

# Light:

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Edited by **DAVID GOW**

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**APRIL, 1930**

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"Whatsoever doth make Manifest is Light!"—Paul.

No. 2568. VOL. L.

[Registered as SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 1930.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

DR. WALTER FRANKLIN PRINCE.

Dr. Walter Franklin Prince, the new President of the Society for Psychical Research, has many claims to recognition. He is research officer of the Boston S.P.R., a position he has held since 1925, when he left New York, after doing invaluable work for the American S.P.R. His name is probably best known in connection with the "Doris case", a complex study of multiple personality of which he made an exhaustive examination, setting out his researches in an important book under the title *The Doris Case of Multiple Personality*. Other notable books from his pen are *The Psychic in the House*, *The Case of Patience Worth* and *Noted Witnesses for Psychic Occurrences*. A man of tireless energy, he has travelled extensively on the business of psychical investigation, both in the United States and Europe. He was a delegate to the first International Congress of Psychical Research, held at Copenhagen in 1921, and, later, attended the third International Congress in Paris. He has also visited England on more than one occasion. His activities have not been restricted to psychic matters. He has worked in the Church as Methodist Pastor, as Protestant Episcopal rector, and also in the fields of journalism and social reform. He is the second American to hold the office of President of the Society for Psychical Research. The first was Professor William James. Although it is no easy matter to follow worthily in the footsteps of the brilliant men who have held the same office—Crookes, Richet, Gilbert Murray, Flammarion, to mention but a few—Dr. Prince has done much to justify his election to the highest position in Psychical Research.

## THE NATURE OF MEDIUMSHIP.

One of the studies of the future will be the true nature of mediumship. So far we have not got much farther than fumbling conjectures and generalisations. Some authorities talk as though it were all a matter of sensitiveness, but many people are acutely sensitive without being at all mediumistic. Others say it is a matter of instability of temperament, but we have known Mediums of a stolid and bovine type who were often more matter-of-fact people than the psychic researchers who studied their peculiarities! One

burly Scot, whom we knew as a Medium for psychic photography many years ago, never presented any external indication of mediumship, typically considered. Apparently there is something more than temperament in the matter. There used to be a popular idea that Mediums were shrinking, sensitive and eccentric souls. There was every excuse for such peculiarities in days when Mediums, being regarded as freaks or monstrosities, were treated accordingly! If a sane man finds himself regarded everywhere as a lunatic he is pretty sure to act in a way that will confirm the impression of him! To-day, when psychic faculty is showing itself amongst all sorts and conditions of men, the material for study by psychiatrists is more abundant. In the meantime we would hazard the conjecture that whatever it is that makes a man a good subject for a hypnotist will come into play when it is a question of his responding to the control or influence of the Unseen World. And in that direction it is worth noting that the best hypnotic subjects are the sane and healthy types—and not the neurotic or unbalanced varieties.

## THE ETHERIC BODY.

There is reason to suppose that much which is put down to the working of the "subconscious mind" arises simply from the interaction of the psychic or etheric body with the material organism. We notice as a significant thing that the idea of an etheric body is coming very much into prominence just now, judging by the number of allusions to it in recent literature. It is well to have some definite conception of that spiritual body which, while it will be the vehicle of the spirit beyond death, is already ours and enters into all our activities. In that little book *The God of Blake and Shelley* by Dr. J. H. Clarke, we read:

Unconscious cerebration, the operation, that is, of the Etheric Man . . . can achieve results which the conscious cerebration of the slow-thinking, reasoning Man could never accomplish.

Yes, surely it is the "etheric man" who is at work in the case of the genius and the mystic, putting them into touch with worlds not realised by those in whom the soul-body is inactive and undeveloped.

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Mr. R. A. Bush, 8, Mostyn Road, Merton Park, S.W.19, will gladly acknowledge in LIGHT further donations to this Testimonial, which it is hoped will receive the generous support of all friends.

## SOME MEMORANDA ON OUR PRESENT DAY COMMERCE WITH THE UNSEEN.\*

BY G. R. S. MEAD, M.A. (Editor of *The Quest*.)

In delivering a Felicia Scatcherd Memorial Lecture, it may, excusably, be assumed that the audience addressed will consist for the most part of those who are already convinced that commerce with the Unseen, or communication between the two worlds, is not only possible, but definitely proven and substantiated by a wealth of critically-sifted evidence.

Certainly, after forty-seven years of patient enquiry, investigation and research, I have myself no hesitation in affirming that such inter-communication is a familiar fact of personal experience, confirmed by very many instances.

Now what does this avowal signify? It means the confession of a wholehearted acceptance of the claim that survival is an experimentally demonstrated fact. It means, therefore, an unequivocal declaration that repeated experience has shown that what is commonly called the "spirit hypothesis" is the only reasonable explanation of certain types of psychical phenomena.

Subsidiary working hypotheses may, of course, be found to hold good in the detailed explication of the numerous classes and multitudinous phases of these supernormal or para-normal happenings, which form the already very extensive subject-matter of psychical research, and which constitute a field of investigation that is daily being added to by the good services of those endowed with hypersensitive or characteristically mediumistic organisms. But the chief interest of the more experienced and thoughtful investigators inevitably finds itself predominantly centred on the fact, that, time and again, they are aware of being in contact with the activities of discarnate minds.

The term "spirit hypothesis" is, however, not very happily chosen to my thinking. It is only too liable to suggest to many the false notion that, as long as we have physical bodies, we are not spirits. But we are, surely, just as much, or as little, spirits here in the flesh, as we shall be there, in the "hither hereafter", when we have shed our outermost physical integument.

The term "spirit" has a very long and variegated history; it has had, and still has, many meanings and values. But, at its highest, it can, I think, more appropriately than any other verbal label, stand for the deepest or most essential reality in man, when human nature marches on, or begins to coalesce with the Divine.

Now, for the vast majority, this sublime and most mysterious, whole-making reality in us must remain for long an ideal, a hope, an aspiration. It is a potentiality which becomes but slowly actualised. It manifests its presence, first of all, in what is called character, and good character at that, what we call moral character; while its realisation in clear self-consciousness still remains as the privilege of the very few.

Many may think that this evaluation of the spiritual is an over-statement; its praise-note is pitched too high. But to-day the speed of living is accelerating to an almost breakneck pace. Times

\* Felicia Scatcherd Memorial Lecture, delivered at a meeting of the London Spiritualist Alliance on Thursday evening, 13th March, 1930.

and manners are changing fast; meanings and values are changing with equal rapidity. The swing of the pendulum is so much wider and swifter than ever before that thoughtful minds stand amazed at the spectacle.

