

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

The "Literary Digest," that excellent compendium of the world's thought, published every week in New York, speaks very seriously about the general interest in, and accumulating evidence concerning, Psychic Phenomena and the Unknown. It devotes no less than six columns to extracts, and comments upon the extracts, from the various English and American journals which have treated of the phenomena, including "LIGHT." The "Digest" truly says:—

On both sides of the ocean, and in every language that has a periodical literature, psychic phenomena, the occult, the mysterious, are being discussed with an interest, a freedom, and a voluminousness heretofore unknown. There is undoubted evidence that this interest is growing and spreading, and that with its widening circle have been developed new sources of information derived from personal experience heretofore untold. A spirit of earnest and impartial investigation seems to be taking the place of the credulity which unquestioningly accepts, and the scepticism which arbitrarily condemns, without trial. Evidence is being gathered, personal experience generalised, and phenomena which have been called "supernatural" are being examined with scientific care and accuracy.

Dr. Purdon, whose name is well known on this side of the Atlantic, writing from Tampa, Florida, refers to an article in "LIGHT" of January 28th, entitled "An Idea of Research." In that article it was pointed out that there were curious branches of mathematics which at present were interesting to mathematicians only, but which, following the analogy of previous investigations of the kind, would be found to represent in some way certain of the more recondite problems of existence. Dr. Purdon says he has been working at one of these comparatively little known branches of mathematical study, and that he has obtained remarkable results. We hope to get further information from him for "LIGHT." In his letter, which is not intended for publication, there is this striking passage:—"I don't believe the molecules are absolute existences independent of all perception or feeling present or past. They are, I hold, the fundamental working elements of the Spirit as revealed to and in us."

This connection between mathematical science and the Unseen seems to be getting fairly prevalent. In a note of the "Christian World," headed "Religion and Geometry," reference is made to a book called "The World of the Unseen, an Essay on The Relation of Higher Space to Things Eternal." We hope to speak more fully of this book later on; but from the account of it in the "Christian World" it is a valuable one. The "Christian World" says of it—

Beginning with geometry, the author shows, in terms of that science, the forms of existence successively under one, under two, and under three dimensions of space, the latter being, of

course, the condition under which we actually live. By parity of reasoning it is possible to think of a fourth dimension or direction in space, and even to express it mathematically. It is however, to us as actually unknown, and at present unrealisable, as the condition of three dimensions would be to a being knowing only two. The author proceeds, then, to develop the theory that it is in this higher dimension that the departed dwell, not necessarily far from us, but invisible, because our senses have no way of entrance into it. Into this also our Lord entered at His ascension. Moreover, the reasoning which makes a fourth dimension intellectually possible leads us to the conception of still higher ones, each increasing indefinitely the freedom and power of the inhabitants, till the highest is reached where God is. The kenosis or self-emptying of Christ was His descent from the highest sphere to our own. The writer claims to be based on scientific principles, beliefs which are found, not only in Scripture, but also, in less complete and accurate form, in the Occultisms and Gnosticisms of all ages and countries. He discusses his subject with much devoutness and with unquestionable ability, and his work deserves to be read as a noteworthy contribution to a question which is deeply agitating the modern mind.

Macmillan and Co. are the publishers.

The story of the origin of the now celebrated Lick Observatory, near San Francisco, will be interesting to readers of "LIGHT." Sir Edwin Arnold, who has written for the "Daily Telegraph," under the title of "A Night in Heaven," a long account of his recent visit to the observatory, makes the following statement:—

From what I gathered James Lick amassed his fortune chiefly by lucky mining speculations, and was led to dedicate a large portion of it, seven hundred thousand dollars, to this noble purpose rather by vague, dreamy, transcendental ideas than upon strictly scientific grounds. He had come across some "Spiritualistic" books, full of theories about life upon the moon and the planets, and the possibility of some day and somehow communicating with planetary people, or at least of demonstrating the existence of "other races in other worlds." The bigger the glass the better the chance of this, he thought. Consequently that vast instrument was ordered of Alvan Clarke, and the Lick Trust was formed.

The leaders of liberal religious thought in Chicago are determined that nothing shall be left undone to prove their desire to welcome all such as, being free in thought like themselves, may visit the World's Fair, as the following extracts from the "Chicago News Record" of February 14th will show:—

Pastors of the liberal churches of the city have decided on a step which, it is predicted with confidence, will have far-reaching effects upon the religious thought of the future. The step was taken at a meeting held at the Tremont House yesterday. The gathering comprised fifteen pastors, the leader of the Society of Ethical Culture, M. M. Mangasarian, and the editor of the "Religio-Philosophical Journal," B. F. Underwood. The churches alone have a membership of about ten thousand.

The step taken was a determination to have all unite and form a common centre where the distinguished men of liberal religious views who will visit Chicago during the World's Fair period may meet to enjoy the hospitality extended them and to discuss all questions affecting the welfare of humanity.

Dr. Canfield presided, and the Rev. Dr. Thomas was the chief speaker. His address, as well as those of all who followed

took the form of suggestions rather than that of formal address. Nevertheless, he was unable to refrain from an occasional shot at those who hope to see the gates of the World's Fair closed on Sunday. Dr. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Dr. Canfield, and others supported the views of Dr. Thomas. At length it was resolved to find suitable headquarters in a central portion of the city for the entertainment of visitors on week-days. The question of securing the Auditorium or some other public building for mass-meetings on Sunday afternoons will be subsequently discussed. The following were appointed members of a committee to take the matter in hand: F. B. Toley, B. F. Underwood, A. J. Canfield, and J. T. Ripley. This committee will report to a further meeting to be held at the Tremont on Monday next.

"LIFE AFTER DEATH."

Professor S. P. Wait, in the "Arena," for March, has an excellent and remarkable paper; excellent for its admirable style, and remarkable for the illustration that it gives of the new thought which is the outcome of the higher Spiritualism. The first sentence is a striking one: "The only life we know is one before which death has been." And the paper goes on to show how life here is only won by the continuous struggle with death.

Death is the great price we necessarily pay for partaking of the fruits of a ripened earthly experience. Not death in the sense solely of putting off the fleshly form, but as a failure to respond consciously to the environment of that all-encompassing spiritual fatherhood in which wittingly or unwittingly we live, and move, and have our being. It is the burden of this death that rests upon the race, giving rise to the belief that man is alienated from his Maker, and that some virtue other than his own must operate vicariously to bridge the intervening gulf. Was a mistake made then in this the chiefest of creative handiwork? Did some dire monster co-equal in power with the Highest come off victorious in a struggle for possession of the human soul, aiding man to rise in a successful rebellion against his Creator, and causing him to lapse from a primal perfect state? Ah, no! Man, as God thought him, as conceived in the Divine mind, was necessarily and inherently a perfect creature. But in making objective this subjective reality, we have the ages of *becoming* that mark the rise from savagery to civilisation.

Evil, then, is chaos, gestation, transition. The devil becomes positive and personal in all undeveloped forms of life belonging to the seen or unseen universe. The regular movements and relative positions of the heavenly bodies are determined and maintained by the balanced working of antagonistic forces, on the one hand causing every ultimate particle to tend toward a common centre; on the other, seeking to draw it from that centre into space. The very earth itself still bears upon its surface and within its crust the record of the age-lasting warfare it waged for its place in the order of planets. It yet carries surging within it a molten sea like that of the protean fire-mist from which it was progressively created. The new chemical combinations that mark the transition from a gaseous to a solid state were attended by convulsions gigantic and prolonged. Long cycles were required for the principle of vitality, with all its processes, to modify and supersede those forces and inorganic actions that characterised crystallisation and the formation of the mineral kingdom. Every germ of a higher nature, representing the impact of the Creative Spirit in its overshadowing capacity, found its environment filled with foes to its progress. The principle of repulsion and resistance pointed out the path for every species in its battle for being.

As the spiral line of life mounted through orders higher and still higher, the struggle for existence became more and more intense, and less and less the number fitted to survive, until at the last and highest, man, a task so prodigious was given to accomplish, enemies so mighty to be overcome, and a mark so high to be attained, that no one but a god incarnate could perform the work, win the victory, achieve the goal.

Speaking of Christ, Professor Wait says:—

The new creation that commenced with the appearance of the Typical Man, is to continue to the universal presence and expression of what was then individualised. Its advancement thus far we can trace as concreted physically and intellectually in the history of an outward church and a parallel social and scientific progress. Its ultimate is commencing to take shape

in an understanding of Christ as a life to be lived, in which it is as impossible for differences of doctrine and ceremonial to exist as it would be for one to institute a schism concerning the relations of number, or to found a one-sided sect on a child's conception of the same. Evolution along all other lines—literature, discovery, invention, science, and art—has prepared the basis, broad and strong, for this pyramidal point of a spiritual consciousness.

Its first fruits are apparent in a wide development of power to see clearly in a psychical domain heretofore deemed inaccessible by the human explorer, or only to be entered through the doorway of the tomb. The appeal has first been made to the physical man through sense perception. Evidences many, emphatic and unmistakable, are readily obtained by the honest and persistent inquirer, that the human soul is in constant association with intelligent orders of life other than those inhabiting material bodies on the earth. By the very complexity of his nature, man is in touch reciprocally with every element and essence of lowest earth and highest heaven. The influence that degrades or the inspiration that uplifts moves in upon the soul's susceptibility along the line of least resistance in each individual's character. It is in every instance high or low according to the grade of growth and dominant desire, irrespective of all forms, professions, scepticisms, or beliefs. Proof palpable confirms what analogy alone would indicate, that the diverse keys to character are played upon by kindred spirits, ranging from the lowest elemental creatures to the highest of those sons of God who joyed together when the morning stars made melody because the earth was born.

These are weighty words. True, indeed it is, that the influence which degrades or the inspiration that uplifts moves in upon the soul's susceptibility along the line of least resistance in each individual's character. And the fight is to get the lines of least resistance in the right direction.

