

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATSOEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!"—Paul.

No. 2,052.—VOL. XL.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

The Jeremiahs are abroad to-day prophesying the coming of great woes, and there is more than one Solomon Eagle crying of impending calamities. But there are optimists also, and some of them are dreaming of world construction and Utopia. The Utopia makers, indeed, are many, and if each of them regards his scheme as the only one likely to result in a new world-order, we need not on that account reject it. All the contributions of the idealists are doubtless of some use in the edifice which is being built up. Behind the limited power and vision of the human workers are great Cosmic forces—the Universal Intelligence selects and rejects with unerring judgment. None of the Utopian schemes probably is entirely fallacious. Every one contains the germ of an idea, and the good in it is rigidly conserved. The defects are mainly due to artificiality and mechanicalism. We are evidently not ripe for a world in which everybody is to be well-fed and comfortable. This world, as a spirit communicator once remarked, was "not meant to be perfect." Adversity is a prime condition for evolution, which suggests that to-day we should be evolving at a considerable rate! We have here, as the Apostle said, "no abiding city." But there is such a thing as "living by the way." As "R. L. S." put it, "It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive."

* * * *

True, there are some rare souls who find life something of a Utopia even as it is. Like Mark Tapley, they revel in hardship, peril and adventure. These things give a spice to their lives. They would find a comfortable world dull and tedious, and so indeed would all of us—after a time. Professor James tells how he once took up his abode in a model town in America. It was designed to shut out every element of danger and disorder; it aimed to abolish everything of a disagreeable character. James lived there for some time and then revolted. He found it an impossible place. He could not breathe freely in it, and it was a relief to get back once more to the rough and tumble world of every day, with its "moral precipitousness." There is, indeed, something in humanity too great for mathematically-perfect states. It cannot endure the precision of a logically-planned existence. We have sometimes thought that although many weary souls to-day are longing for rest and calm and security, their real need might be summed up in the words, "more life." "This life of which our nerves are scant." Well, the life is pouring in, and as soon as we are sufficiently receptive we shall be filled with its energy, braced up and made whole to take a part of the great procession of humanity.

In "A Theory of the Mechanism of Survival: The Fourth Dimension and Its Applications" Mr. W. Whately Smith, of the Psychical Research Society, gives us a well-reasoned study of fourth dimensional space as applied to some of the facts of Psychical Research and also to questions of Time and Prevision. Necessarily Mr. Whately Smith's book is mainly one for the advanced student of psychical phenomena, and needs in the reader some acquaintance with mathematics to make it quite clear. We do not propose at the moment to go critically into the questions which it raises. We found it interesting and highly suggestive, being not at all opposed to the idea of approaching these subjects from the mechanistic standpoint, for wherever there is life there is mechanism, and to understand that mechanism is part of the task before us—some of us, at any rate, whose talents lie in that direction. There is a good deal in the book which should be of use to students generally, for Mr. Whately Smith deals with Dr. Crawford's experiments (of which he can speak as a witness), clairvoyance, levitation, Eusapia Palladino and Slade, the ultra-violet light, and cognate matters. The book is published by Kegan Paul and Co. at 5/- net.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF SPIRITUALISM.

A PLEA FOR LEADERSHIP.

BY THE REV. G. VALE OWEN.

There is much wisdom in the leading article on page 140, and that part of it which I trust will be especially taken note of at the present time is the intimation that we must go forward. We must move, indeed, but with the right sort of movement. The traveller on the joy-wheel moves, but, for all that, he does not get much forwarder. It is, no doubt, a most pleasing sensation, especially as the other fellow is doing all the work—the O.F. in this case being the engine. The joy-rider himself is really not moving, but being moved. In other words, he is a drag on the wheel. And the wheel is not over pleased with the arrangement, for the efforts of the wheel have a centrifugal tendency. He still maintains the customary glad eye, however, and round and round he goes regardless.

Also he does not guide. The man at the helm of a ship guides. And he has to put his back into it if the job is to be done properly. Moreover, he has to keep the same pace with the ship. True, he does not move of himself any more than he of the glad eye does. Still he does his bit in his own way. Moving with the ship, he is really part of the whole business, which would not be very satisfactory if he let go of the rudder and sat down to joy-ride on the deck.

Another simile. If the guide be an explorer, he must go ahead of the adventurers, his comrades. That is the only way he can lead them satisfactorily. And to do it at all he must set his jaw forward and take risks.

To come back to the starting point, and so to follow for once the bad example of the glad-eyed joy-rider; let us remember that, in its present phase, the spiritual movement is an exploration, an adventure which needs the lead of those who dare to go forward in all kinds of weather. There are multitudes waiting, ready to follow, nay, where a leader is found they are not slow to help him shoulder the burden. Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. Conan Doyle have proved this manfully.

Now, in respect of individuals and of institutions, including the Press, who and which will lead? Not the Conservative, not the Moderate Liberal, but, for good or ill, the Radical and Hot Gospeller. These will make mistakes, no doubt. But they will lead. Moreover, the people will follow them, and I am one of those people.

Yes; to use the excellent words in the leading article, "We must expand our activities."

THE BEARING OF SPIRITUALISM ON THE NEEDS OF THE TIMES.

ADDRESS BY MR. STANLEY DE BRATH ("V.C. Desertis").

"Has Spiritualism any bearing on the needs of the times, and if so what is the nature of that bearing?" are questions which must have exercised many minds of late. They were very ably answered in the address to which we listened in the hall of the London Spiritualist Alliance on the evening of the 29th ult. Mr. Henry Withall, who presided, said, in introducing the lecturer, that while it was true that the foundations of Modern Spiritualism were laid in America, in this country at least it largely owed the firm corner-stones on which it rested to four men—Sir William Crookes, Wm. Stainton Moses, Edmund Dawson Rogers, and the speaker of that evening. They saw the need that people's minds should be prepared before entering on the investigation of the phenomena, and to their careful and self-denying labours he thought it was mainly due that the movement was saved from an inrush of curiosity-hunters—a serious danger to any cause. He himself felt it a great honour to appear on the platform with the author of "Psychic Philosophy."

The following is a synopsis of Mr. De Brath's address:—

One of the great needs of the time is that religion should be restored to the life of the people, and be much more natural, joyful, and even commonplace. This was so formerly in the times of the Miracle Plays in the Churches. The religion thus portrayed was not (it is true) of a very exalted kind. The Deity, in a green coat with attendant Virtues, appeared on the stage, while the Devil in black tights with horns and hoofs played pranks. But no one was ashamed of religion, whether serious or frivolous; the Church was absolutely right; the Turk (then at the gates of Vienna) was the enemy of God; war was a high adventure, not very costly in money or life; and no sort of doubt troubled the men of that age. In Elizabeth's day the religious concepts remained much the same; the temper was that reflected in Kingsley's "Westward Ho!"

With the Civil War the Puritan became dominant in contrast with the roystering Cavalier to whom religion was little more than a form of loyalty to the King. In the Georgian era orthodoxy was almost a Tory badge. Women and children were degraded into beasts of burden in the mines. Estimating religion by ethical consciousness, the men who saw these things without indignation could hardly be said to have had any. The speaker here quoted Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Cry of the Children," and alluded to the work of Lord Shaftesbury in connection with the Factory Acts. The Oxford movement was an attempt to revitalise religion by a return to past ecclesiasticisms.

FACTS AND DOCTRINES.

Science was the enemy, not of religion, but of ecclesiasticism, but scientists, being men of like passions with theologians, went much further, alleging that Matter generates life, that "soul" is a mere name for the functions of the body, that God is a figment of the mind, and that the law of human progress is the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. They shut their eyes to the obvious, that science in the hands of men of ill-will may be a great curse. They and the theologians alike thought in terms of doctrines.

