

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !"—Goethe.

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

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Our 'Evangelical' friends, as our readers have gathered, are industriously engaged in 'harmonising' Psychical Research (they prefer that safer phrase!) and old theology. We are glad of it. In fact, it is the duty of everyone to adjust the balances, or keep the rudder true. So we wish them well. We only ask them to be frank and quite honest, and to admit that we were not so far from the truth, after all.

One specially pretty bit of by-play is on just now. We have always said: 'If you believe in Bible spirit-communion why try to scorn or frown down ours?' and now these good people are saying: 'If these things happen now, and they do, why may not the records of the Bible be true?' Has it come to that already, that *they* are on their defence? Are our facts so certain, and theirs so damaged? But we intend no reproach. We only want to get the balance right and the rudder true.

The Rev. E. M. Duff writes as follows in a High Church paper, 'The Living Church':—

So-called rationalistic critics of the New Testament have built their superstructure upon the supposed and assumed non-existence of the superphysical in the earthly plane of existence. We are all familiar with the 'Robert Elsmerean' proposition that has been so long dinned into our ears, that 'miracles (i.e., superphysical phenomena) do not happen.' Under this assumption the superphysical has been eliminated from the New Testament and all the documents thereof practically discredited in the eyes of sceptics. But miracles, i.e., superphysical phenomena, *do* happen. Psychic research has established that fact. What is the result? The result is that the *a priori* arguments of rationalistic critics go for nothing. Scholarship returns to the study of the sacred documents *minus* a foregone bias of destruction. Now space forbids me to pursue this thought as it ought to be pursued. I must leave the subject with a quotation from a Bible handbook which is approved, so far as I know, by the most conservative, and will content myself with a brief comment upon the quotation. I quote from the Rev. Arthur Carr's article on Miracles in 'The Cambridge Companion to the Bible.' He writes: 'It is not necessary to regard miracles as deviations from the order of nature or the laws of nature. All that can be truly asserted is that the causes of which miracles were the results are unknown to us. . . . A miracle may be regarded as the manifestation of a hitherto latent divine force.'

Will any one impugn the soundness of these observations? The line of thought which they suggest is this: Our Lord in His superphysical works, both therapeutic and thaumaturgic, brought *laws* into operation. He knew the laws and He utilised them. He reversed or suspended *no* law of nature, when we consider 'nature' to include the whole universe, both physical and spiritual.

Mr. Duff draws from that some conclusions (as crutches for certain old notions), but we are not concerned with these, nor need we notice his odd remark that 'Psychic research becomes the logical graveyard of that lamentable superstition,

Spiritualism.' That need not alarm us. 'We call it only pretty Fanny's way.' As Mr. Stead says: 'We shall scoop them all in'—in time.

The following presents Mr. Duff at his best, and we like him best at his best:—

I must now state an observed fact falling under the generalisation stated above from which another very important conclusion is derivable, viz., psychic research has found that the supersensory manifestations of the human mind are highest when the cerebral and other physical functions of the subject are lowest. From this fact probability becomes so high as to be almost a certainty that when the physical functions of the body cease *altogether*, the supersensory faculties and powers *will attain to their normal functional perfection*. Thomson J. Hudson, LL.D., in his 'Scientific Demonstrations of the Future Life,' develops this thought briefly as follows: (1). It is an axiom of science that nature never produces functions, faculties, or powers for which there is not some normal use in *some* sphere of existence. (2). The exercise of the supersensory faculties and powers of the human mind in the *physical* plane of existence is abnormal. All their deliverances require sensory verification before they can be trusted. (3). We are therefore compelled, by hypothesis, to predicate a *future* and *superphysical* state of existence in which to look for a normal exercise of these functions, faculties, and powers. A future life thus becomes demonstrable by strict scientific induction which reasons from the known to the unknown.

'Neo-Christian Epistles: A vindication of Christianity,' by B. S. Drury (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co.), is a puzzling book on 'Life's Spiritual and Scientific Possibilities.' The author tells us that its contents were sent as letters to a friend, and were returned as 'unintelligible.' They are not quite as bad as that. In manuscript they might look hopeless, but, with the help of nice paper, clear type, and narrow pages, they are fairly readable. Still, we are afraid they are far too soaring for us, and we prefer a simpler style. May we also venture to say that we have seen better composition?

We take a bit quite by accident,—the very first that meets the eyes on opening the book:—

Which further through the Divine Transmission of the Holy Ghost, is it not the Electric connector for Divine thought-transference, which therein in Transmittal awakens in Humanity the Dormant Energy of its latent Divinity, and therein productive of all Divine Metaphysical, spiritual and physical 'Regeneration!'

Whence

through the Divine Descent to the Word of Christ Jesus, was not thus Formed the further Electric Connection, &c.

As we say, it is a puzzling book.

'The Theosophical Review' for August (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society) is a specially strong Number, but, as usual, it is anything but food for babes. We particularly note Mrs. Besant's Speech on 'The Inner Purpose of the Theosophical Society,' with its teaching and wholesome counsels; Gyanendranath Chakravarti's Paper on 'Spirituality and Psychism,' with its forceful warning against the acquiring or use of psychic powers; and a stiff Study on 'The Basis of Manifestation,' by A. H. Ward: but these by no means exhaust the good things in this Number.



'The Ideal Review' (New York) is quite as serious in its subjects, but far brighter and far more suitable for the vast majority of even serious persons. It is also more varied. Henry Frank is as brilliant and Eva Best as delightful as ever. 'A plea for the word *God*,' by Barnetta Brown, is short, but convincing. It is not necessary to change it,—not necessary, at all events, until we get a better substitute than 'The Absolute' or 'The Power.' 'The Father' is perhaps best: but every word applied to Him can only be a symbol.

A writer in 'The Globe,' Toronto, vigorously defends Spiritualism against 'The Christian Guardian,' and says that the teaching of Spiritualism contains:—

A great divine principle and holy philosophy as broad as the broadest Christianity, and all-embracing in its scope and hope, and is the one great wholesome belief that is destined ultimately to be the heaven which shall leave all the religions the wide world over, because its essence and essential are always, first and last, truth. Spiritualism absorbs the veriest grain or germ of truth where and whenever found, and claims it for its own, for the one purpose that it may give it out again.

This writer adds:—

As for the astounding phenomena of Spiritualism, they are produced to-day in hundreds of private homes in Toronto without the aid of professional mediums, and the phases are so varied, remarkable and unexpected as to confound and utterly defy being exposed by the profoundest investigator.

We are sorry to say that 'The Open Court' continues its uninformed Articles on 'The Old and the New Magic,' in which it 'exposes' spirit-mediums and their 'frauds.' For example, there is the 'rapping and talking table,' which contains a costly arrangement of an electric battery in its legs, with a specially prepared top; a lovely article! What a ridiculous suggestion this is, in face of the fact that the table signals relied upon are obtained in private families! 'The Open Court' is too good to be wasted on such nonsense; and yet we are sorry to say that the writer is the editor, Dr. Paul Carus.

We agree with his closing sentence; 'Even where "now we see through a glass darkly," we must remain confident that when we grow in wisdom and comprehension we shall learn to see "face to face."' In that we wish him success.

'The Spiritual Review' gives us a short Article on 'Palmistry in the Bible,' and says that the Senora Blanca de Ovies 'makes out a fair case' for her contention 'that the modern cult of palmistry is to be found in the Bible.' The following are the texts quoted, which 'make out a fair case': Proverbs iii. 16; Job xxxvii. 7; Job xxiii. 9; Proverbs xxvii. 16; Job xxi. 16; Job xi. 14; Job xiii. 14; Job xxvii. 9; Ezekiel xxiii. 37 and 45; Isaiah li. 22-3; Isaiah xlix. 16.

Truly, the Bible can be quoted for anything, but this is 'a fair case' of *making* it mean anything.

Another of George Bell and Sons' pretty shilling books is Mr. Colville's 'Fate mastered; Destiny fulfilled.' The book is rather discursive, but it deals with the great theme of personal development through personal self-possession, and is full of good thoughts, the result of close observation of character. A well-informed and practical book.

#### A HAUNTED HOUSE.

A gentleman writes: Will one or two good clairvoyants undertake investigation at a haunted house in London, and will a few experienced gentlemen also join as a committee to assist in the work? It is undoubtedly a genuine case. Address 'Y. Z.,' care of Editor of 'LIGHT.'

#### UNIQUE MANIFESTATIONS.

The editor of the 'Light of Truth' reported in his paper for August 18th that during a recent visit to Mount Pleasant Park, the home of the Mississippi Valley Association, he became acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. M. Buchanan, of Marshalltown, Iowa, who through persistent application have developed mediumship of a remarkable nature. He says:—

'The phases are direct slate writing, letter writing on paper, and flower production in the light, the latter being full gas light, in this case produced from gasoline, the illumination being made by a Welsbach burner, so that the room where the manifestations take place is almost as light as day. Doors and windows are also wide open, and there is no attempt to hide anything whatever, the sitters being privileged to watch the manifestations as they occur.

'For instance, the writer had a seat at one of the séances close to the mediums, and with at least four senses, viz., sight, touch, smell and hearing, became thoroughly aware that here was indeed a marvellous exhibition of psychic force and an intelligence at times of a high order.

'The paraphernalia consisted of a dozen double school slates, a common folding sewing table, and a bit of red covering that shut out the view on three sides, but permitted a full view from the front, at which Mrs. Buchanan sat holding the slates on the palm of her right hand, just beneath the edge of the table, her left hand resting on top of the table. Mr. Buchanan sat at her right with both hands on the table and occasionally manipulating a small Swiss musical box. A paper tablet and a little pile of lead and slate pencil fragments completed the visible means of communication. The gas lamp hung directly over the table, hence there was at all times a glare of light. Under these conditions messages were written, and before one's face and eyes flowers, such as roses, pinks, azaleas and carnations, were produced between and upon the slates, the messages indicating to whom the flowers were brought, and signed by the communicating spirit. The writer and his wife were favoured in this manner with two American Beauty roses, perfectly formed and wet, as though but just dipped in clear water. This, remember, in full gas light, with our eyes watching every movement!