The result of this better condition of things when it begins to be attained is thus described:—

It is not to be supposed that when the earth becomes, as it is fast becoming, a fitting footstool for this higher kingdom, the race is gradually to go on toward a physical immortality. Yet it is already well within the reach of realisation by those who cultivate the better part and daily die unto the lower self, that the latent powers of mind can be so freed, the treasury of the soul's energies so unlocked and distributed to the uttermost atoms of the physical system, as to resurrect the body from a sepulchre of otherwise incurable disease; and to then so order the life by standards of wise temperance and chastity, reason, and good will, as to preclude the possibility of lapsing into a similar state. With days thus lengthened out, doubtless far beyond the limit that has heretofore been set as the extreme duration of human life, the second birth will never be ungodly, premature; but with consciousness undimmed, the present life-work well performed in humane service, the soul will gladly change the older garment for the new. Such a one having served, in the flesh, a long apprenticeship as angel, in the true sense of that word, which means *any messenger or ministrant endowed with power for good*, is merely given a larger field in which to act and grow.

As endless progress is the law, *perfection* is but a fulness of growth in one order or degree of consciousness preparatory to birth and infancy in a higher state. So heaven is no finality from which further advancement is impossible. We enter when first we know our life has triumphed over death, our god has conquered ill. And as we thus maintain ourselves, so must we rise from glory unto glory evermore.

Assuredly the "old order changeth."

DUTY.

WHAT shall I do to gain eternal life?

Discharge aright

The simple dues with which each day is rife?

Yea, with thy might.

Ere perfect scheme of action thou devise

Will life be fled;

While he who ever acts as conscience cries,

Shall live, though dead.—SCHILLER.

PRAYER is the only dormitive I take to bedward, and I take no other laudanum than this to make me sleep; after which I close mine eyes in security, content to take my leave of the sun and sleep until the resurrection.—SIR T. BROWNE.

THE

PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MR. THOMAS SHORTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE AT 2, DUKE-STREET, ADELPHI, ON TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 28TH.

Those of you who are readers of "LIGHT," and that I hope includes all present, are aware that there has recently been a correspondence in that journal in which the principle of authority in religion, and the question of its claims upon our obedience, have been mooted. With the peculiar applications of this doctrine therein discussed, I have at present no concern, but the principle itself is one of primary and supreme importance, and I think it is well that we should from time to time turn aside from the more exciting but ephemeral questions of the hour, to consider questions which, like the one that I am about to bring before you, are of such deep and permanent and universal interest. It is true that for the great majority of mankind this question will have but little interest. For the most part we have little choice, practically, in the matter of religion; it is for most of us a question very much of geography and chronology, dependent upon parentage and education, the country in which we are born and the age in which we live. Take three children of different parents—one is educated in a devout Protestant family, the second is trained in a family of good Roman Catholics—one in London and the other at Rome—and the third, we will say, is brought up in Constantinople in the faith of Islam. We may pretty reasonably and safely conclude that the one will become a Protestant, the second a Catholic, and the third a Mohammedan. This is a consideration that should lead us to be tolerant and charitable in our judgments, but at the same time we must not make too much of it, for, after all, if there is any truth in religion it involves the consideration of much deeper matters than these mere externals. Of far more consequence is the temper of mind in which we approach these subjects, the spiritual culture which we receive, the disposition of the soul, than Church, or creed, or systems of theology. How does it bear upon life and character? is the great concern. A narrow-minded, persecuting bigot will be much the same whatever may be the religion he professes, while a large-minded, liberal, devout soul, inspired by the love of God and enthusiasm for humanity, will be acceptable to the great All-Father whether we worship Him as Jehovah, as Allah, or as Lord! For of one thing we may rest assured, that in every nation he that doeth good and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him. I do not wish by this to infer that religion is altogether a matter of indifference: quite the contrary. That which cultivates best our spiritual nature, which leads us to larger and more rational apprehensions of the Divine nature and of our relations to Him and to our fellows, that which bears upon character and life and fills the soul with peace and harmony, is surely a matter which deeply concerns us, and on which our peace and happiness must largely depend. But as the life is more than food and the body than raiment, so these spiritual dispositions are far more than the system of theology to which we may give in our adhesion, or the Church to which we may be attached. In considering, therefore, the question of religion, we must bear in mind that, in this age of intellectual and spiritual unrest, there are many who wander hither and thither, uncertain of their path, and who, with a humble sense of their own insufficiency, naturally feel anxious and eager to ascertain if there is no authority by which they may be guided, if there is none to lead them, if there is no authentic voice from Heaven to speak to them, if they cannot find some external and visible authority upon which they may cast the burden of their doubt.

To all inquiries of this description there is a ready affirmative and loud assent. But when the question is pressed a step farther this general chorus of agreement, which comes from every pulpit and every street corner, falls into very harsh and discordant notes, and in the place of the unanimity which at first greeted us there is a perfect Babel of confused voices and echoes. These, however, when the clamour has a little subsided and we are able to discriminate them carefully, may, I think, be broadly separated into two distinct answers to the question—the one we may call the Protestant, the other the Catholic. And their answers respectively may be summed up in the two words of each—"The Bible" and "The Church." If we were to prosecute our inquiries farther, beyond the pale of Christendom, we should find that the answer is substantially

the same. There is always an answer, on the one side of the Written Record, and on the other of the Living Authority. But we are at present concerned only with the religion of our own time which prevails in the Western World. The answer of the Protestant to the question, as I have said, is "The Bible." He will tell you that God has once for all revealed His Will to man and made known the relations in which man stands to Him, and that this revelation of Himself is absolute and final; that there can be no further revelation of equally binding authority; that it is the ultimate revelation which He has given! Well, on this point there is much to be said. The answer is clear enough, and it is plain and definite. The militant war-cry of Protestantism is expressed in the famous declaration of Chillingworth that "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is the religion of Protestants," and as expressed by another authority, which has been often quoted—"The Bible has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any admixture of error for its matter."

After hearing this statement, the natural comment of the religious inquirer would be, "Well, I suppose that among Protestant Christians at all events there is perfect agreement on matters of religious faith? Where God has spoken you have but reverently to listen and obey. There can be no conflict of faith, no controversy, all is clear, and you must be united and must be one religious body." The candid Protestant would be bound to answer to this, "Well, unhappily, that is not the case; we are not only not fully agreed among ourselves as Protestants, but our differences are vital and fundamental; indeed, they concern the very essentials of our religious faith, and so far from any agreement, these points of difference have been so hotly contested that Protestants as well as Catholics have persecuted each other, sometimes even to the death, in the hope of extirpating heresies so pernicious and even fatal." The main cause of this conflict of belief is not far nor difficult to seek; it is inherent in the constitution of man, and in the nature of the revelation alleged to be given. Not only are men so differently constituted that, from the same premises, they will deduce very different and even opposite conclusions, but with regard to the revelation itself, whatever we may think of the Divine origin of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, all must recognise that they come to us through human agencies, and are contained in human language with all its limitations and imperfections. Nor is this all. The languages in which they were written are not the language of the common people, they are not now spoken; they were written from eighteen to thirty centuries ago; they express modes of thought and contain forms of expression with which we are utterly unfamiliar and which we scarcely recognise. These books have to be translated for us by learned men, and still farther elucidated by commentators and expositors, and made familiar in the speech of the common people. Well, we know how difficult it is for any language to express thought so clearly and unambiguously that there can be no difference of opinion with regard to the meaning it is intended to convey. Take, for instance, our Acts of Parliament. Although these are put into the language of our mother tongue, although they are prepared by experts of the greatest ability expressly that they may be accurately understood, that there may be no ambiguity of expression, they are notoriously and proverbially so capable of being understood in different senses, that we know not very often what their meaning may be until they have been interpreted for us by judicial authority. How much more, then, must this difficulty be felt when it is in foreign and ancient languages with which we are unfamiliar, and when it is embarrassed by all the differences of modes of expression and of thought contained in a language not written, like those in our Western world, with a considerable regard to logical and scientific accuracy, but in the figurative and flowery language of an Oriental people! How are we—who are acquainted with this difficulty, that the same words and expressions are capable, as they certainly are in many cases, of being open to different meanings and different interpretations—how are we to decide which is the correct one out of the many different constructions and senses which may thus be put upon the same text? The answer sometimes returned by good Christian people is that if we keep an open mind, and reverently study the Scriptures, praying for Divine guidance, that Divine guidance will be given, so that we may be preserved from misunderstanding and from error. Unhappily, however, experience does not always conform to this pious expectation. Men of undoubted learning and of unquestionable piety, after most careful and reverent study,

have often arrived at very different, and even opposite, conclusions. When the same passages are open to various interpretation, the question of course arises—How is it to be decided where doctors, and professors, and laymen, and divines differ hopelessly among themselves? How are these differences to be determined? And if these differences have existed now for three centuries, with the Bible in the hands of the common people, and after all the Biblical criticism and scholarship which have been expended upon them, and the long controversies which have taken place, how are we to expect that the prosecution of further research on the same lines will be attended with any happier result, and that there will be a composition of these differences that prevail? We may then ask, How is the reader of these Books to be guided to a certain and correct interpretation of their meaning? The only answer which Protestantism can give is that that must be left to the private reason and judgment. But this at once transfers the ultimate authority from the Book to the reader of the Book: it nominally maintains the authority of the Bible, but it in reality places that authority in the private reason: and unless the Bible is an infallible Book, and unless the reader of it is also guided to an infallible interpretation, how is certainty to be attained? The answer seems to be, therefore, illusory: it holds out the promise and the declaration of an infallible authority, but it leaves that authority variable and undetermined.

