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SPIRITUALISM AS A RELIGION A FRANK AND FRIENDLY CRITICISM BY A UNITARIAN MINISTER

That Spiritualism must be recognised as "the practical religion of many thousands of people," but that it is inadequate in itself as "a philosophy and way of life" is the conclusion reached by the writer of this article—a London Unitarian minister who has made a close study of psychic evidences for Survival and who writes of them with sympathy and understanding.

By THE REV. HERBERT CRABTREE
(Author of "Some Religious Cults and Movements of To-day.")

AS a professional minister who takes an interest in psychical matters, but who is not closely identified with the Spiritualist movement, the periodic discussions which take place in LIGHT and other journals as to whether Spiritualism is, or is not, a religion, always attract my attention, and I have read with care all that has appeared in this paper bearing on the matter in recent years.

I have never been able to understand how anyone could seriously doubt, in view of the many hundreds of Spiritualist churches in which some form of worship is regularly conducted, that it is the practical religion of, probably, many thousands of people who seemingly are satisfied with it and ask for no other.

Religion is essentially a sense of dependence upon, and obligation towards, a Power higher than man. Such a definition certainly justifies the Spiritualist claim to be classed among the forms of religion extant in the modern world.

I would suggest, however, that the crux of the problem lies not in the mere question as to whether Spiritualism is a religion, but whether it is an *adequate* religion; i.e., adequate to meet all the needs of mankind, and adequate, moreover, to formulate a philosophy and way of life so peculiar to itself as to render it a distinctive and independent

contribution to the spiritual progress of the race. Of this I am by no means sure.

To be adequate, a religion must be (or at least aim at being) intellectually, æsthetically and morally satisfying, and must blend these aspects of mental and spiritual experience in a form of worship which evokes reverence for the Highest, and directs the main interest of the worshipper to no end lower than that Highest. There are many dangers, rational and moral, in those forms of religion which centralise interest in anything lower than the reality of the Supreme Being, the only true and eternally satisfying object of worship.

In theory, the Spiritualist churches try to avoid these dangers: in practice I fear they do not succeed. The climax of the service, the *pièce de résistance*, that for which the people assemble and which constitutes the distinctive element in the service, is not indeed an act of worship as such. It is, of course, the clairvoyance; and this, alas! often betrays an interest that is all too humanly centred, and concerned with mundane affairs. Let there be no clairvoyance, then, however able the speaker and however reverent the surroundings, the numerical attendance slumps catastrophically. Let there be a chance of getting "something through," however trivial in a spiritual sense it might be, and the crowds attend. Is this worship? Does it constitute an adequate religion? I doubt it.

Having attended a considerable number of such churches

I am convinced that the cause of Spiritualism would greatly gain if about three-fourths of them were closed down. There simply are not sufficient good Mediums to go round, nor does there seem to be any indication that the number is increasing. I have attended some services where the clairvoyance has been striking and evidentially valuable (though I have never felt quite sure that to a critically-trained mind clairvoyance alone can ever be fully convincing); many where it has been trivial, and some where it has been highly distasteful, if not actually disgusting. Such churches may claim to be religious, but only so when judged by extremely low standards.

I have never felt that the Medium was a complete charlatan, but I have certainly often felt compelled to regard her (or him) as a person possessing only the faintest flicker of psychic power, but who, nevertheless, presumed to hold the key to unlock the mysteries of Heaven. Sometimes I have wondered whether the mysteries of Hell might not in some degree be in evidence.

The matter is of real and practical importance, for the traditional churches are constantly being told that if they would only accept the beliefs and practice of Spiritualism they would speedily save the religious life of England. But what are they to do in the light of the facts? I belong to a Church (Unitarian) which is faced with many difficulties. Many of our congregations are disappointingly small, and we know full well that in the present temper of the age devout worship and sermons, however eloquent, have no great attractive power. And yet if it be true, as my far from unsympathetic observation prompts me to believe, that not above one in half-a-dozen of the Mediums who at present occupy Spiritualist platforms possess a really adequate degree of psychic power, and if, moreover, even the good ones often get through but little more than fragmentary scraps of personal evidence, what is the state of things going to be if the demand for mediumship were suddenly to become virtually universal?—obviously, fearful confusion and incomputable spiritual degradation.

We who minister to relatively small congregations can at least claim that those who come to us do so from genuinely religious motives. There is certainly no other reason why they should come. There is not the appeal of novelty or of curiosity, nor perhaps even some morbid propensity to shun immediate duties by obsession upon the future life, and in our attempts to cope with human and religious problems which Spiritualism as such does not touch upon, we may claim that, though not so spectacular in our efforts, we are at least doing something which must be done by some definite religious agency if the spiritual life of man is not to dwindle into a trickling stream of merely personal or parochial interest.

Though I may doubt whether Spiritualist practices will ever be generally adopted by all the churches, its contribution to their thought will be far from unimportant. All religious systems must stand intellectually by the strength and consistency of their philosophical basis. In this respect Spiritualism may rightly claim more sympathy than it usually gets, for it has a definite contribution to make to metaphysics. Nevertheless, it cannot afford to stand aside from the major philosophical stream of the day, and it must be careful to offer no greater contribution than it can validate. That degree of valid contribution is soon reached, I suggest, viz., in the theory (and evidence for) the etheric, or soul, body, the tangible existence of ectoplasmic substance, and the objective persistence of

personal traits and characteristics after death. When, in its efforts to furnish a complete religious philosophy, it goes beyond this, it falls repeatedly into inconsistency and ambiguity.

I hold, therefore, that ultimately it will be recognised that the particular contribution which Spiritualism has to make to religion is of considerable importance, but I doubt whether the movement as an organised church will ever take high rank among the religions of the world. Those who have exceptional opportunities for investigation (a very small number) will no doubt feel most of their religious enthusiasm absorbed by it; those who are compelled to study it mainly through its literature (the lot of most of us in the ministry, owing to our limited financial means) will come to embody what is valid in it in their general philosophy; but those who narrow their sympathy and interest to the level of such clairvoyant messages and trance addresses as are now the main features of spiritualist services, will seldom, if ever, rise to the full perception of the glory and radiance of a truly devout and worshipful life.

PIGMIES' PSYCHIC FACULTIES

IN a new book, *Pigmies of the Equatorial Forest* (reviewed in *Psychica* for October), a missionary, M.R.P. Trilles, has some interesting stories about what he has seen amongst pigmies and other primitive races in Africa.

Amongst the pigmies, he says, illness is attributed to spells cast upon the sufferer by some ill-wisher. The first thing therefore to be done is to discover who it was that cast the spell. This is done by means of a mirror.

Whatever form it may take, the procedure is one and the same; the magic man of the tribe goes through a species of incantation or ritual, after which he will declare that the face of the offender has appeared to him in the mirror.

M. Trilles asserts that this is no empty boast. On one occasion he himself complained that one tin of provisions had been abstracted from his baggage on the way. At once the local Sorcerer fetched his mirror, and after incantation announced: "I see the thief—behold, it is so-and-so. Come and see for thyself." To the missionary's amazement he distinctly saw in the mirror the reflection of one of his bearers, who at once acknowledged his guilt.

Another time, after a long and difficult journey, the village magic-man, upon their arrival, described to them with faultless accuracy the exact route by which they had travelled, the halts they had made, the people they had met *en route*, what meals they had eaten by the way, and even the very conversations they had held. This was the more remarkable in that these conversations had been in French, of which the magician neither understood nor spoke one word.

INTER-RELIGIOUS CRUSADE SOCIAL

In connection with the Inter-Religious Crusade (of which Mrs. St. Clair Stobart is the promoter and chairman) an International Social is to be held to-morrow (Saturday 16th December) at 8 p.m., in the Grotrian Hall, Wigmore Street, London (the headquarters of the Spiritualist Community). Admission is free and all who are interested in the Crusade are invited. We are informed that the programme will be of an international character—including Japanese dancing and flute-playing, Indian music and other equally interesting features.