'How was it accomplished?

'Before a marvel of this nature the mind is dumb, the tongue mute. There is nothing in the tri-dimensional sphere of physics in which mortal man is immersed that can account for it. We only saw, heard, smelled and touched the outward manifestation of a force we know nothing about; and this through the organisms of two simple-minded, illiterate persons, for Mrs. Buchanan is not averse, in relating their experiences, to explain that she is incapable of writing a legible hand, she having been reared on a farm and her parents poor. We should perhaps note this more properly in connection with another phase of the manifestations, in which letters and essays on spiritual science of a high order are given. This is indeed one of the most beautiful and at the same time inexplicable manifestations.

'A number of sheets of the tablet paper were torn off by Mr. Buchanan and placed between two slates, together with a piece of pencil lead. Mrs. Buchanan took the slates and blank paper thus arranged and held them on the palm of her hand under the edge of the table, and anyone was privileged to see the whole operation. We saw it, and the writing seemed to be in the nature of transfer, for whole pages written on both sides, lines close together, and as straight as a rule, came into view almost instantaneously and fluttered to the floor. In this way, in the space of seven minutes by the watch, twenty-nine sheets of this tablet paper, ordinary letter size, were completely filled with messages to the various members of the séance. It occupied the time of a reader full thirty minutes, to read aloud to the circle a portion only of these communications. Aside from their character as pertaining to the life beyond and the teachings of the spirits to mortals, there were scores of absolute tests of identity contained in them which could not by any mortal agency have been known to the mediums, but which were acknowledged by the recipients.

'It is here that the marvel of the matter occurs as relates to the mediums' literary powers. Mr. Buchanan is a butcher by trade and never had any schooling to speak of; while his wife is a simple farmer's daughter, reared in strict orthodoxy, and who for a long while in the early days of her development regarded it all as the "work of the devil." These mediums are wholly under the direction of their spirit guides and were sent out into the world some months ago from their home in Blair, Neb., in a "prairie schooner," with sixty cents in money. They went to Marshalltown and began their public work; later to Clinton, Ia., where they made a stir last summer. They have prospered materially as well as spiritually. Both are pleasant in disposition, and more anxious that good to others shall come of their powers



than that fortune shall favour themselves. The "Light of Truth" does not give this account of their rare psychic gifts for the purpose of exploiting them, except in so far as it may be their due for truthful and persistent application to their work, but rather with a view to drawing attention to the painstaking character of the spirits who have them in charge, in that a phase of mediumship absolutely without question and as marvellous as it is beautiful, has been given to the working forces of Spiritualism. No mind not saturated with ignorance, prejudice and greed can for a moment hesitate to pronounce these manifestations genuine and helpful in the highest degree.

#### DECEASE OF PROFESSOR SIDGWICK.

The decease of Dr. Sidgwick, which took place at Terling, Essex, on Tuesday, August 28th, elicited from the Press of all shades of thought the expression of a very high appreciation of the professor's contributions to moral philosophy and political economy; but, with scarcely an exception, all reference to his interest in psychical investigations was studiously omitted. The one exception which came under our notice was a contribution by a Cambridge correspondent published in the 'Daily Telegraph,' in which the writer said:—

'He was for many years a prominent member of the Society for Psychical Research, and for all practical purposes a believer in spiritualistic phenomena. . . . He was at one time the ally of Mr. Gurney and Mr. Myers, and the record of his work may be found in the early volumes of the transactions of the Psychical Society side by side with the inquiries of men of far less mental calibre than he, who were a good deal more emotional and sentimental. He had one or two disillusionments—especially with regard to the charlatanism of mediums—which had their natural and proper result, and the *Society for Psychical Research* knew him *no more*.'

The italics are ours. Mr. Frank Podmore, we were pleased to note, fully disposed of these misrepresentations, in a letter to the 'Westminster Gazette,' from which we make the following quotation:—

'In the otherwise admirable memoir of the late Professor Henry Sidgwick, which you publish to-day, there is one curious omission. In any record of his own lifework I know well that Professor Sidgwick would have given an important place to his labours in that obscure region which, for want of a better name, is called psychical research. Prior to 1882, the date when my own association with him commenced, Mr. Sidgwick had for some years interested himself in collecting evidence for ghosts and death wraiths, and had spent some time in examining the alleged physical phenomena of Spiritualism. In 1882 the Society for Psychical Research—not, however, by Sidgwick's initiation—was founded. For the first few years of its existence (except for an interval, during which he stepped aside in favour of the late Professor Balfour Stewart) Mr. Sidgwick acted as president of the society. But the bare statement of that fact conveys a very inadequate idea of the real nature of the services rendered by him. That he gave largely—very largely—of his personal means to help the work of investigation in those earlier years is the least of his benefits. He presided throughout at our councils; he took an active share in the tedious work of experiment, of examining witnesses, of collecting and appraising evidence; the lines on which our work could best be done were laid down by his advice and pursued under his personal direction; all the publications of the society were issued under his immediate supervision. That of late years he has delegated to others many of these functions was due less to any decay of his personal interest in the work of investigation than to the feeling that his immediate supervision of all details was no longer necessary. But he has throughout these eighteen years been a *regular attendant at our meetings, and has taken a constant and predominant part in all our deliberations*. Whatever position the S.P.R. may hold to-day, whatever good work it may have done in exposing error or in directing attention to neglected facts in human psychology, its success is due, in the largest measure, to the wisdom, the clear insight, the "particularly sane intellect" (to quote the words of your memoir), and, above all, to the pre-eminent justice and veracity of our first president.'

In a subsequent issue of the 'Westminster Gazette,' Mr. F. W. H. Myers, President of the Society for Psychical Research, gave the following emphatic reply to the statement which that journal had quoted from the 'Daily Telegraph':—

'In an article on the late Professor Sidgwick in your issue of August 30th, I observe that you quote from the 'Daily Telegraph' the following words *re* Professor Sidgwick's con-

nection with the Society for Psychical Research: "He had one or two disillusionments . . . and the Society for Psychical Research knew him no more." I will ask you to allow me to state that this statement is entirely erroneous. Professor Sidgwick retained to the last his position upon our Council, and was the most influential member of our society.'

#### 'THE GATELESS BARRIER.'

'Lucas Malet's' latest story is happy in its possession of dainty charm and in its lack of pedantic purpose, for while, from its character, it might easily have been made a vehicle for the expression of some personal bias, its author has preserved an admirable catholicity of conception, albeit her theme is somewhat *bizarre*.

The book has indubitably the Dhyâna quality of suggestion, and is in no danger of forfeiting it by any effort at conclusive utterance. The questions of heredity, of re-incarnation, of the relation in particular and general between spirit and matter—all these and more are assumed as settled; or ignored in a manner bewildering to any who approach the volume with an inquiring haste. Yet to those who are content to walk softly down the 'noiseless corridors' of its pages into its gardens of 'love's deathless roses'; to those who have felt the benison of the departed in 'night's splendid silences,' and their kiss in the stir of the dawn-wind, it will appeal strongly.

Briefly, it is a record of the passionate love between Laurence Rivers, a naval officer who fell at Trafalgar, and his cousin Agnes, a girl of delicate beauty and sensitive spirit. The hero of the narrative is the grand-nephew of the dead sailor, and in person entirely similar—in short, as the reader is led to imagine, the deceased sailor re-incarnated. Called to England by the summons of an uncle who is slowly dying, he entered Stoke Rivers, the house of his fathers.

Whilst acquainting himself with its range and character, he came to the end of a corridor, where hung a heavy tapestry curtain. As he passed behind it, the 'curtain fell back with a muffled thud, leaving him standing in a narrow, dark cupboard-like space closed by a door, of which it took him some stifling seconds to find the handle. He fumbled blindly in the dark, an almost childish sense of agitation upon him. A conviction grew upon him that he had stood just here and so groped an innumerable number of times already, and that he should so stand and grope—either in fact or imagination—just so long as consciousness remained to him, an innumerable number of times again.' Turning the handle, he enters the 'Yellow Drawing-room,' where the drama of souls moves swiftly. The love of the Laurence who fell at Trafalgar awakes again in the later Laurence, amidst the associations of the past, and compels the sweet spirit of the dead Agnes to its human form once more. The measuring of the man's self against the forces of the Unseen is finely pictured. The telling description of pure passion which forced the Gates of Death, stepped over the threshold of the 'Yellow Drawing-room' and passed the heavy curtain secluding it from the world, is powerfully, yet delicately told, and the great moment of the book is instinct with a spiritual beauty that dwells as a 'mountain memory.'

The symbolism of the story reveals a rare insight. The library with its treasures of cold analysis, the dining-room suffused with the 'musky odour of orchids'—'clinging, enfolding, it seemed more as a presence than a scent'—admirably convey the dying sceptic's manner of life, the subjective learning, the objective experience; while outside in the corridor, the marble faces of the Roman Emperors, in their sightless dignity, suggest the stony calm that hid the human man when there came upon him a vision, not born of sense or intellect, but of spirit. How Laurence is led from the realm of reason, the sphere of sense, to the threshold of the spirit, is subtly depicted in the scenes in the 'Yellow Drawing-room,' where he feels the sense of an 'exquisite presence,' and on the hillside, where he holds communion with the ageless dead. Within 'The Gateless Barrier' is struck the deep note of life immortal, which, in its echoes, haunts the 'House of Time,' wherein, not commonly, but at least or fast, the heart of man lifts to its exquisite music, and he knows that it is the voice of his own longing to salute the Supreme Soul as kin and part.

H. B. C.

\* 'The Gateless Barrier.' By 'LUCAS MALET' (Methuen and Co.).



## 'THE NEW THOUGHT OF IMMORTALITY.'

BY 'HACTENUS.'

No. III.

To the bereaved mourner there is no more terrible problem than that involved in the question :

'What fate awaits us when we die?'

