perhaps, prove somewhat repugnant to readers of more enthusiastic temperament.

When we turn, on the other hand, to the literature of negative criticism, it soon becomes apparent that the string of which its controversial beads are strung is an *a priori* disbelief in the possibility of the alleged phenomena, fostered, doubt, by the sceptical and materialistic spirit of the nineteenth century. Such an attitude is in itself remarkable in dwellers in so stupendous and inexplicable a universe, wherein scarcely a generation passes without witnessing the discovery or invention of some hitherto unsuspected marvel. Finally, it should never be forgotten that the brilliant efficacy of scientific method has been applied for little more than a generation to the elucidation of psychic phenomena, and the results which are now apparent.

JOAN OF ARC, the saviour of her country, is denounced as possessed of the devil in one age, but extolled as a saint in another. Mr. Andrew Lang has furnished documentary evidence proving her to have had true clairvoyant and pre-emptive gifts. Authentic documents, not only in her case, but countless others, prove these gifts to be real and unquestionable.—"Visions, Previsions and Miracles in Modern Times," by E. HOWARD GREY, D.D.S.

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE AT QUEEN'S HALL.

It will be seen from our advertising columns that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, M.D., LL.D., will deliver addresses on "Death and the Hereafter," at the Queen's Hall, on Sundays, June 15th, 22nd, 29th, at 11 a.m.

These meetings are, of course, intended mainly for non-Spiritualists, but Spiritualists may be relied on to do all in their power to make them a success.

A PEN PORTRAIT.

It would be idle to deny the great interest taken in the visit of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle—always better known as Conan Doyle, the novelist. Apart altogether from the subject matter, one was sure of a scholarly address. A man who has attained distinction as novelist, historian, scientist, lecturer and investigator could not stand on a public platform and talk for an hour without saying something that would arrest the mind and quicken the imagination. Many went to hear Conan Doyle, knowing that whether they agreed with him or not they would at any rate be rewarded with a literary masterpiece. Nor were they disappointed. A heavily-built man, tall, with a broad face and iron-grey hair, he had little of the poet in his appearance, and if he will pardon us saying so, he looks more like a retired sea captain than a man given over to probing the mysteries of the spirit world. But there was no getting away from his intense earnestness. He spoke with the fire of the prophet, with the eloquence of the visionary, with the masterful assurance of the man who has convinced himself late in life that his earlier attitude was mistaken.—The "Doncaster Chronicle."

"LIGHT" SUSTENTATION FUND, 1919.

In addition to the donations recorded in previous issues, we have to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of the following sums:—

					£	s.	d.
E. Howard Grey	1	0	0
Orleans	0	10	0
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Mrs. Tate	0	4	0

LIVING is loving. Loving is living. Otherwise we see men as trees walking. Otherwise we exist. We draw empty air, not teeming life, with every breath.—HELEN M. BOULNOIS in "The Healing Power."

VAUGHAN THE ALCHEMIST.—The books of Mr. Arthur E. Waite on Mysticism, Occultism, Freemasonry, Alchemy and allied subjects would fill at least one shelf of a good-sized book-case. The latest addition to these is a handsomely-bound volume, "The Works of Thomas Vaughan: Eugenius Philalethes. Edited, Annotated and Introduced by Arthur E. Waite." (Theosophical Publishing House, 21s.) From the foreword we gather that it is the first volume of a series of "Transactions" to be issued by the Library Committee of the Theosophical Society of England and Wales. There is an interesting biography of Thomas Vaughan, who was the twin brother of Henry Vaughan, the religious poet. Mr. Waite has so high a repute as an authority on Hermetic literature and doctrine that the work could not have been in better hands.

