

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

'The Scotsman,' a really virile paper, though given to airs, prints a long communication from 'R. A. H.,' who says that 'Spiritualism, like every other form of delusion, requires more than simple denunciation.' It requires 'the combined tests of fact, reason and revelation,' in order to demolish it. He then proceeds to pour out a stream of undiluted nonsense about 'preparing' a medium, 'spectral impressions' caused by 'irritation of the stomach,' and 'table-rapping old women of both sexes' who are 'not able to reflect logically.' All this culminates in the following bit of stupendous foolishness:—

They tell us, or, rather, their mediums do, that they are the ghosts or spirits of dead men, and that they know a great many things much more than the living. The Word of God says the dead know not anything, and that there is neither knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, 'whither we go.' Now, divines make this word 'Sheol' equivalent to Hades, which they say is the place of departed spirits.

Well, then, let us accept their definition for the present. How, then, reads the latter text:—'There is neither knowledge nor wisdom in the place of departed spirits.' This is, with me, authority outweighing the testimony of all the spectres in creation, with all the opinions, to boot, of the many thousand of simpletons who vainly imagine they converse with living spirits from the vasty deep.

All this 'The Scotsman' prints without flinching,—more than eleven inches of it! We print this specimen of it simply to show what our work is. The darkness and stupidity are very dense. Fancy a Scotchman telling us, on the strength of an agnostic or atheistic text, that spirits know nothing, and that this foolish text outweighs all the experiences of thousands of seekers in all ages!

In the columns of 'The Glasgow Herald' also an extremely important and exciting debate, on the subject of Biblical Inspiration, is going on, under the general designation of 'The Higher Criticism.' We have not seen anything for years as interesting and as enlightening, on this vital topic. The old views are put so uncompromisingly, the Scotch note of precision comes out so vigorously, and the new thought is so ably stated that one wishes to see the whole of these remarkable letters in a volume.

We are pleased to see our friend, James Robertson, in the arena, with his usual keen alertness. His defence of the new thought is in every way admirable, and there is real enlightenment in his important reference to spirit-communion (all-important in any attempt to really understand the Bible, and especially 'prophecy'). He says:—

We may understand something of the prophets and teachers of old if we look into the claims made by those with occult powers in our own day, the trance and impressional mediums who claim to be acted upon by intelligences outside the physical. Balaam may be seen to have had the

same qualities for catching impressions as Elijah, Hosea, and the others, but had not perhaps equal moral and spiritual stamina. Let it not be forgotten that Samuel, who in his youth heard the voices of the unseen, in later years devoted his psychic gifts to discovering the lost asses of Saul—a very mundane kind of work for a seer, a man of God. Modern Spiritualism has much of light to throw upon Bible mediumship, though it may have to wait a little longer for acceptance. Sir William Crookes, Alfred Russel Wallace, Hodgson and Myers, will get studied more closely by and by, and perhaps be recognised as religious helps capable of putting a new soul into religion.

This is real education, though, of course, it will make Scotland wince; but light will penetrate all the same.

How we long for more of the religion of the spirit! and, by that, we mean the religion which springs from our common human life and needs. To that, we, of all others, should show the way. The religion of the spirit is not and never could be confined to any race, book, epoch. It is really the record of the spiritual progress of Humanity,—its evolution to the religious plane. Max Müller, who has lately left us, was a brilliant witness-bearer to this truth, and taught us to see the unity of the human race on that plane. But an influential preacher, resisting this teaching, said: 'I hate the science of comparative theology. I know but one God, and all the rest are idols. I hate the comparison of sacred books. I know of only one, and all the rest are pretenders.'

In so far as missionaries to 'the heathen' believe and say this, is it any wonder that they excite animosity and utterly fail to reach the educated natives they unconsciously insult?

A wiser preacher lately said:—

A comparison of religions shows that the instinct to search after God, if haply he may be found, has been as honest, earnest and worthy of respect with one race as another. And it shows that, while men have met with varying degrees of success in this search, no race of men has ever engaged in it quite fruitlessly.

'Each form of worship that hath swayed
The life of man, and given it to grasp
The master-key of knowledge, reverence,
Infolds some germs of goodness and of right.'

It is a very practical kind of atheism to deny all true knowledge of God to all but the merest fraction of the rational beings that have dwelt on earth since the advent of man.