Concurrently with this doctrinalism on both sides, there grew up the great body of supernormal facts known as Spiritualism. These are now recognised as facts. Telepathy—influence from mind to mind—is the normal mode of communication in the Unseen; and it is no wonder that it should operate occasionally between incarnate souls, or be the means of communication from the discarnate. The Paris materialisations were recently seen by over one hundred men of science. Psychic photographs are recognised; and exteriorisation of power is a commonplace at seances. Men who are guided by pure science—like Sir Wm Crookes, Alfred Russel Wallace, Professor Hyslop, Professor Crawford, and Sir Oliver Lodge—and hundreds who are guided by pure common-sense, are agreed in referring the phenomena to discarnate souls.

All these things indicate a power in Nature or Man which differs from all other discoveries in that the phenomena show life and intelligence. This is the starting point. Any theory to command respect must cover all the facts, not merely a small group like automatisms. It is no use saying "Oh! it is all telepathy"—telepathy won't give a materialisation. It is no use saying, "The theory of the Subconscious Mind has given the death-blow to the spiritist hypothesis." The subconscious mind plays a large part, but if it can cause a medium to speak in a language he has never heard or tell things with which neither he nor the sitter has even been in contact, either consciously or unconsciously, then it has powers which leave our humble claims for the human spirit far behind. Let the gentlemen who put forward these theories prove their "explanations"; as it is, they remind me of the boy who said to the teacher who was expounding Shakespeare to him, "I understand it well enough till you begin to explain." Any theory, to be valid, must also fit with all the facts (I do not say the theories) of

physical science, the course of history, the growth and transformations of Christianity, the authentic history of the compilation of the Sacred Scriptures, the course of Evolution, the science of Comparative Religion, and the problems of the day.

THE SPIRIT AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS SELF.

Now I venture to assert that the only theory which complies with these conditions is that the Mind which has directed the course of animal evolution is in organic contact with the human mind, in which the subconscious rises into human consciousness; that the subconscious Self is the real Self; that the normal personality is only that subconscious or sub-liminal Self limited by its conditions of race, education, and environment generally; that it survives the body and carries into its larger personality that lesser personality with which some of us are so well satisfied. Its conditions being etheric and not material, it is impossible that those conditions should be expressed in direct language. It speaks to us of these things by symbolism. It always has spoken by symbolism, whether in the Book of Genesis, the Apocalypse of St. John, or the Vale-Owen script. This subconscious Self, which is no other than the human spirit, has an etheric body which stands in much the same relation to its environment as our bodies to our environment. But it is (according to its grade of development) in more or less conscious contact with the Supreme Spirit who, as Isaiah said, dwelleth in the high and holy place and inhabiteth Eternity.

But it is still the person we knew here, and the familiar communications which come to us from across the borderline restore to religion its naturalness and inevitableness, and contradict nothing whatever in the realm of physical science, whose limited and negative deductions result only from a very restricted selection of data and a small area of investigation. The Unseen has become a familiar thing, not an awe-inspiring one; it is real, it is joyful, it is homely, and meets the needs of everyday people.

How does it meet the needs of the world at large? The great need is Peace—the cessation of strife not by exhaustion, but by Concord. This can come only by the acceptance of a spiritual principle. Harmony is not unison; that was the idea of the past—that all men should profess one creed and think alike. It should be with us as it is with an orchestra in which every instrument has different tone, compass, and capacity, playing different notes but in one time and expressing one theme.

All civilisation is thought externalised. Institutions, books, sciences, human laws, all exist as thoughts before they are externalised, and to produce harmony they must be guided by one principle. The present civilisation is the externalisation of our thoughts of Conflict.

The harmonising principle is that the essential Self is a spirit, and that the law of its development is co-operation in good will. Three categories of Reality are known to man—Matter, composed of atoms and molecules, very refractory to transformation; Energy (electricity, heat, light, etc.), very readily transformable; and Mind, which whether human or superhuman, conscious or subconscious, directs Energy.

Materialists say that all the phenomena of Energy and Mind proceed from Matter, and therefore the law of Evolution is Conflict. Spiritualists support the converse process—that as Matter is a product of Energy, the atom being composed of grouped electrons, there is reason to think that all that is may be referred ultimately to Mind or Will; so that the world is the "representation" of Will, human and Divine, as its primal source.

THE MENACE OF MATERIALISM.

The Materialist view is the one put before the working classes in thousands of cheap pamphlets, as the latest conclusion of pure science, telling them that survival of death is false, religion a device of the propertied classes, and that there is no God. The purpose is to lead to the inference that Man may do what he will without fear and without hope. This view is put forward in preparation for the class-war, and the only countervailing influences are the Spiritualist societies of the North of England, which are doing brave work under great difficulties.

Till the spiritual principle prevails there cannot be co-operation; and to those who have no religion that principle can only come through science. Let it be shown scientifically that the soul is a reality and does survive; then all men will draw the inference that the law of human progress is co-operation in good will.

But we must beware lest we make this an excuse for reactionary thought and spiritual apathy, and think we can quietly revert to pre-war conditions. Nor should we judge the whole Labour movement from hot-headed partisans. The working classes are far more educated than they were. Speaking as an engineer I tell you that the skill required to make such instruments as the thermionic valve for wireless telegraphy is far higher than the skill of the average public school and University man in any direction whatsoever. It is not reasonable to expect workers to be content with present conditions.

What we may look for is that if no attempt be made to reduce wages when prices fall, they on their side will abandon the suicidal policy of restriction of output. That is the practical co-operation which realises the spiritual principle. Prices fall by abundance of production and in no other way.

Under "nationalisation" or any other nostrum they will rise heavily. This can be proved in very few words. Under nationalisation men expect to be paid by the week irrespective of output, and they are induced to support nationalisation by promises of "a good time." I have yet to meet the man to whom "a good time" does not mean less work and more pay.

The whole of the supernormal facts reveal a principle—the existence of Spirit and its guidance both of the race and of individual lives, subconsciously in the former case, and, if we will, consciously in the latter. When that principle is accepted the result must be harmony, together with perfect freedom of thought. It will bring the Peace so much needed to-day.

But Spiritualism must be quite unsectarian. A militant Spiritualist once said to a friend whom he thought lukewarm in controversy: "Why don't you stand up for the Truth?" His friend rejoined: "My dear fellow, if I obey the truth I expect Truth to stand up for me." That seems to me the right attitude for Spiritualists—demonstration, not controversy; and let us speak as learners, not as teachers, nor claim to be guides in that undiscovered country which we have only just begun to explore.

The meeting concluded with a cordial vote of thanks to the lecturer.

THE LATE MR. JAMES STEVENSON.

With the decease on the 19th ult. of Mr. James Stevenson, of Dundee—referred to in our "Lighthouse" page last week—the scanty ranks of the remaining pioneers of the Spiritualist movement in Scotland have been still further depleted. Born in Dundee in 1850, Mr. Stevenson, early in his career, interested himself in the religious life of the town. He was for many years a prominent member of the Rev. George Gilfillan's Church and later was one of the founders of the Gilfillan Memorial Church which, curiously enough, was the place in which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle so recently addressed the citizens of Dundee on "Spiritualism." Mr. Stevenson was first attracted to our subject in 1895 through some newspaper references to the subject and the perusal of two books lent him by the Rev. David Macrae, with whom at that time he was closely in touch, having been for twelve years the secretary of his Church. Attracted by the teachings set forth in these books Mr. Stevenson pursued his investigations until he had proved the truth of the subject for himself. His own mediumship developed quickly, the principal phases being automatic writing and trance speaking. By means of the former he was able to give Mr. Macrae several spirit messages, but though recognising his transparent honesty Mr. Macrae attributed the messages to the work of Mr. Stevenson's subliminal self. Mr. Stevenson retorted that in that case his subliminal self must be an arrant liar. The upshot of it was that Mr. Stevenson severed his connection with the Church in 1896, and in recognition of his long and ungrudging service he was presented with an illuminated address and a purse of sovereigns. In the same year, along with eighteen others, Mr. Stevenson formed the Dundee Society of Spiritualists, of which body he became the first President, an office he retained for twenty-one years. His energies were not confined to Dundee, for he took a prominent part in the inauguration and development of the Scottish Spiritualist Alliance. He was always a strong advocate for a high standard of platform work. Himself a fine trance speaker, he served the Scottish societies with much acceptance. His chief control was his former minister, the Rev. George Gilfillan, and so clear and distinct was the personality of this man through Mr. Stevenson that those who knew him in earth life had no difficulty in recognising him. Some of Mr. Stevenson's finest addresses were received by means of automatic writing, one of the most beautiful being entitled "Memory's Garden," which was subsequently published in pamphlet form.