The notion, for instance, of what has been called matter, which seemed so sure and certain a sensible objective fact for the relatively naive scientific realism of the latter half of the last century, has been to-day so sublimated, refined and en-dynamised, that every prior meaning assigned to the concept has become practically valueless. We now recognise in matter, powers and virtues of such unimaginative subtlety and potency, that the picturings which past generations fictioned for their spiritual world seem in comparison but the crudest of sketches. It stands to reason, then, that if we are to retain appropriately in speech, and maintain rightly in thought, the immemorial distinction between the material and the spiritual, the concept and meaning of the latter must be proportionately extended—deepened, broadened, heightened.

It is chiefly because of this necessity, imposed upon all thoughtful minds by modern scientific theorising, in respect to the ever more accurately observed material phenomena of the physical world, that the loose, vulgar use of the term "spiritual" can no longer be tolerated. But this is by no means the whole of the matter. To-day the world-old mutually exclusive opposites and stark contrasts, "spiritual" and "material," can no longer be allowed to stand one over against the other as utterly irreconcilable, and continue to be treated as perpetual foes in an ever-warring dualism. The powers and virtues of spirit and matter are found to be self-complementing, and to interact on a common playground, as it were, a neutral territory, a border-land which can be not only conveniently, but appropriately, named the psychical.

We English-speaking folk are, I think, fortunate in having lit on the term "psychical research" to designate the methodical attempt to observe and elucidate the protean phenomena, objective and subjective, psycho-physical and psycho-mental, that constitute the subject-matter of this new discipline, which is endeavouring to win its way to deserve the right of being regarded as a distinctive science.

To call this "Spiritualism" is felt by methodical investigators and thoughtful students, even when they have satisfied themselves that the basic phenomenon of intercommunication is a demonstrated fact, to be a misnomer. It is perhaps for the above reason, primarily, that we do not like to call ourselves "Spiritualists". But there are other reasons. In the first place, in respect to the high meaning of the term, it seems arrogant to use it for ourselves in distinction from our fellows. It is like the boastfulness of the early centuries of our present era in the West, when many claimed that they were "the spiritual", thus separating themselves off, at their own good pleasure, from "the psychical" and "the material". In the second, the popular meaning of the term in our own day, when it has been employed to designate so much that is far more materialistic, in a philosophic sense, than spiritualistic, has disgusted sober and experienced minds. They shrink from parading behind a banner with such an inscription.

Such is the cause why other terms also have been sought to cover this new type of investigation and research. In France, for instance, *métapsychisme* is fast becoming a household word. But I hope it will

never be popularised in this country, so as to oust our familiar "psychical research", as distinguishing the labours in this vast new field of enquiry from those of the now established field of what is coming to be called "classical" psychology.

In the United States of America some have ventured on "metaphysical" as a description of what is more appropriately to be called "psychical" healing. But this is clearly a "derangement of epitaphs" as Mrs. Malaprop would have called it. In the works of Aristotle the more recondite enquiries, which came *after* the physical treatises, were so designated. They dealt with what was called "the first philosophy"—that is to say, with the principles of things. Hence the heading "*meta ta physika*", which originally signified the second part in an arrangement of books, came metaphorically to mean the general nature of the subject-matter treated in those books.

*Metapsychics* is formed by analogy with *metaphysics*; but it is not an exact parallel, for it signifies a distinction in degree and not in kind.

In Germany, the neologism *Para-psychologie* is preferred to denote this new discipline of research as being *alongside* of the classical "science" of mental phenomena. This is, perhaps, better than *métapsychisme*. Others use *Okkultismus*. But "occultism" is open to the objection that it has a shady reputation from the past, which is as difficult to live down as that of "Spiritualism", if not, indeed, even more so.

So much for novelty of nomenclature. But we are continually being reminded that there is nothing new in all this; that psychical phenomena, of one sort or another, are as old as history, and indeed, presumably, as old as humanity itself. This is in indubitably true. And yet there is a difference, and a very great difference, in our modern mental orientation towards them. We are to-day viewing these manifestations from an entirely new standpoint, envisaging them in a new perspective. Hitherto, all such unusual, paranormal or super-normal phenomena were wont to be surrounded with an atmosphere of mystery, of uncanniness, of fear or awe. They distinctly belonged to what Otto has recently called *das Numinöse*—the numinous, the sacred, in both a high and a low sense. They came within the category of *miracula* far more frequently than that of simply *mira*—of miracles rather than wonders.

What our forefathers spoke of with bated breath as the supernatural or præternatural, to-day is held by all emancipated thinkers to fall entirely within the natural order. We owe this liberty to the steady and sturdy growth of the scientific spirit, with its patient observation and questioning of facts, and its devotion to seeking for truth at all costs.

In the past, from the most primitive art and craft of the medicine man, and magical practitioner, up through all grades of seership and prophecy, and all stages, stations, and states of mystical and spiritual experience, there was, generally speaking, an atmosphere of aloofness and apartness, of secrecy and esotericism, which, for the most part, not only (and only too easily) favoured the exploitation of the credulity and fanaticism of the profane, but also fostered the self-deception of the initiates.

To-day we have very extensive records from the past, well-nigh of all historical times and all climes, from which to study and profit by the endeavours of our predecessors to establish contacts and relations with the unseen, and to set forth what they found, or thought they found. We are here confronted with a busy industry of generalising and dogmatising from sparse and flimsy data, as judged by modern requirements, and with vain attempts at imagining what myth-making minds deemed to be universal schemes concerning the inner nature of things. The long history of these strivings and fictionisings has now been extensively surveyed by the patient industry of modern research and scholarship, and largely submitted to critical treatment by the salutary discipline of the comparative method. Consequently, those who have the taste and ability to follow such enquiries

and studies, have open to them facilities, never previously accessible, for schooling and educating themselves, and profiting by the history of past experience. By labouring in this field of culture the student can gradually acquire a sense of proportion and value, and thus a critical equipment, of the greatest service in fitting him to deal intelligently with the vast and complex mass of modern psychical manifestations, experiences and experiments, that keep piling up so rapidly with every year that passes.

In this new psychical domain, this young spirit of research, progress is assuredly being made in the dawning light of the new age that is being ushered in with so many upheavals in discovery, invention, thought and speculation. It may be said, in general, that much which in the past was laid under the interdict of religious taboos and prohibitions, much that was hidden from the light of day in wrappings of that *deisidaimonia*, "fear of the gods or spirits", which we to-day call superstition, is being rescued from obscurity, obscuration and obscurantism. It is gradually being thrown open to free and fearless inspection and enquiry.

(To be continued.)

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## A VISION IN A HAMPSTEAD HOUSE.

By MRS. SHIRLEY ESHELBY.

In 1922 I was living in an old house, on the border of Hampstead Heath. One afternoon, whilst sitting in my room in broad daylight, with the sun shining through the open window, I suddenly felt that I was not alone. I looked across the room, and was greatly interested to see three men dressed in the conventional garb of highwaymen, standing in my room. Two were by the open window, and one on the opposite side of the room, near to the wardrobe.

The two by the window were pleasant and friendly looking; they were laughing and talking together, obviously about me. I could not hear what they were saying, because I am deaf, but I could hear their voices.