We have had before us for several months a notable 'North American Review' article by Dr. G. W. Shinn on the vanishing of Hell. Dr. Shinn ought to be 'orthodox' but he is manifestly restless. He thinks that 'many in the religious world want to get rid of hell.' He examines those refuges for the destitute—Intermediate States and Conditional Immortality, and regards them with melancholy dissatisfaction. For his own part he thinks that 'there is no fact which we are so compelled to see as the fact of retribution.' Admitted; but real retribution is real justice, and the 'orthodox' Hell was never just. Dr. Shinn himself illustrates, and in himself, the great change that has occurred. He quite reasonably says:—

There is a sense of righteousness in all men, and all men know that unrighteousness brings punishment. It is fair to

assume that what holds good in the present life, that what is a part of man's very structure here, will continue hereafter. We may give up entirely the notion of a material hell, but we cannot give up the doctrine of retribution. Suffering must follow sin, and therefore to appeal to fear is not only legitimate, but it is in accordance with the structure of man's nature. Let us grant that the descriptions of hell are figurative. Let us admit that men have blundered in accepting as literal what was intended to be figurative. Let us grant that there is no material lake of torment. Yet, after all, is there not something back of the imagery? Is there not something real—so real that men may well strive to escape it? Can it be well with him who passes hence in his sins?

Again admitted, but again we are no nearer the 'orthodox' Hell. Retribution is not reserved for the Unseen: it is a fact here and now, as Dr. Shinn points out. 'It is the working out of laws under which we are now living.' Here and now, the judgment is 'a separation from goodness, a loss of spiritual power, a falling below the ideal.'

Once more admitted: but the old Hell is only put farther away by an 'orthodoxy' like that.

Swami Abhedananda, writing in the 'New York Journal,' gives an instructive summary of the Vedanta philosophy or system of religion. In the course of this he says:—

The grand truth of unity in variety in religion has been discovered by the Vedantic sages in India. Therefore their religion is built not around a particular prophet, but on universal principles; it does not depend on a particular book, but on the spiritual laws of nature.

Hundreds of sects exist in India, but a student of Vedanta never interferes with any of them. He says that each individual has perfect liberty to follow any creed or denomination which he sincerely wants to follow. The religion of Vedanta embraces all religions, sects and creeds.

A Vedantist is neither a Christian nor a Mohammedan, nor a Buddhist, nor a Jain, nor a Hindoo in the ordinary sense of the word, yet in principle he is one with all. He does not belong to any particular sect or creed, but he is a member of all sects and creeds that exist on earth. He has no quarrel with any sect or creed. A Christian or a Mohammedan or a Buddhist or a Jain will become a Vedantist when he will understand the universal principles of all religions, and when he will see that all religions are but so many paths which lead to the same goal, are like so many radii which converge to the one centre, the ETERNAL TRUTH.

As we read this, we seem to be facing a mirror in which we see ourselves, or at all events, the reflection of our cherished desires and aims. We need not regard Spiritualism as a Religion; but the religion of the spirit, which it teaches, also teaches us to see universal principles, and to recognise glimpses of truth wherever we find them.

Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch's new book, 'Old Fires and Profitable Ghosts' (Cassell and Co.), needs its sub-title, 'A book of stories.' There is extremely little about 'ghosts' in it, and we wonder why the word was introduced. Are ghost-stories so very attractive—or fashionable? There is just one pretty ghost-story, 'A pair of hands,'—very unbelievable, the world will say, only it so happens that we know somebody across the road who affirms a precisely similar experience. The other stories are, for the most part, simply studies for entertainment,—first-class magazine work. It is a treasure for a railway journey or short voyage. Not much more.

'The Lamp' says:—

The Chinese Minister to the United States recently expressed his ideas about religion. 'I have no quarrel,' he said, 'with any religion that is based on a foundation of virtue. If they all bid one to do good and deter one from doing evil, I say let them all go on. If there is a reward in some future life for good deeds done on earth, if there is a heaven for the righteous, there must surely be many ladders leading up to it, just as there may be many staircases in a

house. To say that there is only one ladder is too narrow for me. If there is any reward for any, I believe it will be for all good people. Some Christians say that except you believe in Christ you cannot be saved. I am broader than that doctrine. My religion comprehends them all.'

If that is a representative view of the opinions of his fellow-countrymen, what is the matter with the religion of China?

'The Freethinker' has indulged in an ill-informed and ill-natured assault upon Spiritualism and its mediums. Its remarks upon Henry Slade are especially foolish. In no particular is it accurate. We admit that Mr. Watts has fairly well stated the popular opinion and the prejudiced version of the facts, but he ought to know better than to retail these for real freethinkers. There is no bondage so bad as bondage to popular opinions and prejudiced versions. The usual lying about the trial of Henry Slade and what followed is 'enough to provoke a saint.'