The answer of the Roman Catholic is altogether different. He tells us that not the Bible but the Church is the ultimate authority; that the Bible can only be regarded as an authority when it is interpreted by the Church, which is itself infallible. He tells us that the Church existed before the Bible, and is independent of it; that the Church is the immediate organ of Divine truth; that it is a supernatural order within the natural; that it is so fully under Divine guidance in all matters of faith and morals as to be preserved from error. Well, this answer, too, like that given by the Protestant, is clear and definite, but is it altogether satisfactory? Were the principle of a living authority conceded it would by no means settle the question. Of course I cannot enter into the whole controversy that will be thus raised, but there are two or three leading points which may be presented for brief consideration. In the first place, the answer given by no means settles the question as to where that authority ultimately rests. It must always be borne in mind that the Roman Church is itself but a secession from the Greek Church, as the Protestant Church was subsequently from the Roman Church; that it is, in fact, but an earlier form of Protestantism; that the Greek Church still regards the Roman Church as a heresy, and the fruitful mother of the large family of heresies that have been born to it. Then, again—waiving the question between the Roman and the Greek Church—the Roman Church itself has been, at all events, up till a certain very recent period, by no means at one as to the ultimate deposit of this Divine truth. By a very large number, and especially by the Gallican branch of the Church, it has been held that that authority rests with the General Council, while the Ultramontane party have affirmed that it rests with the Pope, Christ's Vice-gerent upon earth, and the visible Head of the Church. It is true that the Vatican Council called to determine this question decided in favour of the Ultramontane view, but at one time it threatened another disruption in the Church, and was carried in the face of a very large and influential minority, and is still open to considerable definition and explanation, which will probably very materially modify it. But a party triumph so obtained, and which had been provided for before the Council was convoked, can have little more claim upon veneration and respect, however it may command the allegiance of the faithful as a matter of obedience, than a party majority obtained in the House of Commons by pressure and by party organisation. Then there is this further difficulty: the waverer in religious opinion, when he is appealed to by the Roman Catholic, must have that appeal addressed to him, and his decision must be governed by his private reason and judgment. He, at that time at all events, is the ultimate authority: he is superior to any Council, or to any Church: it rests with him in this initial and most important stage—more important than all those that may follow it. In this stage the appeal has to be made to him on behalf of the Church, to that very principle of private reason and judgment which subsequently it will altogether repudiate and condemn!

So far, we have proceeded on the principle of conceding the claim which the Church has made, but it must be borne in mind that this is a large assumption which is altogether unproved and

undemonstrable, and in the very nature of the case does not admit of proof. If then we are to commence our prosecution of religious truth by starting in search of an external, visible, infallible authority, it would seem, from this review, however brief and imperfect, that that quest will be futile, and that our hopes will be doomed to disappointment. The question will then, however, very naturally and reasonably arise, "Is there no authoritative voice? If we find that the authorities on which we have relied are weak and fallible like ourselves, if what we considered to be an authentic map of the road which we may consult, with the written word of God in our hands which we may read, is capable of many interpretations, if with all this the ultimate authority is still left open, have we no kindly light to lead us, no hand to guide our steps, no voice to direct us, so that we must wander on hopelessly,

And find no end, in wandering mazes lost?"

To these inquiries I would answer by propounding another. May it not rather be that we have missed our mark because we have mistaken the road; that we have failed because we have looked for the object of our search where it was not to be found? May it not be that the oracle, which we have sought without, is really to be found within? That God has not left Himself without a witness? That He does speak to us with the voice of authority? That there is a light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world? That it comes to every man, to each and to all of us? That it speaks to us in the law established, and written not upon tables of stone, not in the pages of a book, but in the human heart? That it is a law which is not of our making, which we have no power to repeal, a law which is binding and obligatory upon all of us? But then it will be said, How can the authority of conscience be respected? How can it be considered as an authority when its decisions are so largely dependent on time, place, and circumstance, approving here, in one land and in one age, what it condemns and reprobates in another? I answer that within its own sphere its authority is absolute and final; it is inflexible and irrevocable. The mistake arises from confounding the sphere of the conscience with the functions of the intellect. It is the work of the intellect to prosecute the search for truth by all the aids and appliances it can command, to compare and reflect, to reason and examine, to weigh and consider; but when its decision has been reached then comes in conscience and stamps it with its royal seal, and makes it authoritative and binding upon us; makes it a law to us which we are bound to obey! We are bound under all circumstances to accept that which we believe to be true, to do that which we know to be right, to act from the higher and nobler motive, and repel the promptings of the lower and the baser. It is a voice which comes to us in the sense of duty, which rises with the dawn of consciousness, and continues with us till its close, which besets us behind and before, and is around our path. It is this which gives the final sanction to all human law, and from which, indeed, it receives its validity affirming only as it echoes and registers the decree of conscience. And where the decision and law of the human tribunal is in conflict with that of the conscience it appeals to the former. "Whether it be right to obey God rather than man, judge ye." It is this which fires the ardour of the missionary, which sustains the constancy of the martyr, which upholds us in times of weakness and peril, which comes to us with an imperative command, with a mandate which we are bound to obey, which says to us, "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not." It is the supreme court from whose decision there is no appeal, the moral law which God Himself has given to us, which is undoubted and authoritative! And not only is this so, but we find it is everywhere recognised in practice as the ultimate source to which all our appeals must be made, to which every teacher of truth and every preacher of righteousness has to address himself. It says with stout Martin Luther in the hour of danger, "I will go to Worms though there are as many devils arrayed against me as there are tiles on the houses." It says again with him when in imminent peril, when confronted with all the dignity and authority of Church and State—one man alone against the world—"Here I stand; I can do no otherwise: God help me;" and with One greater than Luther in His hour of agony, and in the shadow of the bitter Cross, prays with bowed head, "Father, Thy will be done!" One other consideration may be suggested, which is of special interest to us as Spiritualists. Both science and religion agree in affirming that the known comes out of the unknown, the visible from the invisible, that out of darkness come the hands that reach

through Nature, moulding men—the power that reaches through the material universe and pervades it, but is not of it, the inspiration that comes to us as we commune with our own heart and are still, the revelation that flashes upon the mind all unaware, unveiling some new aspect of truth, planting in the soul some fruitful seed of thought, giving us some hidden clue to those subtle laws which bind the realm of Nature and the world of mind; the miracle that comes to us with the dawning day and with the light of setting suns, with every vision of beauty, with every awakening of a new affection; the motion of the hidden fire that glows within the breast, lifting up the heart to Him Who we feel is Lord of all; the moral law through obedience to which we become one with God, one with the Divine order He has established and which testifieth of Him; the hope which springs eternal in the breast; the faith which upholds us in weakness, which sustains us and comforts us in times of sorrow and affliction, and enables us to tread firmly, where reason falters and knowledge fails; that speaks to us in the language of seer and prophet and saint and sage—all these are manifestations of that higher World of Spirit which interpenetrates our own, and imply communion with it!—voices in that choir invisible whose music is the gladness of the world!

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

At the head of these we purposely place the "Arena." Excellent as are our own reviews, we have nothing so thoroughly good as this. Just as in the United States an degree of perfection has been arrived at in "illustrating" which seems unattainable in England, so in magazine production the "Arena" is easily first among the swarm of English-written periodicals. To one article reference is made in another part of "LIGHT." It is strange, and yet not strange after all, that in the most "go-ahead" nation in the world speculative philosophy should be taking so prominent a place, yet that is what the "Arena" teaches us. Such articles as that already referred to on "Life after Death" and "Christ and the Liquor Seller," and "The Woman's Part," are indicative of the trend of thought, at any rate among the cultured ones, on the other side of the Atlantic.

The "New Review" is also good. There is the inevitable article on Egypt, and the equally inevitable Ernest Hart, but there is also the paper by Dr. Lloyd Storr-Best, which is treated of elsewhere.

In the "Contemporary Review," what concerns the readers of "LIGHT" is of course the article by Dr. Lloyd Tuckey on "The New Hypnotism, a Reply." A rather feeble legendary story called the "Last of the Vampires," by Phil Robinson, must not be read in the hope of getting information as to things occult.

We have received "Lucifer," as usual, and are as usual grateful for it, even when not agreeing with its contents.

The Theosophical Publishing Company have also sent a work by Mr. Arthur Edward Waite, called "Azoth, or the Star in the East: A New Light of Mysticism." This, and a book on Simon Magus, previously received, are of so elaborate a nature that the task of reviewing is not an easy one, and we must for the present simply acknowledge them, and compliment the Theosophical Publishing Company on the sumptuous volumes it is able to turn out.

In this connection we may call attention to "Book Notes: Theosophical, Occult, Oriental, and Miscellaneous," of which we have received the first number, that for March. The annual subscription is 1s. 6d. The notes are edited by John M. Watkins, the publishers being the Theosophical Publishing Company, 7, Duke-street, Adelphi. From the contents of the first number these Book Notes will evidently supply a want. The books spoken of have short analyses of their contents appended to their titles and prices, and these form a valuable guide to the inquirer.

"How to Mesmerise," by James Coates. On the whole we regret the publication of books of this kind. There are two chapters devoted to the question of "How to give an Entertainment," which seems a pity. As the old phrenological "bumps" are taken for granted, notwithstanding the recent researches into the physiology of the brain, the value of the book is evidently not great.

"The Idler" for March has been duly received. Are we not having a little too much of the illustrated interview?

The "Agnostic Journal" comes in due course. May we mildly suggest to our good friend, "Saladin," that by presenting things which do not quite fit in with his views, in a too

obtrusively aggressive manner, he may succeed in giving offence to those who otherwise agree with him in very much? There is a dogma of non-dogmatism that is worse than the dogma of the dogmatic.

Mr. J. J. Morse is, we are glad to see, just as energetic as ever with the "Lyceum Banner."

Not a book certainly, but something on the borderland of books, is Mr. R. Harte's "Crypto" for secret writing. Mr. Harte claims that his invention will set the cipher expert at defiance. To those who have need for using this kind of communication the instrument seems well adapted, though apparently a little trouble is required in arranging the cipher. That, however, is inevitable in such a case.

SOME DUTCH PAPERS.

"Sphinx: Contributions to the Study of the Human Problem," is the title of a new magazine published in Rotterdam, and edited by A. J. Riko. In its introductory remarks it claims, as a serious journal, sympathy from those interested in occult subjects and in well attested matters of fact which are in direct contradiction to the materialistic tendencies of the age, and states that some of those who make exalted claims to enlightenment will have to modify their opinions on such subjects, as there exist "whole chains of apparitions confined to definite localities, which show themselves afresh at every turn, steadfastly exhibiting precisely the same characteristics, and for an explanation of which official science is wholly responsible."

The first article deals with the now well-known experiments of Colonel Rochas.