The dearly-loved partner in life, or the cherished child, having passed through the portals of death, the grief-stricken one naturally breathes the cry—prompted by the very intensity of the ties of love which linked life to life and heart to heart and made existence a sweet delight—'Where are the dead?'

Who has not felt the yearnings expressed in those touching lines addressed by the poet, James G. Clark, to his departed mother :—

'Is there no grand, immortal sphere  
Beyond this world of broken ties,  
To fill the wants that mock us here,  
And dry the tears from weeping eyes?  
When Winter melts in endless Spring,  
And June stands near with deathless flowers,  
When we may hear the dear ones sing  
Who loved us in this world of ours?  
I ask, and lo! my cheeks are wet  
With tears for one I cannot see :  
O Mother, art thou living yet,  
And dost thou still remember me?'

The traditional faith of Christendom has fostered the idea that there cannot be any legitimate response from the 'other side' to the sufferer's agonised plea for comfort and light in the darkness of the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

The heart-hunger of the race was voiced in that pathetic cry :—

'Oh for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still.'

Bereft of the companionship of those who made brightness and cheer in the home and heart, those who remain to mourn their loss often feel that the solitude is unbearable, and the uncertainty regarding their fate intolerable. Spiritualism has truly been the 'comforter' to thousands who were well nigh helpless because they believed the popular faith, which, as the Rev. Heber Newton forcibly says, teaches that 'Death fixes the doom of a man forever. As he dies so will he live—saved or lost eternally!' The horrible uncertainty as to the fate of their loved ones, and the fear lest they should be forever 'lost,' was like a terrible nightmare that oppressed them with its nameless misery night and day. According to this traditional view :—

'Life is a probation, and the touch of death stereotypes character for ever. The good pass directly to heaven; the bad pass directly to hell. The good never fall from heaven—the bad never rise from hell. . . . Endless happiness for the saved—endless suffering for the lost! Neither in heaven nor in hell are there any natural relationships. Heaven knows no perfectly reunited family—hell misses some of the home circle. The whole adjustments of life in the beyond lack any natural orderings. There are no natural occupations. The saved need nothing but the joy of their salvation—the damned can have no joy whatever.

The old Scotchwoman described the traditional heaven when she said that "we shall sit upon stules and sing psalms all the day long." . . . The language of this traditional conception still drawls in our hymns, still drones from our pulpits, still whines in our prayers. Alas, that we conservative Churchmen, holding our venerable Prayer-book in our hands, in the last sacred offices of the dead, should ever fancy ourselves obliged to repeat language that is archaic, obsolete, and untrue—words ringing false upon our consciousness, offending our judgment, and belying our faith.'

It is well that we should sometimes have these old teachings re-stated, 'lest we forget'! They still survive amongst us, as we can easily discover if we go to the right quarters to hear them. We may then realise how far we have journeyed along the road to a more scientific, rational, and helpful faith. Mr. Newton, by giving us this summary, saves us from the probable charge of misrepresenting the old-time pessimistic traditional doctrine of immortality, which chilled the very heart's blood of so many sorrowing souls, by his frank and picturesque presentation of its crudities. As

he is the Rector of All Souls' Protestant Episcopal Church, New York, and one of the most prominent clergymen in America, he may surely be trusted to depict the orthodox view of post-mortem existence in a trustworthy manner. He says :—

'According to the traditional idea death is really a sleep. The spirit passes into unconsciousness at the touch of death. It remains in slumber until the resurrection morning. On the resurrection day the soul, which has passed from the body at death and remained asleep, re-enters the body and awakens to consciousness. Body and soul, then, together rise and pass into the true life hereafter. The veritable body laid aside in the grave, rises from the grave, as the habitation of the soul in the hereafter. In the quaint old village of Easthampton, where I summer, the earliest pastor of the village lies buried at the eastern end of the old burying ground, facing towards the east, that on the morning of the resurrection day, at the sound of the Archangel's trumpet, he may be first to rise from the grave and lead his flock in triumphant ascension to the skies. A touchingly pathetic illustration of the traditional belief.'

But, fortunately, this materialistic and limited conception of the hereafter is losing its hold upon thoughtful people. 'It is passing wholly out of the mind of our generation,' says Mr. Newton, 'so rapidly that it is difficult to realise now that men, only a few years ago, actually thought thus—or thought that they thus thought—of the hereafter.'

But we must add to this the idea that the saved are to be shut up in heaven in self-congratulatory bliss; selfishly enjoying their own escape from perdition and delighting in the beauty of heaven, but unsympathetic towards their dear ones, who, 'driven to their eternal hell,' are unable to escape. According to this belief, therefore, all the dead are either asleep, awaiting the resurrection, or they are imprisoned in heaven or hell, and, in any case, they have gone 'to that bourne from whence no traveller returns'!

It is one of the supremest services of Spiritualism that it has rescued so many from slavery to tradition; that it has helped to lift this incubus from the heart of humanity; that it has torn the pall from the tomb and illumined the path by which we pass 'through the mists' into the real, natural, and human life beyond; that it has put us into communication with the denizens of that world and revolutionised our thoughts regarding the destiny of mankind.

We are now able to realise that there are not two worlds, but in reality only one. If natural laws are operative in the spiritual world it is because spiritual laws are operative in the natural world. *This* is a spiritual world and we are spirits, and life both here and hereafter is natural. The shadows here obscure the realities. There, with clearer atmosphere and quickened perceptions, we shall no longer see 'as through a glass darkly.' We shall know that all life is spiritual and that Nature is but the 'living garment' wrapt around the true self of the infinite and eternal spirit—half concealing, half-revealing, the divine innermost—the life and love supreme.

We have already shown that Mr. Newton realises and acknowledges that Spiritualism has rendered valuable service to humanity in helping to formulate 'the new thought of immortality.' He admits that there is 'a certain underlying unity among all spiritualistic communications concerning the hereafter' and that 'under the double influence of the teachings of Swedenborg and those of the people of the unseen world a new vision of the hereafter is rising upon the souls of men.'

Among the most important facts insisted upon by the spirits who report their experiences to us, is their testimony to the existence of 'spheres' through which the ascending soul will pass in its evolutionary progression; that each spirit goes 'to his own place' immediately after his departure from this state of life; and that, while he has 'a local habitation and a name,' yet the mental, moral and spiritual conditions which exist within him constitute his heaven and hell. These terms indicate moral conditions of being more truly than places of existence, although the environment of the individual reflects his interior states more accurately than it does here. Dealing with this aspect of the subject, Mr. Newton points out that :—

'Even here on earth men group themselves according to their moral affiliations. Goodness itself establishes its own



territorial zone, and evil haunts its own dens. You know in what part of the city to go if you desire the company of intelligence and culture and character. You need not ask the policeman where to go if you want the gambling hell and the bagnio. . . . Every man tends to find his own place on earth, and he will go to his own place when he leaves earth, with swifter, surer steps. Heaven and hell are not shut off from each other, as we traditionally conceive of them. Heaven and hell commingle on earth. Men living in each jostle each other in the streets. You pass from heaven to hell as you pass from one block to another. You leave heaven behind you in one house whose door closes upon you, and you find hell back of the next door through which you enter. . . . There are, indeed, spiritual classifications on earth. How should there not be? . . . But there are no fixed groupings for these spiritual classifications here, and there will be none in the hereafter—for one class at least. The classes are not castes. Goodness trips and falls, and then drops out of its place for a time and tumbles into a temporary place, out of which it must rise again. . . . The gaol-bird reforms, and his old surroundings become abhorrent to him. . . . His "pals" miss him in his wonted resorts. They can find him if they know how, but it will be in other sorts of places. Thus the soul in its stages of progress readjusts its environments to its own condition, and changes its states. All this strange sorting of souls, this strange placing of spirits, goes on in one superficially indistinguishable mass of human life; the good and the evil jostling against each other; the spheres of heaven and hell impinging upon each other, sliding forever into each other. Why, then, should we wonder that it should be so hereafter? How could there be any helpfulness for those whom we call the "lost"—how could the good reach out their hands to succour their brothers who have not won character—were it not for this continued contiguity of souls throughout the universe, whereby all sorts and conditions of spirits commingle free?

This touches another fact upon which spirits have constantly insisted during the past half century, *viz.*, that among the employments of the 'after-death states' of humanity that of endeavouring to render helpful and sympathetic service to less fortunate brethren continually engages the thought and endeavour of the more spiritually unfolded; that there is no 'gulf fixed' between the several spheres of spirit life, save the gulf of ignorance, wrong-doing, pride, hardness of heart and exclusiveness; that where repentance and desire for better things can be aroused in the soul of the sinner, the loving and compassionate spirits will find a way by which they can render him help and blessing. Here again Mr. Newton has caught the golden gleam of the glorious spiritual revelation:—

'The significance of the great Catholic doctrine of purgatory is beginning to be discerned. Not as in the Catholic purgatory, limited, but without limit. So far as we can see, the pains of prison punishment are purifying. The sufferings of the hells in the beyond, as here, are remedial.

'The work of all true society, whether in the world seen or in the world unseen, is to carry on this redeeming, restoring, renewing work of God in man. For this end are all the institutions of the social life on earth and in the hereafter—there, however, mightily re-enforced by the developed powers, mental and moral, of good men. We would not now care to erase from our creed the words "He descended into hell." Even in the most literal interpretation of them, we can believe them now, as our fathers dared not to believe them; seeing the work of the Christ and of all his followers in the beyond, not in the selfish enjoyment of a heaven of happiness but in the unselfish ministry to those in the hells of suffering; that they, too, may be brought into the light of God and led up into the life of the All-Father.'

Thus Spiritualism defeats materialism, and revolutionises the religious thought of the age. Its facts can no longer be denied, its interpretations of the great problems of life are being accepted by the most advanced and intelligent people, and its 'new thought upon immortality' is, indeed, a glad gospel, for, founded on facts, it offers the largest possible hope of the ultimate happiness of every child of God.