An American humourist tells us of a new Mrs. Malaprop who says she does so like to see a clergyman in the pulpit with his 'surplus.' Even the poor Spiritualist lecturer likes that too.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

In the interest of those Members and Associates who find it impracticable or inconvenient to attend evening meetings, it has been decided to hold a

DRAWING ROOM MEETING

in the French Room, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, on Friday next, November 23rd, from 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m., for conversation and the answering of questions bearing upon subjects discussed in 'LIGHT,' and at the usual fortnightly meetings of the Alliance.

Afternoon Tea at 4.30 p.m.

Admission will be by ticket only. Tickets have been sent to the Members and Associates.

A meeting of Members and Associates will be held in the French Drawing Room, St. James's Hall (entrance from Piccadilly), at 7 for 7.30 p.m., on Friday, November 30th, when

MR. ROBERT M. THEOBALD, M.D.

Will give an Address on the Question—

'Is a Spiritualist Church Needed?'

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

A WINTER NIGHT'S REVERIE.—Sweeter than the day-dreams of summer is the tranquil hour spent musing upon the borders of the Good-night Country which lies—somewhere in a moon-lit, dim, forsaken Fairy-land—beyond the flickering of the firelight shadows drifting between tea-time and bed-time. These seeming idle dreams! Dreams perchance!—yet who can say 'tis not 'the spirit rising o'er its clay.' Let us attune ourselves a little more to these Harmonies in half-tints and under-tones; nothing unfitting for the work-a-day. Just a little turning of the inward ear to listen to the music that is sublime, and 'The Voices that are Eternal'—a little turning of the inward eye to catch some fleeting glimpses of the Land of Beautiful Shadows—for there lies Light, and that which no scientist can measure—a glory no enterprise can seize! In this hour of the night, we may almost feel the presence of something that has gone from us—the touch of a dear hand that we shall hold no more—nor feel the gentle influence subduing all the baser part of us, nevermore, never. Ah, no! That isn't true, God, is it?—(From 'Stray Leaves,' Prose and Verse, by IVAN HILL.)

A CLERGYMAN'S TESTIMONY.

We have more than once referred, with expressions of appreciation, to the very valuable book, 'Man and the Spiritual World,' by the Rev. Arthur Chambers, Vicar of Brockenhurst, Hants; and we think our readers will be interested in the following narrative, given by the author, of his experience with a trance medium, with whose utterances he seems to have been greatly and favourably impressed:—

'A few months ago I was invited by intimate friends to meet at their house a young man, an acquaintance of theirs, who had recently manifested extraordinary powers that astonished himself, and upset the ideas of the members of the religious community to which he belonged. These good people (like the Pharisees in conflict with our Lord) did not hesitate to tell him that the cause of what he exhibited was Satanic—an explanation, by the way, that has been very often put forth to account for anything in any degree supernormal.

'On the occasion to which I am referring, I conversed with this young man for some time on ordinary topics, and discovered that he was by no means a well educated person. He dropped his aspirates, made grammatical blunders, and badly constructed his sentences. I mention this only because it has an important bearing upon what afterwards occurred.

'After we had conversed awhile, he suddenly moved uneasily, and appeared to faint, and remained for about five minutes motionless, his eyes being closed.

'My friends had previously seen him in this condition, and told me he was under control, and in a trance-state. I had seen persons entranced, and determined to carefully note whatever might happen.

'At length, the young man slightly raised himself in the chair in which he was reclining, and, with his eyes still closed, commenced to speak in a language unknown to me, and in a tone of voice not at all resembling his own.

'Among those present was a lady who had spent several years in India. She had never seen the young man before.

'When he commenced speaking, she whispered to me that he was talking in Hindustanee—a tongue with which she was sufficiently acquainted to be able to recognise it.

'I inquired of my friends if the young man himself knew that language. They said that in his normal state he had no knowledge of it (which seemed exceedingly probable); but that under control he spoke it fluently.

'I asked who the control was, and they told me he was the spirit of a man who, in earth-life, had been a Hindoo of high caste and culture.

'I asked how they knew that, and they stated the control himself had declared it.

'I next asked my friends if questions put by me would be heard and answered. They replied that the young man was unconscious of all that took place while he was in the trance condition, but the control could hear, and on a previous occasion had answered questions through the vocal organs of the young man.

'Now, I give, as accurately as I can remember, the conversation that then ensued. The answers were given in English, and the words were pronounced exactly as a foreigner would pronounce them. Now and again the speaker would pause for a moment, as if casting about for a word. Sometimes he failed to remember it, and when I gave it, thanked me, and continued.

'QUESTION: You claim—do you not—to be a spiritual intelligence, speaking through the physical organs of Mr. A.?

'ANSWER: Yes.

'QUESTION: Who are you?

'ANSWER: I am a man who lived in India, when in the earth-life, and spent a great portion of my time in studying the truths that relate to this World in which I now am.