The second article is a reproduction from the December number of the German "Sphinx" of some interesting personal reminiscences of Herr Fritz Lammermayer, which are, of course, merely corroborative of many similar and well-attested apparitional experiences. The third article, "A Mystical Ballad," is also a reproduction—this time from an English print—giving an account of the origin of "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay"! This is followed by an extract from the "Berlin Tagblatt," describing the interview which the late Emperor Wilhelm I. had, when a young man, with the famous clairvoyante, Clara Dankwart. When the disguised prince presented himself, the gifted lady said to him, "You are not what you profess to be," and proceeded to foretell his marriage, the Franco-German war, the unification of Germany, and his elevation to the Kingly and Imperial dignities. A short programme of the Psychical Science Congress to be held in Chicago, followed by a brief excerpt from the Boston "Psychical Review" and "Sphinx," then closes with a running commentary on De Quincey's "Confessions." These "confessions" are continued in No. 2 of the same paper. But the following description of Eusapia Palladino, the Italian medium, will be of the most interest to our readers. She is a little active and well-formed Italian lady, about thirty-seven years old, married, and childless. She has, however, two adopted children. She has good health and a pleasing appearance. In a normal condition she speaks the Neapolitan dialect, but when entranced, a fluent and correct Italian. Nothing about her gives the least ground for a suspicion of fraud. Her education and intellectual development are of the plainest, and she has been known as an extraordinary medium for about twenty years.

The "Spiritualistisch Weekblad" of February 4th brings to an end the reminiscences of Professor Fichte, and contains extracts from an affectionate tribute to his memory spoken over his grave by the Berlin preacher Fischer. Referring to the service which the Professor rendered to Spiritualism, the preacher says Christianity will not forget that Fichte fought with the whole might of his intellect for faith in a personal living God, and with all the resources of his scientific knowledge for belief in man's immortality. Nor, he says, will it be forgotten that he did this at a time when such a course was fraught with all kinds of social danger, and when denial of the spirit above us and the spirit within us amounted almost to a shibboleth in the ranks of the great army of scientists. In this number there is an interesting communication from the Rev. J. Page Hopps, advocating the establishment of "Our Father's Church." Our readers will be more or less familiar with the plan, but it is curious to find that though Mr. Hopps makes his meaning almost unmistakably plain, the Editors of the "Spiritualistisch Weekblad" say, "It is not clear to us whether the aim of the writer is merely to point to the inner bond which might unite all the children of God, or that he wishes to found a new Church—a new *ism*." Why new Church and new *ism* should be thus cavalierly classed as convertible terms, in face of Mr. Hopps's general and particular enunciations on the matter, does not clearly appear.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
2, DUKE STREET,
ADELPHI, W.C.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post-free to any address, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. R. D. Godfrey, and should invariably be crossed "A.C." All orders for papers and for advertisements, and all remittances, should be addressed to "The Manager" and not to the Editor.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"LIGHT" may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria Lane, London, and all Booksellers.

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Light:

EDITED BY "M.A., LOND."

SATURDAY, MARCH 11th, 1893.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi. It will much facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they are under two columns in length. Long communications are always in danger of being delayed, and are frequently declined on account of want of space, though in other respects good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space of half a column to ensure insertion.

Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. R. D. Godfrey, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., and not to the Editor.

THE CHICAGO CONGRESS.

In August next there will meet in Chicago, almost for the first time anywhere, the representatives of the world's thought as to psychical matters. For some months past the organisers of this Congress have been assiduously working to the end that all phases of thought as to these things should be represented. The names of some of the members of the Advisory Council, which were given in "Notes by the Way" in last week's "LIGHT," show how this principle has been acted upon. It is not a small matter that this should be so, for it indicates a movement onwards of the most serious kind. That psychology of any sort, even the dry materialistic psychology of the schools, should be recognised as a subject of consideration in connection with so apparently mundane a business as the World's Fair, is a thing to be noted; but that the modern psychology, which includes all that has to do with Spiritualism, should be so recognised is a matter of far graver importance.

1893 is, after all, only forty-two years away from 1851, the era of the first World's Fair, the year of the Hyde Park Exhibition in London. About that "show" there was little that suggested psychical knowledge or development, yet there were some germs of newness. There was a certain change in the direction of a desire for beautiful forms, even in the surroundings of ordinary life, which was perhaps the small exponent of the underlying spirit that successful warfare, and still more successful peace, had hidden under the weighty coverings of a pseudo-prosperity. Even in 1851 men wished for something better, and so they got to themselves prettier chairs and tables, put more tasteful hangings about their windows, and hoped for universal peace. It was not a grand development of purified desire, and it did not come to much, for the Crimean War very soon began the dance of bloodshed which finished and culminated fourteen years afterwards, and later still the æsthetic "craze," as it was called—a mistaken name for one of the most serious phases of thought that ever passed over England—had to correct the taste which was not altogether purified by the Exhibition of 1851. That Exhibition was, after all, in its main features purely material.

Nor were the succeeding so-called Universal Exhibitions, as that of 1862 in England, or that of 1877 in Paris, very different. At the same time there had gone on a development as to beauty of form at least, and beauty of form means the outward presentment of a graceful interiority

which cannot be present without the recognition in some, perhaps dim, way of the presence of the spirit which is misrepresented when things are made ugly. That this change had taken place was abundantly evident during the Paris Exhibition of 1889. There the system of congresses began, and Spiritualism and its cognate subjects were well to the fore. Still even there Spiritualism was on the whole a thing apart, and so it has been reserved for the Congress of the World's Fair in Chicago to ask representatives of Spiritualism to take their places on the Advisory Council of the Psychological Conferences which have been organised. Spiritualism was a small, almost unknown, thing in 1851; in 1893 it is recognised at least as a factor in the advance of the world's psychological knowledge.

And here it is curious to note how all knowledges seem to be hovering about Spiritualism in its various phases. That purest of all sciences, mathematics—purest because it has ever to do with the real and never with the material—in its fourth dimensional speculation links on to the Spiritual hypothesis. Physical science, wandering out into the wide fields of supposed atomic movement, destroys our notions of matter and leaves us—what? And seeing that all other sciences are reducible to these two, what have we left if not spirit? And so, after all, when the Chicago Congresses meet they will, as they consider any subject whatever, be but discussing various presentments of the spirit which explains itself in phenomena. Hence Spiritualism, which is the pioneer exposition of the spirit, has its right place in the Congress, and Chicago has recognised it.

But a Congress, after all, is but a Congress, and we must not expect too much from it. Some considerable spreading of knowledge will doubtless take place, and this must be one of the things most to be desired. Other and more valuable advances may be made, and this we hope for; but, whatever is the outcome of the meetings, if it be only this spreading of knowledge and interest, a great debt will be owing to Chicago and the energetic organisers of the Congress.

MR. W. T. STEAD.

We have the pleasure of announcing that—on the solicitation of the President of the Alliance—Mr. W. T. Stead, the Editor of the "Review of Reviews," who has had some remarkable experiences in Psychical Phenomena, has kindly consented to meet the members of the Alliance at 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, at 7.30 on the evening of Tuesday next.

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.

Mr. Maltby, who has transferred to his lantern slides a number of Spirit Photographs formerly in the possession of the late Mr. Stainton Moses, will give a Memorial Lecture, introducing these pictures, at the Athenæum Hall, 73, Tottenham Court-road, at 8 p.m., on Sunday, March 19th. We hope there will be a good attendance. No charge of any kind is to be made. Mr. Maltby purposes giving a second lecture on the following Sunday. Particulars will be found in our advertising columns.

PROFESSOR BEVAN began his Gresham lecture on Celtic Mythology by giving Caesar's account of the Gaulish Pantheon, and ended it by quoting Lucan's eulogy of the Druids, addressing whom, he says: "If your lore be true, death is but the passage to unending life." The lecturer had previously shown that the two fundamental beliefs underlying the religion of the Celts were those of immortality and the transmigration of souls, and their eschatology not only indicated a final hope but a final certainty of salvation for all. Speaking of the Druidic worship, Professor Bevan said that the oak appeared to have been the sacred tree of most Aryan races, and instanced the oaks of Dodona, in the whisperings of whose leaves were heard oracular voices. We might smile and call it superstition, but happy should we be if we heard the Divine voice that speaks in the manifold utterances of Nature. Nine-tenths of the people who wrote in magazines and theological novels about religious belief treated the transient expression of such belief which belonged to their own time as though it were the only one, and seemed to forget that the spirit which prompted the pagan to revere the oak might be no less Divine than that which prompts the Christian to reverence the House of God.—"Echo."

HYPNOTISM IN THE MAGAZINES.

The "New Mesmerism" articles in the "Times," however they may have been explained away, have left their impress on the current thought of the time, whether the impress on that thought be good or bad. But whatever may be said about quasi-scientific experiment, or of experiment which is not even quasi-scientific, there remains this solid residuum that "hypnotism" is recognised as a factor in the world's new knowledge. To reduce it to its merest elements as knowledge is, of necessity, the proper and congenial work of the conservative scientist, who, persistently representing himself as the prophet of finality, hinders the acknowledgment due to him of being a valuable agent in the work of progress. That he does so try to bring about this reduction is fair evidence of the importance of the thing itself.

The "New Review" has an article by Dr. Lloyd Storr-Best on "The Common-Sense of Hypnotism." This paper is very fair from the common-sense point of view; at the same time it is well to remember that the common-sense of to-day is the wild romance of yesterday. The author of the paper contends that there is no mystery about the thing, that "all unsolved problems are inseparable from, and essential to, the life of any growing science—that without them progress is impossible." The gist of the article in the "New Review" is that without sensation there is no thought, and, therefore, that if the consciousness can be withdrawn from any source of sensation, sensation in any other direction does not exist. The following postulates are laid down:—

- I. That general consciousness varies directly with external stimuli.
- II. That general consciousness varies inversely with the intensity of attention upon one idea or set of ideas.
- III. That attention may be so "strained" as to pass beyond the control of the will and to destroy the general consciousness.
- IV. That attention upon one idea or group of ideas may be so great as to prevent that group being remembered in the normal mental condition.
- V. That an idea tends always to generate its actuality either as sensation or action.

In amplification of these postulates the following remarks are made:—

Let us treat the hypnosis synthetically, and attempt to develop it in an imaginary patient by the application of laws which govern all mental manifestations.