THE PROVINCE OF OCCULTISM.—In its truest sense occultism consists in the study of the spiritual causes that underlie material phenomena; just as science properly so called consists in the study of those material phenomena themselves. Science, however, is inevitably in practice bound to take into consideration various forces which, strictly speaking, should be termed occult, among the most important of which we may name electricity, which is not termed occult to-day merely on account of its recognition by official science. Physical science in our own day has begun to utilise occult forces for the practical purposes of everyday life, as in the case of wireless telegraphy, and in cases where such forces are not yet applied practically they are becoming recognised by the scientific theorist and renamed in accordance with the terminology of the latest scientific school; as, for instance, in the case of the "astral light" of the ancient occultists which is now known as the ether. The occultism of Mesmer has given place to the hypnotism of the modern medical practitioner, and although the hypnotist of to-day disputes the validity of animal magnetism as an explanation of the phenomena, the time is probably not far distant when, as Dr. Boirac suggests, in his learned treatise, "Psychic Science," this also is likely to meet with official scientific recognition. Transmutation of metals again, a purely occult conception, is being tentatively admitted to-day in scientific theory. Thus modern science is ever trenching on the field of occultism, though unwilling to admit its debt to that occult philosophy to whose daring pioneers the credit of its discoveries is in reality due.—"The Occult Review."

LIFE, DESTINY, AND RE-INCARNATION.

The translator of this book* has very evidently entered with great zest and abundant knowledge into her task—a labour most creditably achieved. Her avowed admiration and respect for M. Denis, coupled, it must be, with great spiritual sympathy and understanding of his philosophy, have enabled her to put that philosophy before her readers, one feels sure, with far fewer than the average disabilities translation inevitably entails. It is possible that the English reader may not be inclined to accord to M. Denis quite the lofty altitude to which his translator would elevate him; but, not the less, he will acknowledge the loftiness of much of the author's thinking, even though he may have just a suspicion that words and the love of words and melody and rhetoric cover up a good deal of what otherwise might fail to leave much impression. But the author's philosophy is always high-minded and his morality austere and true, his aim and purpose uplifting and on the whole heartening.

The philosophy enunciated by the author's comprehensive philosophical studies and psychic knowledge is not so much novel or even characteristic as splendidly phrased, unflinchingly hopeful, and founded on deep convictions. To the author's more peculiar share in it, in fact, most readers may be inclined to fix just where the philosophy fails to ring true for himself, and where criticism, protest and denial come into prominence. For, although M. Denis rightly observes and dilates upon the liberty of thought and freedom of spirit of all philosophy founded on psychic knowledge, he introduces, if not dogmatism, at least all the preliminaries to it in the use he makes of wisdom alleged to be obtained from loftier and wiser beings than those of earth, "the revealing voices of the tomb," "the secrets of the Beyond," and this necessarily is the voice of Authority, with all its compelling restrictions to the truth of its alleged revelations. Freedom is already in fetters.

For example, the book before us is explained thus in its genesis:—

"Before those spirits who descended for a moment into our obscure world to glorify it with their rays of genius, criticism hesitates and becomes silent. [Exactly so!] During eight years we received here in Tours messages of this order. They touched on all the great problems of moral philosophy, and comprise several volumes of manuscripts. It is the *resumé* of this work too long and too involved to publish entirely, which I wish to present here" (p. 32).

Teachings thus recognised, differentiated and honoured from those of our poor mundane thought, naturally make claim or pretence to greater weight and receive a credence they are not of themselves likely to substantiate.

Through more than half of the book runs the main theme of reincarnation, which is precisely a "truth" or an opinion derived from this "superior" source. Re-incarnation and its cognate beliefs are peculiarly of the East, and, to the writer's mind (to name but one preliminary objection), are too much mixed up with and even productive of the outrageous "caste" system of India to be other than alien and hostile to the Western mind, with its central conviction of the equality of all men before God, and its beliefs in Justice and Democracy, or rather in the root-truths underlying those conceptions. The world, as interpreted by re-incarnation, seems rather a penal establishment than a mode of spirit expression; one too, with a lasting, useless treadmill! If re-incarnation be "necessary" because otherwise our earthly conditions are unfair and most desirable compensations lacking, it is not shown how any double dose of these can rectify them. If indeed a first visit into earth-life (and there must be some first visits) sets up and reveals gross favouritism of some and the intolerable miseries of many, repeated visits may only accentuate these. For, if old offences are expiated, new ones are certain to be created. Sin and temptation exist for all, and, guarded on one side, may we not fall on the other?

Re-incarnation, with its rigid formalism and grinding out of a meticulous righteousness, its inevitable expiation and its recurring, incessant penal sufferings, seems very much such an escape as is made from the frying pan to the fire. One might well prefer Calvinism to that; for there at least an illimitable Fount of Mercy can soften logical rigidities. But is there not in all this rather the piercing recognition of our darkest problems as in the tragedy of ancient Greece? This is not to see Life whole. The reader sighs for the clear, fresh, modern presentment of life, its gaiety, laughter and humour as in the broad humanity of Shakespeare.