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THE MEDIUMSHIP OF LAJOS PAP

REMARKABLE VARIETY OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

By DR. ELMER CHENERY PAP

President of the Hungarian Metapsychic Society

LAJOS PAP, whose remarkable mediumship I am going to describe, is a skilled wood-turner of Budapest. He was born in 1883. Chance and curiosity provided him with his first spiritualistic experience in 1922. At the house of Dr. John Toronyi, he agreed to sit for table movements. Vibratory motions and partial levitation occurred. The force was strong enough to loosen the top of a heavy table, the circular bottom of which was held tight by the sitters' legs. He agreed to sit and experiment.

I met him for the first time at the house of Prof. Szesztay in 1924. The sittings were conducted by Major Cornelius Seefehlner and lasted for a year. There were two other Mediums, women. There were raps and table movements. Nothing else. The powers of Lajos Pap were yet unsuspected. During a sitting in the autumn of 1925 he passed, for the first time, into trance. The phenomena increased in strength; the table rose in the air. In 1927, we had the first apport: a wild flower and a tobacco pouch from the locked apartment of a neighbour. At that time notes had not yet been taken.

From 1927 on, however, a system of control of increasing severity was devised by myself for experiments to be conducted in my own home. The Mediums (for some time Lajos Pap sat together with another psychic, a man) and the sitters had to empty their pockets and attach luminous straps to their wrist and ankles. Then the Mediums donned a jumper which reached to their knees. This was later replaced by a two-piece seance garment. At present, the sitters, a constant and harmonious circle, all change into pocketless one-piece garments with sewn-on luminous straps and after the Medium and the sitters have been rigorously examined the laboratory is locked.

Before describing the experimentally-obtained phenomena, I wish to mention some spontaneous ones. On Aug. 8, 1931, at 7.15 p.m., in front of our seance room door, in the presence of myself, another witness and the two Mediums, a broken marble cross from a grave, weighing 9,200 grams, fell down apparently from nowhere. On January 1, 1933, at 3.45 p.m., in an empty square facing the Southern Railways, five snow-balls hit the Medium in the back. I am wrong to say snow-balls—they were quite loose and looked as if they had been scooped up with a spoon. I made an instant examination. No men were to be seen anywhere and the windows of the more remote houses were shut.

EXPERIMENTAL PHENOMENA.

The following is a summary of the experimental phenomena which we have observed:

1. Telekinetic phenomena: movement of the table with and without contact, raps and touches, imprints in clay, bulging out of curtains, complete levitation of chairs behind the Medium;

2. Apports: (a): beans, green twigs, flowers, pebbles, stones, cartridges, empty cartridges, old paper money and coins, pins, broken glass, drizzle of water (with the mouth of the Medium held), wine, beer, liquor, black coffee, cream dripping into a bottle handed to the Medium, and perfumes;

(b): Dead organic matter: beetles, butterflies, snail shells, horse bone, dog's skull, masses of cobwebs, birds, fish, frogs, a still warm squirrel, wet, four fleas creeping out of its ears;

(c): Living things: Grasshopper, bumble bee, stag-beetles (15 on July 15, 1933), field bugs, butterfly, dragonflies and their larvæ, rose beetles, cock-chafers, caterpillars, frogs, crabs, goldfish, lizards, salamander, slugs (21 on

June 17, 1933), tortoises, white Japanese mice, birds;

(d): Vanishing apports: In 1932 a perfume bottle arrived. I had it in my hands. On the wish of the control I laid it on the luminous table top. The Medium covered it with his palms and when, a minute later, he lifted his hands up, there was no bottle. Nor did we find it afterwards in the laboratory or on the Medium. In a sitting on December 31, 1932, two handkerchiefs were apported. I took one, with the other the Medium made a throwing motion. We did not see it drop or fly off. It simply disappeared. On June 14, 1933, we received a dead bird. With Dr. Groh I felt it. A few minutes later the Medium picked up the dead body and threw it against the wall. We heard the thud. But after the sitting we looked for it in vain.

LIGHTS AND SPARKS.

3. Luminous phenomena—(a): Neon-like streaks of light in the luminous basket which the Medium swung up and down, and between his two hands;

(b): White light on the finger-tips, describing a circle, leaving a smell which reminded of phosphorus;

(c): Fire-works of white, yellow, green and red lights on the tips of the Medium's finger, circling in the air, lighting up the laboratory;

(d): Sparks, reminding of electric discharge, setting fire to an apported paper napkin and a thin bunch of wrapping paper. On another occasion red light set fire to the bottom of the luminous basket but went out on my request addressed to the control. The basket still shows traces of burning.

4. Immunity to burning heat after holding and pressing to his lips and tongue a 100 watt electric lamp which had been already on for 6-10 minutes.

5. Immunity to bodily injury. The Medium often fell full length and bumped his head against sharp corners. He never showed traces of bruises or wounds.

6. Elongation, in 1927-28, by 10-15 centimetres under control of the soles of his feet.

On June 4th, 1932, several beetles arrived. For 2-3 minutes they were lying lifeless on the luminous table-top. Then they stirred and soon after began to scramble away.

Once, on arriving for the sitting, the Medium remarked that he smelled quicklime. No one else could detect the smell. During the sitting there was a cornflower apport, the smell of which reminded us of quicklime. On another occasion, he had a pricking sensation on the back of his hand, and, following that, 247 pins were apported. After the apport of a living grasshopper the Medium heard chirping for days. He could not sleep from the noise. At the next sitting we received another grasshopper. After that the noises ceased. Once he heard the croaking of a frog in his stomach. He asked me to put my head against his body and listen. I heard nothing. But in the sitting which followed we received a living frog.

FIRE TESTS IN A HOME CIRCLE

IN the November issue of *The Link* (privately issued to the members of the Association of Home Circles), visiting officers (Mr. and Mrs. F. Bell) state:

"It is encouraging to note that out of eighteen circles visited, five at least show definite signs of possessing physical Mediums. Think of it! Nearly 28 per cent. and this despite the fact that many circles have been in existence for only a comparatively short time.

"These physical Mediums include one who is able to handle fire without harm to himself, and he is also able to hand live coals round to sitters without their being hurt in any way. Another is himself levitated, and that to a height of 17 feet, and yet another becomes transfigured under a red light."

PSYCHIC INTRODUCTION NAME AND ADDRESS GIVEN THROUGH PLANCHETTE AND MEDIUM

By MRS. VIOLET FORMAN

WITH regard to psychic introductions mentioned in LIGHT recently, the following may be of interest.

Many years ago, as a young girl, I used to try writing with a planchette for fun, without ever realizing its possible value. I often found that when I put my hand upon the board, a frequently-repeated "order" was produced in a small but very distinct writing, yet very different to my own. Again and again would come the following words, written in French: "Collaborate with E.V. Look for him." At times the full name was written "Emanuel Vauchez."

As I knew nobody of that name, it seemed utterly senseless to me, and as these words continued to be written I got bored and dropped the whole thing for a time. About a year later, a travelling mesmerist and his Medium, Mde. S——I, came to Dinard, where I was then living, to give a performance at the Casino. As I had, at that time, never seen a public performance of the kind, I much looked forward to the entertainment. The day came, and I remember the moment I set eyes upon the Medium a curious sensation like a mild electric shock passed through me, and a feeling of intense pity for the Medium came to me.

The performance started and the woman seemed to go to sleep quite easily. Then suddenly she jumped up from her chair and ran down the stairs into the audience crying "Save me, save me," and as she came to where I sat, threw her arms round my neck and burst into tears.

I was utterly surprised and confused for in the circumstances the meeting came to an end, much to the annoyance of the hypnotist. Later, when I spoke to the Medium, she said she could not explain her action, except she felt that if only I could send her to sleep she would find peace. This she begged me to do.