In the first place, in order to obtain the minimum of general intellectual activity, we shut off, as far as we can, impulses from the external world. We place the patient in a position of rest and comfort that auditory and tactile "stimuli" may be as small as possible, while we minimise ocular impressions by causing him to regard fixedly a single point of light, or by closing his eyes. At this point our patient is probably thinking with considerable vigour; he wonders what is going to happen to him, analyses his sensations, compares them with what he expected to experience, while his general mental attitude is distinctly unfavourable to the lethargy we wish to produce: an attitude of curiously critical introspection. One hostile element has, however, in great measure disappeared. Thought, whose very essence is the recognition of differences, is no longer stimulated by an ever-varying environment, the consciousness is diminished *in extent*, and the attention ready to leap forward to the operator's words or actions. With what weapons shall we attack the residual mental activity maintained in great measure, not by present sensation, but by those regenerated by memory? We know that in such degree as we can bind attention to one set of ideas will general consciousness and power of attention to other things diminish. We know, too, that an ideal sensation tends to become actual, and fails to do so only when impeded by other affections of consciousness. Thus have we two strings to our bow. We attract our patient's attention, and hold it riveted by the vivid verbal development of a mental picture of sleep. As our delineation increases in vividness and emphasis, his attention becomes more and more "cramped," introspective criticism changes to intense conviction, as one by one suggested sensations become actual, as his limbs do become heavy and numb, his eyelids weary, and his brain drowsy and

confused. At this point our patient is entrapped in a vicious circle. The more he is struck by the transference of suggested idea into sensation, the more is his attention engrossed, and conversely, the more concentrated his attention upon the suggested idea, the more complete and rapid the transformation of that idea into its actuality. Finally, the patient's attention passes altogether beyond the power of the will. He *cannot* attend to anything but the operator's words, and is consequently unconscious of everything else. He is now in a *mono-ideal* condition, and if we wish to use so extremely vague a word, has an *abnormal personality*.

As to the therapeutic value of hypnotism the author says:—

It is patent that by means of hypnotism we can act *directly* upon morbid mental conditions, being able by reiterated suggestion to create or destroy any fixed idea or habit. Thus the dipso-maniac, thoroughly hypnotised, and inoculated, so to speak, with the horror of intoxicants, positively loathes the sight of alcohol, and feels no longer the terrible craving which formerly overpowered his most determined resistance. The morphino-maniac is made to cease his pernicious indulgence in morphia, and escapes, too, the awful Nemesis that under normal circumstances awaits the discontinuance of the drug. In incipient melancholia, the persistently recurring ideas of suicide may be "suggested away," and the patient rescued from the vicious circle wherein morbid mental and bodily conditions perpetually act and react. In brief, the prejudicial idea is removed, and in its stead one tending healthwards is branded indelibly, as it were, upon a mind rendered impressionable as soft metal by the fierce flame of attention at its hottest. The hypnotist, then, can directly "minister to a mind diseased," and break habits injurious to health.

The "common-sense" of hypnotism gets rid of all difficulty, as witness the following. The theory is that close attention to any part of the body will determine a change in the blood vessels of that part, which will become enlarged:—

The bleeding from the hands and feet which occurred in the well-known case of St. Francis d'Assisi was undoubtedly, I think, the result of the "determination of blood" to those parts by the rapt imagination of them as bearing the same marks as the Crucified Christ.

The "Contemporary Review" has a "Reply" to Mr. Ernest Hart by Dr. Charles Lloyd Tuckey. Dr. Tuckey very naturally objects to the unfair way in which Mr. Ernest Hart has "confounded medical hypnotism with matters totally unconnected with it," and says, truly enough, that "nothing is harder to contend against than a half-truth, and Mr. Hart's articles are full of half-truths and of false deductions drawn therefrom." That "good man gone wrong," as Dr. Tuckey calls Dr. Luys, has been used very skilfully to blind men to what is the real question—that is, the existence of a true and, in proper hands, a beneficent system of hypnotism. Dr. Tuckey acknowledges that great abuse may be made of hypnotism; but, as he justly argues, that is not a valid reason for abandoning it as a therapeutic agent. "The sale of poisons is regulated by law, and accidents and crimes arising from their use are therefore reduced to a minimum; but accidents and poisonings do occur, and that sometimes in the practice of medical men. Yet Mr. Ernest Hart does not propose the giving up of chloroform because a certain number of fatalities and outrages are brought about through its agency; nor do medical men cease to prescribe strychnine or aconite even when a Palmer or a Lamson among them uses these drugs to commit murder." With all which the thoughtful man must agree. But one does not feel quite so sure that "hypnotism should be practised only by doctors," on the ground "that they are already the licensed depositories of the health interests of the community, and are accustomed to bear such responsibilities as the practice of hypnotism demands." If hypnotism were *only* a therapeutic agent, that would possibly be right enough; it must be remembered, however, that we are no more than at the beginning of our knowledge of the meaning of the hypnotic state, and

to make a law handing over its practice to a "trades-union," however honourable, would be to stop the development of that knowledge. Dr. Tuckey, in allowing the subjective nature of the hypnotic state, surely ought to see that this very circumstance removes hypnotism out of the ordinary list of therapeutic agents, and so himself cuts the ground from under his claim that the medical profession alone should practise it. Dipsomania is a disease, but because it is a disease surely the powerful agency of a loving suggestion from a close friend or relative should not be disallowed to that close friend or relative. In hypnotism we are dealing with something which is not objective, and for that reason other elements of consideration come in, and the *rapproch* that exists between certain persons cannot be ignored in an impartial consideration of the question.

There should be safeguards undoubtedly. Such things as public exhibitions should be mercilessly suppressed, but the demand that so potent an instrument as hypnotism should be alone in the hands of one body of men, however excellent, makes one feel that "Ouida" when she spoke of the medical profession as "the new priesthood" was not so wide of the mark after all. How changed the circumstances are is evident from one of Dr. Tuckey's own stories:—

Among my earlier patients was a very intelligent tradesman, who was almost crippled by rheumatic gout; various treatments had failed to give him relief, and I tried hypnotism to see what that would do for him. I hypnotised him a few times, and after each operation improvement was most marked, so that at the end of a week the man could rise from his couch without assistance, and was almost free from pain. Then things came to a standstill, and little improvement was effected at future sittings. A start had, however, been made, and a month at the brine baths of Droitwich completed his cure, and he has since continued fairly well. Long afterwards he told me the reason why my suggestions had suddenly ceased to benefit him. He was, it appears, an ardent and aggressive teetotaler, and he was shocked at noticing one day when he called about my luncheon time that my breath smelt of wine.

Something will evidently be demanded of the operator more than the guarantees of the examination-room and certificates of moral worth can give. With the rest of Dr. Tuckey's article we entirely agree.

LENTEN LECTURES AT ST. NICHOLAS COLE ABBEY, KNIGHTRIDER STREET, E.C.

A course of lectures is being delivered at this church during Lent, by the Rev. G.W. Allen, under the general title of "The Gospel of Christ and the Problem of Evil." The next two take place as follows:—

Thursday, March 16th.—"The Redemption."

" 23rd.—The lecturer will answer such questions as may have been sent to him at 33, Bloomsbury-square.

Before each lecture there will be a short service, beginning at 8.15 p.m.; the lecture is at 8.30 p.m.

We call attention also to the meetings of the Christo-Theosophical Society, which take place at 33, Bloomsbury-square, W.C., every Thursday; at 8 p.m. on the first Thursday in the month; and at 4 p.m. on every other Thursday. As all interested persons are invited, we hope many will attend these meetings, where a very important side of our subject is being developed.

Of the 1,961 magazines now in course of circulation in the United Kingdom, no less than 456 are of a decidedly religious character, representing the Church of England, Wesleyans, Methodists, Baptists, Independents, Roman Catholics, and other religious communities.—From "The Newspaper Press Directory," 1893.

The final outcome of God's creative work on this planet, I believe, will be a host, which no one can number, of glorified spirits, who, through suffering and struggling under the immutable laws of spiritual growth, have attained unto the stature of the fulness of Christ. Not until we have ourselves entered into the "silent vastness of eternity" can we form any adequate conception of the glory yet to be revealed in this creation's masterpiece.—W. W. KINSLEY, in "Bibliotheca Sacra."

CRYSTAL-VISION.

I.

The "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research contain further observations by Mr. F. W. H. Myers on "The Subliminal Consciousness." Of these, those that deal with crystal-seeing are important. Mr. Myers speaks of crystal-gazing as a method of getting "our subliminal mental pictures externalised for supraliminal study; in other words, to produce harmless and manageable hallucinations." Three words are used here which need interpretation: "Subliminal," "Supraliminal," and "Hallucination." By "subliminal" Mr. Myers means that which is "below what we are accustomed to call the threshold of consciousness," so that "supraliminal" is that which is above it or normal. Of "hallucination" Mr. Myers says that at first the term was "applied to phenomena as to whose nature we wished to take as little for granted as possible." But as this meaning naturally got to be misunderstood, "hallucination" in the language of ordinary life being applied to what is not true, the adjective "veridical" was used with it. This, however, seemed to some as involving a contradiction in terms, and so Mr. Myers would substitute "sensory automatism." Anyway, it is to be understood that the word "hallucination" in the hands of Mr. Myers has not the ordinary signification.

The paper of Mr. Myers as far as regards crystal-vision begins with a number of experiments carried out at Brighton on March 9th, 26th, 27th, and 28th, 1891. In these experiments, which were to elucidate the phenomena of post-hypnotic suggestion, Mr. Myers believes that he finds the "gradual transition between the common forms of post-hypnotic hallucination and crystal-vision." The experiments . . . were such as suggesting during the hypnotic sleep that on awaking the percipient would see a certain picture on a card, or in a glass of water.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Myers combats the idea that all people who are crystal-seers, or have any characteristics of peculiar sensitiveness, are necessarily hysterical, which seems to be the basis of the argument we are having a good deal of just now. He says "the wide experience of the Nancy school has proved afresh and conspicuously what had been abundantly well known since Elliotson's day to practical students of hypnotism outside hospitals, namely, that robust and healthy persons are often even more susceptible to hypnotisation than feeble-minded persons or invalids." And this is well borne out by the character of the crystal-gazer whose experiences Mr. Myers first gives. This lady is Mrs. A. W. Verrall, a lecturer at Newnham College, who made the experiments at the request of Mr. Myers. One or two of these experiments we append. Mrs. Verrall made thirty-three observations, and remarks that out of the thirty-three there were only nine cases where she perceived any connexion between her thoughts and the visions:—

One other of these fancy pictures I will give in detail, as it was rather more elaborate than most. I was looking at the crystal on a blue ground, with a single lamp at some distance in the room.