**SPIRITUALISM IN SPAIN AND CUBA.**—The 'Banner of Light' reports that Spiritualism has gained a firm foothold in Spain, and that the Spiritualists of Cuba formed a federation in Havana in June last. The Spiritualists of Porto Rico are said to have founded a hospital in a town of that island. Before the Spanish-American war the journals devoted to Spiritualism issued in the Spanish language alone on both continents numbered thirty-seven, but since the war the number is somewhat smaller.

## SPIRITUALISM IN ALGIERS.

We have had the opportunity, from time to time, of publishing records of very remarkable manifestations which have occurred in the Villa Carmen, Alger Mustapha, the residence of Madame la Générale Carmencita Noël, and now the following has come to us from a correspondent who is evidently one of Madame's enthusiastic admirers:—

The ladies of France, it must be said, still bear the conventional stamp—the stamp of those religious educational houses which have brought to the fore so many generations of fair women; who knew next to nothing, yet conversed with choicest wit, and wrote sparkling letters full of life and spirit. In bed-chamber and drawing-room, extended full-length on their couches, their charms enhanced by an elegant 'déshabillé,' they wielded their sceptres and would certainly have gone into fits at the bare idea of speaking in public.

'Autres temps, autres mœurs.' The lovely city of Alger la Blanche witnessed, not long since, an experiment most interesting to all who profess our faith and doctrine. A lady belonging to what our neighbours call so expressively '*le dessus du panier*' (literally, 'the top of the basket'), flung down her glove to routine and tradition by giving a lecture, in a semi-public hall, on 'Modern Spiritualism.'

I may here inform your readers that Algiers rejoices in a newly-formed society called '*Le Petit Athénée*,' whose members meet together for the development of art, literature, and science. Gentlemen lecture there every week; concerts are given; and the amateurs of astronomy study the stars now and then from the beautiful terrace overlooking the old harbour in the house of the Turkish-Rais (Commander of the Harbour).

It was in the *salle du Petit Athénée* that, one evening, the cream of the cream of fashion, together with a sprinkling of humbler members, assembled to hear, admire (and criticise) Madame la Générale Carmencita Noël, who, it was whispered, was going to hold forth '*On the Spirits!*'

For two hours Madame kept her auditors spell-bound as, in a clear sweet voice—distinctly heard by all—she told them in choicest language the wonderful tale of Modern Spiritualism. She began by greeting her adopted land Algeria, *Matre pulchrâ filia pulchrior*. Then she unfolded before the assembly a mysterious doctrine, which, born in the East, handed down from age to age, was well-known to their brothers, the Arabian children of fair France. But, to all appearance, it was lost to modern nations, when, in a far-away land over the Western ocean, suddenly it had re-suscitated! Risen from its ashes the phoenix of Modern Spiritualism was now soaring away over both worlds!

Madame la Générale Carmencita Noël then informed her hearers that she purported explaining the new faith by a series of tableaux taken from first-rate English and American authors, these two nations having been the first to raise the new standard, the banner of Light!

These tableaux cannot be too highly praised, for each is a little gem in its own way, the pearl being the tale of Henry de Valois' fatal and occult love for Marie de Cleves, Princesse of Condé, told as only a 'grande dame' of the fair land of France could tell it.

Your readers acquainted with the French language will enjoy reading the account of Madame la Générale Carmencita Noël's conference.

It has been lately printed and is sold by Chamuel, 5, Rue de Savoie, Paris, for one and a-half franc, and for English readers it will be a treat to study these few pages.

Forgetting rival lands and national jealousies, the author has poured out the tribute of a high-souled woman's admiration at the feet of England's great men of science. And England's gifted sons will be known, honoured, and loved in many a palm-shaded villa, loved as the champions of faith and hope, for none who saw and heard her will forget that tall, elegant figure, whose voice cried, like a silver clarion, 'Honour to Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace! Honour to Sir William Crookes!—to those who in the advancement of physical science have never been surpassed.'



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EDITOR ... .. E. DAWSON ROGERS.

*Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.*

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### 'BIOGEN.'

The late Professor Elliott Coues was a good fighter, and he had plenty of opportunity for proving it. He was a member of the 'National Academy of Sciences' in the United States, 'The American Philosophical Society,' the Philosophical and Biological Societies of Washington, &c., and he everywhere found what used to be the worryingly self-satisfied materialism of, say, twenty years ago. So he fought. One of his campaigns turned upon the delivery of an Address, eighteen years ago, before the Philosophical Society of Washington, on 'The possibilities of Protoplasm,' afterwards published under the title of 'Biogen: a speculation on the origin and nature of life' (now reprinted in England and sold by T. O. Todd, Sunderland). It is a good specimen of the ordinary Philosophical Society Address, with the usual amount of militancy, discursiveness, banter and assurance; but, running through it there is a good deal of what was then advanced or adventurous thought, though, oddly enough, the 'advanced' thought, as is often the case, seems to hark back to old-world ideas.

It is an old lecture, but, as it excellently indicates the parting of the ways, it is not only 'as good as new' but better, inasmuch as it shows the altered outlook, though we still have with us many of the old school who hold that 'life is the result of the aggregation of matter.' The large majority of the scientists and philosophers addressed by Professor Coues believed that. But, if that is a correct account of the genesis and exodus of life, several awkward things follow:—these, for example:—that this account of the origin of life involves somewhere the exploded notion of spontaneous generation, and involves also the absurdity of a 'huge "perpetual motion" machine,' which 'invented itself and set itself a-going.' As to the first, Professor Coues properly points out that every supposed condition of vitality has been artificially produced, but that life has not. We have chemically made every physical condition of an egg, but never an egg that would hatch. Life eludes us every time. On pages 27 and 28 of this Sunderland reprint there is a remarkably neat landing of the materialist into the hole we know so well—and love. He tries to get out of it by saying that chemistry claims only to deal with elementary substances, 'not pretending to say what particular manner of aggregation of their molecular units results in life.' But that is taking refuge in a metaphysical subtilty, and shirking the physical difficulty. If life necessarily results from the compounding of certain elementary substances in certain proportions and in a certain way, the man who affirms that necessity ought

to be able to explain and prove it. But he shirks it, and no wonder; 'for all that relates to the ultimate atoms of matter—supposing any such things exist . . . is beyond human scrutiny, and therefore remote from the domain of exact science.' So that Professor Coues' 'Biogen' is as likely a hypothesis as that life is the result of a certain shuffling about of Matter.

And what is 'Biogen'? But before we answer that, we will turn to the Professor's excellent Appendix, in which he very clearly sets forth his general view of man, as body, soul and spirit. The physical body is made up of 'certain transient atomic and molecular aggregations of solid, fluid and gaseous matter.' The soul is 'a certain substance temporarily in contact and very intimate connection with the body, on the one hand, and with the spirit, on the other, serving as a medium between the two.' The spirit is 'divested of every trace of materiality.'

The soul, then, in this scheme, is a 'semi-material' entity. 'Soul-stuff is animalised astral fluid'; and it is to this substance, when acted upon by, and serving for the manifestation of, spirit that the name 'Biogen' is given. This is the 'vital principle,' the action of which we call 'vital force,' and the results of which action we call 'vitality' or 'life.' This substance of the soul, says Professor Coues, 'seems to correspond closely to what Professor Crookes calls "the fourth state of matter." . . . It is the "od" of Professor Reichenbach, and many of the manifestations of its activities are grouped under the expression "odic force."' Its currents to and fro between a human spirit and its physical shell are those which are known to physiologists as sensory and motor impulses. Modifications of this soul-stuff, says the Professor, exist in all animals and plants—in all things which have life, if not also in those other things which we call inanimate.

'Mind' is not an entity, under this scheme. It is rather a relation,—'the result of the interaction between spirit and matter. It is what the spirit thinks in consequence of its connection with matter. It is the knowledge which the spirit acquires by its experiences in contact with matter. . . . It is the knowledge of good and evil. It is the fruit of the tree of life.' Death is the breaking of a partnership, but not between spirit and soul. The body is deserted. Something has gone which made it alive, and that something was the master of the house. It made the house a home, and, when it leaves the house for good, it leaves it to decay. Another tenant is impossible. But the soul persists as a biogenic body, and 'a far higher order of intelligence, volition and will-power is manifested' as the result. 'The human being has entered upon another sphere of existence by an evolutionary process as natural as that by which he passed from the womb to the world.'

We cannot but think that this reasoning is sound. It, at all events, accounts for much that Materialism, as we have seen, shirked when we pushed it home. It gives a reason where Materialism can only make an assertion, and it certainly gives a conception of man and his destiny immeasurably nobler than any that could ever enter into the scheme which declared that life was a product from the mill of matter, and that matter and motion were all.

We will only add that there is deep meaning as well as nimble wit in the questions with which the lecture concludes:—

What is the difference between a Godless, self-created, always existent cosmos of matter-in-motion alone, and any perpetual motion machine which men have dreamed of inventing, but which philosophy declares impossible?

What is the difference between any mechanical or chemical theory of the origin of life, and that spontaneous generation of life which science declares to be unknown?

What is the chemico-physical difference between a live amoeba and a dead one? And if there be no chemical or physical difference, in what does the great difference subsist?

What is the principal difference between a living human



being and his dead body, if it be not the presence or absence of the soul? And if it be nothing like this, what, then, is it more like?

We hope the learned people to whom the Professor spoke enjoyed this little catechism. We never heard that they gave satisfactory replies. On the contrary, the Professor hints at something quite different, in his Preface, in which he says:—

No one who has frequented scientific societies can have failed to observe how naïve and natural are our exhibitions of human nature. We 'elder children' cannot be outdone by the youngest in our harmless vanities. When someone is speaking, for example, we who are listening are busy with our pencils and note-books. To put down the best things he says? To put down the good things even? Why should we? These things take care of themselves, do they not? We watch him like a hawk, to pay ourselves for having to listen; to catch him tripping, and find fault with him afterwards, and have an excuse for speaking ourselves. We are all too full of our own ideas to listen to anyone's else for any other purpose, or on any other terms.