Mr. Stevenson's body was interred in the East Cemetery, Dundee, on the 22nd ult. At the request of the family the services at the house and grave were conducted by Mr. J. M. Stewart Vice-President of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists, assisted by Mr. David Urquhart, Vice-President, Dundee Society of Spiritualists.

MOTHER JULIANA OF NORWICH.—All true students of mysticism in its deeper significance are acquainted with the name, and some of them with the writings of Mother Juliana of Norwich (1373). These will welcome the edition of her writings ("Revelations of Divine Love") just published by Messrs. Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd. (5/- net), with a preface by Father Tyrrell, S.J., as revealing another facet of the great Illumination which has come to so many minds in so many forms, high and low, learned and simple—revelations of Wisdom or of Love, or both blended in different measures. The key to the interpretation of Mother Juliana's revelations is well expressed by the writer of the preface to the present volume in a citation from the seeress's own words, "Wouldst thou wit thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Wit it well: Love was His meaning. Who showed it thee? Love. Wherefore showed He it thee? For Love." We recall the words of Diotima, the teacher of Socrates: "Love bridges the chasm."

MR. F. BLIGH BOND ON THE NEW REVELATION.

Mr. F. Bligh Bond contributed to the "Bristol Times" on April 24th some interesting impressions of Sir A. Conan Doyle's meeting in the Colston Hall a few days previously. From Mr. Bligh Bond's article we take the following extract:—

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's address on Tuesday evening was something of a portent. Nothing surely could be more indicative of the vast and silent change in the public attitude towards a subject but recently so despised and abhorrent to the majority of conventional thinkers than to see the huge hall crowded with people of a normal and intelligent type.

No one, I am sure, could have listened impartially to the lecturer without feeling the spiritual motive which impregnated his words. Equally also, no one could fail to be struck by the consciousness that what his audience so responsively acclaimed was the evidence of that same spiritual motive. Herein, it seems to me, the lecturer was but giving effect to the apostolic injunction (I. Pet. iii., 15) to be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."

Where Sir Arthur was on soundest ground was in his appeal to the facts of the apostolic period, when the spiritual gifts were common in the Church. The parallels which he established, and which cannot be successfully controverted, between those gifts of the early Church and the manifestations of modern times, are yet more obvious upon closer study of the patristic records.

Let me give a few examples. It is not generally known that in the early Church there were trained clairvoyants attached to each congregation. Three widows, discreet women, as we learn from the ancient book, "The Apostolic Constitutions," were delegated to act for each congregation; one for the gift of ministry to the sick, and two for "revelations." Here we have a precise and accurate parallel to the modern trance-clairvoyant. Again, when we read the words of Tertullian, that very stern and orthodox Father, we find him calling upon Marcion to exhibit the exercise of spiritual gifts which he says are forthcoming from his own side more easily, and these gifts include trance-utterance in "amentia" or unconsciousness, prophecy, prediction of the future, and revelation of the secrets of the heart. And Irenæus, writing about the end of the second century, says:—

"We hear of many brethren in the Church possessing prophetic gifts and speaking through the Spirit in all kinds of tongues, and bringing to light for the general advantage the hidden things of men, and setting forth the mysteries of God."

As to the "discerning of spirits," Paul insists with the utmost emphasis (I. Cor., iv., 4-11; xiv., 23) that whereas all these gifts come from God, at the same time they can also come from evil spirits and the listeners must decide for themselves as to this. There is an apparent contradiction here of which the apostle does not seem to have been sensible.

With the early Church, Faith was not mere belief. It was an apprehension of spiritual realities (see Hebrews xi., 1) for which a man would cheerfully sacrifice all earthly possessions, even life itself. This apprehension, humanity earnestly desires to regain, and if the professional exponents of the Faith have no longer the knowledge or the power to give it, then Humanity will claim it, and will storm the gates of heaven for itself.

When the Faith was most real, the Church was most truly a democracy; with the usurpation of spiritual power in an oligarchy of bishops, the spiritual gifts disappeared. If I mistake not, the true meaning of such meetings as that of last Tuesday is the re-awakening of the spiritual democracy, with all that it implies.

It is a strange and fearful thing to behold in these days the official Churchmen driven into an unnatural alliance with the materialists in their fight against this re-awakening demand for spiritual freedom. This attitude, it is to be feared, is likely to react upon the professional exponents of religion in a manner as yet hardly calculated—namely, by a further diminution of spiritual authority. It is too late to stifle the independent growth of the new life, and it were well for the Church that she recognise the inevitable.

THE fourth article of Mr. De Brath's series on "Spiritualism and Religion" will be published next week.

ONE must be oneself and not the reflection of others is the main thought we get from William Kiddier's "The Painter's Voice" (Fifield, 2/6 net). Not that Mr. Kiddier dwells on that thought but because the reader feels that here is a man who is striving to get behind the conventional and utter his deepest spiritual intuitions (to him intuition is far greater than reason) in briefest and simplest terms. Truth to him is a matter of few words. "Truth," says this painter-poet, "may come upon my canvas with a few touches, but 'tis gone with one touch too many." Alas, how many of us are not content with adding even that one touch! This impressive little book is dedicated "To my son killed in action."

London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., 6, QUEEN SQUARE, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W. C.1.

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THE SPIRIT CIRCLE.

SOME THOUGHTS ON SPIRIT MESSAGES.

The unpublished automatic writings in the Note Books of the Rev. William Stainton Moses ("M.A. (Oxon)"), which have been typewritten and bound for the L.S.A. library, have had many readers. Looking through them the other day we came upon some passages of more than ordinary interest. They offer solutions to many questions we still hear hotly debated. In reading one of them we recall the keen interest which Mr. Andrew Lang felt in the "fire test." One of the last letters from that brilliant Scottish writer which came into our hands was on that very question. Here is a statement on the subject from Note Book No. 1:—

The fire test is done by mesmeric power which throws round the object an aura on which the flame has no effect. It is analogous to the spirit chemistry by which we resolve the particles of solid matter. You will understand more one day. All the control exercised by spirits over the elements of your earth is a mystery to you. We could not explain it save by analogy, and vaguely. Your rude senses cannot recognise aura which surrounds everything in nature. It is that which we use.

That explanation is consistent with many others which have come through and are still received from the other side concerning the methods by which spirits produce effects in the material world, although cut off from that direct access to the physical plane which we who are spirits in the body possess. It is true the explanations convey little to us at present—in fact, the full secret is incommunicable—but we are learning more and more as we go on, not so much by the accumulation of knowledge as by the thinning of the gross veil of the material senses.

Here is another message relating to this same question:—

It is not easy for us to explain to you or for you to comprehend that there is in controlling spirits a sort of vital force or will force, as ye call it, which enables them to control the elemental forces which are evolved from the circle. A circle is composed of different organisms each with its own magnetic aura, each with its own positive and negative will-power, each giving off a different influence. The influence-aura, or what you please to name it, of the medium is one which amalgamates with and binds the rest together, and enables us to use the emanations. Consequently no circle without a medium is of use to us, though the elements may all be there. These are the forces which are generated. Now the spirits are as ye are. Some there are who are born to command among you; some to yield obedience; some are passive, others active agents in your world. So with us. We are intelligences of varying powers or varying capacities, of different degrees of development, of different degrees of influential and impressive power. So we have our several works proportioned to our several powers. Some command; others work in subservience. Some govern the hands of the missionary spirits, and preside over the bands who come to minister on earth.