My eyes soon got tired, then the colour on the crystal grew pale primrose, then the colour of pale burnished brass. Then I saw a small bright fairy figure fly across from left to right, followed by a large black swallow-like creature. When the swallow reached the right edge of the picture it turned back (without turning round), moving towards the left, and presently the fairy came into sight, but turned round with its head towards the swallow and arms uplifted, as if beating it off. The swallow seemed smaller than before. But with a swoop the swallow, huge as before, swept again to the right, pushing the fairy before it. I saw a faint light, like an evening sky, behind the tail of the swallow, and then all was black darkness.

In the next case also the actual sight of an object recalled a crystal picture which it may have originally suggested. On

August 25th, 1890, I was at Brighton, where I had been for some time. I saw in the crystal, at 10.15 p.m., an "ugly clock in white alabaster, round face on hideous stand, dial black, letters gold." I made a rough sketch of the outline of this clock, but it suggested nothing to me at the time. On September 9th, immediately after returning to Cambridge, I went to the house of a woman I knew to inquire after a servant of mine who had been suddenly attacked with mania and removed to this house—her sister's—and thence to the asylum. On entering the room I noticed the clock, having some unexplained association with it. Then it flashed upon me that it was the clock I had seen in the crystal. It was, however, not perfectly like. The real clock is in shape like the visionary clock, and is of the same material. The dial, however, is white, not black, with gold letters; but there are in the real clock two round black ornamental spots on the stand, which did not appear in the vision. I had heard on August 22nd that my servant had been taken to this house, and had been thinking a great deal about both the servant and her sister. I had once been in the house, about a year before, and probably seen the clock, though I had no conscious recollection of it. I found, however, that they had had the clock when they went into the house, and that it had always stood on the mantelpiece, so that I must have seen it on my first visit. I have never since seen any clock at all like the "crystal clock," though I have taken special notice of my friends' clocks.

Mrs. Verrall has had visions, however, of a spontaneous character, though she was in each case looking towards a mirror. The following occurred on July 29th, 1890:—

I was in my room in the afternoon, thinking about a paper I had just read in the "Proceedings," and of a friend with whom I had talked of the matter in question, when "as I turned to the glass I had a sudden impression of Mr. Y., in Swiss mountaineering costume, light dittos and hat, sitting astride on an arête, face downwards, with a stick or ice-axe across the figure. Some other man was standing below, looking up." The picture did not impress me as veridical, though it was very vivid. But the feeling in my mind was one of amusement, not alarm, nor interest—the attitude being obviously absurd, and impossible in an ascent of any real difficulty or danger. It suggested rather a person sliding down a stair rail, but I saw the snow and rocks of an arête quite plainly. I believed Mr. Y. to be in Dauphiné at the time.

I wrote to him later in the autumn asking him what he was doing on July 29th, at 4.15 p.m., and heard that it was an off-day, and that he was probably loitering about in front of the hotel. When I saw him in November I told him what I had seen, and he then said that he had actually been astride of an arête for a moment on the day before, July 28th, but had not remained so long, thinking the attitude unnecessary. The guide had crossed first, sitting astride, and Mr. Y. was second, the whole number of the party being four. The arête did not, however, slope downwards, but was nearly level.

Very interesting are the experiences of Miss X., whose paper on crystal-gazing appeared in Part XIV. of the "Proceedings" of the Society. Miss X. classifies her visions, and both the classification and the experiments are so important that some space must be devoted to them. The classification is:—

- i. Mere reproductions—voluntary or spontaneous—of things recently seen.
- ii. Pictures which contain some memory or some imaginative effect not coming from one's ordinary self.
- iii. Pictures which bring information of the present, past, or future, presenting information unknown to the gazer.

To class i. we may refer again, but of class ii. we get these illustrations:—

I saw in the crystal a pool of blood (as it seemed to me) lying on the pavement at the corner of a terrace close to my home. This suggested nothing to me. Then I remembered that I had passed over that spot in the course of a walk of a few hundred yards home from the circulating library; and that, the street being empty, I had been looking into the books as I walked. Afterwards I found that my boots and the bottom of my dress were stained with red paint, which I must have walked through unobserving during the short *trajet* just described. I cannot tell which part of me it was that mistook paint for blood—

whether it was my misinterpretation of the crystal-picture, or a mistake in the picture itself.

I saw in the crystal a young girl, an intimate friend, waving to me from her carriage. I observed that her hair, which had hung down her back when I last saw her, was now put up in young-lady fashion. Most certainly I had not consciously seen even the carriage, the look of which I knew very well. But next day I called on my friend; was reproached by her for not observing her as she passed; and perceived that she had altered her hair in the way which the crystal had shown.

Next as to sounds not attended to. I was writing at an open window and became aware that an elderly relative inside the room had said something to me. But the noise of the street prevented my hearing, and a wish to discourage conversation prevented my asking what had been said. My ink began to run low, and I took up the inkstand to tip it. Looking into the ink I saw a white florist's parcel as though reflected on its surface. Going into another room I there found the parcel in question, of which I had had no knowledge. I returned carrying it, and was greeted with the remark, "I told you half an hour ago to attend to those flowers; they will all be dead."

In class iii. the following are related:—

A friend wrote to tell me that—acting on some suggestion of mine—she had secured an engagement on a newspaper, adding "that she was not obliged to fill all her columns with fashions." This phrase suggested the *Queen*, or some paper of the kind; but the crystal on being interrogated showed a magazine about the size of the *English Illustrated*, with the title *The Princess*. I took this for a cynical joke on the part of the crystal—a "not quite *Queen*." But I have since found that there is such a paper, and that my friend is engaged on it. The look of the paper is different from what I saw, as though the name only had been transferred to me.

On October 12th, 1891, I was discussing the question of crystal-pictures with a gentleman to whom I had been but that day introduced, and of whose friends or surroundings I knew nothing whatever, and who was so deeply interested in the subject that I promised to look into the crystal with the definite hope of seeing something which he might find personally interesting. I was rewarded by three pictures, of which one was as follows:—

A room containing a high glass screen, round the end of which came, after a few moments, a lady, short, plump, dressed in blue serge dress, with a short jacket, in the pockets of which she rested her finger-tips: elbows stuck out, hair dark, dressed in a low, loose knot, fine dark eyes, and a white sailor hat. As she walked across the picture, she turned and seemed to look at me with some curiosity.

We had occasion a few days later to visit Mr. R.'s office on business, when I described my pictures. No. 2, the picture above-described, he recognised as representing his lady-secretary, though some female clerks in the office denied that she wore a sailor hat. She was not in at the time, but he was able to show me the glass screen in the room in which she habitually sat. I made her acquaintance later, and found that I was, for special reasons, an object of some curiosity to her, and also that she had had a white sailor hat, which, only a day or two before my vision had been blown into the Thames, leaving her to walk down the Embankment bareheaded.

My other two visions Mr. R. regarded as also reflected from his mind and thoughts at the time, but I had not the same degree of proof as in the one which I have described.

On August 10th of this year D. went with her family to spend the autumn at a country house which they had taken furnished, and which neither of us had ever seen. I was also away from home, the distance between us being at least 200 miles.

On the morning of the 12th I received a pencil note from her, evidently written with difficulty, saying that she had been very fiercely attacked by a savage dog, from which she and our own little terrier had defended themselves and each other as best they could, receiving a score or so of wounds between them before they could summon anyone to their assistance. She gave me no details, assuming that, as often happens between us, I should have received intimation of her danger before the news could reach me by ordinary methods.

D. was extremely disappointed on hearing that I had known nothing. I had not consulted the crystal on the day of the accident, and had received no intimation. Begging her to tell me nothing further as to the scene of her adventure, I sought for it in the crystal on Sunday, 14th, and noted the following details. The attacking dog was a large black retriever, and our terrier held him by the throat while D. beat him in the rear. I saw also the details of D.'s dress. But all this I knew or could guess. What I could not know was that the terrier's collar lay upon the ground, that the struggle took place upon a lawn beyond which lay earth—a garden bed probably overshadowed by an aucuba bush.

On September 9th I had an opportunity of repeating all this to Mr. Myers, and on the 10th I joined D. at their country house. The rest of the story I give in her own words:—

"As we were somewhat disappointed that no intimation of the accident which had occurred to me had reached Miss X., she determined to try to call up a mental picture of the scene where it had occurred, and if possible to verify it when visiting us later on.

"On the night of her arrival at C—, we were not able to go over the whole of the grounds alone, and it was therefore not until the following morning that we went together for the special purpose of fixing on the exact spot. Miss X. was in front, as I feared some unconscious sign of recognition on my part might spoil the effect of her choice. The garden is a very large one, and we wandered for some time without fixing on a spot, the sole clue given by Miss X. being that she 'could not get the right place, it wanted a *light* bush.' I pointed out several, silver maples, &c., in various directions, but none would do, and she finally walked down to the place where the accident had occurred, close to a large aucuba (the *only* one, I believe, in the shrubbery), and said, 'This must be it; it has the path and the grass and the bush, as it should, but I expected it to be much further from the house.'

"I may add that I was not myself aware of this bush, but as I was studying them all at the time we were attacked by the dog, and as this one is close to the spot where I was knocked down, it seems possible that it was the last I noticed, and it may therefore have influenced me more than I knew."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Under this heading, at the request of several subscribers, we give from time to time such questions as may reach us—provided we deem them of a profitable character—with a view to their being answered, not necessarily by the Editor, but preferably by our readers. Both questions and answers should be stated clearly and succinctly, and in the replies the questions should be indicated by the number.

ANSWER.