'QUESTION: Is Mr. A. conscious that you are speaking through him?

'ANSWER: No. The controlling power of his material body, which is his spirit-body, is in a state of unconsciousness, and I am exercising the control.

'QUESTION: If you, as you say, are taking the place of

the spirit of Mr. A., in regard to his physical body, has *his* spirit left that body?

'ANSWER: Yes.

'QUESTION: Where is it, or rather, where is he?

'ANSWER: In this room, in a state of unconsciousness.

'QUESTION: But how can that be? Can a man's spirit leave his body before death?

'ANSWER: Most certainly it can, and does, at times. But you as a teacher of the Bible should know that truth.

'QUESTION: Does the Bible, then, declare it?

'ANSWER: Most assuredly. Does not an apostle say that he was caught up into the third sphere of the Spiritual World; and yet his earthly body did not die until some years afterwards?

'QUESTION: Yes, I am familiar with that statement; but St. Paul himself did not seem to be quite sure whether he was in his outer body, or out of it.

'ANSWER: That is quite possible. Many persons, after passing through what you call "dying," having left the earthly body behind, do not, for awhile, realise that it has been cast off. They are still, after the change, so really men and women. The apostle, when he had the experience mentioned, was out of his earthly body, and the latter was in a state of trance.

'QUESTION: When the spirit of a person is outside his body, is the connection between the spirit and the body maintained?

'ANSWER: Yes; were it not, the earthly body would die.

'QUESTION: Would it under such circumstances be possible to break the connection between an external spirit and its earthly body?

'ANSWER: Yes. A sudden shock might bring it about. Hence, to violently arouse a person in a state of trance (when very often the spirit is absent from the body) is very dangerous. It may break the connection, and then the body would die.

'QUESTION: I have taught, and still teach, that the separation of the spirit and spirit-body from its earthly encasement takes place shortly *after* death. Am I right in this?

'ANSWER: No: you are wrong. The separation takes place immediately *before* the death of the body.

'QUESTION: That rather astonishes me.

'ANSWER: I will explain. A little while before death the spirit-body of a person releases itself from the physical form and floats at full length above the latter, with which it is still connected by something not unlike a fine cord. The physical body, as yet, is still alive, but it no longer contains the man. He is in the spirit-body, but unconscious. When that fine spiritual cord is snapped, the separation is effected, and the material life expires. You have the physical counterpart of this cord in the connection that exists between the mother and the babe at birth. The severance of a cord is the preliminary of the entrance of both the man and the babe into a higher plane of being.

'QUESTION: May I ask you a few other questions?

'ANSWER: Certainly.

'QUESTION: What is your object in controlling the body of Mr. A.?

'ANSWER: To establish a communication through him with the world I have left.

'QUESTION: For what end?

'ANSWER: To try and convince men of the fact of a World of Spirit.

'QUESTION: But, surely, that fact is acknowledged, is it not? We Christians, for example, acknowledge it.

'ANSWER: Yes; in a way. Your Bible is full of testimony regarding it, and you profess to accept its teaching; but not one in every thousand who attend your churches grasps the truths concerning the Spiritual World that Scripture declares.

'QUESTION: Is not that too sweeping an assertion?

'ANSWER: No; you well know that many who read their Bible school themselves to think that all the spiritual facts recorded therein actually did take place *thousands of years ago*; but ask them to believe that like things are happening now; what will they say? Will they not declare it to be incredible and absurd?

'QUESTION: Are they wrong?

'ANSWER : Why ask such a question ? Do you suppose that the Spiritual World is now different from what it was before, and at the time when Christ sojourned on your earth ? Nearly all the phases of spiritual manifestation described in the Bible are present occurrences.

'QUESTION : If that be so, how comes it that the truth is not better realised ?

'ANSWER : Because the tendency of men's minds is too materialistic. When that is the case, a revelation of the Spiritual becomes more difficult.

'QUESTION : Why ?

'ANSWER : Because of the feebleness, through disuse, of internal faculties by which the Spiritual can be apprehended. You have the correspondence of this in the physical world. Were you never to use your eyes and your ears there would come a time when, although the organs might still remain, it would be exceedingly difficult to get those eyes and ears to perceive sights and sounds which *exercised* eyes and ears can perceive.

'QUESTION : Do you imply that many Christians who believe in a World to come fail to perceive the *whole* truth concerning the Spiritual ?

'ANSWER : Most certainly I do. If you doubt this, question them on the point. Will you find more than one in every hundred, or thousand, who has any idea of a Spiritual World, except as a far-off Heaven at a future time ?

'QUESTION : I am afraid your assertion is true.