These statements are borne out by countless communications which have been made since these messages were received by "M.A. (Oxon)" in 1875. We are assured of their truth.

Let us continue the quotation:—

Each circle is to spirit gaze a centre of light, visible from afar, frequented by crowds who fain would talk with the denizens of earth. Some of these spirits are powerful in their ability to use the elements. They are, in truth, more powerful in that capacity than the more highly developed spirits. In proportion as we progress we become less able to manage the elemental forces, and resort more to elemental impression and distinct intellectual guidance and direction. It is the grosser spirits who communicate most readily to strangers. . . . It is these grosser spirits who are able to use best the elemental forces. They are not bad nor evil in their intent, but ignorant, rude and undeveloped. They

seize greedily all opportunities, and are the authors of false and foolish messages, erring partly through ignorance, partly through folly.

There is matter for profitable reflection there. It is, of course, a point of view—not final nor necessarily authoritative—but in our experience generally true.

With all its mysteries, the spirit world is a very human world, and the human world here has its mysteries, too, as all who view it thoughtfully must realise. Neither here nor there are the elements of mind and affection always well balanced. Sometimes the heart outruns the head, and we have loving counsels that lack something of wisdom. The loving spirit would fain save those whom it loves on earth from ordeals which the wiser spirit sees are necessary for the permanent welfare of the incarnate soul. Or, it may be, some intellectually ambitious spirit urges its earth friends to the carrying forward of schemes which, however well-meant, are an invasion of their legitimate claims to dispose of their own lives in their own way. Self-sacrifice is good, but there are times when it is foolish and needless.

Let us who are drawn to study and follow spiritual and psychical matters remember that the great end of character-building is self-mastery, self-direction, the command of destiny, always, of course, in co-operation with those higher forces which are beyond human power and scrutiny. So fortified, the spirit circle may be made a blessing and an inspiration. But to the drifter, the careless, the self-seekers, it may be, like all the great things of life when abused, a means of mischief and even catastrophe—not irremediable, of course, but deplorable and needless, for one of the tragedies of life here is the vast amount of pain and misery that need not be, and would not be, were humanity wise enough to take its teaching at first hand, from the principles of Nature, rather than slavishly to follow the dictates of man-made custom, tradition, and authority.

THE SOCIETY OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

A CONFERENCE.

BY THE REV. CHARLES L. TWEEDALE (Vicar of Weston).

The suggestion made in your last issue by the Rev. Ellis G. Roberts that a conference of leading Spiritualists should be called before the Lambeth Conference meets is a good one, and I beg to endorse it. For several years past I have advocated in my books and pamphlets the re-establishment of the real and objective "Communion of Saints" as a practice in the Anglican and other Churches. At the present time the Churches are out of all conscious and objective touch with the departed, and with the spirit world, and are unable to give a scrap of objective evidence that the "Communion of Saints," in the sense of communion with the Church Triumphant, is anything more than sentimental imagining or pious make-believe. The time has come in the interests of practical religion to revive the practice of the Communion of Saints, and so put the members of the Churches into conscious and actual communion with the spirit world. I propose that this be the main object of the Conference and that the Society of the Communion of Saints be formed, with branches in every parish, or in connection with each place of worship; such society, while not confined in its membership to members of the Churches, to consist of those who are interested in the subject of survival and the reality of spiritual things, to meet in some convenient place to discuss the subject and to exchange experiences and evidences. There might be Church societies and non-Church societies, all affiliated under the common title and bond of the Society of the Communion of Saints. The meetings might be held in turn at the houses of the various members where the branch society is a small one. Such a society, based on broad lines, could not fail to have a powerful influence in deepening the sense of the reality of the things normally unseen and eternal.

L.S.A. MEETINGS: ALTERATION IN SYLLABUS.

Owing to the postponement of one of Mr. Vanstone's lectures, rendered necessary by the Conan Doyle-McCabe debate, it has been found advisable to extend the session by one week. On Thursday evening, the 20th inst., Mr. Vanstone will conduct the usual group for Devotional Contemplation and give the final lecture of his present series, and on the following afternoon "Morambo," through Mrs. Wallis, will answer written questions. Mr. Vout Peters will give clairvoyant descriptions on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 25th, and the session will close with a social evening on Thursday, the 27th.

FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

We learn with pleasure of the arrival of Mrs. Etta Wriedt, who reached London a few days ago and has now taken up her residence amongst us. Letters for her can be addressed to this office.

We understand that Mr. Percy R. Street, at the instance of his medical adviser, has relinquished all his engagements until October next.

The celebrated French medium, Mademoiselle Eva C., is now on a short visit to London, accompanied by Madame Juliette Bisson. We understand that the Society for Psychical Research is to conduct some investigations into the phenomena of materialisation with this medium. Dr. Schrenck-Notzing and Madame Bisson have already published voluminous reports of their experiments with her.

Dr. Abraham Wallace has returned from his six months' visit to the United States. While there he addressed a number of meetings and met many people prominent in the psychic world. Dr. Wallace says that he was impressed with the general interest in psychic subjects shown all over America, and this interest was mirrored in the Press. We hope shortly to be able to publish an account of Dr. Wallace's impressions during his tour.

Mr. A. Vout Peters, writing from Copenhagen, describes a very successful meeting he addressed there on Sunday, April 25th, at which 2,300 people were present. Mr. Peters spoke on the New Revelation, and followed his address by some clairvoyant descriptions which were all recognised.

Mr. Peters states that he finds a keen interest in Spiritualism in Denmark, especially on the part of the more intellectual people. The Press, which was formerly unsympathetic, now supports the movement, and Mr. Peters was interviewed by the most conservative of the newspapers. Danish friends, we are told, desire to come in closer touch with English Spiritualists.

Few who heard Miss Scatcherd's second lecture on Psychic Photography, a report of which appears elsewhere in this issue, would have believed that she had risen from a sick bed to keep her appointment, returning to bed when it was over. It was a triumph of will power. Her third lecture on May 11th promises to be of exceptional interest.

Sir A. Conan Doyle, in an article entitled "The Shadows on the Screen" in the May number of the "Strand Magazine," examines the extremely interesting hypothesis that past events leave a record upon our surroundings which is capable of making itself felt, heard, or seen for a long time afterwards. Sir Arthur, indeed, declares his belief that such is the explanation for many peculiar experiences which have been placed on record.

Invisible air records, he says, would explain many things which are otherwise inexplicable. "Men of strong nerve have been known to be terrified in certain localities without being able to give any reason. Some horror of the past, unseen by their eyes, may still have impressed their senses. One does not need to be very psychic to get the same result upon an old battlefield."

Sir Arthur adds, "I am by no means psychic myself, yet I am conscious, quite apart from imagination, of a curious effect, almost a darkening of the landscape with a marked sense of heaviness, when I am on an old battlefield. I have been particularly conscious of it on the scenes of Hastings and Culloden, two fights where great causes were finally destroyed and where extreme bitterness may well have filled the hearts of the conquered. The shadow still remains."

After relating a case which he considers clearly fits itself into the theory of a form-picture thrown out at a time of emotion, Sir Arthur goes on to say, "Difficult as my hypothesis may seem, we have to remember that the only conceivable other explanations would be either that the man's self was there in front of the fire after a century of spirit life, or that his thoughts in the spirit world concerning an episode in his earth life were so constant and vivid that they conjured up a picture in the room. The latter explanation might be accepted for a single episode, but when it is a constant matter, and when one remembers how many other reminiscences of earth life such a man must have had, it is difficult to consider it seriously." Sir Arthur has boldly faced a complex side of psychic research, and his observations will be found well worth attention.