9.—I am very much interested in the phenomenon of automatic writing, and should be glad of a few hints or advice. I have sat with a pencil in my hand repeatedly, but have not obtained anything conclusive. Should the hand rest upon the paper or only the pencil? I generally read a book while sitting. Sometimes the pencil moves and letters are formed, but never *unconsciously*. I know beforehand what is going to be written just as in ordinary writing. Would a Planchette be better?—**TITUS.**

In reply to Question No. 9, I should say, from the facts which "Titus" mentions, that he will never obtain automatic writing in the strict sense of the term. His mind is too active and conscious of its powers and surroundings to allow of its working unconsciously; for such is what I am bound, from facts in my possession, to consider automatic writing. The same with the Planchette—he will know, as a rule, perfectly well beforehand what it is about to write. The position of the hand is, I think, perfectly immaterial, or, at least, depends on one's own impressions, so that it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rule. Has "Titus" ever tried crystal gazing?—he might be more successful there.—**CHARLES STRANGE.**

If a man is not rising upwards to be an angel, depend upon it he is sinking downwards to be a devil. He cannot stop at the beast. The most savage of men are not beasts; they are worse, a great deal worse.

That is nature which we come to by culture, not that which we come to before we are unfolded. It is absurd to look for nature in youth or in barbarism. Nature is to be looked for in civilisation and right manhood.—**H. WARD BEECHER.**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents, and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.

Theosophy and Spiritualism.

SIR, Will you allow me, in all kindness, to point out that in your note to my letter, which appeared in "LIGHT" of February 18th, you altogether omitted to deal with my most important point? I grant that I was wrong as to Mr. Stainton Moses being the medium on the occasion to which I referred, but that makes my case all the stronger, inasmuch as by your own showing he was sometimes controlled by spirits of a lower order. So much the worse for Spiritualism. If a man of his intellect and spiritual gifts could be vampirised thus, then our pity may well go out to the poor weaker mortals who are constantly encouraged by Spiritualism to resign themselves to the ordinary degrading mediocrity of life.

The important point is this. Take Mr. Stainton Moses' "higher controls"—"Imperator" and others. Where is the high teaching that they gave? Did they give any that was not in men's minds before? Has any such teaching been given by Spiritualism? I humbly submit that these are crucial questions—they are perfectly plain and should admit of a plain, categorical answer. For then comes my farther question—and it is the point which is at issue between Theosophists and Spiritualists. If Spiritualistic teachings are already in this-world thought, why go to the "other side" for them? The old scientific maxim still holds good: "Exhaust the near causes before proceeding to remote ones." I sincerely wish that the symposium on this subject which Mrs. Besant proposed had been accepted by Spiritualists, for then we might possibly have arrived at some philosophical agreement on the matter. As it is, I am again obliged to say that the Theosophical position still stands. In its teaching we have an explanation of nearly every case that Spiritualism can bring forward (I should be foolish to say that there may not be rare exceptions), and until Spiritualism can produce the teachings of the disembodied higher Ego we must be excused for disbelieving in that higher Ego's presence in the séance room.

Theosophical Society,

HERBERT BURROWS.

17 and 19, Avenue-road,

St. John's Wood, N.W.

P.S.—Next week I hope to have the opportunity of replying to the various other criticisms on me.

[Mr. Burrows seems curiously to misunderstand. In "LIGHT" for several months past there have been printed not only the records of Mrs. S. but extracts from the letters of Stainton Moses. In some of those letters he tells of his visits to certain séances. As Mr. Burrows had so misread the records, that he did not notice that Stainton Moses himself was the medium referred to in the Records, it was a fair conclusion that he probably *did* refer to the séances described in these letters, where he was *not* the medium. At such séances the claim was not always that exalted spirits were present. As to the rest of Mr. Burrows' letter, we shall have something to say another time.—**ED. "LIGHT."**]

The Substance of Existence.

SIR,—Madame de Steiger in her comments on my letter of the 11th ult. says that I consider "the source of all thought" to be "unreasoning." Evidently the word "unreasoning" has failed to convey my intended meaning, which was that the primordial force acted on impulse, and was unconscious of its powers, also that it did not stop to consider the consequences of such an act as creation, the results of which are placed in a sad array in the history of this world.

Madame de Steiger also asks me to say "what was the further source or force which started this unlucky blind force?" Which, to put it simply, means to define "Negative Existence," or why does existence exist? An invitation which I beg to decline; the utmost one can do is to give an idea of what these enigmatical phrases may mean.

It is impossible to define *strictly* the creative energy, for it is within our power to set limits to the "Infinite"? The most we are able to do is to study the results produced by the exercise of this power and from thence to deduce the probable motives and characteristics; for when we say that the Creator is infinite, uncreated, formless, self-existent, &c., we simply say what it is not; not, what it is.

The word "infinite" is, I think I may say, the key to the whole question of the origin of existence. It is the only dimension of space—length, breadth, and thickness being dimensions in space. As space is infinite so its source (if it has one) must be infinite; also it never was created and will never cease to exist, for as it is infinite it must be one and the same with its source; as infinity comprises all things. Hence progress is also infinite, i.e., it never began and never will end. From the foregoing I think we get an idea of what is meant by the law of the necessity of existence.

Such a state of existence being incomprehensible to our finite minds, some people think fit to deny the existence of a creative energy, but when they do they invariably substitute something in its place; call it force, matter, God, or what you will, the idea is fundamentally the same. To a certain extent I think that they are in the right, for it is only a matter of words to represent our ideas, together with the re-action that naturally takes place when the dogmas of priestcraft are overthrown.

The best conception, I think, that I have ever read of the possible characteristics of the creative energy is expressed thus: "Being, uncreated, eternal, and alone." Hence the universe and all it contains is constructed on the same lines, for it is impossible for the primal force to create anything apart from itself, it being infinite in all senses of the term, therefore the utmost it can do is to reflect itself.

CHARLES STRANGE.

Prophecy in Relation to Spiritualism.

SIR,—I have recently been reading an old and famous work by the Rev. Alexander Keith on the "Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy," which is probably familiar to most of your readers. The treatise bears more particularly on the history of the Jews, great stress being laid upon the miracle exhibited in the fulfilment of prophecy, as verified by modern discovery and research amongst the ruins of ancient cities, and as evidence of divine revelation.

A similarly useful work might be effected by Spiritualistic students of the Scriptures showing the relation, if any, of ancient prophecy to the modern outpouring of spiritual gifts; and if, as is probably the case, there are such indications of their being foretold, it would help to substantiate the truth of continued revelation from age to age down to the present time.

I trust the suggestion herein may induce some competent students to take the subject up, and afford your readers the benefit of their researches.

THOMAS BLYTON.

The Seven Principles.

SIR,—I think that "Alif," whose article on the "Seven Principles" I have just seen, would have done well to consult the most recent work on the subject, namely, Mrs. Besant's little manual. By so doing he would have avoided some of the misconceptions into which he has fallen. In the first place, let me remind him that Theosophists do not pretend to derive their Esoteric philosophy from the exoteric legends, myths, traditions, and doctrines of the Hindus, nor do they confine themselves to any one school of Indian thought. Therefore, when I read that Colebrooke represents the Linga Sharira as transmigrating through successive bodies, the statement moves me to nothing worse than a smile. The different schools in India have a provoking habit of mixing up their names for principles in a very confusing manner; for instance, the Buddh of one school will be quite a different principle from the Buddh of another. "What's in a name?" The principles remain the same though the names are interchanged. Therefore, when I read the quotation from Colebrooke I know that it is not the Linga Sharira at all to which reference is made, but the Karana or Casual Body, the sutratma or Re-incarnating "thread soul," so called because it links various lives together like beads on a thread. Whatever the Linga Sharira or Astral Body may be with the Hindus, with Theosophists it is a temporary body used for one life only. It is created by the thoughts of the previous life (as Mrs. Besant explains); it is that around which the physical body is built up in the womb; and it decays away after death, *pari passu* with the physical body. A new Linga Sharira is formed at each incarnation.

"Alif" gives "three main teachings" of Madame Blavatsky's Buddhism, which, by-the-way, was not Buddhism at all, but Buddhism (*vide* introduction, "Secret Doctrine"). His first teaching that "there is no God, personal or impersonal" is mis-

leading unless he tells us what the word "God" connoted with the writer. Madame Blavatsky has stated that if it is used in the sense of the Vedantic Parabrahm she will accept it, and most Theosophists do the same, but they generally prefer to leave it alone on account of its contradictory theological connotations.

The idea that the Seven Principles ever meant seven distinct somethings "which were from the beginning" is shown to be mistaken by the fact that the physical body is included as one of them, and whatever dispute there may be about the rest of them there can be no denying the fact that the body is ephemeral and used for the purposes of one life only.

If we make a little allowance for Madame Blavatsky being a foreigner and imperfectly acquainted with English, her definition of Atma is quite comprehensible; while Mr. Sinnett's statement that Buddh is "not in us," merely means that it is not confined to the limits of the physical or astral bodies, or even of the human mind, as at present constituted; man's centre of consciousness cannot yet rise into that state when it will become Buddh, therefore Buddh is outside us, in a metaphysical sense. The "physical intelligence, memory, &c.," which "Alif" cannot understand, is plain enough; it is that division of the intelligence which manifests through the physical body, for there is intelligence which does not so manifest.

I am pleased to notice your leading article on Re-incarnation. I agree with you that some theory of pre-existence is inevitable if the theory of human life is to accord with justice, but I venture to think that that form of the theory which supposes a series of lives in the same world before passing elsewhere is more coherent and involves fewer difficulties than the supposition that we came from another world, incarnate here only once, and then pass away whether we have learnt much or little.

H. S. GREEN.

SIR,—"Alif's" attack on "Theosophy and the Seven Principles," in "LIGHT" for February 25th, requires answer in some parts. As to his "Articles of Buddhism," he is quite right in consigning them to the lumber-room as unfit to waste time over, and I am sure no Theosophist will want to hinder him there. His statement that Madame Blavatsky's religious teaching does not acknowledge a God, personal or impersonal, is untrue; and anyone may convince himself, by turning to her "Key to Theosophy," pp. 61, 63, and *passim*, that she taught belief in an impersonal Deity. Again, the system of Madame Blavatsky is not Buddhism, but Buddhism (from bodhi, "wisdom") as explained, on pp. 12 and 13 of the "Key." The second "article"—that we believe in no beings outside living humanity and Devachan—is equally untrue, and I leave it to any reader of Madame Blavatsky's writings to prove it so. Hence, in challenging Theosophists over the above two "articles," "Alif," is simply creating a bugbear for his own amusement.