'ANSWER : Yes ; but there is now an ever-increasing number who are reading more intelligently their Bible, and perceiving great truths disclosed therein, which have been lost sight of during past centuries. A great wave of spiritual influence is passing over your world now, and breaking through the hard crust of materialistic thought and feeling. Some of your great thinkers and preachers are beginning to acknowledge the nearness of the Spiritual.

'QUESTION : Is it granted to *all* who leave the earth-life to set up—as you claim to be doing—this phase of communication with the physical ?

'ANSWER : No ; many wish to do so, but are not permitted.

'QUESTION : Why so ?

'ANSWER : In the case of many spirits, the wish does not spring from a desire to benefit you on the earth plane, but from a mere longing for contact with the world they have left.

'QUESTION : Is this longing wrong ?

'ANSWER : It is harmful, unless dictated and sanctified by the promptings of love and unselfishness.

'QUESTION : Explain, please ; I do not fully understand you.

'ANSWER : If a spirit, not prompted by love and unselfishness, control a person, he harms both himself and the person he controls.

'QUESTION : In what way does he harm himself ?

'ANSWER : By retarding his progress in the Spiritual World. The desire to continue in close contact with the physical, *for the sake of the contact itself*, checks his advance on a higher plane of life and thought. In the case, however, of physical contact being desired only that love and unselfishness may find a field for exercise, the spirit is unharmed, nay, more, he is often advanced by the experience. Thus, the contact of Christ with the physical did not diminish aught from the moral and spiritual excellence of His being. His love and unselfishness grew grander thereby.

'QUESTION : In what way does a spirit's control injure the person controlled when the spirit is actuated by nothing beyond mere desire of physical contact ?

'ANSWER : In the same way that the stronger mind of a teacher of low moral tone will injure the boy placed under his guidance. The spirits who control from no motive of love, but only to satisfy a longing for the physical, are low in the scale of moral being ; as low, and often far lower, than those they control. No good can come from such.

'QUESTION : But how comes it that this longing for the physical remains in anyone who has passed from this world into the Spiritual ? Does not the change of the plane of existence obliterate it ?

'ANSWER : No. There are numbers in the Spirit-World who, when living in your world, never lifted their thoughts

and desires above the material. In tastes and inclinations they were "of the earth, earthy." They entered Spirit-life in that state, and, untrained in the Spiritual, it is strange and distasteful to them. They carried their instincts with them, and longed to be back in the physical.

'Sometimes they are permitted to gratify their longing, and then there happens that which is recorded in your New Testament—evil spirits control the bodies and minds of men. Christ, when on earth, could see such spirits, and they could see Him, and it was His mission to cast them out.

'QUESTION : This, if true, is a terrible fact.

'ANSWER : Yes, and it explains a great deal of the awful crime that stains your earth. If you could see, as we on this side do, you would behold your gin-palaces and drinking-saloons thronged with troops of spirits, who in earth-life had been drunkards, gamblers, and fornicators. Earth-bound, and no longer able to satiate their still-existing desires, they seek a gratification in frequenting their old haunts, and inciting others to sin. Every unrepentant spirit let loose by the hangman is a menace to society. Have you never noticed that after an execution three or four murders follow in rapid succession ? Can you not see the cause of this ?

'QUESTION : Do all these evil and earth-bound spirits, then, *perpetually* exercise this awful control ?

'ANSWER : Yours would be a fearful world if they did. Few of them, comparatively, can exercise a physical control, and only that when the will of their victim is too weak to offer resistance. More commonly their control takes the form of suggestion to the mind. But, happily, behind all that lies the fact that evil is growing less in the universe of God. So many of you fail to realise that God is working for the triumph of good in the World of Spirit. In spite of your Bible, which tells you Christ preached His Gospel to *spirits*, that they might live unto God, you can only think of Him as exercising His saving power on the restricted field of earthly existence.

'QUESTION : That is a beautiful thought, but not a new one to me. I have long since discarded the theology that denies the truth that God's "mercy endureth for ever." But I have other questions I should like to put. Will you tell me—is there not a great danger in regard to spirit-control ?

'ANSWER : Most certainly. That is why, in olden times, all intercourse with "familiar spirits" was forbidden to the Israelites. The spirits who were then controlling men were evil. They were the spirits of men who in earth-life had lived in the grossest vice and impurity. Nothing but evil could ensue from such control as that, and as the Israelites themselves, at that period of their history, were but little advanced in their knowledge of a Life Beyond (as seen in the earlier books of the Bible), they were forbidden an intercourse with spirits whose earthly surroundings had been of such a character as to make them spirits of low moral type. Probably you have noted that the age in which intercourse with familiar spirits is so discountenanced yields a very great deal of testimony in regard to intercourse with spiritual beings of an *exalted* class. For instance, angel-visits were frequent, and a servant of God after death—the prophet Samuel—in spite of the existing prohibition, appeared to the woman of Endor, and spoke to King Saul.