Finally, I consented with much hesitation—never having tried to do such a thing before. The results were interesting, but that is her story, not mine. However, the second time she went to sleep under my suggestion, suddenly to my extreme surprise, she said: "At last, E.V., I have found La Violette for you."

I then asked for details of the two letters mentioned; to which I received his full name and address, in "Emanuel Vauchez," etc. On waking, I found she had no knowledge of the E.V. personality, much less did she know anything of his full name or address. I wrote to the address given, and received an immediate telegraphic reply, asking for an interview without delay.

The following day E.V. came and told me that for over twelve months he had continually been given under mediumistic control (the Medium being his niece) the order to look for "la Violette H," as she would help and collaborate in his work with him. The full name was never given—only at times a violet was drawn with the letter H following. Like myself, he knew of no one corresponding to such initials. My name was Violet Hamilton.

E.V. was a man over 75 years of age who had devoted most of his life to the education and improvement of the conditions of the working-class in France, but had also studied many phases of psychic phenomena and research, and was anxious to make public to others the results of his findings.

Unfortunately, private circumstances arose that prevented me from carrying out his wishes; but, whoever the "intelligence" who arranged this "psychic introduction" was, I can only express my deep sense of gratitude, for it was eventually through my friendship with E.V. that the realization of the value of psychic research came to me.

STRANGE EXPERIENCES INTERVIEW WITH MR. THOMAS WYATT

FOR the public at large, clairvoyance is a staple commodity. For the Medium, it is as highly individual as any of the normal faculties of perception. The subjective sensations of no two clairvoyants would completely agree. The varieties of clairvoyant experiences are an important and growing study.

In an interview for LIGHT Mr. Thomas Wyatt, the young London clairvoyant whose excellent platform demonstrations are well known to visitors at Queen's Hall and Grotrian Hall, disclosed a peculiarity, suggestive of Tom Tyrrel's "thumping" clairvoyance (recalled by Mr. Ernest Oaten in LIGHT, Nov. 24th). He usually has a pint and a half of cold water on the platform of which he freely partakes both before and during the demonstration.

"I cannot dispense with it," he said. "The moisture in my body is used up. The spirits say they use the 'water-body.' What that is I do not know. But if I don't get enough water (and I drink two quarts a day), I have the sensation of a punch on the solar plexus, which actually leaves a bruise. This is the call for more water."

Another feature of Mr. Wyatt's clairvoyance is reminiscent of Vincent Turvey's strange psychic adventures as described in *The Beginnings of Seership*.

"Spirits who have an urgent message to deliver," he said, "come to me at odd places and hours. Some time ago, on going to Southend, I received a visit from the spirit of a very persistent lady. She said: 'My daughter will be sitting at the end of the second row on the right hand side. She will be visiting my other daughter who is in hospital in the afternoon. I want you to tell her not to worry about the operation.' I did not know a soul in the audience at Southend. I pointed to the woman addressed by her name and gave her the message. It was correct in every detail. The seat which she occupied was the only one she could get."

"On 'buses and trains, going to certain places, I often have entities coming, giving their name and saying: 'I shall be seeing you later on.' As a rule all that is done in a pleasant fashion. I had only one experience which almost amounted to haunting. At a time when I was working very hard and my resistance was the weakest, the spirit of an old man dogged me for twelve days. He wanted to entrance me to get even with his son who was squandering the wealth which he accumulated in thirty years in as many days. One morning I told him quite frankly that he was an intolerable nuisance and by no means a gentleman. He answered: 'You have been very sporty. I will go.' And so he did."

"I am one of the few people who cannot go into museums. A great discomfort gets hold of me. I have the feeling of being in a lost property office and want to get out."

"But in the ordinary course of life I am not troubled by psychic impressions. I am left completely alone. That is why I could not help feeling greatly amused when I was stopped before the Queen's Hall by a lady who said: 'I sat with you eighteen months ago. My husband communicated. I just would like to know if you had heard from him since.'"

POSING AS A MEDIUM

From the *Two Worlds* (December 8th) we take the following: "Mr. E. R. Mandeville, of Wigan, who has been touring Spiritualist churches in the North of England, posing as a psychic photographer and transfiguration Medium, has been exposed by the Darlington Psychological Society as a charlatan. The Darlington Society obtained from Mr. Mandeville a written confession, in which he denied any possession of genuine mediumship for psychic photography."

Mr. JAMES COATES

MR. JAMES COATES, one of the veterans of the modern Spiritualist movement, passed peacefully away in Glasgow on Wednesday last week (December 6th) at the age of 91. The funeral took place at Rothesay on Friday, the service being conducted by Mr. J. B. M'Indoe, President of the Spiritualists' National Union; and on Sunday a memorial service was held at the Holland Street Church, Glasgow, with which Mr. Coates had long been closely associated, lately being Hon. President of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists.

At Mr. Coates' request, there were "no flowers and no mourning" at either of these services, but eloquent testimony was borne at both to his work for Spiritualism as Medium, investigator, author and lecturer.

In early life, Mr. Coates fought in the American Civil War and he had gone through many adventures before he came to Glasgow. Later, he married and settled at Rothesay where—to quote from an article by the late Dr. John Lamond in *LIGHT* (March 3rd, 1928)—"his home for many years became a centre for Spiritualistic investigations. Mrs. Wriedt, of Detroit, and many other distinguished Mediums found their way to that home and Spiritualists from all parts of Scotland assembled there. It is not too much to say," Dr. Lamond added, "that the home of Mr. Coates in Rothesay was the great centre of Spiritualism in Scotland for many years."

Interesting references to Mrs. Wriedt's seances at Mr. Coates' home are to be found in *The Voices*, by the late Vice-Admiral W. Osborne Moore.

Mr. Coates was well-known as a speaker on Spiritualism and other subjects; and his books *Photographing the Invisible* (psychic photography) and *Seeing the Invisible* (clairvoyance), although written many years ago, have still much practical value. He also published several books on Mesmerism and Hypnotism.

A LONG AND WORTHY RECORD

Mrs. HEWAT MCKENZIE writes as follows:—

Sixty years of close contact with Spiritualism, and an abiding interest in the public aspects to the very end, is a record of which as a Movement we may be proud. Only a few weeks ago, on Armistice Sunday, I sat by James Coates on the platform at the meeting in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow. He was the veteran among many workers and a reference to his long years of service evoked hearty applause from the great audience: if opportunity had allowed he would have been ready to speak a few words of cheer. Now he is with the greater gathering in the Unseen still ready to speak those words.

I well remember how, in 1920, he gave us ready and willing help at the start of the British College of Psychic Science, in preparing the first library catalogue; his wide knowledge of our literature and his personal acquaintance with many Mediums and practical experience of all aspects of phenomena was a very real help at that time. There, too, he had an experience with the Crewe Circle and with great joy received a clear "extra" of his beloved wife. Only a year ago, I found him active at the Brighton Society, attending the meetings and taking part in the discussions.

Wisdom attained through experience and deep thought for the work dwelt with him, and this he carries on to the new life and to new achievement.

YORKSHIRE PSYCHIC SOCIETY

At the annual meeting of the Yorkshire Psychic Society, at Bradford, Dr. John J. Bell, of Ben Rhydding, was elected president and Councillors Arthur Smith and G. F. Crosland of Bradford, Mr. A. A. Law, Rev. G. A. Mitchell, Vice-Admiral J. G. Armstrong, Captain Quentin C. A. Craufurd and Mr. G. A. Topham are vice-presidents. Mr. J. L. Graham was re-elected secretary-treasurer and Mrs. Jackson librarian.

FIVE MINUTES AFTER DEATH

REV. BASIL BOURCHIER ON WHAT HE EXPECTS TO FIND

REV. BASIL BOURCHIER, Rector of St. Anne's, Soho, London, recently bade farewell to his congregation, saying, "I am passing into the shadow of death," and he has contributed a remarkable article to the *Daily Independent*, Sheffield (6th December), in which he writes:

"Soon I must die. Five minutes after that death, where shall I be? What shall I be? What shall I be doing? And the answer is plain. 'In my Father's house are many mansions . . .' They many entomb the trunk and limbs that was a part of myself in dull, cold marble. But I shall march on. Those 'many mansions,' I believe, are so many spheres or planes of existence, fit stages according to our knowledge and holiness.