Says M. Denis (or is it "Jerome de Prague"—the author's "guide and friend of the past and present" among these wiser Beings?):—

"Re-incarnation affirmed by the voices from Beyond is the only rational form under which we can admit the reparation of faults and the gradual evolution of being. Without it there is no conception possible of a great Being governing the universe; nor can we feel a satisfying moral sanction of existing conditions" (p. 125).

Apart from the notorious fact that "voices from the Beyond" are many and various and not by any means in accord—

* "Life and Destiny," by LEON DENIS; translated by Ella Wheeler Wilcox. (Gay and Hancock, 6s. net.)

ance with each other, those statements, though monumental in their aggressiveness, are simply untrue. The Western world has done very well, under both Paganism and Christianity, in its conceptions of a "great moral Being governing the universe" and of the reparation of faults and the gradual evolution of being, without troubling its head with re-incarnation, or even seeing the least necessity for it. And there is more than a likelihood that with world acceptance of re-incarnation (were that possible), and its concomitant deductions and conclusions there will emerge for unhappy humanity, just as in poor caste-ridden India, the Brahman the "thrice favoured," who is practically deity, with his anti-social, insufferable claims and pretences and privileges to the fat things of life. *Absit omen!*

R.C.

A WAR PROPHECY EXAMINED.

Notwithstanding the general failure of the war prophets there have been a few predictions which have been signally fulfilled. In particular we may cite the very accurate prophecy given through Mrs. Piper in the year 1899 and recorded by Dr. Hodgson. It is dealt with in the preface to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's book, "The New Revelation."

Some of the other prophecies have been of a curiously mixed character. Thus, in February, 1918, "Reason," the American magazine, edited by Dr. B. F. Austin, published a prophecy stated to have been given through Mrs. Mary C. Vlasek, Pastor of the Society of Spiritual Truthseekers of Los Angeles, on December 31st, 1917, in the presence of 141 people assembled in the Temple of the Society. We take from it a few of the predictions:—

A revolution in Spain, which country would not take part in the war.

France, when appearing to be on the point of losing, would be saved by one who would be raised up to lead her armies to victory. In the end she would make great gains of territory and "broaden her boundary lines." Break up of Austrian Empire, its provinces becoming republics.

Greece to suffer from earthquakes and to become the subject of invading armies.

England, instead of gaining from the conflict, would gain more from peace, but her colonies would some time after peace separate themselves from her and become independent. (The latter portion of this, of course, relates to the future.)

The United States would grapple with the liquor question. Many States would vote against the liquor trade, and by the year 1920 there would be no more production of alcoholic beverages.

There would be a great growth of spiritual phases of mediumship. "Many men will seek as they have never sought before to know if their loved ones live, and there will a greater outpouring of the Spirit on this planet than has ever been." In short, there would be a great union of all cults and religions, and a mighty spiritual awakening.

SPIRITUALISM: CAUTIONS AND CONCESSIONS.

WE take the following from "Life and Work" (the Church of Scotland magazine) for June. It is fair comment, and the advice given is not without value:—

Under the leadership of such men as Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle the propaganda of Spiritualism has been making very rapid progress. More than once a caution has been offered in these pages to those who would dabble in the subject without sufficient equipment. Of course the phenomena ought to be investigated. It is never in the interests of truth that any doctrine claiming to be true should be refused an examination of its claims. But it is not every one who has the gifts or the training that make a scientific investigator. By the admission of every one, friend and foe, there are risks of mental strain or unsettlement in dealing with the occult; and not a few fine natures have been irretrievably injured by invading a region with which they were temperamentally unfitted to cope. Let all the high-strung and nervously delicate beware of an inquiry which a man of stolid constitution, like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, may perhaps pursue with impunity. This statement must not be interpreted as a judgment upon the reality or unreality of the alleged phenomena of Spiritualism; the writer of this paragraph has not sufficient information to warrant such a judgment. But there is need for a grave warning against the intrusion into the realm of spirit manifestations by those who are unsuited for such experiments.

THE men with ideas are never in a hurry. — FRANCIS GRIERSON.