'Later on, you find an apostle of Jesus Christ—who himself knew a great deal about the Spiritual World—showing that he was sensible of the danger underlying spirit-control, while acknowledging the possibilities of good in it. He wrote : "Believe not every spirit ; but test the spirits, if they are of God."

'QUESTION : Then persons who are under the control of low spirits may be deceived ?

'ANSWER : Yes. When the prophets of old, to whom spiritual control was a common experience, threw themselves open to the control of ignorant and lying spirits, they became no longer prophets of God, but false prophets. What do you imagine the words mean—"A lying spirit in the mouth of all His prophets" ?

'QUESTION : Do you assert that persons can be ignorant and untruthful in the Spiritual World ? Does not their entrance into that World at once enlighten them and make lying an impossibility ?

'ANSWER : Persons enter the Spiritual World with precisely the same character, enlightenment, and disposition

as that with which they leave your world, and go into a sphere for which they are fitted. And there they remain until, mentally, morally, and spiritually advanced, they are fitted for a higher sphere. You in your world have persons of all sorts and classes. So have we in our World; persons depraved, ignorant, cruel; others, not so morally bad, but ignorant of God and truth; some, partially enlightened, but exhibiting good traits of character and desire; others, better, wiser, nobler, and so on, until a class of spiritual beings is reached so exalted in knowledge and excellence that many of us have never, as yet, seen them.

'QUESTION: Then I gather from your teaching that a person who has but just entered the Spiritual World may not be much better off than in this world?

'ANSWER: As regards his character, on entering our World he is exactly what he was on leaving yours; good or bad; godly or ungodly; ignorant or enlightened; or in any condition that lies between these extremes. What you call the "act of dying" does not alter the *character* of a person; he that is unjust will be unjust still; he that is filthy will be filthy still; he that is righteous will be righteous still; and he that is holy will be holy still. As regards, however, his surroundings, he is better off with us than with you. Every sphere of spiritual life, even the lowest, is interpenetrated by influences and ministries of good flowing into it from higher spheres. Consequently, from the lower spheres there is a constant emigration of spirits who are responsive to the good, and these pass to higher planes of life and thought.

'QUESTION: But this fact is not grasped by great numbers of Christians; how is that?

'ANSWER: Because so many of your teachers are purblind. They read the Bible and fail to see the truths it proclaims. What, for example, could more plainly assert the truth of spirits progressing, than the statement of an apostle, that Christ in our world preached to, and reclaimed, a great number of spirits who in earth-life had been godless and debased? The fact is, the importation of Western ideas into Christianity has acted banefully upon the latter. Old Roman conceptions have made your theology hard, cruel, and loveless; God is viewed as an Almighty *Magistrate*, instead of a Father, and punishment as *vindictive* instead of remedial.

'QUESTION: Are all in your World readily responsive to the leadings and impulses of good?

'ANSWER: No, any more than persons in your world are. Some have shaped such characters while in the earth-life that for long after they come to us they remain insensible to good, and only along the highway of bitter experience can they rise to the better. Some, on the other hand, have developed such noble characters on earth as to start in Spirit-life in a high sphere, and these pass easily onward.'

'QUESTION: Do you assert that *all* will ultimately yield to good?

'ANSWER: We in this life do not possess fore-knowledge any more than you do; but we know that God is supreme, and the ever-widening stream of tendency is towards Him. But why ask me about this matter? You, as a clergyman, believe the Bible, do you not? Consult that Book. Does it not tell you that God will one day be "all in all"; that every will in His universe is ultimately to bow to Him; and that His Christ will not rest so long as one lost sheep has *not* been found?

'QUESTION: Yes, that is so; but hundreds of thousands believe in an everlasting Hell. Must there not be a basis for that idea?

'ANSWER: Undoubtedly. That terrible libel on the power and goodness of God is built up on two words in your Bible wrongly translated.

'QUESTION: Which words?

'ANSWER: You know them; I have *heard* you speak about the mistranslation.

'(The words referred to are these: "These shall go away into *everlasting punishment*" (Matt. xxv. 46 v.). Every scholar knows that the Greek of this passage means an *age-long pruning*. "Pruning" is a discipline with a view to improvement.)

'QUESTION: Many of the things you have told me appear

like familiar truths, and yet I cannot tell when, or where, I learned them. Is this not strange?

'ANSWER: No; you have been taught them.

'QUESTION: By whom?

'ANSWER: By several in our World who are guiding you.

'QUESTION: But I am not controlled?