"The scene of this life after death I picture rather as an Everest. Some advance down in the valley, amidst the mists. Others are beginning to ascend, others are half-way, two-thirds of the way, nearing the summit. When my eyes close, this—as I see it—will be my fate.

"Shall I live? The question is ridiculous. My mind on this point has no doubts. 'There are no dead'—though death and this life may be widely sundered. My eyes will close upon one scene, and open on another. I have no fear. I am firm in this faith.

"Heaven and Hell, too, I face with clear mind. This is a time for stripping the mind of all preconceived ideas. I shall go to Hell. Not, mark you, that I read into that word the usual sinister meaning. In no part of the Bible has that word any meaning other than a term for man's second stage of existence. Plainly, in the existence of men there are three stages—earth, the sphere of life awaiting us immediately after death, and Heaven. That second sphere is, I believe, the place where all men await until the Day of Judgment.

"Though proof is not wanted. If real proof of my forthcoming perpetuation were forthcoming, I should reject it, for I already treasure the greatest proof of all, the words of the Master, who said: 'I am the resurrection and the life,' and 'Whosoever believeth in Me shall never die.'"

Mr. Bouchier writes that he attended "one or two seances" but "witnessed nothing less convincing in my life."

"Death has already shown itself to me," he says. "I have stood by the dying, I have read the Burial Service over their cold bodies afterwards. It is, admittedly, a part of my daily business. In transacting this business I have not infrequently seen dying men stretch out their hands to someone, or something, invisible, at the same time murmuring terms of endearment. Since my instructions are plain in the Bible, was not this further proof of the existence of the invisible, this presence of invisible friends who had come back from the other side to the bed of one they had known and loved to conduct and welcome him into the second stage of existence?"

M.S.A. CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

The Christmas Bazaar of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association was opened on Friday last (December 8th) by Mr. and Mrs. George Craze. Mr. Craze expressed his deep regret that, owing to an accident which she suffered a few weeks ago, Rachel, Countess of Clonmell, was unable to be with them as had been expected. He referred to the great work in which the Association is engaged and expressed his hope that the visitors to the bazaar would help them to meet the heavy financial responsibilities of that work, including the Queen's Hall Sunday services.

On Saturday, Mrs. Gordon Moore performed the opening ceremony. The total realised on the two days was nearly £400.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(The views and statements of correspondents are not necessarily endorsed by the Editor, who occasionally prints, in the interests of free discussion, letters with which he does not agree.)

SPIRITUALISM AND RELIGION

Sir,—The unending controversy on the subject of Is Spiritualism a Religion? would be simplified if controversialists would define the meaning they attach to the term "Religion." It does not seem to occur to them that this is a prior necessity before the question can be answered.

Some understand the term to imply simply a recognition of a state in which spiritual beings exist apart from matter, others as an organised body of doctrine with forms of worship: some however take a wider view and consider that the essence of Religion is the recognition of a Supreme Being and the worship of His Perfection; and others again regard religion as a word to denote the bond between God and the souls of men.

Until it is clear what significance is attached to the term there is no use in the pursuance of the argument as to whether Spiritualism is a religion or not.

H. A. DALLAS.

* * *

THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

Sir,—The debate as to whether Christianity or Spiritualism will be the religion of the future waxes fast and furious between the opposing parties, and bids us ask ourselves for the solution.

May I venture to express the hope that the religion of the future will be loyalty to God the Infinite Being Who is the Supreme Reality and Source of all life. This means loyalty to the Eternal Principle of Truth and Love upon which harmonious human relationships can alone be permanently established.

T. KIRBY.

52, Queens Road, Watford, Herts.

* * *

A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

Sir,—A very significant change in the attitude of the Church's leading and most representative paper is evidenced by the review of the *Church Guardian* on my book *Man's Survival After Death*, which appeared in its columns on November 10. There it was said:—

1. That on the evidence submitted I had proved my case;
2. That my book cast new light on the Bible, causing difficulties to vanish;
3. That the beliefs I set forth are spreading rapidly;
4. That they are bringing inexpressible comfort to thousands, and converting men to a belief in the future life and in God;
5. That the Church must face this great question, and make these facts part of her Christian Apologetic, for they are inescapable.
6. That the time has gone by for dismissing these things with a text, or explaining them away by any devil theory;
7. That my book is emphatically one to be read, and widely read, by all church people.

Thus, after 30 years of labour, in season and out of season, I have broken the ice of reserve and negation which has bound the Church's Press with reference to these vital facts: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

CHARLES L. TWEEDALE.

Weston Vicarage, Yorkshire.

* * *

A VOICE FROM WALES

Sir,—There are far too many "its" and alternatives in the Rev. A. F. Webling's address (LIGHT, December, 1st). I think it is the "its" that make room for the sceptic.

WALTER SNOOK.

(Past President Local S.N.U. Society.)

Ystradgynlais, Nr. Swansea.

ALBERT HALL PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPERIMENT

Sir,—Further to your report of my experience with Mr. Myers at the Albert Hall (LIGHT, November 10th, p. 738) I enclose a copy of a letter I have recently received from a lady claiming one of the "extras" as her father. My correspondent has also sent me a copy of a photograph taken during life for purposes of comparison. The original letter and photograph are of course open to your inspection.

I have read Capt. Carnell's letter (LIGHT, December 1st, p. 767) with interest, and enjoyed the dramatic fervour lent to my perhaps bald narrative by his subtle use of words such as "mere," "suddenly," etc., but if he will re-read the report of mine, I think he will notice that I nowhere make any claim or contention as to the cause of the extras obtained. My report was simply a statement of a sequence of events from which Capt. Carnell, or anyone else, may draw whatever conclusions he pleases. That a large number of inferences other than the obvious may be drawn from an identical sequence of facts is evident to anyone who for instance has attended the Law Courts, or has read distinguished interpretations of the Bible. The efforts of critics of Psychical Research generally to escape the obvious continue to evoke my respectful admiration. To illuminate this tendency further, take a sequence of two incidents at the meeting under discussion. A speaker asks if those present who have had proofs of Survival will rise to their feet—some hundreds accept the invitation—does this prove that they believe in Survival? Not to the really conscientious critic! They may simply have been tired of sitting down, or may have thought "God Save the King" was about to be played, or they may have been amenable to an hypnotic suggestion from the speaker. One might continue *ad infinitum* if your patience, Sir, permitted.

To return to Capt. Carnell's criticism of the joint experiment of Mr. Myers and myself, a necessary realisation is, that it was not undertaken to satisfy the requirements of Capt. Carnell or anyone else except the people concerned, and that as I was quite sure that no one but myself handled the plates until Mr. Taylor developed them under my eyes, I am perfectly satisfied with the result, but I neither hoped nor expected that everybody else would be so. The reason I attempted to record it publicly was the distance between Mr. Myers and the camera, and in the hope that it would suggest further experiments of a similar nature to other people; my own spare time being very limited.

To conclude, I hope that Capt. Carnell will be able to conduct his proposed experiment with the assistance of the Kodak Co., and I shall await the result with great interest. Meanwhile, in case it has not already occurred to him, I must warn him that, after its to-be-hoped successful conclusion, someone will write suggesting how much more convincing it would have been had he conducted it in a totally different manner. Still, that will not matter to Capt. Carnell if he is able to answer triumphantly the question "Can such things be?"

Saint Giles', Norwich.

HILDA BRETT DURRANT.

* * *

EFFECT OF RADIO-ACTIVE PREPARATION

Sir,—Mr. Barlow has recently shewn that if a cut-out photograph is exposed to a certain radio-active preparation, it becomes itself capable of imparting a radio-active "image" to the back of the shutter of a plate-carrier which will, in turn, produce a negative on a plate.