The "Globe" (May 3rd) publishes communications from four Bishops of the Church of England on the subject of Spiritualism.

The Bishop of Hereford considers that for ordinary people Spiritualism is "mentally and morally debilitating." The Bishop of Norwich finds nothing in it so strong and comforting as the Fellowship of Christ. The Bishop of Truro is of opinion that "the future is veiled from our eyes." The Bishop of Lichfield agrees with the views recently published by Canon J. M. Wilson wherein he objects to the Spiritualists' exposition of the nature of the next stage of existence revealed to them by the departed through controls.

The Chelmsford "Diocesan Chronicle" publishes what in the circumstances is rather a remarkable paper which was read before the Colchester Clerical Society in February last. It is entitled "The Rumours from the Nearer Beyond," and is by A. C., who is evidently a ripe thinker.

After examining the results achieved or indicated in the field of psychical research, the writer considers that what is therein presented does not enter into competition with the Christian hope as to the future life. That, he says, stands expressed for us in the high vision of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

"But," he continues, "it is conversant with the habit of our modern mind to expect the future to open itself in many stages, and it is the possibility that we have before us some glimpses of the stage next succeeding our earthly life that invests with profound seriousness for Christian men and women the extensive and increasing literature to which I have now ventured to invite your attention; critical certainly, but also respectful, and not without expectancy of benefit for the illumination and purification of our religious faith."

Philippa Forest contributes an excellent article entitled "Are the Dead Dead?" to "Pearson's Weekly" (May 8th). Speaking of the present wave of intense interest in Spiritualism she says that platitudes about "unfathomable mysteries," or "sinful attempts to find out things we are not intended to know," will not check the rising tide. She considers that dogmatists who try to check investigation with portentous pronouncements about "sin" and the "will of God" command as little attention as they deserve.

This writer well points out that a professional medium is by no means necessary to secure results, because unsuspected psychic power is present in many people and only needs right surroundings in which to develop.

She says, "I have seen far greater marvels—if one may call them so—in my own and my friends' drawing rooms than in any professional parlour, and that when only the little circle formed by ourselves was present. Heavy furniture has been moved without contact, lights, scents, raps giving intelligent messages and answers to questions, and in some cases predictions that have been proved true by time, and all the other marvels of séance rooms have manifested themselves many a time and oft." She adds that when they began their sittings they were not aware that they possessed any mediumistic powers.

At the sittings of the Glasgow Presbytery on April 28th the Rev. W. A. Reid asked for the appointment of a small committee to inquire into "the alleged psychic phenomena so much in evidence at the present time." He said that it was a people's question, that thousands were interested in it, and that the Church could not afford to ignore the Spiritualist movement. Mr. Reid added that he knew several ministers and elders in Glasgow who believed they had got messages from the so-called dead, and he knew Church of Scotland ministers who claimed to have the healing touch. After a long discussion the request was refused by 36 votes to 7.

Meetings next week:—

Sunday:—

Miss Maud MacCarthy, 81, Lansdowne-road, 8 p.m.
Mrs. Fairclough Smith, 22, Princes-street, 3.15 p.m.

Monday:—

Croydon, Sir A. Conan Doyle, 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday:—

L.S.A., Mrs. Brittain, 3 p.m.
Stead Bureau, Mrs. Neville, 7 p.m.
Home Circle Federation, Miss Scatcherd, 6, Queen Square, 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday:—

Delphic Club, Miss Ellen Conroy, 5 p.m.
72, High-street, Marylebone, Mr. Ernest Huht, 7 p.m.

Thursday:—

L.S.A., Mr. Vanstone, 7.30 p.m.
Stead Bureau, Rev. Drayton Thomas, 3.30 p.m.

Friday:—

L.S.A., Mrs. Wallis, 4 p.m.
Delphic Club, Thakur Shri, 5 p.m.

THE MEANING OF ALCHEMY.

ADDRESS BY THE REV. A. H. LEE.

• On Wednesday, April 28th, the Rev. A. H. Lee lectured on this subject at the Delphic Club, Regent-street.

The lecturer began by emphasising the ancient origin of the Art in China, Egypt, and amongst the Arabians. It is (he said) perhaps the most occult of all so-called "occult arts," and the most sublime in its true aim. Many impostors have attempted to exploit it for selfish purposes, but many great names are found amongst genuine truth-seekers both on the physical and spiritual side of chemistry. The evidence for actual transmutation of metals may be considered as uncertain, but the late Sir William Crookes had done much to vindicate the alchemical postulate of the "First Matter," which he called "protyle." In France modern alchemy has had a number of followers, led by "Papus." One of the most ancient and important "oracles" is the famous Emerald Tablet of Hermes which sets forth—in symbolical language—the whole theory and practice of the art. The First Matter, known under many divers names, is the mother-stuff or universal Mercury, on the finding and converting of which the success of the would-be alchemist depends. It is that which centrally subsists in all that circumferentially exists from it; it originated with the primal "Fiat Lux" and is "light of light." It can only be seen and cognised inwardly—on its own ground; it is the pure matrix round which aggregates the disordered material of our phenomenal world. The ancients called it Proteus (*protos*, first), the ever-changing, to indicate its plastic, adaptable nature; also Hermes or Mercury, *i.e.*, the vibrant universal Ether which is the medium-vehicle or "messenger of the gods" of interaction between different planes.

No true alchemist professed to transmute what we call natural species, or said that lead *qua* lead could be turned into gold. But they surmised that the subject-matter of all metals (including the *human*), or their "radical moisture," could be withdrawn by skilful "dissolution" and by a certain fermentative process sublimated from lower to higher shapes. This process was always described as threefold, corresponding to the purgative, illuminative and unitive path of the soul in mediaeval mysticism; it was summed up in the formula "Dissolve, Coagulate, Fix": volatilise the fixed, and fix the volatile: spiritualise the body, and corporify the spirit. The chief labour was to find the key, the true "mercury" on which to commence operations.

The three principles with which the alchemist must work are salt (stable being or body), sulphur (expansive power, initiative), and mercury (receptivity), in which we all "stand," but in a fallen state because the two first oppose each other, and perfection can only come by "the shadowy third" being sought and reintegrated, bringing us from the Duadic state ("the fall") into the Triadic. Probably by the "Argent Vive" (mercury or flowing silver) was indicated what is now known as the "astral" body: undoubtedly the hierophants in the Ancient Mysteries and the alchemists later on possessed a secret for the quickening of the regenerative process in this soul-stuff of candidates, which is, and must always be, carefully guarded. The process of fermenting grape-juices into wine, and that of the hen's egg evolving into a chicken, both afford admirable illustrations (in lower kingdoms) of the Royal Art that is open to men who desire a "new birth."

Most alchemical literature is unintelligible or misleading to those who have not the key: the most remarkable English essay in the last century was the "Suggestive Inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery," by Mrs. M. A. Atwood, suppressed on its first publication in 1850, and republished in 1918.

HUSB FUND.—Mrs. Etta Duffus, of Penniwells, Elstree, Herts., acknowledges, with thanks, the following donation: Kaye, £2.

MR. G. R. DENNIS, in his very sensible little work "The Quest of the Unseen: Spiritualism in the Light of Christianity" (J. M. Watkins, 1/- net), seeks, and we think successfully, to set forth the higher aims and ideals of Spiritualism and to show that the subject is worthy of the attention of all serious people, and especially of the Church. He thinks it "safe to say that the growth of the movement will not be hindered by any action that the Church may take; but if she should decide that it is 'subversive of the Christian faith,' and refuse to countenance it, the breach between the Church and modern thought will be still further widened, a result which all her lovers must deplore." He does not suggest that the Church should advocate the indiscriminate practice of spirit communion, but he does urge that the clergy should study the matter earnestly so that they may be able to distinguish between what is good and what is bad in the Spiritualist movement and that the advice they give their flocks may be the result of knowledge and not of prejudice. To aid them in this study he examines the claims of Spiritualism, its teaching regarding the after-life, the benefits and dangers attending the use of psychic gifts, and the witness of the Bible.