The one on the opposite side of the room was not a pleasant looking man, and I quickly turned away from him, and again looked at the friendly men by the window. One man was extremely handsome and looked quite amiable. Seeming to read my thoughts, he laughingly took off his hat and bowed to me! I smiled, and tried to speak, but my voice would not come; I was speechless. The vision gradually faded away, and although I tried to recall them after they had vanished, I was not successful.

Psychic experiences are quite common with me, and I usually find they have some connection with forthcoming events. A few months later many thousands of pounds were lost over the sale of the house in which the "highwaymen" had appeared to me! The sale was forced by the mortgagees owing to the death of the owner.

---

At the British College of Psychic Science on Wednesday, 5th inst., the Rev. R. W. Maitland gave a fine lecture in which he embodied his views on the Church's attitude towards Spiritualism. As he has himself faced the public with the courage of his opinions this plea for tolerance towards others of his cloth cannot fail to bear weight. He dwelt on the responsibilities of a minister to his congregation, in a new and very arresting manner.

R. de C.

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"REFLECTOGRAPH" CENTRE IN LONDON.—On Wednesday, March 12th, Miss Estelle Stead dedicated the premises at 42, Penywern Road, Earl's Court, S.W.5, where the "Reflectograph" is to be demonstrated by the inventor, Mr. R. K. Kirby, and Mrs. Singleton.

### A TEST SEANCE WITH Mlle. LAPLACE.

On the 13th of November, 1926, I placed in the hand of Mlle. Laplace an object (a paper knife) which had been sent me by Monsieur F. I had asked this gentleman, by reason of his profession of genealogist, to furnish me with objects having belonged to deceased persons whose inheritors were unknown and being sought for. My aim was to test the reactions of the psychic in reference to the temporarily unknown inheritors, and to allow Monsieur F., when he had discovered the inheritors, to judge the value of the indications furnished by the psychic.

Upon touching the object Mlle. Laplace, who had not been asked any questions, said that it concerned a dead man and gave a few indications as to his character and mode of life. The effort was difficult. Her words were slow and halting; clearly she was unable to "contact" the reality of the case.

Suddenly she turned towards Monsieur F., who had supplied me with the object, saying:

Friends of yours gave you this. There is something mysterious about this death [of the owner of the object]. They want me to find out about it . . . Your friends—I will speak about them . . .

She then began to describe the character, physical aspect, mode of life, etc., of Monsieur and Madame F. until she reached this point:

There has been a drama around your friend. Oh! how cold I am! There is someone dead as though stifled. A young woman, accidentally dead . . . Oh, it was by drowning! They did not know about it at first . . . I see a river; wasn't she bathing? She is buried in the country . . . Your friends have a house in the country . . .

I see written "Viviane." [A pseudonym.]

In April of that same year, 1926, a niece of Monsieur and Madame F., aged about twenty-eight years, quite recently married, had gone to spend a few days on their property in one of the central departments. A deep river runs at the bottom of the park. One afternoon the husband went out alone fishing; his wife should have joined him. Some hours later he returned to the house and, learning that his wife had been absent a long time, went out to seek for her. He walked along the river bank hoping to meet her, noticed a fragment of clothing floating on the water, threw himself into a boat and, in anguish, drew from the water his wife, fully clothed and dead. She was a good swimmer. It was believed that a false step had precipitated her into the water and that she had been overcome by a syncope.

Viviane was not her name but that of her sister.

A question was then put to Mlle. Laplace. "Tell us about the Viviane whose name you have given."

"Viviane" is a relation of the young woman who died accidentally—a sister. The two sisters did not resemble each other. One is blonde with a rather a round face. [Exact for the drowned girl]. The other is dark with a long face. [Exact for Viviane]. They do not resemble each other physically nor morally [Exact].

The one who remains is "Viviane". She is no longer a young girl. She is about 24 to 30 years old. [About 30]. Her health is delicate; her lungs weak; she coughs; her eyes shine. It would not astonish me if she were tuberculous. She also suffers in the stomach. She goes away from Paris for her health; she goes to the mountains where there are pine trees, etc. . . .

In 1913 Mlle. Viviane, on account of tuberculosis of the lungs, had taken a cure for fifteen months in a sanatorium situated in flat country among pine woods.

During the whole of 1925 she had been treated in a sanatorium in the Pyrenees.

In addition to her lung affection Mlle. Viviane has frequent stomach troubles.

Although not knowing Mlle. Viviane's sister, I knew that she had been accidentally drowned on her uncle's estate. I knew Viviane and her state of health well.

DR. E. OSTY in *Revue Métapsychique* (Jan.-Feb.)

### THE GOOD SITTER—AND THE BAD.

By IVAN COOKE.

By long experience, sitting in circle with many types of men and women, I find I can now tell almost at a glance whether this or that person will prove to be a good sitter—or otherwise. Yet by what means I discern this would be difficult to define. It seems to matter not at all from what stratum of society the sitter is drawn, for position or wealth means nothing to the Spirit; the charwoman is of as vital an interest as the duchess to those in the beyond. The sitter's intellectual calibre is immaterial, so long as there is a quick and retentive memory to grasp and hold the evidence obtained. His bias for or against religion—whether he be a life-long atheist, or Christian straying from the fold of orthodoxy in search of the Spirit—does not seem vastly important; and his mental attitude towards the Medium and other sitters, though a big factor, is not necessarily a determining factor. True, antagonism is usually fatal to results, and the antagonistic deservedly go empty away; simplicity and receptiveness usually bring their reward, although the Guides seem able to counter the critical, to break down by fast or slow degrees their distrust, and gradually to establish a bond of respect and even affection between Guide and sitter. I have seen the critical fare better than the credulous in the end, once the critic recognises the Guide to be at least as honourable a man as he. A Guide respects the mind which wishes to prove all things, and will take pains to convince it, knowing well that he in the end will be worth the winning.

No, the difference between good sitters and bad lies deeper than a man's exterior, deeper than his mentality or attitude to spirits or Spiritualism. I once saw a man come to a seance looking as hard as granite, as distrustful as a man can well be. And I heard old "White Eagle" pierce hardness and distrust with his first sentence. "There is no man" said he, "no man on earth who knows how this my brother has suffered, how bitterly he has called upon God in his extremity; the loneliness and sorrow of my brother."

I saw the sitter's face break, his head bow. No man on earth had known. . . . But someone after all had been reached by those prayers which had died, so he had thought, in an unanswering void. "White Eagle's" sentence had gone home to the heart, to the deeps.

*To the deeps, to the heart:* here is the crux of it all. Here then lies the difference between the sitter to whom the Spirit opens wide, and the sitter to whom the door is fast closed. It is only when those deeps are there, only when the sorrows and travail of life have quickened—then only can one receive. It is when the soil is ploughed, the rough harrows of sorrow have broken down the clods of pride, of intellectuality, only when the seed bed is ready—then Love the Sower casts her grain. It cometh surely to the sorrowful, to the bereaved, to those hungry, who at last have proved how empty life can be.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(The Editor does not necessarily identify himself with the opinions expressed by Correspondents)

“SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE AND THE S.P.R.”