The evidence, therefore, for spirit-photography cannot carry any weight whatever, unless the plate-carriers are properly tested before exposure of the plates placed in it. This with reference to the test experiment carried out by a group with Mr. Myers, detailed in LIGHT of November 17th.

E. S. THOMAS.

Bickerton Road, Headington, Oxford.

"THE WHOLE TRUTH"

Sir,—Mr. J. A. Findlay has many predecessors who have endeavoured in vain to write the obituary notice of Jesus Christ but, as the grand old hymn says, "They fly forgotten as a dream."

Does not Mr. Findlay, in claiming so much for the present Spiritualist movement, rather put the cart before the horse? Is there anything in up-to-date psychic phenomena to which reference is not made in the grandest of all books?

Mr. Findlay "wants to hear about the other world from the other world." Very well, what is wrong concerning the teachings of "Zodiac" through the mediumship of Miss Moyes? With all deference, I suggest that Mr. Findlay only wishes to hear what agrees with his preconceived notions of it.

The whole truth, as Mr. Hannen Swaffer is reported to have said, "would be too much for any of us" and I think Mr. Findlay is seriously deceiving himself in imagining that he is the sole possessor of it. RICHARD HARVEY. 64 Sunningwell Road, Oxford, and Oxford Spiritualist Society.

* * *

SPIRITUALISTS AND PRAYER

Sir,—Mr. Findlay says: "Once the people know that salvation and reaching Heaven is not dependent on a belief or the performing of some rite or ceremony, the whole Church organisation falls to pieces like a pack of cards."

I think he fails to realise that there are people who go to Church services (and join in social activities organised by Churches) with the idea of *giving* rather than getting.

Spiritualists must surely realise, perhaps more than most people, that united prayer in a place set apart for that purpose is a very potent force. Spiritualism is certainly "a scientific fact, which can be discovered by anyone in their homes," but should it end there?

Holts, Little Horkesley. E. M. HORSEY.

* * *

IMPORTANCE OF HOME CIRCLES

Sir,—As one of a small group of Spiritualists who read with great interest and appreciation the courageous and enlightened statements made by Mr. Hannen Swaffer in an interview on the "Future of Spiritualism" (LIGHT, Oct. 27) and by Mr. J. A. Findlay in his book *The Rock of Truth*, may I, on behalf of that group and myself be permitted to extend heartfelt thanks to Mr. Swaffer and Mr. Findlay.

In these days, when everything and everybody is being over-organized, it is most refreshing to find one of the foremost champions of Spiritualism emphatically declare that upon the lowly home circle rests the future of Spiritualism.

I will even go so far as to say that the transforming power of Spiritualism is in direct ratio to the quality and faithfulness of the home circle.

(Dr.) HILDA R. B. WERDEN.

St. Catherines, Ontario.

* * *

"THE WORLD OF LIGHT"

Sir,—I would strongly recommend your readers to see Aldous Huxley's play "The World of Light," now revived for a short time at the Playhouse, London. A Comedy the author calls it, but it contains the elements of tragedy; perhaps the best comedies always do.

Mr. Huxley's attitude to psychic research and Spiritualism is not known to me, nor his object in writing the play; but it does not matter. The listener's part is to apply his mind to the problems which the play presents and to assimilate the lessons it holds, which may not be the same for all hearers. Incidentally, we have a fine example of telepathy from the living, though assumed by the other protagonists in the drama to be dead.

J. D. TURNER.

SPIRITUALISM'S GREATEST ASSETS

Sir,—May I say that, much as we are all indebted to Mr. J. Arthur Findlay, his Grotrian Hall address reveals him as a poor Spiritualist. He should apply first principles all round. Christianity began, he says, at Alexandria and Nicæa. But the Nicæa date is 325 and, a hundred years before that there were fifty thousand Christians in Rome alone, while a hundred years earlier still, Hadrian found an important Christian community at Alexandria, where, says Gibbon, "The Christian theology" [not religion] "appears to have assumed a regular and scientific form."

"New Testament evidence for Christianity is valueless" says Mr. Findlay. Thus with one swing of his left, he sends Paul and his fellow apostles to the floor. Yet, if the critics are to be believed, Paul had much to do with the founding of Christianity.

The fundamental error in the Grotrian Hall address is one which understanding Spiritualists make it their business to condemn—to wit, the confusing body with soul, the outer husk with the kernel, life with its expression. The early Christians did not conquer the world (so far, it conquered them) by compromising—borrowing ideas, clothes, altars and like paraphernalia. That way victory could not lie. Creeds, theologies, sacraments, offices are not religion.

The admittedly authentic letters of Paul reveal the soul and life of the Christian Faith—viz., the worship of the one God and Father, known through love and loyalty to the risen living Christ "who gave Himself" for us, and is become, by way of reward, Lord of angels and men (modern scripts confirm this). Paul phrases it briefly: "To me to live is Christ." This is vital Christianity—all that really counts, or ever has counted for spiritual ends: my religion, and that of millions.

"Once the people know the truth," declared Mr. Findlay (that salvation and Heaven do not depend on rites and ceremonies) "the whole Church organisation falls to pieces like a pack of cards." Where has Mr. Findlay been living? For this is sheer nonsense. All sensible people know it well enough. An important interdenominational Free Church newspaper which has just put out its four thousandth issue, has to my knowledge, been saying such things for upwards of eighty years. *Christianity*, equally with (here Mr. Findlay begins) "Spiritualism is not dependent on churches, on clergy, on holy books, on rites and ceremonies."

Further, I ask: is the personality of Jesus a contemptible asset that it should be lightly flung away? Will India and China be requested to turn their backs on Buddha, Mahomet and Confucius? A great personality in any sphere, here or in the Beyond, is of priceless value. Jesus, to say the least, is our greatest Spiritualist.

Here are indubitable facts of immense value to our Cause:

1. The Apostle Paul had immediate communications with the risen Jesus, resulting in his spiritual transformation; and he "received from the Lord" his commission, Gospel, and repeated guidance, independently of fellow apostles.

2. Jesus is in continuous direct communication with those who desire and need it here on Earth, and who love, consult and loyally serve Him as their living Commander. It is an exquisite Christian experience. As Spiritualists should know, this has nothing to do with deification.

3. The New Testament is a magazine of Spiritualistic phenomena centring about Jesus.

There may be, probably are, narrow minded Christian Spiritualists. But the cavalier treatment meted out by Mr. Findlay to Spiritualism's greatest assets, provides, in my judgment, an exhibition of folly, ingratitude, and false strategy.

(REV.) WM. BICKLE HAYNES.

Light

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ON THE WIRELESS

B.B.C. Directors are necessarily sensitive to public opinion; and it may therefore be assumed that, before announcing a series of talks on Spiritualism, Psychical Research and allied topics, they have satisfied themselves, not only that these subjects are of public interest and importance, but that their frank discussion on the wireless will be generally welcomed by listeners. In this we believe they are right.

The title of the series is "Inquiry into the Unknown," and the scope of the inquiry may be gauged by the list of the speakers. First comes an introductory address on January 5th by Mr. Gerald Heard, who has, in several of his science talks, touched on some of the problems of Psychical Research. Then follows Mr. Theodore Besterman (Research Officer of the S.P.R.), Lord Charles Hope, Mrs. W. H. Salter, Dame Edith Lyttelton (President of the S.P.R.), Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Ernest Bennett (Vice-President of the L.S.A.), Professor Seligman, and Professor C. D. Broad. From what is known of the views of these speakers, it is safe to expect that the reality of psychic phenomena, both physical and mental, will be affirmed, and also that both Animism and Spiritualism will be advanced as hypotheses necessary for their explanation.