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF MRS. HARRIS.

Mr. W. G. Mitchell (3, Harewood Terrace, Darlington), writes:—

I hold no brief for Mrs. Harris or any other medium, but your footnote to the Norwegian report in the last issue of *LIGHT* leads one to surmise that there is another side to the story. It behoves us to be both just and charitable as well as impartial, and to do exactly that which the Norwegian Psychical Research Society have done, *viz.*, speak of Mrs. Harris as we have found her.

I often wonder whether any organised Psychical Research Society, either in our own or any other country, goes quite the right way about getting the best out of the mediums who subject themselves to the hyper-critical investigations of official psychical researchers. No reasonable medium would object to "test conditions" if as much attention was devoted to "conditions" as to "test."

If one goes to a *trumpet* séance to investigate the claims of *trumpet* mediumship, one should not expect necessarily to hear "voices in the air," and it is, to my mind, no more unreasonable to expect a materialised voice to be in some unexplained way connected with the organism of the medium than it is in the case of a fully-materialised form.

British investigators will not fail to recall the very stringent test which Mrs. Harris submitted to in London when she endured the unpleasant experience of conducting a séance with a mouth full of prepared fluid which, had she swallowed or ejected it, would have spoilt the "test." The sympathetic "conditions," however, that accompanied the test, enlisted the hearty co-operation of the medium. The result was, as is well known, that voices were heard in the trumpet and Mrs. Harris's mediumship was a proven fact.

Just one other incident I would like to recall. A few years ago, I and one or two friends had the pleasure of dining with Mrs. Harris at her private apartments in the suburbs of Belfast. After dinner we had an impromptu séance, and it will long linger in my memory. There were about six of us, including Mrs. Harris; the room was in darkness, and Mrs. Harris announced that she would try and keep "normal" so as to be able herself to witness the phenomena. The voices and levitation of the trumpet under the circumstances might not have convinced a sceptic, but when a large globe of phosphorescent light floated round the room, sufficiently brilliant to illuminate the pictures and furniture as it passed, then I think it would have at least caused the most stubborn critic to wonder.

A mandoline was levitated and the illumination from the psychic light showed it plainly to be moving around the room without contact. The next phenomenon was in the form of a brilliant blood-red flame, measuring from nine to twelve inches at its base and rising in height to quite six inches flickering and burning like a human fire. This flame floated around the room and as it approached me I asked Mrs. Harris whether it would be dangerous for me to place my hands near it. She advised me not to do so as she did not understand the nature of the phenomenon. In spite of this advice, I ventured to move my hand towards it, and feeling no heat, I placed my hand into the centre of the flame which played around and between my fingers. I felt I was in the presence of unseen intelligences and the Biblical story of the burning bush came vividly to my mind as did also the phenomena of the Day of Pentecost. It was a wonderful evening.

Mrs. Harris may have her shortcomings—who of us have not?—but in my opinion treat her as a sensitive should be treated, and the genuineness of her mediumship can soon be proved.

"Try a little experiment; think and act the spirit of the thought, 'I consciously radiate goodwill, gladness and happiness' for a week. Put aside your previous attitude and live in, and up to, the spirit of this. Do not argue or growl or be too ridiculously pompous to bring yourself into it, but just go ahead and do it."—"Self Training," by ERNEST HUNT.

WORK THE LAW OF PROGRESS HEREAFTER.—I hear you debating how we live and whether we eat and drink and earn our living. At the risk of giving false impressions let me tell you we have sensations. Every sense you possess is continued on a higher vibration. We eat, drink and we work—that is, all who are progressing do—not for a living, however, but because work is the law of progress.

The first instruction we receive is in the use of our bodily powers. We are not helpless infants, but are more in the condition in which an invalid finds himself after a prolonged illness when again attempting to walk. You know many have the experience of learning over again. With their mature minds it is a question of days, not years—it is here. We come over with our mentality as mature as when we left earth, but with bodies in which we have been living but not using, so we often need to go to school or have special instructors. In the case of one coming over with impaired mentality the period of rest and awakening takes longer.

—"A Soldier Gone West" (edited by H. M. G. and M. M. H.)

PHOTOGRAPHING THOUGHT.

MISS SCATCHERD'S SECOND LECTURE.

We referred last week to Miss Felicia Scatcherd's versatility, but in view of her second lecture on Psychic Photography, delivered at Queen Square on April 27th, under the auspices of the Home Circle Federation, we should prefer to emphasise her surprisingly comprehensive and intimate knowledge of this important branch of psychic research. Students of the subject cannot afford to miss such opportunities of enlightenment unless they are content to stay in the backwaters of scientific investigation. In that case their opinion counts for nothing.

Miss Scatcherd made good use of her personal knowledge of the work of the French scientists Darget, Baraduc, and de Fontenay. She exhibited on the screen pictures of intense interest which had probably never been shown in England before, and in her descriptive remarks she touched on and illuminated many obscure and baffling points. Commandant Darget is the man to whom we owe the discovery of the scientific evidence for the existence of human emanations, and it was he who produced pictures of human thought. Dr. Hippolyte Baraduc, as the result of Darget's experiments, showed that thought could be photographed. Compared with the results achieved by Mr. William Hope at Crewe, those obtained in France seemed trifling, yet the lecturer pointed out what progress our Continental friends had made with their scanty material.

Miss Scatcherd has a happy faculty of getting in touch with her audience, even at times indulging in conversational interludes wherein she seeks to elicit their views on some point under discussion. This absence of formality infused a spirit of camaraderie into the proceedings. There was a large gathering and those who had faced a most unpleasant sample of April weather were amply recompensed.

Mr. Henry Blackwell at the close of the lecture made an interesting contribution to the subject of the evening and illustrated his remarks by showing a few slides which, curiously enough, met and answered several questions raised by members of the audience. They also justified Miss Scatcherd's statement that Mr. Blackwell's pioneer work in this new field of science ought of itself to have compelled scientific recognition of the facts adduced.

The Rev. Walter Wynn, who presided, paid an eloquent tribute to Dr. Ellis Powell's recent address delivered before the I.S.A. on April 15th.

Miss Scatcherd's third and final lecture will be given on Tuesday, May 11th at 6, Queen Square at 7.30 p.m. In this she will show a series of wonderful pictures taken in Paris in connection with the well-known medium Eva C.

Viscountess Molesworth will preside.

L. C.

THE SUFI VIEW OF REINCARNATION.

"The Phenomenon of the Soul" (Sufi Publishing Society, 2/6 net) is the title of the third of the "Voice of Inayat" Series, in which Sherifa Lucy Goodenough embodies in book form the teachings of Inayat Khan, the bearer of the Sufi message to the Western world. Every soul, we are told, is a ray or portion of the Eternal Consciousness confined by the external self, the mind and the body. The soul is compared to a mirror; upon it "is reflected the happiness or misery, the joy or sorrow of the external self, but the soul in itself is neither sad nor joyful. The soul is neither subject to birth and death, nor has it increase or decrease; it neither evolves nor degenerates."