Sir,—I do not take exception to your strictures of my review of *Modern Psychic Mysteries* in the *Journal* of the S.P.R. as being “certainly not marked by good taste”, and the like. These are legitimate subjects for difference of opinion. But I do object to your quoting the allegation that my review contains misrepresentations, and to your statement that “complaints of inaccuracy are made on both sides and examples given”. Accuracy is not a matter of opinion but a question of fact. The position is that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle cited a number of instances of inaccuracy or misrepresentation on my part, and that in the circular signed by me and issued with the circular of the President and Honorary Secretaries (and which you completely ignore), I show every one of Sir Arthur’s criticisms to be wholly without foundation.—Yours, etc.,

THEODORE BESTERMAN,  
Librarian and Editor.

The Society for Psychical Research,  
31, Tavistock Square, W.C.1.

[We willingly give space to Mr. Besterman’s letter. Our remark that “complaints of inaccuracy on both sides have been made and examples given” is a fair general statement. We have no desire to weigh up the points of dispute arising out of the review, as such; that review, taken alone, is not, in our opinion, of major consequence; it is rather the inferences and issues that arise indirectly from the review that are of more serious import. Both sides of the case have been given wide publicity, and we have no desire to exacerbate the quarrel by a fresh presentation of the arguments and counter-arguments. It is quite true, as Mr. Besterman says, that he has issued a circular in which he claims, generally, to have been accurate in his original statements and criticisms. On the correctness of that claim we have no desire to pass judgment, but we may observe that it is possible for a book-reviewer to be meticulously accurate in his statements, while at the same time being invidious in his manner of expression.—ED.]

“VALIANTINE AND A BERLIN REPORT.”

Sir,—In the issue of January 18th I found an article entitled “Valiantine and a Berlin Report”, as to which I would like to make a few observations.

The writer of this article, which appears over the initial “N”, is perfectly right in ridiculing the so-called “entlarvung” of Valiantine in Berlin, which has proved nothing, except the perfect incapability of the Berlin sitters to investigate with a Medium. I know none of the persons concerned, neither have I had the opportunity to be present at a Valiantine sitting. On the other hand, I have considerable experience of Mediums, with many of whom I have sat in my home at München. I have had many experiences with the sittings at Baron von Schrenck-Notzing’s house and also at Millesimo, Italy.

I have come to the conclusion that it largely depends on the sitters rather than on the Medium whether one obtains good results, or no results, or the appearance of fraudulent manifestations in a sitting. (I am not now speaking of a deliberate fake, but of the so-called unconscious fraud of the Medium when in trance or other abnormal condition.)

I am of the opinion that there should be some generally-accepted criterion agreed upon between all investigators in this new science, for deciding the question of fraud. It should be laid down that an “exposure” is only permissible if the Medium is clearly caught in *flagrante delicto*. An accusation of fraud is of no value if based on judgment arrived

at after the sitting, and an “exposure” such as Kröner attempted with Valiantine is not only unmoral but also unscientific, because Science demands proof and not mere impressions.—Yours, etc.,

ANNA LANGHEINRICH.  
Locarno-Muralto, Switzerland.

MR. SHAW DESMOND’S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.

Sir,—Would Spiritualist and other societies kindly note that it being impossible for me, personally, to attend to the requests to speak, which come in day by day, all applications should be addressed to my managers, the Lecture Agency, Ltd., Outer Temple, W.C.2.

Save for one or two of the great meetings, my time being so occupied with my writing, I have decided to place all such applications upon the same basis as my professional engagements.—Yours, etc.,

SHAW DESMOND.

“A PROBLEM OF RE-EMBODIMENT.”

Sir,—Since sending you my article, entitled “Reincarnation Theories” (p. 154), I have seen Mr. E. Harvey’s paragraph in your issue of 1st inst., under the above heading.

I do not think the question he raises need embarrass believers in reincarnation, because, as he says, earthly parents provide a physical setting for the spirit, and a part of that setting is the brain. Evidently a spirit’s powers and even its character, while embodied, must be limited by the quality of the brain given to it as an instrument in this world. It is well known that even skull-formation largely influences character.

These things are, of course, chiefly matters of heredity, and one may well suppose that they are deliberately chosen by Providence as an essential part of the trial to which the spirit is to be subjected. Even if there is no deliberate purpose or choice, surely the fact that a spirit is accidentally subjected to more or to less limitations, in consequence of hereditary qualities in the body it must use, need not interfere with a rational belief in reincarnation.—Yours, etc.,

CHARLES W. ARMSTRONG.

Barcelona.

DECEASE OF MR. EDWARD CLODD.

Mr. Edward Clodd, whose death, at the age of eighty-nine, took place at Aldeburgh, on 10th inst., was a man of great achievements as an expounder of Science, and his primers *The Childhood of the World* and *The Childhood of Religion* first drew attention to his gifts. Others of his books were *The Story of Creation* and *A Primer of Evolution*. His strong Rationalism is said to have been largely due to his reaction from the bleak Calvinism in which he was brought up. His book *The Question*, which was critically reviewed in *LIGHT*, many years ago, by Dr. Ellis T. Powell, was a vigorous attack on Spiritualism and the idea of human survival. Notwithstanding his hostility to our subject, however, we had some pleasant correspondence with him at the time, and gained, at least, a sympathetic understanding of his attitude of mind, although it was one irreconcilably opposed to our own. He was a trenchant opponent and we give him our farewell with appreciation and regret. He was a man of many friendships.

MRS. MABEL BEATTY, C.B.E., will deliver an Address on the book “Man Made Perfect” at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Wednesday next, April 2nd, at 8 p.m. Miss Estelle Stead will preside. Doors open at 7.30 p.m. Admission free.

**LIGHT.**  
**Offices, 16, QUEENSBERRY PLACE,**  
**SOUTH KENSINGTON, S.W.7.**

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ADVERTISEMENTS.—For rates, apply The Advertisement Manager, LIGHT, 16, Queensberry Place, South Kensington, London, S.W.7. (Phone: Kensington 3758.) Telegrams: "Survival, London."

### THE CHEERFUL WAY.

There is a delightful story concerning a little company of sages who were enjoying a joke as they walked. Suddenly one of them raised his hand in warning. "Now we must look serious," he said, "for here's a fool coming." The philosopher knew the view taken of philosophy by the ordinary man. It is well exemplified in the case of the gentleman who told Dr. Samuel Johnson that he had himself tried to be a philosopher, but he found that cheerfulness would creep in!