UNCERTAINTY

DR. L. P. JACKS, writing on "The Future Life" in *The Spectator* for December 8th, draws attention to the probability that the belief in survival "has a biological rather than a theological origin." Often in *LIGHT* attention has been directed to this suggestion, which we regard as well founded. Survival, if a fact, cannot depend on theological theory—it is, like birth, a fact in nature dependent only on natural causes. For this reason the problem of survival ought to come, and some day must come, within the scope of purely scientific study.

Another interesting point made by Dr. Jacks is that uncertainty as to what lies beyond death helps to keep up interest in life and that complete certainty would cause interest to evaporate. "A

touch of uncertainty," he writes, "is a cheap price to pay for escape from boredom." Here, we think, he puts the emphasis on the wrong place. Certainty of survival is in every way desirable—the more so as there must ever be much uncertainty as to the conditions beyond death, uncertainty more than sufficient to keep interest awake both in regard to this life and the next. Even if knowledge grows "from more to more," complete knowledge can never be reached as to what lies beyond death. Literally, it is true that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," and equally, it may be believed, for those who love Him not—for, if tidings from the "other side" be true, they must be won to love Him before the goal is reached, "when God hath made the pile complete."

SAINT BERNADETTE

IF it were permitted to Bernadette Soubiroux to leave her place in the Beyond and be present as an onlooker in St. Peter's, Rome, on Friday last, when her canonisation was completed in the presence of the Pope and an assembly of ecclesiastical pilgrims from all over the world, she must surely have been sorely puzzled by the meaning of it all. In earth-life, Bernadette was a simple French peasant girl, who frequently went into a dreamy condition and afterwards declared to her unbelieving friends that she had seen and heard a beautiful vision-lady whom she believed to be the Virgin Mary. Like Joan of Arc before her—and like many after her whose inner sight and hearing have been opened—she was suspected of being either a liar or a lunatic, particularly by the priests. Not until after her death was her saintliness discovered by the Church, and the proof was found, not in her character but in the succession of cures taking place in the grotto at Lourdes where she had seen her visions.

Not a lunatic or a liar now, but a Saint of the Roman Catholic Church—canonised amidst scenes of glittering splendour of which in her peasant days she had never dreamed. What can Bernadette think of it all? If permitted to convey a message from the Beyond to the Pope, would it not be likely that she would protest against the vanity of her posthumous honours and point out the culpable blindness of the Church in refusing still—despite the obvious lesson of her life—to recognise the gift of clairvoyant vision as one of the means of establishing and maintaining contact between the two spheres of life? We think it very likely. And if it be the case—as reported by our Italian Correspondent (*LIGHT*, August 18th, 1933)—that seances are held regularly in the Vatican, it is not at all impossible that such a message either has been or will be received, although the world is not likely to hear of it in any official proclamation.

BOOK REVIEWS

MISS MARGARET UNDERHILL'S NEW WORK

By MRS. HEWAT MCKENZIE

IT is now some ten years since I first met Margaret Underhill on her arrival in London from U.S.A., and during this period it has been a matter of deep interest to watch her growing powers and their application in the instruction of other seekers after wisdom.

In a long and fascinating preface to the present volume, **Dreams of Udar*, she tells us how she first contacted psychic facts in California, as so often, in a seemingly accidental way.

Further search into these brought her, as if truly led by her helpers, to Europe, to Italy and to London where she became intimately acquainted with Miss Helen MacGregor, whose psychic gifts helped to ripen those of her friend, and with Mrs. Osborne Leonard, whose trance-power opened a way to new contacts with her teachers in the invisible.

Those who have read *The Road to Immortality* by Geraldine Cummins, will remember that the communicator, F. W. H. Myers, lays stress upon his discovery of groups in the Unseen, engaged in high enterprises for humanity: and that he found that, even while he was on the earth, his work had been utilised in such a group. Miss Underhill has had the good fortune to discover her connection with her group now; and in the fellowship of Udar (a Sanskrit word she discovered subsequently meaning "noble or enlightened") she has from the first been associated with a noble company which seeks to stimulate creative activity among men and women here. The proof of this she offers in many ways: she is humble as to why she was chosen for this work, but the fruit of the years in her previous books, *Your Infinite Possibilities* and *Your Latent Powers*, which have brought courage and strength to many, is the proof of the energy which flowed to herself and which she has generously passed on.

Many of the dreams of the fellowship are given in verse, and these are gathered together in this tastefully produced little volume. They speak of the high adventures of the soul who would journey on, and the efforts of the fellowship to find new workers to help mankind in its struggles.

This is a book for meditation, to keep by one's bedside, and I trust many will buy it at this season and introduce it to others, both for its intrinsic merit and as a meed of thanks to a noble worker who has, she tells us, other treasures to bring forth to us from the Unseen.

**Dreams of Udar* by Margaret V. Underhill (Wright and Brown. 5/- net.)

HINDU AND BUDDHISTIC PHILOSOPHY

This comprehensive little volume—*Yoga*, by Major General J. F. C. Fuller, Messrs Rider, 5/- net.—aims at indicating points of agreement between the Hindu and Buddhist philosophy and the Western study of the Quabalah. For all have one aim, to get behind the outer manifestations of life to that which animates it, in fact to understand Spiritual force. The goal is within man himself for he too is spirit. "Thou art That," says the Brahmin, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," says Jesus. The scientific steps by which the methods of Yoga lead the aspirant to this end are detailed at length as far as words can help, though the necessity of a teacher is emphasised. The way of the Buddha and his ethical teaching regarding life and thought-control also brings the seeker home and is more nearly allied to the synthetic method of the Christian mystic than the analytical method of Yoga. The search by all these means ends when the freedom of the soul is established and the indestructible thing is discovered within the heart of man.

"MARGERY" MEDIUMSHIP

EXPECTED STATEMENT BY DR. CRANDON IN LONDON ON THUMB-PRINT MYSTERY

WE learn that Dr. L. R. G. Crandon, of Boston, U.S.A., is to be in London from Sunday to Wednesday next (December 17th to 20th), and that he will bring with him a copy of the report by a Committee of experts on recent allegations reflecting on one aspect of the mediumship of "Margery"—namely, the production in wax of thumb-prints purporting to be made by "Walter" her deceased brother who acts as "Control."

The allegations, it will be remembered, were that it had been discovered that the thumb-prints are identical with those of a man now living who had been associated with the experiments in their early stages; and that, as no two thumb-prints had ever been found to be exactly alike, the inference was that the "Walter" prints were not genuine.

The investigations into these allegations have been in progress for many months, and we are informed that Dr. Crandon will be able to state that the Committee have discovered a satisfactory explanation of the mystery.

It is expected that, on Monday evening, Dr. Crandon will be the guest at a dinner at which representatives of the Spiritualist movement will be present; and that he will address a meeting to be held at the L.S.A., South Kensington, at 8.45 on the evening of Tuesday. At both of these gatherings Dr. Crandon is expected to explain the line taken by the investigating Committee and to give details of their findings.

"UNCOMMON SENSE"

HERE is a book of psychic philosophy adapted to practical life with an uncommon appeal by a coloured man who is blissfully unconscious of being a Spiritualist, and of the highest type at that. By his conception of *Uncommon Sense* (Fowler & Co. 5/-) Garland Anderson, the playwright, has bridged the gulf between orthodox and psychic philosophy. He opens up a new field of intellectual expression to millions whom orthodoxy has blinded to the fact that "sound sense may exist beyond accepted common sense reasoning and therefore not immediately commending itself to the understanding as being in accordance with reason and good judgment." The source of this uncommon sense is intuition, imagination, faith, inspiration and inventive urge. It is to them, so Garland Anderson proclaims, that all progress is due, and not to common sense.

Moreover, he discovered the Principle of Success. He believes that "every sincere desire of the heart is a true prayer, and when the desire or prayer is formulated the Principle is immediately providing us with every step necessary to the perfect fulfilment."