The Sufi religion does not accept the doctrine of reincarnation, and the case against that doctrine is very well argued but when a dogmatic statement on the one side is met by an explanation on the other which makes equal demands on our faith we are left in a quandary. We do not know what has happened to us before we appear on this planet. The Sufi, like the Reincarnationist, does. The soul, it seems, on its journey from the unseen to the seen world, meets the souls which are on their return journey from the seen to the unseen, and so far as it is attuned to those souls it receives impressions from them. "For instance, a soul meeting the soul of Beethoven receives the impression of Beethoven's music, and then is born with the musical qualities of Beethoven. The upholders of the theory of reincarnation say, 'He is the reincarnation of Beethoven.' The Sufi says that if it is meant that Beethoven's mind is reincarnated in him, it may be said; but because the spirit is from the Unlimited, he says it need not necessarily be called reincarnation. Therefore a person of poetical gifts may be born in the family of a statesman where there never before was a poet." It may be so, but we are sadly in want of evidence on the matter. It would be interesting to receive an evidential communication from some departed poet, artist, or musician who had met and impressed a soul on its way from the unseen to the seen, especially if he could let us know when and where that soul was to appear on earth. Maeterlinck, in "The Blue Bird," showed us the hall of the children who were awaiting birth, but there were no souls of the departed there. But we are not criticising Sufi philosophy. Some of it is rather difficult to follow, but there is much in it that is beautiful and attractive.

D. R.

THE TYRANNY OF PHRASES.

A PLEA FOR CLEAR THINKING.

It is well now and again to challenge some popular phrase or saying which is finding a too ready welcome into our literature, and bid it submit to examination before yielding our judgment to its claims. To Mr. Prentice Mulford, I believe, belongs the credit of having first proclaimed that "Thoughts are things," since which time few if any of the kind people who conceive it to be their duty to lecture us on the importance of right thinking have been able to avoid trotting out that oracular pronouncement with more or less frequency. This is not to be wondered at. It is so pleasantly alliterative, and there is such an air of finality about it, as of something which it were high treason to question. So nobody apparently has questioned it, or if anybody has, he or she hasn't ventured to do so in print. I am, therefore, conscious of great presumption in humbly asking what precisely is meant in this connection by "things." According to English dictionaries I find that the word "thing" has, in ordinary language, two general meanings. First, it stands for "whatever can be the subject of consideration or discussion, any separate or distinguishable object of thought." There is no need to tell us that thoughts are "things" in this sense; so are size, form, colour, happiness, misery, ambition, and—the "thing" to which I specially object—ambiguity. The word is all-inclusive. Mrs. Leila Boustead, in her brightly written article, "What is Telepathy?" (p. 2), tells us that thought is imperishable and undying (which is only another way of saying that the human spirit is imperishable and undying), but she adds no emphasis to these adjectives by calling it a "thing"—if the above is all that she means. The other definition is "Whatever exists, or is conceived to exist, as a separate entity." Do our New Thought friends seriously conceive thought to exist as a "separate entity"? Thought, whether it be voluntary or involuntary, is an action of the mind or ego. "I think." To say that it is a separate and independent entity is to say that an action can exist apart from and independent of the actor. It would be just as sensible to say that love can exist without a lover, motion apart from that which moves, and attraction or repulsion without any person or thing attracting or repelling. But the danger is this—that having once accepted such a statement we start building on it. We picture filmy fragments of thought, affection, fear, dislike, and anxiety floating around in the atmosphere, ownerless and objectless, or perhaps (if we possess the weird imaginative powers of a "psychic expert") condensing themselves into elementals or other monstrosities of the most gruesome and nightmarish description. If we would keep our judgment clear, catchy phrases of this kind are, therefore, better avoided. They are mischievous and misleading.

But we cannot always avoid inexact forms of speech. Language is a compromise. We find it convenient to talk about the abstract in terms borrowed from the concrete, but as there is no true analogy between the subjective and immaterial and the objective and material, the terms we employ are necessarily inexact. This does not greatly matter so long as a mental reservation is always present with us. Lose sight of this reservation and the result is confusion. For instance, we speak of "thought transference." It is convenient to do so, but let us be sure of what we mean by the expression. We know quite well what we mean by the transference of any material object. When A transfers a Treasury note from his own possession to that of B, A has it no longer, because he has parted with it to B. But in the case of what is called "thought transference," A does not part with his thought; he has it still, and B's thought only resembles A's in the degree that B's mind is of the same quality as his friend's, and has passed through similar experiences, and been subject to similar influences. The ideas of which B's thought is composed have been latent in his mind all along; they came to him in the first instance by way of sense impressions. All that A has done has been to call up these already existing ideas, and to suggest (whether by agreed upon signs, written or spoken, or in some more immediate and as yet not understood fashion) a certain combination or arrangement of them similar to that which exists in his own mind. No doubt, as in hypnosis, there are ways in which one person's mind can immediately affect another's without the employment of any external agency, but it still holds true that the process bears no true analogy to the transference of any material object.

Again, we take an adjective to which we variously apply the meaning of immaterial and of pure and lofty in character, join it to a substantive that we generally associate with what is material, and talk of the "spiritual world"—adding that "the spiritual world is the world of causes"—when all the time we mean a world that to the people who dwell in it is just as material as ours is to us, a world multitudes of whose inhabitants are not necessarily more spiritual in any lofty sense than are the worst elements of society here. It is only spiritual in the sense that spirits dwell in it, but that is just as true of our present stage of being; and it seems no more likely that the varied phenomena of that world, the trees and flowers, etc., are the causes

of similar phenomena in this than that the men and women there are the causes of the men and women here. The real spiritual realm, the realm of causes, is not something outward and visible at all. It is there, but it is equally here. It is unseen and only known by its working. It is the realm of spirit and life, manifesting itself through nature and through man.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

GERSON.

SPIRITUALISM AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH IN FRANCE.

We have received from the editor of the "Revue Spirite," 42, Rue Saint Jacques, Paris, an intimation of two important foundations in France.

(1) The International Metapsychic Institute has already been noticed in our columns, but its recognition by the French Government as of public utility is a sign of the times which English Spiritualists will note.

(2) A federation of all who support the Spiritualist movement in France and her colonies has been formed under the title of the "Union Spirite."

The former is domiciled at No. 89, Avenue Niel, Paris, where it has an ample and well-fitted laboratory with self-registering machines, a library, reading room, lecture room, and archives. It is, as stated, international, and is under the distinguished presidency of Professor Charles Richet. Its working Council consists of eminent scientific men only. Its Director is Dr. Geley, to whose striking and original work we have often alluded. It will investigate, experiment, and publish, under the guarantee of exactitude given by a Committee of experts, the results of psychic experiments made under its supervision. Above all, it is the first and only body which has definitely undertaken to provide for reliable mediums "a life free from distracting cares, allowing them to devote themselves to the development of their valuable faculties." Suggestions to this effect have often been made here by those who recognise the invaluable and essential services rendered by mediums, often to their pecuniary detriment. Unfortunately these have remained in the realm of good intentions. The subscription is 25 francs annually.

The Union of French Spiritualists foresees that the ideals of Spiritualism are destined to prevail at no distant day. It is formed to secure unity of policy and action in view of that general recognition which is rapidly coming to pass.

These developments import much. They provide a guarantee of scientific accuracy to which no single and isolated experimenter can lay claim. We do not, of course, minimise the exceedingly valuable work which has been done by men and women working on their own lines, nor the credibility of their results, but we have painful evidence every day how readily the work which rests on single testimony is set aside. The verification of the supernatural phenomena and their reception by the scientific world at large will be attended by the same dangers which beset all movements as soon as they become successful. They are adopted by the unthinking and by doctrinaires. They tend then to lose sight of principles in disputes on minor points; they split into parties. This tendency in human nature first injures, and then destroys, their usefulness.

It is to guard against this danger that the French Union has been formed. We have recently advocated the same policy here, where it is perhaps still more needed in an atmosphere more disposed to sectarianism than are our French friends. No English Spiritualist has, as yet, come forward with the large benefactions of M. Jean Meyer, who recognises that the supernatural phenomena, if true, are of vast importance, not only individually but nationally also, in providing that common principle of proven belief which harnesses that the supernatural phenomena, if true, are of vast freedom of thought. But though we may regret that this has not as yet been done in Britain, we have only congratulations for the energy and unity of aim which has prevailed in Paris.

PLATO ON A QUESTION OF THE HOUR.—If we think we ought to investigate what we do not know, we are better men, more courageous and less slothful, than if we think that what we do not know is something which it is neither possible to ascertain nor right to investigate.—PLATO ("Meno").