Indeed, a sour and gloomy philosophy is no philosophy at all, for wisdom and wit are near allied. If, as a melancholy moralist once said—evidently in a fit of dyspepsia—*increase of knowledge means increase of sorrow*, one may well inquire into the kind of knowledge which is meant. To know beyond all peradventure that there is a better world, and that, sooner or later, we shall all be its inhabitants is not a kind of knowledge which should depress any sensible person. Several times we have heard people who found themselves for the first time in the company of Spiritualists, remark on the cheerfulness which prevailed. It came to them as a "new revelation" (on a small scale, of course). They had been led to expect a concourse of cadaverous-looking people with uncanny ideas, and a morbid attitude towards life, as being concerned with graves and sepulchres, which are quite erroneously presumed to be the habitations of the dead. Although that little mistake has largely been corrected nowadays, it has left some lingering traces, for the "dead hand" of a materialistic Science, and of an even more materialistic theology, has not yet been lifted from humanity.

If the average Spiritualist is a cheerful person, he has every reason to be. The poet who wrote that "Life is a jest" would have been more correct if he had applied the description to death, although he would have shocked multitudes of good people who took a different view, and who would have regarded the poet as the kind of man of whom Sydney Smith wrote as being so flippant that he would speak disrespectfully of the Equator.

If there is one particular thing in Spiritualism which is calculated to give an occasional check to a perennial cheerfulness we should find it in the perplexity it occasions to the unseasoned Spiritualist who has not yet found his feet. He comes, here and there, upon weird little doctrines and fanciful speculations with which the misdirected ingenuity of too fertile minds has sought to embroider the simple truth. They are spun like cobwebs across the pilgrim's way, and he does not always at first discover that they are *only* cobwebs, even when, spangled with dewdrops, they

give a rainbow sheen and look like fairy fabrics instead of flimsy fabrications.

So we would see not only gloom banished, but *fear* also, for it is not easy to be cheerful and fearful at the same time. Some of the queer little doctrines we have in mind are unnatural and intimidating. The healthy mind shears its way calmly through them, knowing them for what they are. But tender minds, with a little tincture of unhealthiness, are caught by them. With rather more experience of life these souls will learn that fear gives an entrance not only to malice, but also the perversity of those with a cross-grained humour. We read in *Pickwick Papers* of the Fat Boy who played on the fears of the old lady because he loved "to make her flesh creep". The Fat Boy has some descendants to-day. They are rarely fat; they belong rather to the lean kind, addicted to treasons and stratagems—and fantastic fictions. Of course there are perplexities in Spiritualism, but not even in the deepest of them can we see occasion for more than a momentary eclipse of cheerfulness. And if perplexities are not a necessary part of life why is it that most of us take so much interest in crossword puzzles?

### THE PASSING OF A PATRICIAN.

With the passing on of Lord Balfour we lose a great mind. A man of rich mental endowments, high statesmanlike qualities and unvarying courtesy, he has played a distinguished part in the life of our nation. His outlook on the world was benevolent yet detached, and his name is surrounded by an aura of honoured tradition. Lord Balfour's deep interest in psychic matters dates from his early years. In 1882 he took an active part in the formation of the Society for Psychical Research, being one of the vice-presidents, and becoming president of the Society twelve years later. He had a deep and sympathetic understanding of the philosophic side of Spiritualism, but on this, as on many another subject, his attitude was one of aloofness; his somewhat fastidious mind shrank from the more popular, and propagandist activities of the psychic movement. "My views on the subject are sufficiently well known," he is reported to have said on one occasion, when approached with a request that he would declare himself publicly on the question of survival.

We salute the passing of an illustrious citizen, and pay a respectful tribute to his memory.

### AT SUNSET.

Slow fades the vision of the sky,  
 The golden water pales,  
 And over all the valley-land  
 A grey-winged vapour sails.  
 I go the common way of all:  
 The sunset fires will burn,  
 The flow'rs will blow, the river flow  
 When I no more return.  
 No whisper from the mountain pine,  
 Nor lapsing stream, shall tell  
 The stranger, treading where I tread,  
 Of him who loved them well.

But beauty seen is never lost,  
 God's colours all are fast;  
 The glory of this sunset heaven  
 Into my soul has passed—  
 A sense of gladness unconfined  
 To mortal date or clime;  
 As the soul liveth it shall live  
 Beyond the years of time.  
 Beside the mystic asphodels  
 Shall bloom the home-born flowers,  
 And new horizons flash and glow  
 With sunset hues of ours.

J. G. WHITTIER.

MARCH

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SIDELIGHTS.

Sir Oliver Lodge contributes to the Daily Express of March 11th a long and important article dealing with the relation between mind and matter, from which the following extracts are taken: "The psychic or spiritual world, on the one hand, and the chemical and physical world on the other, have appeared as perfectly different regions—one of them clearly accessible to the senses and constituting the subject-matter of orthodox science: the other a vague mystical region not reducible to scientific terms, and constituting the field of religion. So diverse have these regions been that it is a wonder they can interact at all. Indeed, philosophic efforts have been made to get rid of the idea of interaction by treating the mental region as somewhat imaginary, and speaking of it as a shadowy epiphenomenon, or at least as a parallel harmonious but independent system."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Many times it must have been urged that physics and psychics were interlocked, at least to the extent that probably every psychic event had a physical concomitant, but hitherto no attempt has been made to imagine a mechanism or physical process for this interaction. The ether of space has not been a medium much attended to in philosophy; and if the ether contains the key to the connection between mind and matter, that key has been effectively hidden. Groping among the intricacies of modern physics I have found something that feels like a key. It has a handle at one end; what it has at the other end is still rather speculative."

\* \* \* \* \*

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle relates the following experience in the Morning Post of March 6th. He was lying awake in the early morning of February 3rd when he became aware of well-marked, heavy steps approaching along the passage leading to his room. They paused outside the door. Then came a short cough. He turned up the light, observed that the time was 3.30 a.m., then rose and went to the door which he opened wide. There was nobody outside. Then he returned to bed feeling, as he remarks, "in a somewhat shaken state, as I was a sick man and in no condition for such nocturnal adventures."

\* \* \* \* \*

Sir Arthur continues, "Two days later my wife received a letter from Mrs. Osborne Leonard, the well-known Medium, saying that she had never dreamt of me before in her life, but that between 3.30 and four o'clock on Monday morning she had had an extraordinarily vivid impression of having visited me and actually seeing me and administering some healing treatment to me. 'It was all so real,' she said, 'that it cannot be classed as a dream.' In this letter Mrs. Leonard offered to come to Crowborough and to give me a special seance, which she did three days later, nobly fulfilling her promise, which involved a drive of thirty miles partly through deep snow."

\* \* \* \* \*

Sir Arthur goes on, "the seance was a very wonderful experience, but it makes a story by itself. When it was over I discussed with Mrs. Leonard the happenings of Monday morning, and I mentioned to her the short cough which I had heard outside my door. She said: 'That is really final. I seldom have anything the matter with my throat, but that night every time I woke I found myself coughing in the very way you describe. It was so unusual that it impressed itself upon my memory.' These are the facts, and they seem to me beyond all range of coincidence, and to present a very clear case of bi-location. Mrs. Leonard was sleeping at Kenley, but undoubtedly her double or etheric body had visited me at Crowborough."