'ANSWER: Not physically, but you are mentally. They impress your mind with a thought, and you clothe it with language and ideas.

'QUESTION: Is this possible?

'ANSWER: Read your Bible for the answer. Inspiration (or as it should be more correctly termed, "spiritual suggestion") is a fact.

'QUESTION: Are men, then, *still* being guided in this way?

'ANSWER: Yes; many are. Have I not told you that a great wave of spiritual energy is now passing from our World to yours?

'QUESTION: May we hope, then, that men, as time goes on, will better understand the truth concerning the Spiritual than they have hitherto done?

'ANSWER: Most assuredly. Have you not, yourself, received the testimony of hundreds that they are craving for clearer light than the schoolmen give? That craving is the forerunner of enlightenment.

'QUESTION: Will the Bible be superseded?

'ANSWER: No; but it will be better understood.

'At this point of the conversation, I put a question (I cannot remember what it was) which drew forth a reply marvellous for the depth of thought and beauty of expression contained therein. The reply was concerning God, and the fact that character finds its highest development when Self-hood is absorbed in love and concern for others. It was a long statement, and took, at least, fifteen minutes to deliver.

'I could not reproduce it if I tried. I candidly admit that I have not the ability to do so.

'I have listened to the sermons of many noted preachers, but no one of them has equalled, in sublimity of idea and charm of diction, this sermon.

'When it was finished, the young man fell gently backward in the chair in which all this time he had been sitting, and, except for a few convulsive twitches of his body, remained for three minutes motionless. Then he opened his eyes, seemed dazed, as if awakening from sleep, recovered himself, and asked for water.

'Later in the evening, I engaged him in conversation; but the contrast was marked—only the mind of the ordinary young man expressed itself.

'In connection with this incident, there are two facts I wish to mention. One is that, during the whole of the conversation and oration, I carefully watched to see if the young man would betray himself were he playing an assumed part. As I have stated, the conversation, on his side, was conducted in English, but with a very pronounced foreign accent.

'Admitting the possibility that he might be an impostor, would he momentarily forget that he had to be a Hindoo, and, perchance, drop the accent?

'Not once did he do so. Surely a difficult feat for an impostor—who was not a clever person—under the prolonged strain of a conversation such as I have outlined!

'The other fact is this. Those present on the occasion were convinced that the young man, of himself, neither possessed the intellectual talents to conceive, nor the educational advantages to express, the thoughts embodied in his address.'

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

'J. C. K.'—In our next.

'A. G.'—Shall have due attention.

'Charcot Hospital.'—Under consideration.

'E. K. B.'—Thanks! Hope to print your kind communication in our next issue.

Pasupati N. Satyaratna.—Your manuscript is gratefully acknowledged. Shall be pleased to use it as soon as possible.

'F. E. G.'—Greatly obliged, but do not think the incident important enough for notice, especially as it does not seem to be very well authenticated.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
LONDON, W.C.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17th, 1900.

EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.

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A CLUSTER OF QUESTIONS.

One of our esteemed Indian correspondents, whose opinions and inquiries we highly value, asks us a series of questions which, although in some respects elementary, are quite to the point. We prefer to reply to him in public. Indeed, with one hand held out to us and one to inquirers all around him, he suggests a public reply. But, although we fall in with his suggestion, it must not be understood that we profess any greater knowledge than himself, still less that we can speak in any way authoritatively. We are all seekers:—even the unseen people seem to be seekers, as they differ in their replies almost as widely as we poor groppers in this 'muddy vesture of decay.'

The questions are these:—

What is the condition in which a man exists beyond the change called death?

What are the actual goings on in the future life?

Is there any scientific basis of proof as to the existence of a spirit-world?

Can spirits communicate with us? and have they the power of establishing their identity?

What is the condition of the departed spirit immediately after it has 'shuffled off its mortal coil'?

Is there an intermediate state?

Can the doctrine of reincarnation be reconciled with the theory of Spiritualism or the theory of the progressive development of the soul where there can never be a retrogression?

We ought perhaps to apologise to the large majority of our readers for setting forth such elementary questions as most of these are: but we need to be patient: and we need more frequently to remember the need of 'food for babes.' We probably take it too much for granted that 'everybody knows that.' What strikes us most, however, in these questions is the quaint supposition that we may possibly know everything about a state of being concerning which we may nevertheless reasonably ask whether there is any scientific proof of its existence. Here, for instance, are these two amazing questions side by side: 'What are the actual goings on in the future life?' and 'Is there any scientific basis of proof as to the existence of a spirit-world?' It is as though one asked 'Give me details as to the menu'; and then followed that up with the question: 'Is there any evidence that there was a dinner party?' We really must put the matter in that light-hearted way in order to show exactly what we mean.