His own rise from an ignorant bellboy to a dramatist and philosopher of renown—an absorbing romance—is advanced as a convincing demonstration that "there is absolutely no environment or surrounding, no matter how lowly, which can hold a man down who is determined to apply this success principle and go up." The book brings fresh air into cobwebby nooks and corners of the human mind and will be found immensely helpful to all. Its concluding sentence should re-echo far and wide: "Service is the rent we pay for the space we occupy on earth." N.F.

"CHRIST RESCUED"

"Christ Rescued" is the rather arresting title of a book by Werner Hegemann (translated from the German by Gerald Griffin) and published by Skeffington (6/- net). It includes a series of imaginary dialogues in which some famous thinkers and writers take part—Sir James Frazer and George Bernard Shaw amongst them.

HELPERS FROM THE "OTHER SIDE"

HOW SUCH GUESTS SHOULD BE RECEIVED

By FREDERIKA QUANJER, The Hague, Holland

IF any one asked me at what particular time in life I became a Spiritualist, it would not be possible for me to give a definite answer. Without my being aware of the fact, Spiritualism must have been working within me long before I ever heard about it. The consciousness of a continued existence after our life on the earth-plane seems to have always been there, and it grew stronger, as those dear to me passed away. How could intimate ties relentlessly be broken? As the years rolled on, the conviction grew that the Creator would never destroy what he had so wonderfully wrought. A child builds houses with his bricks, only to demolish them with a shout of delight. No reasonable grown-up man would ever dream of doing such a thing; how much less the All-Father, Who planned perfection for all He made.

Yet there was one very dark period in my life. When quite young, I was suddenly seized with the terror of death. There seemed to be nothing at that moment to justify this fear, but there it was, and I felt caught in a grip of iron from which there was no release. Never did I mention my fears to others. Young children are reserved, where death is concerned, and I could not bear the thought of perhaps making others afraid. Whenever I saw old people, I felt an impulse to cry out: "You are so old! You cannot live much longer! Are you not afraid—terribly afraid?"

Although it was never expressed in so many words, and consequently no one tried to argue with me, my fears left me as suddenly as they had come. It was the influence of home life that brought peace again, thus putting a stop to the fiercest struggle that could perhaps rage in the soul of a child. As a revelation came the thought that if an earthly father were good and loving, the Heavenly Father was sure to be all that. This being so, nothing terrible could happen after death. It is the privilege of youth to jump at conclusions, and to shake off care and trouble. It was never forgotten though, and it certainly led to a fuller measure of faith.

NO ROOM FOR FEAR

Although I was convinced of life going on in other spheres, it was much later in life that I came into touch with real Spiritualists. It is true that I had been told of the possibility of communicating with those who had gone, but the way in which this was said to take place, did not appeal to me. Creepy tales were told; the creepier, the better, so it seemed, and all the more appreciated. *True Spiritualism leaves no room for fear, or for anything that is creepy.* On the contrary; it leads to a deeper belief in God, to an intense joy of living, eliminating all fear of death. We who call ourselves Spiritualists, should never for one moment forget what a great responsibility rests upon us. Let us never spread any tales, for the truth of which we cannot answer, in our desire to convert others. Spiritualism was never given us for that purpose. What we can do is to help and comfort the bereaved ones that stretch out their hands for it. Then let all our actions testify our knowledge that Love reigns triumphant, that Love stands fast for ever and ever, that it outlasts death and the grave—that we could never doubt it, since we believe in a loving Father, and in a living Christ. So very often the attitude of so-called Spiritualists is far from being earnest and dignified.

Foolish tales are spread about Spirit manifestations, and about our being able to call Spirits back to the earth. The thought that any one should ever try to do such a thing is revolting; it is moreover wicked and devoid of feeling. *Thank God, it is not true. None of us can ever force a departed Spirit to come back to the earth.* It is the seances of this type that have caused so many misunder-

standings, and have been so detrimental to the cause of real Spiritualism.

If we are to make true progress, we should advance carefully and reverently, armed with the common sense given to us. There should be doubt, too, honest doubt, which leads to a deeper, independent study of facts. *It is not right to accept blindly all that is said to come to us from the Spirit world.* After having received the first few communications, most of us, Spiritualists, have felt an insatiable thirst for more, especially in the first stage. Perhaps it is just human. It is then that we must be on our guard. If we take part in numerous sittings, going now here, then there, the inevitable result will be that all sorts of contradictory messages are given to us. And what then? In nine cases out of ten deep discouragement will follow, and it is even possible to turn away from Spiritualism, saying: "What is the use, if we cannot be certain about the truth of the communications?"

Spiritualism is all right, but in most cases we ourselves are not. That is the trouble. We all know, moreover, that like attracts like. This we should never forget. We only get what we deserve, and we have to fight ourselves before we can ever hope to get anywhere. There are those who think that if they only consult a Medium, spirit-communication will follow immediately and at their bidding. They will soon find out their mistake.

HOLY GROUND

How is it that we do not realise that before ever attempting "to sit," we should first know something of the Holy Ground we wish to tread. Do we know what risks we run by rushing blindly into a maze, the paths and turns of which are unknown to us? Are we convinced of the fact that Spiritualism is not a thing to trifle with, but part of God's great scheme of the universe?

Our helpers are always there, whether we sense them or not, but very often it is our own lack of trust that bars the access to our hearts. Do we always realise how much disappointment we may cause those patient ones by simply ignoring their presence? Who knows what difficulties they may have had to overcome? If we set up a high wall around ourselves, how can we expect them to get near to us at all!

Just think of the manifold proofs we get of their nearness, without our attending "seances" of any kind. Visible and tangible they do come to us through the genuine mediumship of others; but there are moments, perhaps in the peaceful twilight or when we go into the silence, when a deep sense of awe comes over us. Breathless we listen when they whisper their messages into our ears, when their gentle touch brings comfort. Then we feel that such moments are holy, and that we are truly communicating with those dear ones for whose physical presence we may long have yearned. Help comes in the most unexpected ways.

Have you never felt that in danger you were protected and shielded? There are those who say that there must be a large proportion of mankind left without protection from the other side, and that there must be a great deal of injustice, partiality, and cruelty in the great scheme of the universe, since so many human beings are caused to suffer. They point at all the wars that rage, the accidents that happen, the disasters that scourge the earth. They forget, however, that there is such a thing as the law of Cause and Effect; that God—the loving All-Father—cannot have His laws tampered with.

When we expect earthly visitors, we tidy up our rooms and make them look festive. Then we go forward with a smile to welcome our guests.

Let us throw open the doors and windows of our Souls and hearts. Let the light come pouring in, and let us feel that in streams a long, unbroken chain of joyous guests, ready to uplift, waiting for recognised re-union.

ASTRAL LIBRARIES

MRS. MARJORIE LIVINGSTON'S OTHER-WORLD ACTIVITIES

IT will be recalled that in our issue of November 24th, Mrs. Florence Hodgkin, of Reading, told how, in a communication from the "other side" through a trance Medium, she was informed that Mrs. Marjorie Livingston (of whom she had not heard previously) was "permitted to come over here and read some of our books, taking back with her a memory of what she has read, which is then put into writing."

On her attention being drawn to this, Mrs. Livingston confirmed the statement and added some interesting details regarding the Astral Libraries.

Following the publication of this information (LIGHT December 1st), Mrs. Hodgkin wrote expressing pleasure at the reliability of the communication being thus established and added:

"I received a far more detailed account of Mrs. Marjorie Livingston's activities than my former reference allowed me to relate. For instance, I was told she is at work on the Bible—not as we know it but as it *should* be, and as it is in the copy she is allowed to investigate. An example of the difference was given to me, and if she is able to sustain the quality and significance of that fragment, then never, surely, will the literary world have received such a 'best-seller.' I am inclined to believe, after reading your article, that this may be news even to Mrs. Marjorie Livingston herself, whom I have never met."