Dr. Drysdale Anderson, a British medical officer, has been investigating the emanations of the human body, and his researches seem to be yielding results in line with the discoveries of Kilner and Reichenbach. He found (according to the Daily Chronicle of March 14th) that "there was an emanation from the human body which, under certain conditions, was plainly visible . . . This emanation must have a scientific explanation and that is what we are out to find."

\* \* \* \* \*

Tests have been made on several persons, one such experiment being carried out on board ship. In this case, "a man was asked to strip to the waist, and after the secret conditions had been produced there came from his body a mist-like substance that looked like frozen tobacco smoke or light fog." The emanation was seen by a number of people. It is stated that Dr. Anderson will, on his return to England, carry out further experiments and make a public report.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Rev. Charles L. Tweedale of Otley, Yorks, has a letter in the Nottingham Journal and Express, of March 3rd, controverting the statement of a clergyman that the late Dr. Forbes Winslow had declared that Spiritualism led to insanity—a favourite assertion on the part of ignorant critics, that has been dealt with many times, but which calls for occasional correction. Mr. Tweedale says: "Referring to the Rev. Fisher Fergusson's recent sermon against Spiritualism, in which he brought forward the old false statement of Dr. Forbes Winslow that Spiritualism led to insanity, may I be allowed to point out that Dr. Forbes Winslow recanted and withdrew his statement at a public lecture in Merthyr Tydvil, also in a private letter which still exists, and finally in a book which he wrote on the subject. Perhaps Mr. Fergusson did not know that statistics show that there are about 100 times as many cases of insanity due to 'religious mania' among the orthodox as there are due to Spiritualism."

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Tweedale continues: "Recent inquiries directed to the Board of Lunacy brought this reply: 'We are unable to give any figures in support of the statement that Spiritualism is a frequent cause of insanity.' The report of the Board of Lunacy for the years 1909-1911 shows that each year 26 clergy and 26 Nonconformist ministers were certified insane, the proportion per 10,000 being just double that of the non-clerical part of the population."

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. P. Ch. de Crespigny lectured on "The Aims of Spiritualism," in the Small Town Hall, Reading recently, and in the course of her address, as reported in the Reading Standard of March 1st, remarked that, "People needed something more than the material world could give them—the Church was not satisfying them. The Church was a fine body and had done a wonderful work, but at present was not in the position it should be in regard to Spiritualism. It ought to be in the van of the movement instead of, as it was, having been brought reluctantly at its heels. It was a great pity because it could have been the greatest power in the land if it had investigated honestly and had given forth the truths of Spiritualism which were proving all the things the members of the Church had been trying to prove throughout the centuries. It was peculiar that the Church had not taken up the study of Spiritualism because it explained the Bible, which to Spiritualists as well as to others was the rock on which they based their faith."

## WILL SPIRITUALISM REPLACE CHRISTIANITY?

By AN ANGLICAN CATHOLIC.

A famous writer said some years ago that within fifty years Spiritualism will replace present-day religion. To see if this is probable we must define the term Spiritualism. What is Spiritualism? Merely belief in a spiritual world which is already intermingled with this world, and belief that, given certain conditions, communication with the departed is possible—possible, but not in every case certain.

The Catholic Church already holds this belief, but considers it to be dangerous for all and sundry to dabble in things which they are too ignorant to understand. But however much the Church may deplore the free investigation into these matters, she certainly has no authority, much less right, to interfere with individual members; that is, of course, outside the Roman Communion. The Roman Church absolutely forbids such investigations by any but those who have been given authority. However, the millions outside the Roman Catholic Church have a perfect right to decide for themselves on this question, that is, if they are mentally sound, and have the requisite ability to investigate for themselves. It is for them to decide whether they are justified in spending the necessary time and money required for such study.

To my mind, it is absolutely unreasonable to think that God would only allow *evil* spirits to communicate. The Spiritualists themselves admit that evil spirits do communicate; but for the most part we only get what we seek and *are*. "Like to like" is the rule—and if all men are not "plaster saints" when they pass out, we can hardly expect them to come back as full-fledged angels. It is absolutely unreasonable to claim that all the communicating spirits are even worse than the spirits of evil men, and to say they are "devils" and have never been human beings at all.

One can accept all the doctrines of the Catholic Church and *still* believe that communication with the departed is possible and legitimate; all that the individual has to decide is, whether it is expedient to spend time and energy studying this question.

As for denying that there are phenomena which materialism cannot explain, it is, of course, too late in the day to deny that. These phenomena have been proved up to the hilt, and the fact that *one* investigator, or even a thousand, may have had an unsatisfactory seance or a lying message, does not alter the fact that thousands more have had proof. Also, if an investigator goes to a seance intending to entrap, he will draw like-minded spirits, and probably the Medium's "control" or guiding spirit, would take an instant dislike when he sensed the critical attitude which the investigator exhibited. Again, the spirits like their little joke. They pass over just as they were on earth, and it may take some of them a long time to resist the inclination to "guy" anyone who comes along to confuse the Medium.

Another reason for an unsuccessful seance is that the investigator's own spirit-guides may see that it is not good for him, as the time has not come for him to be convinced.

Spiritualism will not oust Christianity, I think, but it certainly does satisfy a craving which modern religion has in many cases, failed to meet. This craving is for the sure and certain knowledge that our departed loved ones are still often with us, and can guard and guide us.

A mother who had lost her child once said to me, "God is so far away, and angels, what are they? We don't want them, we want our own." When we lose someone by death, we fully realise this, although many, even without this sad stimulus, are trying to get nearer to the spiritual spheres and to God. The one sure way to do this is through Jesus Christ who manifested in the flesh that man might know God the

Father, Who is over all and through Whom the angels and "our own" too, may safely come with messages of love and comfort.

Countless thousands have had this sure knowledge and consolation which both Christianity and Spiritualism can give. But the Church does not always give this, even to the most faithful of her members. No, you must have faith and believe it is so, without the proofs that Spiritualism gives.

If Spiritualism can prove that the "dead" are not dead, but still live, and that they love and are near to us, in times of trouble specially, then Spiritualism ought to be recognised by the Church. The mistake some Spiritualists make, in my opinion, is in calling it a religion. Spiritualism is only a part of religion. It seems to me to be merely the practice of trying to get into touch with the departed. This is not a "religion". The human soul wants something more than this. Whether men know it or not, what they want is to find God, as St. Augustine says. Of course it is getting a little nearer to Him even to take thought of the life beyond the grave.

Some Christian people say they would not have any Medium come between them and their loved ones. Well, we are not all of the same temperament, and I know for a fact that it has been the utmost consolation for the bereaved to get through a Medium a message from a loved one which they could not get in any other way. It seems to me something like blasphemy to say that a message of comfort at such a time comes from an "evil spirit".