As through the hard rock go the branching silver veins, as into the solid land run the creeks and gulfs of the eternal sea, so the lights and influences of the upper world sink silently through the earth's atmosphere, so does the world of spirit invade the world of men,

TO-MORROW'S SOCIETY MEETINGS.

Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour-street, W.1. — 6.30, Mr. Horace Leaf. June 22nd, Rev. Susanna Harris.
The London Spiritual Mission, 13, Pembridge-place, W.2. — 11 and 6.30, Mr. Percy Street. Wednesday, June 18th, at 7.30, Mrs. Ida Rolleston.

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

Reading.—*16a, Blagrove-street.* — 11.30 and 6.45, addresses by Mr. A. Punter.

Peckham.—*Lausanne-road.* — 11.30, circle; 7, Mrs. E. Marriott. Thursday, 8.15, Miss Ellen Conroy, M.A.

Brighton.—*Athenaeum Hall, North-street.*—11.15 and 7, Mr. Percy Scholey, addresses; 3, Lyceum. Wednesday, 8, public meeting, Mr. Hoskins.

Woolwich and Plumstead.—*Perseverance Hall, Villas-rd., Plumstead.*—7, Mr. Symons, address. Wednesday, at 8, Mrs. Orlowski, address and clairvoyance.

Holloway.—*Grovedale Hall (near Highgate Tube Station).*—11, Mr. Drinkwater; 3 and 7, Lyceum anniversary. Wednesday, 18th at 8, Mrs. Neville. Saturday, 21st, at 8, special address by Prof. J. Coates.

Camberwell.—*Windsor-road, Denmark Hill, S.E.15.*—11, Mrs. Edith Marriott; 6.30, Mrs. E. A. Cannock. Wednesday, 17th, 7.30, public service. Sunday, 22nd, 11 and 6.30, Mrs. Butterworth, of Barrow and Lancaster.

Brighton Spiritualist Brotherhood—Old Steine Hall.—11.30 and 7, addresses, Prof. Jas. Coates; clairvoyance, Miss Struthers. Monday, 7.45, psychic readings, Mr. A. Maskell. Thursday, 7.45, enquirers' questions and clairvoyance. 22nd, Mrs. Marriott. Secure your tickets at once for Sir A. Conan Doyle's lecture at Hove Town Hall, July 10th. 5/- to 1/3, from Old Steine Hall, or Lyon and Hall's music warehouses, Brighton and Hove.

Spiritualist Services are held in LONDON on Sundays as follows.

	A.M.	P.M.
*Battersea, 45, St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction ...	11-30	6-30
*Brixton, 143a, Stockwell Park Road ...		7-0
Camberwell, People's Church, Windsor Road, Denmark Hill ...	11-0	6-30
*Clapham, Reform Club, St. Luke's Road ...	11-0	7-0
Croydon, Gymnasium Hall, High Street ...	11-0	7-0
*Ealing, 5a, Uxbridge Road, Ealing Broadway ...		7-0
Forest Gate, E.I.S.A., Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove ...		7-0
*Fulham, 12, Lettice Street, Munster Road ...	11-15	7-0
Hackney, 240a, Amhurst Road ...		7-0
Harrow and Wealdstone, Gayton Rooms, Station Road, Harrow ...		7-0
*Kingston, Assembly Rooms, Bishop's Hall, Thames Street ...		6-30
Lewisham, The Priory, 410, High Street ...		6-30
*Little Ilford, Third Avenue Corner, Church Road ...		6-30
London Spiritual Mission, 13b, Pembridge Place, Bayswater, W. ...	11-0	7-0
*Manor Park Spiritual Church, Shrewsbury Road ...	11-0	6-30
Marylebone, Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour Street ...		6-30
*Peckham, Lausanne Hall, Lausanne Road ...	11-30	7-0
*Plaistow, Spiritualists' Hall, Bræmar Road ...		6-30
*Plumstead, Perseverance Hall, Villas Road ...		7-0
Richmond, Castle Assembly Rooms ...		7-0
*Stratford, Idmiston Road, Forest Lane ...		7-0
*Tottenham, "The Chestnuts," 684, High Road ...		7-0
*Upper Holloway, Grovedale Hall, Grove-dale Road ...	11-15	7-0
*Wimbledon, 4 and 5, Broadway ...		6-30
*Lyceum (Spiritualists' Sunday School) at 3 p.m.		

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