#### A SEANCE WITH A CLAIRVOYANT.

For many years I have taken the deepest interest in psychical research, but recently I have especially devoted myself to the study of the particular phase of clairvoyance. Being in London the other day, I accordingly determined to seize the opportunity of consulting a really good medium, and went to Miss MacCreadie, but unfortunately, owing to my having made no appointment, it was impossible for her to give me a sitting. I therefore went direct to Miss Findlay, to whom I was a complete stranger, but her pleasant and unaffected manner convinced me I had done right in going to her. I at once plunged into my business and told her I wanted to test her powers. She laughingly replied that she would promise nothing; she would give me a sitting, but of its result she was totally ignorant, and for its effect she disclaimed all responsibility. 'Give me something to hold' was her first request, and I took from my pocket a silver pencil-case which had belonged to a very dear and intimate friend. She could not at first get the control, so I offered her my pocket-book, which she instantly flung away, demanding the pencil-case again. She put it to her head, and without more ado exclaimed, 'There is a friend of yours here.' Another moment and she added, 'He has been dead three *something*. . . I cannot tell what, for there is no time here; but hasn't he something wrong with his right side?' I made no reply; and she continued, 'He is paralysing me,' and in an instant her right side grew stiff and rigid, and she was as helpless as a paralytic. 'Didn't he make a compact?' was her next question. I was surprised at this, for no one in the world knew that a dear friend of mine who died *three months* previously, having twelve months before suffered from a severe paralytic seizure on the right side, had promised that if possible he would communicate with me after death. 'If it is who I hope, he did,' I replied. 'He is here to fulfil his promise; listen, he is speaking. He is full of gratitude for all you did for him, and thanks you with all his heart.' He then asked for a *mental* question. I at once put it: 'Are you satisfied with your present condition?' The answer came back, 'Yes, I am quite happy; but I am enveloped in creeds.' Much surprised at so strange an answer, I could only feel how exactly it corresponded with my dear friend's old life, for it had been a familiar sight to me to find him surrounded by various books dealing with the creeds of the Church, for he had been a keen student of Catholic theology.

I put another mental question. 'Would you like to return to me?' The medium seized my hand and shook it, as he himself might have done, saying, 'Yes, and I will whenever I can.' She then added, 'He is talking about his books'—but the power was diminishing, and it was hard to catch what he was saying. He had left me his library, with certain injunctions in reference to various books bearing his father's name, which were to be returned to his family. I think it probably related to these, but here the control ended; and the guide of the medium having remarked that my friend had been there, the sitting was at an end.

C. D.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONGRESS IN PARIS.

The great International Congress of Psychology, held in Paris from the 20th to the 25th August inclusive, terminated on the Saturday afternoon at 4.30 p.m., after successfully carrying out a programme of considerable magnitude and importance. The large amount of attention given nowadays to the various phases of psychology included in physiological science succeeded in drawing together a very notable and representative gathering from the world of science.

Contributions in the way of papers had poured in from all the leading centres of thought in Europe and America, and although some of the most celebrated of our world-famed thinkers were not present, those who did personally join in the throng were sufficiently eminent and interesting to compensate for certain omissions. The English representative thinkers in this important domain of research were, with the exception of Mr. F. W. H. Myers, conspicuous by their absence, and in no sense can one consider that our medical experimenters were to the fore in taking their place in this great international meeting. One name only from London is to be found among the list of members. As a natural consequence, the English language was barely heard, and if by chance an American expert came forward to give a paper in his own language, a general exodus from the lecture-room would be the result, leaving so small a minority for audience that it was rapidly decided to eliminate as much as possible all communications which could not be given in French or German.

The German-speaking countries were most excellently represented, and one also heard some very able speakers from among the Russian contingent, these latter gentlemen invariably using the French language, as did also the Italians. Time limitations were, however, soon felt, and many papers had to be given up and taken as read, these being more generally contributions in English or Italian.

President Ribot, Professor of Experimental Psychology at the Collège de France, and editor of the 'Revue Philosophique,' opened the Congress on the Monday morning, at 10 a.m., and read an address dealing with the progress of psychological science since the last Congress. He was followed by Professor Ebbinghaus, of Breslau, who gave a long discourse on the history of psycho-physiological science during the last century.

After the general opening ceremony the rest of the Congress work was proceeded with. Members met every morning and afternoon for hearing the addresses, which were given in three separate rooms, simultaneously, according to the section and classification under which the communication came. By this division occasional inevitable difficulties were presented in finding out just when a certain speaker would be likely to take the platform, and this necessitated an incessant incoming and outgoing from one room to another on the part of members. Each section was presided over by one or more of the professors having most to do with the branch of science under consideration. Professor Séailles, for instance, directed the section classified as 'Introspective Psychology in its rapports with Philosophy'; Professor Binet, of the Sorbonne, taking charge of the 'Experimental Psychology' division, and M. Bernheim, of that section dealing with Hypnotism and Suggestion, &c.; while Professors Ribot, Richet, and Janet, with others, generally presided over the larger afternoon meetings in the principal room.

It would be useless, therefore, in view of the great mass of subjects under consideration, to attempt any detailed account of what was read and discussed. One or two points of special interest to Spiritualists in general are all that one can hope to put forward with any clearness. Those desirous of obtaining more information will be doubtless able to procure a published account of the Congress proceedings later on.

The sensation of the Tuesday afternoon gathering was provided by Professor Richet, who presented a truly marvellous musical prodigy in the person of a little Spanish boy barely three and a-half years old. This child was lifted on to the presidential table by M. Richet, who gave a short history of this infant phenomenon, and how the extraordinary musical faculty was first discovered by the mother. The amazement with which all listened to this child's



remarkable performance on the piano is indescribable. On that memorable afternoon we witnessed, perhaps, the *débüt* of our coming Mozart or Beethoven. Playing, with an inborn instinct and ear, music that in ordinary cases requires technique and education, this baby passed from one piece to another, giving in his selection two of his own compositions. One of the most striking of these, in point of originality of thought, was found in the little march dedicated to the King of Spain, and in which the roll sound of many drums was reproduced with wonderful faithfulness.

So far this child has in other respects exhibited no particular trait of eccentricity or abnormality. There is, however, one point on which he is very obstinate, and that is that he steadily refuses to play on any other instrument than the old jangling one he first learnt to strike, so that this very inadequate piano has to be taken with them whenever he and his guardians travel. It will be interesting to learn in the future how his parents succeed in getting him to attach himself to a better instrument. Spiritualists will naturally conclude that he is taken possession of by a great departed genius, and even the precise scientist, Professor Richet, acknowledged, when off the platform, that he thought there was something for the theory in the phenomenon which this child presented.

The following day, Wednesday, proved, for the English at any rate, the most interesting, perhaps, of the whole week. Contributions were so numerous that speakers were strictly limited to time, and some good papers had to be rushed through at unconscionable speed. The chief feature of the morning conference was the short address given by Dr. Encausse ('Papus') on his method of magnetic healing through a hypnotic subject. This subject, a woman, he brought with him so that he could illustrate his meaning by practical demonstration. She passed into the sleep state directly Dr. Encausse touched her forehead, and was then told to clasp the hands of the gentleman who had consented to act as patient for the time being. While the two were seated opposite to one another the doctor, taking a magnet, rapidly described circles over the hands and arms, directing the current. The medium apparently becomes clairvoyant, and is able to diagnose the case which requires treatment, the doctor at a later stage using her as the instrument whereby, through his suggestion, deleterious fluids and ailments are drawn out from the patient being dealt with. He, in turn, demagnetises his medium from all ill effects afterwards. This method seems so full of special interest to those who study curative magnetic science that I obtained permission to visit Dr. Encausse in his clinique and watch him practise. This will allow a more detailed and satisfactory account of his work and method to be noticed hereafter.

In the afternoon a general meeting of members took place in the principal room, presided over by all the leading heads of the Congress, and papers which had been classified under the head of 'Studies in the Phenomena of Somnambulism' were down for classification. This produced remarks from a particularly interesting group of psychical investigators, among whom were Professor Flournoy, Dr. Van Eeden (of Holland), Mr. F. W. H. Myers, and others. Before these contributions were started, however, a long and important address was permitted from Professor Ochorowicz on behalf of the new Psychological Institute which has been formed, and which is now ready to receive members. This Institute owes its initial stages of being to the brains and energy of M. de Vouliévitch, of the Russian Embassy in Paris, and Mr. Oswald Murray, of London—a well-known contributor to 'LIGHT.' To these two gentlemen the warmest congratulations and thanks from all lovers of psychical research are due, for the courage and perseverance which they have displayed in evolving so important a scheme. Their efforts promise to be crowned with notable success, and already cordial support from leading men of science has been promised. The society will be conducted on liberal lines, and will work for the universal progress of psychological research and study, making no hard and fast distinction between one school of thought as opposed to another. Everything will fall into its proper place as matter for study, provided it presents phases of interest to those engaged in the various branches of psychology, and these researches will be conducted in a steady, scientific manner.

It is gratifying to those who have the scheme at heart, and who see the great work this new society may possibly achieve in the future, to find that it has now received the cordial and official support of all the leaders of this last Congress. General expressions of welcome and goodwill came from the platform in the persons of Professors Richet, Flournoy, Séailles, and Mr. Myers, while a hearty round of applause testified to the interest with which the large number of members present had listened to the outlines of the new scheme. It has been found advisable to slightly alter the name from Psychical Institute, as at first proposed, to 'International Psychological Institute,' which conveys a broader idea of the lines upon which it is intended to work. By this title it will be known in the future, and we trust that now it has been successfully launched on its proposed career, members and supporters will not be backward in joining.

After this discussion Mr. F. W. Myers took the platform, though, owing to the regrettable fact that so few present understood English, he decided to abandon his plan of reading the paper he had prepared on 'Trance,' especially as observed in the mediumship of the English lady, Mrs. Thompson, requesting instead that Dr. Van Eeden and Professor Moutonnier should communicate their experiences with that same lady. This they did, and the paper contributed by the Dutch doctor concerning his sittings with her was listened to with great interest. One occasion in particular, when he obtained some writing in Dutch and held a short conversation with a deceased brother in that language, is quite remarkable, and proves this medium to be endowed with psychic faculties of a very high order indeed. A further account of phenomena presented through her mediumship, written by a lady, and which was to have been read by Professor Richet, had to be passed over owing to lack of time.