A recent writer said the demand to-day is for a practical religion. Spiritualism is certainly practical in its teaching on conduct. "Deeds, not Creeds," is the motto of organised Spiritualism, which, however, can only be classed as a "religion" on the ground that the adherents of this organisation, as a rule, begin their meetings or services by calling upon the name of the Almighty, and in some cases invoke the name of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Angels.

The constant teaching from the Spiritualist platforms is that we must do good here and now, and as we build our characters here, so shall we be hereafter. It is absurd to say that Spiritualism can do no more than touch people in their sorrows; but even if that were all, it is a great deal. If it can help us when we are down and feel that all is lost; if the knowledge it gives imparts to us strength to go on and face the future when all seems black, then it is worth while. But it does far more than this. It gives one a surer belief in God and a future life where reunion is certain; to say that it concentrates our attention on this future at the expense of the present life is, as all Spiritualists know, untrue. It tries to bring the spiritual world nearer, and the certain knowledge that it is so near is all that saves many from despair, and helps them to endure what would otherwise be insupportable if they had no such belief. There are countless thousands who, if they did not listen to the teaching from Spiritualistic platforms would never go to any Church.

Every pulpit in the land may proclaim the future life, but does the Church *prove* it? People who will not accept the Christian evidences, or who have not the opportunity of studying them, will accept the proof which they consider Spiritualism gives; nothing is more convincing than personal experience, though our Lord has said, "Blessed is he who has not seen and yet has believed".

The Church has certainly taught the doctrine of the Communion of saints, but Spiritualism must *not*. Why? Because the Church will allow no authority but her own. Spiritualism does not, and never has, claimed to be original. It has always taught that mankind, all down the ages, has known that such communication is possible.

As for rival camps within the Spiritualistic movement, this is equally the case with Christianity. In the face of the present-day religious chaos, it is laughable to think of the Church making this objection to Spiritualism. Romans, Anglicans, Methodists,

and others believe in Christ and His Almighty power to save from sin and despair, as countless changed lives can prove. And the rival camps in the Spiritualistic movement all believe in one God and a spiritual world, and that communication with the departed is possible. All agree on this. If they separate, it is not on the main issue, which is belief in communication with the departed, implying, necessarily, a belief in God.

No religion has ever been free from the suspicion of fraud and folly and worse, and from its very nature Spiritualism is more liable to such misjudgements.

In conclusion, since as generally understood, Spiritualism stands for one special doctrine of Christianity, the reality of the future life, it is clear to me that this would not be sufficient to enable it to replace Christianity; men need more than just to know that. Particularly when they find sufficient proof in the Church, joined with the faith in Jesus Christ to deliver them from all the powers of evil. "But if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain", said St. Paul. If He is risen, then we have sufficient proof that we too shall rise again, both from the grave of our dead selves and from physical death, and dwell in light with Him and the beloved "departed".

C. B. M.

### A VISION OF THINGS TO COME.

Some years ago we wrote of Stephen Phillips, the poet and dramatist, and his remarkable prophetic poem, "Midnight, 1900", which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for December, 1899.

That poem gave an accurate forecast of some of the inventions and discoveries, in methods of transit and communication, which came later.

A clipping from a Boston (U.S.A.) newspaper, which reached us the other day, recalls the subject, for it contains a letter from Miss Lilian Whiting, the author of *The Adventure Beautiful*, *Kate Field*, and other well-known books, in which she deals with the poem, which is contained in the poet's collected works. As Miss Whiting remarks, at the time the poem appeared the motor car was still a novelty, the radio unknown, if not undreamed of, and other developments of Science so familiar to us to-day were still in their infancy.

Yet the poet looked forward to the days when the "powers of the ether" should be harnessed to the service of man, and his lines portray, in wonderful imagery, electric traction and wireless telegraphy. He sees the coming of a day when a man "out of uttermost India" shall whisper, and be heard in England by his friends, and "a maiden in English sunshine have sight of her lover" and be seen by him from Cathay.

We are very near that consummation nowadays now that television is being developed.

He tells of a time "when a lonely man with a breath shall exterminate armies", but that prophecy, though it suggests the awful powers of poison-gas may, we hope, never come actually to fulfilment, although the possibility of such a happening has even now probably been reached.

More congenial a study is that part of the poem in which he says "the dead whom ye loved ye shall walk with, and speak with the lost." That is, for many of us, a verified matter, although the forecast that "the delusion of death shall pass" is not yet an accomplished fact for the world at large. "Let them look to the inward things, to the searching of the spirit," is the admonition of the poet—that, also, is a matter to which men everywhere are now slowly giving heed. Changes in the thought of the time are everywhere apparent. A sense of Eternity is beginning to make itself evident.

### RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

How valuable are some of our prejudices! They represent a kind of protective coating sometimes saving the wearer of it from the troubles that come of a too hospitable mind and an excess of that kindly indulgence which may leave its possessor naked to his enemies, to say nothing of his indiscreet friends. But I can better understand the prejudice of the sceptic than the bigotry of the believer.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have been listening lately to a theory that survival of death turns very much on the will and purpose of the individual. If these have not developed a "survival value", it is suggested that he will not persist. An ingenious theory; but it leaves the *Universal Will and Purpose* quite out of account. We did not come into this world of our own will, and our continuance into the life beyond is clearly not dependent upon our own attitude of mind in the matter. We are immortal whether we like it or not. Ultimately, of course, we shall all like it very much indeed; that is, when we understand.

\* \* \* \* \*

A contemporary suggests, as an explanation of the number of reincarnated Hypatias, Scottish Queen Marys, Cleopatras and the like, that the idea in the minds of the people who claim to have been these historic personages may be due to some race-memory or distant family relationship. I don't think it is necessary always to resort to such a theory. The fancy and imagination of the romantically minded is probably the true explanation in most cases. There is the play-actor in most of us, and our old friend the sub-conscious mind loves to weave dramatic situations.

\* \* \* \* \*

Among the amusing things that reach this office almost daily is a story (vouched for as well-founded) of an inquirer into psychic phenomena who clearly possessed more enthusiasm than accuracy. Explaining the action of the "psychic rod" (the ectoplasmic terminal observed in telekinetic experiments) this gentleman made the matter clear to an inquiring friend thus: "Out of the cloud of ectoplasm there emerges a long 'feeler'. Some scientists call this a 'psychic terminal'. On the other hand the late Dr. Crawford called it an 'ectoplasmic cantilever'. But the most up-to-date term for this 'feeler' is *pseudosod*—from two Greek words meaning a 'false foot'." Obviously the word "pseudopod" was intended.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some of those who write in the Press about fraudulent Mediums seem to be under the curious impression that all mediumship is of the physical kind, involving levitations, materialisations and so forth. But, as we all know, physical mediumship is very rare indeed, nowadays. It was much commoner thirty or forty years ago, but it gradually dwindled until there were only two or three professional Mediums for psycho-physical power to be found in all London. Probably there are many private circles—family seances—at which physical phenomena are obtained. But as nearly all the conjuring "exposures" turn on the idea of physical phenomena with professional Mediums, it seems rather like exploiting a myth based on the idea of a state of things that may once have existed, but prevails no longer. The twaddle talked or written concerning hosts of charlatans counterfeiting psycho-physical phenomena and deluding silly people is, of course, only made possible by the ignorance that still prevails regarding Mediums and mediumship. It belongs to the same class of delusion as that which supposes that all seances are held in the dark, a superstition which still lingers amongst the uninformed.