This letter we forwarded to Mrs. Livingston who, in reply, wrote:

"The note from Mrs. Hodgkin is wonderfully interesting. It gives me a specific example of *internal* evidence which is so valuable. The Book which I mentioned as being shown to me in the Hall of Learning *was* a Bible, though 'not like ours' as Mrs. Hodgkin says. I never mentioned this fact to a living soul, so it was extremely evidential that it should have been given to me in this way.

"The *external* evidence is weakened by the fact that the Medium knew my name and had met me some long time ago when I once sat with her, but I never think, personally, that external evidence should be over-valued in these matters: it is like trying to weigh gold-leaf on the luggage machine in a goods' yard! It is the internal evidence which is of true value to those concerned.

"I am very grateful to you for setting this correspondence in motion, for it is so heartening and encouraging to get proof of the accuracy of one's work and messages in this so-called miraculous manner."

"POWER" ON COSMIC EVOLUTION

In his address at the Æolian Hall, London, on Sunday evening last, "Power" (speaking through the mediumship of Mrs. Meurig Morris) referred to the visions of the mystics and of one vision in which the seer found himself loosed from all mortal ties and in a region of Light. He saw that Light was the supreme creative energy and in its working upon matter brought forth all the forms of Nature, including the human form. He learned of the oneness of all worlds as manifestations of one Supreme Mind. "Power" appealed for a recognition of this underlying unity of Life, and exhorted his hearers to break down the walls of separateness and so, by their own efforts, discover the true way of living as part of a Universe growing not only into unity but into a conscious realisation of the truth that all worlds are one world.

REV. V. G. DUNCAN

The Rev. V. G. Duncan, author of *Proof*, asks us to inform readers who may wish to write to him that he will be in Italy until the end of April, and will be glad if he "can be spared extra correspondence." His address is Via Carella 64, Palermo, Sicily,

"THE INVISIBLE INFLUENCE"

IT is stated by the *Sunday Express* that "Dr. Alexander Cannon, psychiatrist and research worker at the London County Council mental hospital at Colney Hatch, has been asked by the L.C.C. to resign.

"The reason given is the publication last month of his book *The Invisible Influence*. In that book Dr. Cannon deals with hypnotism, black magic, and other occult sciences. He investigated their practice in the East. The official view," says the *Sunday Express*, "is that any one who could write such a book is not suitable to practise Western psychiatry in a mental hospital."

In his book Dr. Cannon says he was told, long before the event, how Mr. Justice McCardie would die and the year of his death. "Mr. Justice McCardie," he says, "was a victim of the great evil Order of the Left Hand. . . . This was indeed no suicide. It was the hand of the great black magician."

Dr. Cannon, the *Sunday Express* understands, has entered an official appeal against the demand for his resignation.

[A review by Mrs. Hewat McKenzie of this remarkable book, *The Invisible Influence*, including several interesting quotations, will appear in LIGHT next week.]

W. T. STEAD BUREAU CHILDREN'S PARTY

Mr. Fred Edouin writes as follows:—

"This year the Christmas party for the children at the W. T. Stead Bureau should be a greater success than ever. For the need is greater. The Bureau appeals to you to come and bring a toy; if you can't come, send a toy to the Secretary, W. T. Stead Bureau, 5, Smith Square, London, S.W.1.

Mrs. Grace Cook and Mrs. Sharplin will be at the party to describe the spirit children present, and give you their messages."

By A. F. WEBLING

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INNER MEANING OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

MR. W. H. EVANS, on Tuesday, at the L.S.A., brought to a close the session of Free Public Meetings in which he had given a series of addresses on "The Theory and Practice of Spiritualism."

As we are near Christmas, he said, it would perhaps be of interest to give some thoughts on the inner meaning of the Life of Christ. Pointing out that much of the criticism levelled against Christianity is directed to the form in which it is presented, he urged that there was an inner meaning which is missed both by believers and critics. It is a significant fact that in many of the messages which have emanated from the other side of late years, this inner meaning has been stressed and some attempts to give that meaning had been made. From the time of Stainton Moses' work, *Spirit Teachings*, and that other work of profound meaning, *The Perfect Way*, by Edward Maitland and Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford, down to *Man Made Perfect* by Mabel and *The Outlines of Existence*, by Mrs. Marjorie Livingston, there may be traced the work of a band of teachers engaged in reviving the ancient mysteries. That a story such as the life of Christ should be so ancient and wide-spread—there are versions of it in the ancient world of America among the Aztecs—cannot be put down to mere coincidence or chance. Where you have uniformity of ideas there you have evidence of emanation from the same mind or minds.

It is reasonable to suppose, the speaker went on, that in the early days of the race, those who had the government of the planet in their charge, would from time to time give instruction to those who were ready to receive it, and mediumship, especially in its higher forms as seership, would provide the channel for those teachers in the higher life to give their ideas. If it is possible in these days—as we know it is—for high and lofty teachings to be given forth by some of the leaders in Spirit Life, why not in past ages? The world has never been without its witnesses for the truth, and they have stood forth as the Saviours of the race, or, as it may be better described, the Wayshowers. Reasoning upon this basis, may we not regard the life of Jesus as recorded, not only as history, but as parable? The similarity of the incidents recorded with those of more ancient faiths seems to point to some such possibility.

Viewed from this point, the life of the Master becomes for us a graph indicating the stages in spiritual development which every soul must pass through. The birth of the Child in the stable—or as some ancient authorities say, a cave—becomes for us the birth of a higher consciousness, called by western peoples the Christ Consciousness. This is born of the union of the intellect with Psyche—the correspondences with which are Joseph, the carpenter, who works with the material of this world, that is the objective mind—and Mary, the soul, which is the subjective mind, that dwells upon the inner planes of life.

There comes a time in our lives, went on the speaker, when we reach a stage of unfoldment where we become definitely conscious of this change, and it is as real to the philosopher as is conversion to the sinner. It heralds the opening of a new world, the enhancing of vision, and the glorification of the commonplace. It lifts the consciousness above the things of time and gives a glimpse of the eternal verities, those truths and principles which are beyond the limits of human speech.

GENERAL SITWELL'S VISIONS

On the night of the second Friday in July, 1932, at Barmoor Castle, Northumberland, my husband, Brig.-General W. Sitwell, who was very ill at the time (he died in September, 1932) woke up and said, "Horace M—is in the room." I told him he was dreaming and that no one was in the room with him but me, but he kept on repeating and insisting that his friend was there too. I had not heard him speak of this friend for a long time, and asked where he was, and so on.

On Monday, when the London papers came, I saw "General Sir Horace M— died in London on Friday night." I took the paper up to my husband and told him, at which he smiled and said, "I knew he was dead when he came here that night."

On another occasion a little later, he got out of bed in the night saying, "R—is at the end of the passage—I must go to him." With difficulty I persuaded him to get back to bed saying no one was there, and I only mention this because Lord R— himself died two or three months later.

CONSTANCE SITWELL.
114, Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.1.

MEDIUMS' RECEPTION

A pleasant social meeting was held at Queen's Gate Hall, South Kensington, on Wednesday evening, December 6th, when members and friends of the British College of Psychic Science were "received" by the Mediums working in connection with the College. Mr. G. P. Sharplin presided.

Mrs. Mason spoke of the personality of "Maisie," her Zulu child-control, who has become a real person to her, with differences in taste, character and memory. "Maisie" always remembers her sitters and their communicators—while she (Mrs. Mason) has no conscious recollection of them—and, even after the lapse of a year, would continue from the point at which she had left off at the previous sitting. She promised one lady to visit her abroad and spoke to her in New Zealand in the direct voice. She foretold a personal calamity four or five days in advance which Mrs. Mason did not expect and which came as a terrible shock. Also she spoke in her native Zulu to a lady who came from Africa and who understood the language.

Mrs. Barkell, controlled by "White Hawk," gave very successful clairvoyant descriptions; Frau Lotte Plat excelled in giving auric readings of health conditions; the Rohamah Rhamah narrated a personal experience in spirit-guidance; and Mrs. Eileen Garrett gave splendid clairvoyant demonstrations.

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