Professor Flournoy, the celebrated author of a book on observations with a trance medium in Geneva, which has so universally interested the scientific world, then came forward and made a few vigorous, straightforward remarks. He was not, he said, a Spiritualist, but he was always ready to welcome and investigate any thought or claim coming from that side. Psychological science, to be successful, should, he thought, be broad and catholic in spirit, and unchecked by any form of dogmatic prejudice. All ideas and so-called facts of a spiritistic nature were worth attention from the student's point of view, but precautions should invariably be taken to see that these investigations were carried out in the right, scientific manner.

Professor Flournoy, who belongs to a rigid school of Protestantism, claims that he requires no higher philosophy of life than the one he already possesses, so that the ethical side of the spiritualistic beliefs has no especial interest for him. He showed his audience some enlarged diagrams reproducing the automatic work of his medium, which purported to represent drawings of the alphabets forming the languages in use in the planets Mars and Uranus. These signs were projected through the control of a supposed Martian spirit. As these peculiar and, naturally, not to be tested communications were offered more as curiosities than anything else, a little indignation was felt by the Spiritualist section among the members that Professor Flournoy did not choose to relate some of his more inexplicable evidences of spirit intelligence given through his medium. Lack of time, however, was mainly responsible for this omission, as the short quarter of an hour or twenty minutes allotted to him utterly precluded any complicated or intricate description of mediumistic phenomena.

A stirring, scholarly address from the Hindu philosopher, Chatterjii, of Benares, who gave some account of the way experimental psychology was studied in India, concluded a day's Congress work of more than usual interest.

Psychologists accepting the belief in a soul and future existence were on the whole well to the front on several occasions, and able addresses came from workers in our domain of thought, notably M. Léon Denis, of Tours; M. Gabriel Delanne, already known to English audiences; Dr. Encausse; Professor Moutonnier, who may be said to owe his complete sympathy with our beliefs to the mediumship of



Mrs. Thompson ; Dr. Thorion ; and lastly, Dr. Schupp, who is connected with a psychical society in Munich. His paper, relative to various psychical phenomena which had come under his notice, resulted in a hotly contested discussion between materialists in psychological science and those of spiritual bias. This was the first time throughout the Congress that the opposing schools of thought had had any opportunity to measure swords, and our side was not slow to take advantage of the situation. An argument lasting nearly an hour gave M. Léon Denis opportunity for protesting energetically against the attitude adopted by the majority of scientists toward's all research having a spiritualistic tendency, setting it aside as unworthy of intelligent notice.

Dr. Vogt, of Berlin, said that a society such as the Psycho-Physiological could only consider facts attested, not illusion, &c. The tables were then quickly turned on him by M. Gabriel Delanne, who pointed out that it was precisely on account of the facts and attested facts alone which spiritual psychology could present, that their membership and presence as Spiritualists in the Congress became a necessity in the interests of observable phenomena. If that had not been the case the committee would have ignored their existence, and requested no papers on this branch of investigation ; but on the contrary the society courted information and research on those very subjects termed illusionary and fantastic by certain scientists. Some cultured and luminous remarks in support of spiritistic psychology came immediately afterwards from the Roman Catholic priest Père Bulliot, professor of philosophy in the Catholic Institute of Paris. Another priest rose at a later stage to deprecate the confounding of spiritualistic phenomena with the mysticism and miracles of their Church. Professor Ebbinghaus also vigorously opposed any mixing of Spiritism with psychological study.

Spiritualists, however, have no cause to feel downhearted. They came out of the scrimmage stronger than before and undoubtedly retained the most logical position in the argument, for, as M. Denis observed, why should the verdict concerning what is or is not fact in psychology rest inevitably with the materialist in science? Why is the materialist to be considered as the only intelligent person endowed with ordinary or extraordinary powers of observation? Why indeed?

In conclusion, a word or two of thanks and appreciation is due to the executive committee for their efforts to work everything smoothly and pleasantly ; also for their endeavours to make the week as full of enjoyment and interest as possible. Every evening some form of entertainment or reception was organised for the members, Professor Richet holding the first one at his house on the Monday night. This was a most charming gathering, M. and Madame Richet proving the most attentive and courteous of hosts. Introductions were readily obtained and opportunities given for interesting interchanges of thought. An important and numerous attended reception was next given by M. Youriévitsh at the rooms of the new Psychological Institute. Many interesting personalities were met at every turn, and further opportunities were thus presented for consolidating the ties of friendship between people of various thought and nation.

The most brilliant function of the week was the reception given to members of our Congress and those of the Geological together, by Prince Roland Bonaparte, at his beautiful palace in the Avenue d' Iéna. This proved in every way a very enjoyable and splendid affair. Prince Roland received all with a friendly hand-shake at the entrance of his ballroom. Music was played on the stairs, and guests were at liberty to stroll through the magnificent suites of rooms, most of them containing some memento or picture of the great Napoleon. The libraries were, perhaps, the most unique objects of interest, being a series of lofty rooms, lined with books to the ceiling, and having ornamental iron galleries running round. All the leading people of both Congresses were present, and many notabilities in the world of letters were also observable--Professor Patrick Geddes, of Edinburgh, and Mr. W. T. Stead among the number.

At the last Congress meeting, on the Saturday afternoon, Professor Ribot announced that it had been decided to hold

the next Congress in Rome in about four years' time, though at what season it was yet impossible to fix.

A banquet held on the first platform of the Eiffel Tower, for those who cared to join, took place that evening, and closed with cordiality a memorable, if somewhat fatiguing week.

J. STANNARD.

#### PROFESSOR RICHEL'S 'PRÉCOCITÉ MUSICALE.'

Having read in 'LIGHT,' of August 25th, a reference to the infant prodigy introduced to the Psychological Congress in Paris by Professor Charles Richet, I think perhaps your readers would be interested in learning some further details.

Professor Charles Richet, having heard of this remarkable boy through a doctor in Madrid, arranged for the child to be brought to Paris for the Psychological Congress, and he was introduced to the members under the title of 'Précocité Musicale,' and gave a demonstration of his wonderful ability on the afternoon of Tuesday, August 21st.

Pepito Rodrigues Ariola is a little boy still in petticoats, and aged now three and a-half years. When he was only two and a-half, his mother, a clever musician, had been executing a piece of classical music, and gone into an adjoining room, leaving her baby alone in the room with the piano, which she had carefully closed, when, to her astonishment, she heard the air and accompaniment she had been playing correctly repeated on the instrument. Her astonishment was greater still when she walked into the room and found her baby repeating the very difficult piece of music from memory.

Ever since that day when the child first touched the piano, the tiny Pepito amuses himself and astounds his listeners, not only by playing difficult music he has heard, but also by improvising. He played before the Congress many airs and improvisations with warmth and emotion. His little hand cannot stretch more than five notes of the octave ; yet, by a series of dexterous movements, he manages to evolve passages replete with passion and often melancholy. By whatever means he makes or gets the sounds, he is certainly a skilful harmonist. He has never taken a lesson in music, does not know his alphabet or a note of music, and yet before us this little babe produced the most beautiful music ; and when he had finished he stood up on a table, and clapped his baby hands and laughed at us as though he had performed an amusing trick.

One strange thing about little Pepito is that he cannot play on any but the old decrepid piano he used at first ; and, whether at Professor Richet's house or at the Congress Hall, the piano had to be carted from place to place. The parents have tried to wean him from the old piano, but unfortunately they have not yet succeeded.

I stood on the platform close to the piano whilst the baby played. To me the child's hands became much larger, and in the place where I had seen him sitting I saw (clairvoyantly) the figure of a man ; as I stood behind him the music thrilled me, and when he had finished playing once more the baby was visible. I wondered if the child had been controlled by a musician, or if my vision was only a 'thought form.' I spoke to another clairvoyante who stood near and she said that she saw the hands get gradually larger, but did not see a masculine figure in place of the baby's.

ROSALIE THOMPSON.

#### LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A *Conversazione* of the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held in the Banqueting Room, St. James's Hall, on the evening of Friday, October 5th. Particulars will be announced in next week's 'LIGHT.'

*In accordance with Rule XV. of the Articles of Association, the subscriptions of Members and Associates elected after October 1st will be taken as for the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1901.*

ALWAYS succumb gracefully to superior attainments in others with whom you associate. He may be the wisest who learns rather than teaches.



‘SOCIAL MEETINGS FOR INQUIRERS’  
AND  
PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON INVESTIGATION.

Feeling more and more the urgent necessity for some practical scheme for the assistance of those desirous of investigating the propaganda and phenomena of Spiritualism, I have, after much careful consideration, resolved to organise a series of social meetings during the winter, which I sincerely trust may prove helpful to those for whom they are intended. I am well aware that ‘The London Spiritualist Alliance’ provides a comprehensive library on all branches of metaphysical subjects, and also that it affords opportunities of attending occasional social evenings, and fortnightly lectures, during the winter; but all these privileges are for those who subscribe to the Alliance, either as Members or Associates, and who are already investigators rather than inquirers. The community I am desirous of assisting is composed of those whose footsteps are faltering midway between modern materialism and psychical research, whose hearts are faint and weary with the vicissitudes and mutability of earthly things, and to whom spirit communion and the certainty of a life beyond (with the ultimate reunion of loving hearts torn asunder by the change we call death) would bring an ecstatic joy and incalculable consolation, could they but be *convinced* of its reality! These souls, in their awakening consciousness, need sympathy and guidance as to the most desirable methods to adopt in their investigations, for frequently a want of knowledge leads them to associate themselves with unsatisfactory or even fraudulent mediumship, from which they turn aside in contemptuous disgust, believing such to represent Spiritualism.