A MORAL TALE.—It is told of a rich but rather parsimonious man that, on being asked to help a worthy cause with money he excused himself on the ground of bad trade, decrease of capital, taxation, winding up with a general allusion to the increasing number of calls on his purse; whereupon the applicant for help told him the following story: "There was once a man who was asked to lend a rope to a neighbour. His reply was that he was in need of a rope just then. 'Shall you require it a long time?' asked the neighbour. 'I think I shall,' replied the owner, 'as I am going to tie up some sand with it.' 'Tie up sand!' exclaimed the would-be borrower. 'How can you tie up sand with a rope?' 'Oh, you can do almost anything with a rope when you don't want to lend it,' was the reply."

SPIRITUALISM AS THE GUIDE TO A NEW ORDER.

Unrest, turmoil, suffering, abound on every side. The whole world is still in travail of the new race which shall be born from out the present chaos.

"Is it Peace?" asked the watchman of old, as Jehu approached the city of Jezreel. "Is it Peace?" we question with each other in this twentieth century. And it may be that the answer which Jehu gave is not quite without significance for us. "What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?" Blunt, ugly words—so unpleasant to our highly refined ears! But if we are honest perhaps we shall have to admit that Jehu might justly utter the same words as a condemnation of our civilisation to-day. Conditions of licence and of luxury unparalleled in the history of our Empire are existing side by side with an ever-increasing volume of unemployment and poverty. Little children dying of starvation and diseases of malnutrition—mothers too underfed to nourish the pitifully stunted babes they bring into the world, famine and pestilence sweeping towards us from Central Europe and Asia, men broken in the war, victims of tuberculosis by the thousand, and lacking the skilled treatment which alone can alleviate their sufferings—such are the conditions prevailing to-day. The old social order has crumbled to pieces, and from out the chaos the new era has not yet been born! On every side one hears the parrot-cry, "Reconstruction." But it echoes somewhat hollowly on ears attuned to the great moan of suffering which ascends from this our present world in its throes of a new birth.

What are we doing, individually and collectively, to restore harmony where now there is discord? We each have a definite responsibility for the conditions in which we live—for morality and justice are, after all, affairs of individual lives.

Have the Churches given us any definite lead? Generally speaking, they have failed. Where, then, can we turn for guidance in this hour of crisis? Many have found their darkness lightened by the teachings of Spiritualism, the science of the spirit.

It is no new religion, this Spiritualism—rather it was the underlying principle of all the great religions of old. Ancient Egypt, Persia, Chaldea, India, all based their teaching on the philosophy which we call Spiritualism. The New Testament is pre-eminently a Spiritualist book. Spiritualism teaches that man is a spiritual being, endowed here and now with spiritual gifts which must be used for the good of all. We must readjust our standards of life, and try to regain something of the simplicity and purity which characterised the lives of the early Christians.

In our mad race for money and for pleasure on the material plane, we are losing the capacity for spiritual enjoyment. "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul?" We complain we have no time to cultivate spiritual gifts—life is too short, too full of material problems! Oh, the tragedy of it! Do we not yet understand that "it is the spirit which giveth life," and that material things must take a subordinate place?

This does not imply that a Spiritualist should spend his life contemplating Scripture, nor that he should withdraw from the world to live a "religious" life. Far otherwise! Keep in the world. It needs men and women who have the power of spiritual perception. "Where there is no vision the people perish." The world owes more to its "dreamers" than it realises, for the dreams can, and often do, materialise into concrete realities such as the utilitarian materialist would never dream of!

Spiritualism has a direct application to the problems of our day. Social order and civic justice can only come when every member of the State will at least acknowledge that it is desirable to do unto "others as we would they should do unto us." "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." If we would only, each one, strive to carry out the teachings of that great Master known to the world as Jesus, what an astounding difference there would be! In all their beauty and simplicity they hold for us the key which shall unlock the door leading to the true Palace of Peace. Peace in our hearts, peace in our public life!

The ancient wisdom sheds a light upon the path leading to the New Jerusalem—that mystic city, "having the glory of God," which needs no temples for the worship of the Highest, because He is in the midst thereof; wherein there is no night, neither sorrow, nor crying, but instead, the majestic harmonies of the spheres as they whirl through space. "There is music in keys unknown to the duller ears of earth, and harmonies whose chords are souls attuned to each other."

G. T.

DOWIE and dree are jestin' and glee
When poverty spoils good company.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE truest truth lies in the mystical direction, and though we are here to live the earth life and to learn its lessons, we are nevertheless right in facing that way rather than the other.—J. ARTHUR HILL in "Man is a Spirit."

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.

The Marylebone Spiritualist Association, Ltd., Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour-street, W.1.—6.30, Mrs. E. A. Cannock. May 16th, Mr. Horace Leaf.

The London Spiritual Mission, 13, Pembroke Place, W.2.—11, Mr. Ernest Meads; 6.30, Dr. W. J. Vanstone. Wednesday, May 12th, 7.30, Mr. Thomas Ella. Friday, May 14th, 7.30, Mr. Ernest Hunt.

Croydon.—96, High-street.—11, Mr. Ella; 6.30, Mrs. Annie Boddington.

Walthamstow.—342, Hoe-street.—7, Mr. Forsyth, address and clairvoyance. Monday, Grove-road, 8, Mr. Sander.

Kingston-on-Thames.—Bishop's Hall, Thames-street.—11, Mrs. Brown; 6.30, Miss Conroy.

Lewisham.—The Priory, High-street.—6.30, Mr. Richard Boddington.

Spiritualists' Rendezvous, W. H. Smith Memorial Hall, 4, Portugal-street, Kingsway.—7, Prof. Jas. Coates. Friday, 14th, Mr. G. W. Sharpe (Birmingham) in Furnival Hall.

Peckham.—Lausanne Hall, Lausanne-road.—Saturday, 8, Sunday 11.30 and 7, Monday, 3, Mrs. L. Harvey. Thursday, 8.15, Mrs. M. Clempson.

Church of the Spirit, Windsor-road, Denmark Hill, S.E.—Sunday, 11 and 6.30; Monday, 3 p.m., and Wednesday, 7.30, Mrs. Hettie Butterworth, of Barrow-in-Furness.

Battersea.—45, St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction.—11.15, circle service; 6.30, Mrs. Bloodworth. 6th, 8.15, clairvoyance.

Woolwich and Plumstead.—Invicta Hall, Crescent-road.—Thursday, 13th, 8, Mr. North. Sunday, 16th, 7, Mrs. George; members' circle after service; 3, Lyceum. All seats free.

Wimbledon Spiritual Mission, 4 and 5, Broadway.—9th, 11, Mr. F. Jones; 3, Lyceum; 6.30, Rev. Robt. King. 12th, 7.30, Mrs. E. A. Cannock. Healing: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., excepting Tuesday and Saturday.

Holloway.—Grovedale Hall (near Highgate Tube Station).

—To-day (Saturday), 7.30, whist drive in aid of Building Fund. Sunday, 11 and 7, Mrs. Jennie Walker, of Canada. Wednesday, 8 p.m., Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Pulham. Thursday, 8, Mrs. Jennie Walker, "Flower Séance" in aid of Building Fund; silver collection. 15th, social and dance.

16th, 11, Mr. A. W. Jones; 3, Lyceum; 7, Miss Mary Mills. 23rd, 11, Dr. W. J. Vanstone; 7, Mrs. Rolleston.

Brighton.—Old Steine Hall, 52a, Old Steine.—11.30 and 7, also Monday, 7.15, and Tuesday, 3, Mrs. Alice Jamrach (see advertisement).

Brighton.—Athenæum Hall.—11.15 and 7, Miss Felicia R. Scatcherd, addresses; 3, Lyceum. Wednesday, 8, public meeting, Miss A. Scroggins.

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