As to "Alif's" objections to the "Seven Principles," they are simply founded upon the want of verbal precision which must necessarily arise from having to express complex metaphysical ideas, strange to the Western mind, in English words. When Madame Blavatsky used the word "principle" she did not bind herself to the exact and precise philosophical meaning thereof, but used it because it was the best—or, rather, the least bad—word she could lay her hand on. Moreover, she lays great stress on the fact that what have been called "principles" are not really principles at all, but "aspects" of the One Principle. Hence, while fault-finders like "Alif" are splitting hairs over words and definitions, real truth-seekers are free to study and find out what is really meant. No one who is really desirous of getting to the bottom of Theosophical teachings will give himself much trouble over the inaccuracies committed by a Russian in translating Sanskrit into English.

As to the "quaint slip" over *linga sharira*, "Alif" may like to know that the word is used in Theosophy to express quite a different idea from that which it expresses in the Sankhya. Madame Blavatsky used the words as the most convenient label for the third principle, whose real name is esoteric, and did not borrow the Sankhya idea along with them. "Alif" will find that, in different Eastern systems, the same word may have very different meanings.

Finally, we are taken to task for not instructing people in the occult arts, such as levitation and projection of the double. We are told: "Theosophical initiates consist of two groups—a small group who still write 'F.T.S.' after their names, and a large group who say openly that they joined the Society to learn magic, and that they were fobbed off with transparent excuses, and never learnt anything." Quite so, and however much it

may have been thought advisable to call attention to Theosophy by means of phenomena, Theosophists will never weary of reiterating that the occult arts are not the end in view of the Society, and that persons who come into the Society to learn them will very soon leave it again if they have no deeper motive.

H. T. ENGE, B.A., F.T.S.

Pre-existence Soul and Body.

SIR, — In "LIGHT" of February 25th "C. C. M." says, "If I held that the soul pre-exists physical birth no otherwise than in the elements of a future organisation I should not speak of it as pre-existing at all."

That is, the only pre-existence known to "C. C. M." or within the radius of his mental vision is "individual," and of course "psychical." But if this be so why does he, as in "LIGHT" of February 4th, qualify the word with both these adjectives? Why speak of "individual" pre-existence if he would not even speak of any other, e.g., that of the elements that go to make up the individual? Why speak of "psychical" pre-existence if a physical one is not to be even thought of? In light literature we should not perhaps be surprised at this sort of thing, but when a philosopher enunciates his thoughts on a philosophical subject we expect his words to have a meaning.

Again, "C. C. M." says, "For the soul to pre-exist the composition of the physical body is not to pre-exist its own." Now this assertion simply takes it for granted that the soul does not originate with the body and consequently begs the whole question at issue.

I cannot claim to have read all that has been written on this subject, even in the pages of "LIGHT." It so happens that I have not heretofore taken much interest in it, having rather regarded it as one of which it might be said, *Risum hoc meretur potius quam fident*. But if the arguments for the "individual" pre-existence of the soul can be compressed into a small space, perhaps "C. C. M." as an apostle of the doctrine, would not object to give them as succinctly as he can, and at the same time tell us what he understands by the soul. Is it, in his view, that something in man that thinks, and reasons, and prays, and worships? Or is it something else?

This would clear the ground and enable such of your readers as, like myself, may have heretofore looked at the question in a listless sort of way, to form a more distinct opinion of the claims which the doctrine is supposed to have to their belief.

GEORGE HARPUR.

Mrs. Bliss.

SIR, — Will you allow me through the medium of your valuable paper to thank the numerous friends who have written me since my visit to the Marylebone Society on February 19th?

I tender my heartfelt thanks to all for the cordial way in which I was received at their hall; also to those whose invitations I am unable to accept owing to Brighton and other engagements. I hope in the course of a few weeks to meet them all again. Will you kindly insert this in your next issue?

23, Devonshire-road, Forest Hill.

A. V. BLISS.

CONTENT.

I could not find the little maid Content,
So out I rushed and sought her far and wide;
But not where Pleasure each new fancy tried,
Heading the maze of reeling merriment;
Nor where, with restless eyes and bow half bent,
Love in a brake of sweet-briar smiled and sighed;
Nor yet where Fame towered, crowned and glorified,
Found I her face; nor wheresoe'er I went.
So homeward back I crawled, like wounded bird—
When lo! Content sat spinning at my door;
And when I asked her where she was before—
"Here all the time," she said; "I never stirred.
Too eager in your search, you passed me o'er,
And, though I called, you neither saw nor heard."

—ALFRED ACSTIN.

To share the inmost consciousness of a noble thinker, to scan oneself in the white light of a pure and radiant soul—this is indeed the highest form of teaching and discipline.—O. W. HOLMES.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

We beg to remind those Subscribers to "Light" and the London Spiritualist Alliance who have not already renewed their Subscriptions for 1893, that they should forward remittances at once to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, 2, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C.

SOCIETY WORK.

SPIRITUAL HALL, 86, HIGH-STREET, MARYLEBONE. On Sunday last Miss Rowan Vincent gave an able discourse in opposition to the doctrine of Re-incarnation to a full and intelligent audience. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., Mr. J. B. Dale, of Romford, on "Spiritualism"; at 7 p.m., Mr. J. J. Morse, of Romford, to questions from the audience. C. H. ST.

THE STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, WORKHOUSE HALL, WEST HAM-LANE, STRATFORD, E. Service each Sunday at 7 p.m. Speaker for Sunday, March 12th, Mr. Percy Smyth. Subject, "The Drift of Modern Spiritualistic Thought." A committee meeting will be held after the usual service on Sunday, March 19th. J. RAINBOW, Hon. Sec.

THE SPIRITUAL ATHENAEUM, 22, FERNY-ROAD, W. On Sunday last we had a full and enthusiastic meeting, one of the most striking features of the evening being a transfiguration through the mediumship of the writer. Several clairvoyant descriptions were also given with great success. We had full attendances also on Wednesday and Friday evenings. —HORACE HUNT, 22, Ferny-road, Westbourne Park, W.

WINCHESTER HALL, 33, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM. Last Sunday morning the usual open discussion was held. In the evening readings were given by Mr. and Mrs. Audy, followed by an interesting address by Mr. W. H. Edwards, in the course of which he gave evidence of the possession of some very good clairvoyant powers. Next Sunday morning we contemplate resuming free magnetic healing.—E.C.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, 311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—Sunday next, circle at 11.30 a.m.; Lyceum at 3 p.m.; at 7 p.m., Mr. Butcher. Wednesday, circle at 2.30 p.m. for inquirers. Tea and social meeting on Good Friday, March 31st. Early application for tickets is necessary, as the number will be limited. On Sunday last Mr. Long gave an able address on "Spiritualism—Faith, Facts, Folly, or Fraud?"—J. P. ARSIS, Sec.

14, ORCHARD-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W. On Sunday last we had a good meeting, several strangers being present. Mr. J. H. Bangs, Hon. Sec., spoke upon "Liberty." Sunday, at 7 p.m., séance, Mr. Holmes. Tuesday, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Mason, séance. On Thursday, March 16th, a special séance will be given by Mr. Bangs, for the benefit of Mr. W. Wallace, at 8 p.m. prompt. On Saturday, at 58, Tavistock-crescent, Westbourne Park, at 8 p.m., séance, Mrs. Mason.—J. H. B., Hon. Sec.

23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD, FOREST HILL, S.E.—On Sunday the Rev. A. Smith gave an eloquent discourse upon the "Two Kingdoms," showing how Christ taught that the Kingdom of God was in the heart of every man who served Him. Many questions were put to the rev. gentleman at the close, all of which were answered in a very able manner. We hope to have the pleasure of hearing him again from our platform before long. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long will give an address and clairvoyant descriptions. Thursday, at 8 p.m., Mr. Bliss, séance.—J. B., Sec.

THE SPIRITUALISTS' INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.—PRESIDENT: Mr. Robert Cooper. On behalf of the President and the Committee I am pleased to report an increase of membership, this society now having members in each district of London, a fair number in the provinces, and friends in the following foreign countries: Australia, America, France, Germany, Holland, India, New Zealand, and Sweden, who pledge themselves to assist inquirers. Therefore inquirers and students cannot now complain of lack of assistance, or that Spiritualists have no organisation to help them systematically. It would take too much space to give a detailed report of work done in the Press and otherwise. But I can state that the objects of the society have, as far as it is possible, been carried out. The members of the Essex branch, at Manor Park, have been able to assist many in a practical way. Literature distributed, 31,000; letters attended to by myself, 407; inquirers' and students' meetings, 162; addresses on Spiritualism and kindred subjects, 48, including experiments in Spirit Photography, Healing, Clairvoyance, Psychometry, Mesmerism, Automatic Writing, Physical Manifestations, &c.; records of which will be sent when prepared for the Press. Objects of society:—For the benefit of those who desire to join, I may add that the society is supported by the voluntary contributions of its members, no one being refused admission to membership who cannot contribute. The principal objects are:—(1) To assist inquirers, by correspondence or otherwise, by assisting in the formation of private circles for the development of mediumship (and the scientific study of Spiritualism); (2) to form a connecting link between Spiritualists in all parts of the world for the mutual interchange of thought on Spiritualism and kindred subjects; (3) to supply the Press with information on Spiritualism and answer Press criticisms; (4) the distribution of Spiritualistic literature; (5) members of the above society only pledging themselves to assist in proving the truth of spirit communion. I shall be pleased to send full particulars and list of members to any Spiritualist who may desire to assist by subscriptions or literature, on receipt of stamped envelope. I conclude by sending greeting to all co-workers.—J. ALLEN, Hon. Sec., 14, Berkeley-terrace, White Post-lane, Manor Park, Essex.