D. G.

## REINCARNATION THEORIES.

## THE HUMAN BEING AND THE WORLD SOUL.

By CHARLES WICKSTEED ARMSTRONG.

Author of *The Mystery of Existence*, *The Survival of the Unfittest*, etc.

The question of reincarnation is certainly a very important one, and whether we are Spiritualists or not—nay, whether we are Christians or not—we certainly ought to be able to define our position with regard to it.

It may therefore be helpful if I recapitulate here the principal arguments for and against the theory, examining very briefly the validity of each.

The most powerful argument in favour of reincarnation is doubtless the fact that it seems to explain so well the appearance of infant prodigies who possess powers apparently impossible of development in so short a space of time as that which can have elapsed since a child's birth. Spiritualists may explain such phenomena in their own way, but many of us do not care to accept the Spiritualistic philosophy in its entirety and with all its implications, and are therefore really under an obligation to solve the problem otherwise. This we may do by accepting the theory of reincarnation or that of cosmic telepathy as I shall shortly suggest. There does not seem to be any other theory in the field. What has been called the "common-sense explanation", namely that the child's brain is simply abnormally developed, will hardly bear critical examination. It is rejected at once by most psychologists, for the simple reason that no brain-development could possibly of itself enable an *untaught* child to solve problems instantaneously which even mathematicians cannot solve without recourse to a method which has been learned; and it has been shown that many of these children are entirely untaught.

Before comparing the merits of the reincarnation theory with those of cosmic telepathy, let us glance at the two other principal arguments for reincarnation. They are more easily disposed of than the first.

Many people declare they can *remember* former lives. But among such people are very many who "remember" having been Mary Queen of Scots, Marie Antoinette or other historic personages. How is it possible that many different people can really have been either of those unfortunate queens? And if the alleged memory must be an illusion in most cases, the presumption is that it always is so. But it is alleged, too, that people have found their way quickly through the streets of towns they had never visited in this life, yet remember, as being quite familiar to them in a previous existence. These cases, however, have never, so far as I can verify, been submitted to proper scientific test. They should be investigated thoroughly in the presence of scientists of repute. Until that is done, they cannot be accepted as serious evidence, much less as definite proof of a theory.

The other stock argument for reincarnation is that it affords opportunity for our paying the penalty or reaping the reward of our good and ill deeds, here on this earth. It is said that in this way we may eventually "learn our lesson".

This argument, however, is unconvincing, because, if normally there is no link of memory between one life and the next, it would seem that no lesson can possibly be learned, since we could hardly frame our conduct in life to avoid the errors of a past of which we have no knowledge. And, if it is during the intervening bodiless state, between our earth-lives, that we are able to remember and reflect upon our conduct, it can be no use then making good resolutions for the future, since we cannot remember them when the time comes for their fulfilment. Whether or not we progress morally, will be, therefore, a matter of hazard. We shall be quite as likely to go from bad to worse as to improve.

Furthermore, there is no reason to suppose that

even if the theory could be made to fit our own ideas of justice (which it cannot), the Divine idea must coincide with ours. For this reason, arguments about transcendental facts of the universe or of life, based, as they so often are, upon our own ideas of justice, can never bear much weight, even when they seem plausible.

The strongest case, therefore, for the reincarnation theory is that based upon the appearance of infant prodigies, especially mathematical prodigies, when entirely untaught. Yet this is, perhaps, rather a slender argument upon which to build a theory so transcendental, provided any other explanation of the phenomena can be found and be proved satisfactory—that is to cover all the facts and appeal to the reasoning faculty.

In my book *The Mystery of Existence*, first published in 1909, I put forth the theory of a World-Spirit of which we and all conscious things form a part. The World-Spirit is omniscient and omnipresent, and we are as yet only partially individualised, for the tendency of evolution is toward individualisation no less in Spirit than in Matter. Our subconscious selves are nearer the World-Spirit than our conscious, which are as the crests of wavelets upon the ocean of knowledge and power and intelligence, which is the World-Spirit. The rising of knowledge to the surface—even to the crest of the wavelet—is a normal process and need never cause us surprise, even when we should hardly have expected it just then or in just that way.

The advantage of this theory over others is that it will be found to cover not only the case of the infant prodigy and that of mysterious "memories", but also every sort of apparently supernormal knowledge, from crystal-gazing to automatic writing; from dowsing to the sublimest work of genius. The more facts a single hypothesis will cover the likelier it is to be true.

As to reincarnation, therefore, there remains neither proof nor disproof. Like many other theories, it is quite reasonable in the light of facts, so far as we know them. But it has not yet been proved true. It would seem to me, however, that if we accept neither Spiritualism nor cosmic telepathy through the World-Spirit (we might accept both), then we are almost bound to believe in reincarnation. Moreover there is nothing incompatible between any one of these theories and the other two.

## NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

"The Apocrypha." Reviewed by a Spiritualist. By M. A. St. Clair Stobart. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd. 6s. net).

In the Foreword to her latest book Mrs. St. Clair Stobart remarks that the greatest service we can render to Christianity is to distinguish it from Churchianity, "from those elements in the orthodox religion which are off the Highway of Eternal Truth for which the Holy Jesus stood". She observes that theologians do not disguise their admiration for the literature of the Apocrypha, and cites, in evidence of this, Dr. Charles and the Rev. W. R. Churton. Beginning with the *Book of Tobit*, Mrs. Stobart says we must always remember that it is not a story from *The Arabian Nights*, written solely for entertainment, but "a tale that is included in what is regarded as the most sacred and directly inspired of all books—the Bible—and is presumably, therefore, written for our learning. . . . Luther seems to have been much attracted by *Tobit*." In Mrs. Stobart's hands it is not devoid of *The Arabian Nights*' touch. The book of *Esdras* is similarly handled: "We are given to understand that Ezra was caught away, whilst in the flesh—transported—after the manner of Enoch and Elijah, and once again we ask, Are we reading history or fairy-tale, or possibly fiction founded upon fact?" The reader of Mrs. Stobart's volume on the Apocrypha will not be left in doubt as to the author's answer to that question.

A. R.

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Thursday, April 3rd, Annual College Dinner.

Syllabus on Application.

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