Before giving the particulars of my winter meetings, I should like to take this opportunity of making a few specially practical suggestions to inquirers, for I realise more, year by year, that the path of the seeker after truth is a most thorny and perilous one, and every investigator should be prepared to give at least one year’s patient and continuous study to the propaganda and phenomena of Spiritualism before he is in a position to accept or deny anything, as an opinion too hastily formed is apt to be unstable and untrustworthy. During the period of probation his judgment should remain in suspension, and he should pursue his researches with a calmly critical mind, absolutely unbiassed in either direction. He must not be daunted or discouraged if he sometimes encounters unpleasant experiences (space here does not permit me to go fully into the many special causes of this being ever a possibility or even probability in the earlier stages of investigation or development of mediumship), and if he comes in contact with fraudulent mediumship, deplorable and repellant as it must inevitably be, *still* he must be patient and endeavour to recognise that there are knaves and charlatans in every rank, profession, and community; and chicanery is really powerless to stultify or annihilate TRUTH as it exists, whilst the moral injury is far more potent and permanent in its reflex action to such mediums themselves than the temporary one they inflict upon their confiding and credulous victims! With regard to physical or materialising mediumship, it must be ever a matter of regret that the conditions most conducive to such phenomena should also be most favourable to fraud, and at such sances, if in darkness, I specially advocate the necessity of discrimination being exercised before blindly accepting whatever occurs as ‘spirit manifestation.’

In the dark it is almost impossible to locate sounds, even approximately, and in one’s anxiety to miss nothing, however infinitesimal, which occurs, the nervous senses are abnormally acute and receptive, and in this condition there unconsciously exists a tendency to intensify and exaggerate anything which takes place.

Also in communicating with discarnate entities, the opinions expressed and advice tendered should not too readily be accepted as immaculate, even where personal identity has been satisfactorily established, and the mediumship thoroughly reliable; it must ever be remembered that the transition from life on the physical plane to that on the astral does not, certainly at first, materially change the immortal spirit ego; there is persistence of affection,

anxiety, personality, individuality, conviction, aspiration, memory, animosity, and even occupation when functioning in the astral conditions, where *thought is omnipotent* and takes form for good or evil, and spirit communication, however genuine, must inevitably partake of, and reproduce, the characteristics of the individual whilst in the body.

I wish now to call the attention of the inquirer to a very real difficulty which exists, and one most hard to realise; it consists in the fact that a sensitive or medium may be genuinely gifted with psychic power in various phases, and exercising it in an absolutely conscientious and honest manner, and yet may be quite unable with a given sitter to obtain anything in the way of a convincing test or communication of personal identity or interest. The sitter, on the other hand, may be most earnest and desirous to assist the medium with sympathy as far as possible, but this condition is entirely beyond the control of either, and unless they can blend psychically, and the psychic vibrations be sympathetically attuned, nothing of much value can be obtained; and the inquirer should be most strenuously advised never to deny or denounce any mediumship purely on the grounds that he himself was totally unsuccessful with any particular sensitive.

I enumerate these things because I consider it of vital importance that inquirers should have their attention called to them before they commence their investigations.

And finally I come to the details of my winter social meetings:—

Some little time ago, when Mrs. Besant gave us a most admirable lecture on ‘Theosophy and Spiritualism,’ the wish was expressed that the utmost sympathy and friendliness should be encouraged between Spiritualists and Theosophists, and the idea was even suggested that a social evening should be arranged for the two societies, but, alas! there it has ended. Personally, it seems to me quite a secondary consideration what one designates oneself if one is an honest truthseeker striving for knowledge and progress; some methods of obtaining both will assist, and appeal to, the individual more than other methods will do, and the interchange of thought with those who differ from us is vastly interesting.

I have for some time past had a great desire to see how far theosophical theories on the phenomena obtained in the spiritualistic séance room could be practically applied, so that manifestations could be regulated and induced by such knowledge, and early in July I had the pleasure of some conversation with Mrs. Besant on the subject, as I know several advanced investigators willing to co-operate with me in holding sances along those lines; but, although Mrs. Besant admitted the theosophical school postulated the phenomena, she was of the opinion that such circles were impracticable, owing to the disapproval with which the exercise of spiritualistic mediumship was regarded by theosophical teaching, on the grounds that the mental passivity and surrender inseparable from it were injurious and undesirable; this aspect I deeply regret, as the *real* value of theory is its capability of practical adaptability in the demonstration of Fact, otherwise in unwise hands it may become meretricious and illusive, and one *genuine* phenomenon obtained in the séance room is far more valuable than a thousand theories, and I renounce such investigation very reluctantly, as I feel each society might have been mutually helpful and instructive.

However, I have much pleasure in stating that in my work for inquirers this winter, Mr. Robert King (the well-known Theosophist) has most generously volunteered to help me at the meetings, by answering questions on metaphysical subjects, and Countess Wachtmeister has equally kindly offered to lecture later at my house, on a subject I have suggested of great interest; and such kindness will, I am sure, greatly inspire mutual good feeling.

On my return from the Congress at Paris I shall commence my meetings on Tuesday, November 6th. They will continue on the first and third Tuesdays in every month, all being well, till Easter; and I have engaged the services of Mr. Peters (of whose psychic gifts and honest exercise of the same I cannot speak too highly) to devote one hour at each meeting to giving to any inquirer present whatever tests he can, either by clairvoyance, psychometry, palmistry,



or trance mediumship. Half an hour will be devoted to making any introductions mutually agreeable, and tea will be provided, and the remaining hour will be occupied by Mr. King answering verbal or written questions.

I intend to defray all expenses, and attendance at the meetings will be by introduction only, either through those already known to me or on application at 'LIGHT' office. Upon obtaining the introduction, anyone wishing to be present should write to me, stating by whom introduced, and enclosing a *stamped and addressed envelope*, and a card of invitation shall be forwarded. This card (which is only available for the date specified upon it) must be presented personally at the meeting, with the guest's address plainly written on the back. Applications for attending further meetings can then be made to me, and will be gladly given as far as the available accommodation permits.

All who feel that such evenings devoted to spiritualistic discussion and phenomena would be helpful, are heartily welcome as my guests, but *observance of these conditions is indispensable*, and if at the close of the series I may indirectly be the means of bringing to any others (if only a few) the ineffable consolation Spiritualism has proved to me, I shall rest content that what I have endeavoured to accomplish has not been altogether in vain.

(MRS.) EFFIE BATHIE.

Hurstborne Lodge,  
Ashchurch Park-villas,  
Goldhawk-road, W.

## 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.*

### Immortal in the Flesh.

SIR,—Mrs. Wilmans has revived a hypothesis somewhat resembling one set forth by John Asgill in the early part of the last century (about 1703). He—if my memory serve me—held that we should not pass to eternal life through the physical change of death, if we had real faith in the resurrection of Christ. For publishing this harmless opinion, Asgill was expelled from the Irish and English Houses of Commons respectively.

W. G. BOSWELL-STONE.

214, Ifley-road, Oxford.

### Thought Language.

SIR,—The question asked by 'W.' in 'LIGHT' of August 25th, as to how to set about practising 'thought language,' is not an easy one to answer. When a child is beginning to learn to use the faculty of speech, it would find it hard to explain how it does it, and any attempt to advise others would be quite premature. I do not, in this matter, consider myself more fitted to offer advice than a child would be when trying to learn to speak. Moreover, anything one might venture to suggest lays one open to further questioning, and for this I am not prepared.

The question is, however, an entirely fair one, and I do not like to pass it over without some response.

I can only say that in my experience the practice resolves itself very much into thinking, with one or another of my friends in my mind; my thoughts are in relation to that person, though possibly not *about* that person at all, just as in conversation we are conscious of the person to whom our remarks are directed, and they are coloured by that consciousness. This sort of thinking not infrequently results in what appears like an answer; that is to say, responsive thoughts flow in, which meet the out-flowing thought or question, or something occurs which suggests that the thought has really been carried to its goal. That is about all I can say. Of course it is impossible to demonstrate that the correspondence between the outgoing thought and the (apparent) result is anything more than coincidence; and I do not offer these remarks as likely to be of any particular value, still less as proving anything at all. I hesitate to say even so much as this; but the direct question put to me seems to call for such reply as I can make.

The habit of thus thinking to other minds, either in this life or the other (it applies equally to both), is of the nature of experiment; it is not improbable that it opens the intuitional faculties, and that it is by these telepathy works.

H. A. D.

### Is Spiritualism a Religion?

SIR,—I note in your issue of August 25th a contribution under the above heading.

Whilst far from wishing to bind our grand truth down to any creed, I should much like to know what your correspondent's definition of religion would be.

Surely a belief which has converted thousands from rank materialism to a belief in a hereafter, and consequently in a Supreme Being, is entitled to be regarded as something more than a mere scientific fact.

As to the danger in receiving communications, to which he refers in the latter part of his letter, I do not believe that if anyone approaches the subject with a pure mind and a desire for the truth, any such danger exists.

The kind of references to Spiritualism which one usually sees in the daily papers, to my mind constitute a reason, if none other existed, why people should be afforded a chance of seeing the subject presented in a fitting and becoming manner. The senseless remarks which generally distinguish such articles as those to which I refer give the idea that Spiritualism must be either humbug or trickery; and probably deter many from giving the subject a little serious attention, who might otherwise have been inclined to do so.

Personally, I find the facts which Spiritualism *proves*, and which creeds only *assert*, quite sufficient for this life; and I venture to affirm that the teaching of Spiritualism embraces all that is purest and highest in any religion (see Stainton Moses' 'Spirit Teachings,' Mrs. Tappan's 'Discourses,' &c.), being not only a preparation for the higher life to come, but developing more fully that spirit of brotherhood and charity which is the key-note to all that is noblest and best in our natures.

A. T.

### Is a Spiritualist Church Needed?

SIR,—The letters of W. H. Simpson and 'Vir,' in 'LIGHT' of August 25th, contain peculiar arguments against a spiritual church. 'Vir' says 'The rational Spiritualists put their trust for the life now and hereafter in the guidance of their own reason,' and that the whole creed of the religious Spiritualist and all of his philosophy are derived from the speculations of rationalist philosophers on this side; that trance speakers repeat these as divine truth sent by the agency of spirits.

My own impressions are that rationalism leads more frequently to agnosticism than to Spiritualism; and also from the little I know of German philosophy, I thought it was pessimistic and Positivist in its ideas, so that I cannot understand any Spiritualist taking to it, much less passing it on to others from the platform. 'Vir' also says he 'looks forward earnestly to the day when the religious spiritualist society of every kind will be swept away, and Spiritualism will then resume its proper duty, viz., of providing proof to all mankind of life beyond the grave, and leaving philosophical and religious speculation strictly alone.'

According to this chain of reasoning, James Watts, when he saw the lid of the kettle move, and discovered it was caused by the power of steam, ought to have been content with calling his neighbours to see the new force. After being satisfied with the proof, they ought then to have put their own kettles on the fire in their homes. After this, again, they need only have shown the phenomenon to those who had no kettle or no fire to make the water boil, and a few enthusiasts might have taken a hall and once or twice a week allowed the public for a small fee to come and see the discovery for themselves. This would have been 'rational,' but fortunately for the world, Watts was a 'Progressive.' Having discovered the power of steam his next step was to consider what use could be made of it. So by degrees, from the simple phenomenon observed by Watts, we have the wonderful engines of the present day.

Something in the same way has Spiritualism been discovered, and according to 'Vir' the 'rational' Spiritualist has had it all his own way until lately. Now what has he made of it during the fifty years which have elapsed? What revolution in the ideas and actions of mankind has it caused? Certainly a small percentage of the race has been convinced, amused, or interested by the phenomena, but after half a century what great work has it done in the social or scientific world that can be in the least compared with the revolution that the power of steam has made in the engineering world? The 'rational' Spiritualist has been quite too content with boiling his own little kettle to make his own little cup of family tea; and *spiritual* Spiritualists who have been drawn in from other Churches are astonished, when they are told that spirits are only waiting to co-operate, and that there is a wonderful spiritual power behind matter and the phenomena, to see that so little has been done. No; there has been too much of this apathy; the 'spiritual' Spiritualist wants to go much farther and much faster than the 'rationalist,' and *if* there be a power to help, he desires to make every use of it in establishing the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

ELNOR OLDHAM.

Whalley Range.



SIR,—After reading the letters of your correspondents in 'LIGHT' of August 25th, one is more and more convinced that Spiritualism has not hitherto accomplished the mission whereunto it was sent. To establish in reality the brotherhood of mankind seems at present too much to expect, much as we may hope for it.

Does W. H. Simpson recognise the fact that man is generally a gregarious animal, and must have his or her companions in every phase of life? And in his religious exercises he desires also to be associated with those who are like-minded with himself. Hence it is that we assert that a gathering of those Spiritualists *who are religiously inclined* is much to be desired. For those who have proceeded no further than W. H. Simpson, and are content to treat the matter of Spiritualism as 'a scientific investigation,' of course a *spiritual* Church can have no attraction at present. *Spirituality* is a something to be experienced or felt, and cannot be adequately described. And it is because the conditions which are found in the Spiritualists' halls of to-day are not generally conducive to the production of spiritual feeling, that many find it desirable to absent themselves rather than waste their time by an unprofitable service.

'Verax' is quite in order to deprecate the lack of a suitable church in which Spiritualists could unite their sympathies and meet together in harmony.

'Elnor Oldham' makes a useful suggestion, but when the step is taken, we might as well have a new and distinct organisation as a patched-up one. No doubt a satisfactory basis could be formed, which, whilst it would unite us in essentials, would leave us free in non-essentials to follow the dictates of our own consciences.

'Vir' is apparently one of the non-progressive Spiritualists, or perhaps I should say Spiritists. His argument, that the movement existed for twenty-five years without being associated with religion, is no reason why such an advance should not be made by those who, seeing farther than he, could recognise in the movement the means by which a long-felt want could be supplied. In other words, whereas religion had hitherto been simply a matter of faith and dogma, by the phenomena of Spiritualism we were removed from faith to knowledge, and hope was swallowed up by facts. And if for a further period of twenty-five or twenty-six years we have, by the phenomena, been making millions of Spiritists (such as 'Vir'), is it not high time a further move was made to change Spiritists into *Spiritualists*? 'Vir' speaks a good deal about Rationalist Spiritualists, whatever that may mean; but it seems to me that rational Spiritualists are those who, having obtained undeniable evidence of the continuity of life, recognise their present spirit nature, and should desire and determine to cherish that spirit nature by feeding it with food convenient and suitable for it; and this, it seems to me, can best be done by spiritual aspiration under suitable conditions. Hence comes in the necessity of providing those conditions. We need a building specially set apart for these aspirational exercises—a place where all is in harmony, with good music, and addresses of an educational as well as an uplifting character. With a church conducted on such lines, many who are at present hiding away from Spiritualism would be encouraged to come from their seclusion and unite to spread abroad the glorious truth which the angels bring.

J. CLARKE.

115, Robin Hood's Chase, Nottingham.

SIR,—Your correspondents, 'Vir' and W. H. Simpson, seem to be unduly disturbed because of my suggestion which you were kind enough to publish in 'LIGHT,' of June 30th, that 'a union of like-minded people for fellowship and growth; for sympathy and co-operative helpfulness; for spiritual heartening and culture; for aspiration and worship; for psychical development and spirit-communion,' might be formed which would 'concern itself with the spiritual well-being and unfoldment of its members.' These gentlemen, surely, will not deny those who feel the need for such a union the privilege of endeavouring to unite to help each other? Those who are not 'like-minded' and do not feel the need will not be compelled to join, nor will they be committed to its acknowledgment or support. I merely asked the question: 'Should we, as Spiritualists, endeavour to establish a church wherein we could strive to realise our ideal of what a church should be?' I had no thought of a national organisation, of a new sect, or of an attempt to win 'respectability.' On the contrary, I had an idea that it might be possible to gather perhaps twenty or thirty earnest people together to endeavour to secure by sympathetic study, aspiration, and service, such illumination and cultivation of mind and spirit that all who entered into fellowship would be 'better able to fulfil their duties in daily life.' Is there any crime or wrong in that?

VERAX.

SIR,—To those who would answer the question in the affirmative I would recommend a careful study of the letter signed Edouard Romilly and headed 'Is Spiritualism a Religion?' which appeared in your issue of August 25th.

Spiritualism is, as the writer contends, *a science*; quite as much so as astronomy, botany, or geology. And who would suggest that astronomers should have a church of their own, or could agree on a form of worship that would be acceptable to all students or professors of that science?

I agree with 'Verax' that 'the wants of those whose religious sentiments and aspirations lead them to desire spiritual worship' should be provided for; but surely enough places of worship already exist where these wants may be fully satisfied. True, the *forms* may not always commend themselves to us, but I have no difficulty in finding churches and chapels in London—north, south, east and west—where the best spiritual influences abound, and where those that realise that 'God is (a) Spirit' can 'worship Him in spirit and in truth.' Be the preacher's views ever so narrow, the service ever so discordant to one's feelings, I have never yet found the place of worship where I could not feel on leaving that it had been good to be there.

Although not long ago I should have been one of the first to contend that a spiritualist church was needed (and badly needed, too), I now find that it is possible to obtain all the spiritual help that can ever come from public worship by attending those churches and chapels whose pulpits are occupied by the many advanced thinkers of the present day, and where the services are in the highest degree devotional.

THOS. ATWOOD.

70, Park-street, Stoke Newington, N.

SIR,—We have gone rather astray by too freely using the word 'Church.' It conveys a wrong impression. Allow me to repeat what I said at the beginning: 'We do not want creeds and controversy; we want meditation, aspiration, spiritual communion with seen and unseen sympathisers, and, above all things, human sympathy'; and we want this set to the music of our beautiful faith and hope.

J. PAGE HOPPS.

#### The Spiritualists' National Federation Fund of Benevolence.

SIR,—Again may I ask you on behalf of our committee to accord me space in which to acknowledge the contributions we have received during the month of August? The sum, while not great in itself, is nevertheless made up of amounts from some of our steady supporters, which is a good sign of the esteem in which the fund is held by its old friends. May I ask for some further aid from any who consider that the helping of the widow and the fatherless, the sick and the suffering, is not merely a duty, but a pleasure as well? It has been said that to do good is to get good. With hearty thanks to all friends, old and new, and a sincere hope that we may add to our list during September, and thanking you, Mr. Editor, again, I remain, on behalf of my committee,

Faithfully yours,

J. J. MORSE, Hon. Financial Secretary.

Osnaburgh-street, London, N.W.

August 31st, 1900.

Contributions received during August:—'A. F. M.' 10s.; Mr. Rustomjee Byramjee, 2s.; 'Onward,' 2s.; Mrs. A. Smedley, 10s.; Mrs. J. Parker, 1s.; Miss E. M. Hodges, 1s. 6d. Total, £1 16s. 6d.

#### Battersea Spiritualists' Church.—Band of Hope.

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to gratefully acknowledge the following donations on behalf of our Band of Hope Excursion? Mr. Turner, 5s., Dr. Hooker, 5s., 'A friend to the children,' £2 2s. On Saturday, August 25th, we took two brakes full of our Band to Court Farm, Warlingham, where we spent a very enjoyable time, quite escaping the thunderstorm that visited London in the afternoon.

ANNIE BODDINGTON.

99, Bridge-road.

HEADQUARTERS FOR AMERICAN SPIRITUALISM.—The 'Banner of Light' for August 25th announces that 'The amount required to make up the sum of ten thousand dollars for the treasury of the National Spiritualists' Association, to enable that worthy organisation to receive a warrant deed from Mr. T. J. Mayer of the present headquarters in Washington, D.C., is now less than one thousand dollars.' We congratulate our friends in America upon having so generous a supporter as Mr. Mayer, and upon their success in so nearly raising the amount needed to secure for the movement the handsome building which Mr. Mayer is practically giving to them. The remaining thousand dollars will surely be speedily forthcoming!