Suppose we take these two questions first, and reverse their order. It might suffice to refer this or any other questioner to the books which grapple with this subject, and in a very effective way: but we may as well say that

the emphasis must always be laid on the word 'basis,' unless we include the experiments at séances among scientific proofs as, in truth, in a sense, they are. If the unseen people really do one tenth of the things they are supposed to do, we want little more to furnish a workable scientific basis. But, beyond this, it is a fact that Science is now carrying us far beyond all forms and modes of Matter, and landing us on the margin of an infinite and inscrutable sea from which all Matter is born and in which all things are possible.

As for 'the actual goings on' in that spirit-world, we are afraid our information is not only limited but contradictory. Only one thing is certain,—that death makes no sudden change in the personality and character. The ending here is the beginning there: and we are fully entitled to infer that the old attachments, interests and affections persist with the spirit, as indeed a part of its very self. This again suggests a continuation of one's life-work, the guardianship of beloved friends, the helping of those with whom the spirit is at one, whether for good or evil, and probably the gradual promotion to higher forms of life and activity in the infinite Universe.

This practically answers the first question,—'What is the condition in which a man exists beyond the change called death?' That condition is obviously determined by the ruling affections of the spirit. But, if 'condition' refers to mode rather than to character of being, it may be suggested that an etheric world or sphere will be absolutely real to an etheric being,—in all probability more real than this. The evidence is fairly strong in support of the belief that multitudes of persons are unaware that they have 'died,' and do not at first believe it when assured of it. The shuffling off of the mortal coil only means that the spirit-self (the real self) is brought into direct contact with the spirit-world, that the instrument is laid down and the direct self-sense brought into play. And this again indicates the reply to another question lower down.

The question concerning the power of spirits to communicate and to establish their identity goes, of course, to the root of the matter. As to the first, we can only say that it is a pure matter of experiment; but, *a priori*, it ought to be deemed possible or even probable. If a 'departed' spirit retains its real personality, with its ruling affections and interests, and if it exists in a real world, of probably keener life than this, with more direct possibilities of control over the great subtle causes, what more likely than that it should communicate with those it has apparently left? The real wonder is that this communication is not a common-place of daily life. But we have to depend on infrequent experiences which suggest or practically demonstrate communications, concerning which, however, testimony alone is not usually of much avail.

As for the spirit's power to establish its identity, that is a subject of extreme difficulty. It is probably best to accept, at least tentatively, what is claimed as to this: but always remembering that we are very imperfectly acquainted with the laws that govern spirit-communion, and also mindful of the fact that spirits can probably, under certain conditions, read our thoughts and pick up in various ways all they want to know, in order to personate anyone. No harm will be done if we are careful to be at once receptive and cautious, kindly and self-reliant. But surely, in the vast majority of cases, it is reasonable to assume that one's visitor knows who he is and has no particular motive for cheating.

The question concerning an intermediate state grows, we think, out of the antiquated notion that the unseen world is sharply divided into two compartments, usually called 'Heaven' and 'Hell.' But we have got far beyond that crudity. There are millions of intermediate states, answering to millions of types of character. 'In my Father's house are many dwellings,' said Jesus. A great truth! Law,

order and harmony rule everywhere, from the lowest 'Hell' to the highest 'Heaven.' Each one goes to 'his own place' for the time being, with infinite possibilities and stages before him.

There remains only the subject of reincarnation, as set over against the theory of Spiritualism, that all life is progressive, and that there is no need to return, for development or for the purposes of justice. We have always held that the Spiritualist's great inferences cannot be reconciled with reincarnation, and that reincarnation is as unnecessary as it is arbitrary. One does not need to return to the elementary school in order to make up for inattention or failures there : there are other ways. So in spirit life. The doctrine of Evolution demands progression and on the lines of continuity. Reincarnation is eccentric and out of harmony with both Science and Spiritualism : and yet many Spiritualists do not think so.

THE NEED FOR A MAGNETIC SOCIETY IN LONDON.

All who are interested in psychological investigation must feel indebted to Mrs. Stannard for her very lucid description of the proceedings at the International Congress of Spiritualists in Paris. In view of the scanty amount of attention given to the Congress by the English daily press, the long and able articles which have appeared in 'LIGHT' cannot have been otherwise than highly appreciated by those who, although interested, were unable to visit Paris on the occasion ; and the scientific manner in which the Magnetic Section, particularly, was treated in the final contribution will, I trust, help to arouse more active interest in this branch of science than has existed now for some time past. Mrs. Stannard's 'regret that a strong group of thinkers in this department of science has not been found long ago to start a similar school of practical work in London' is well founded, and I take the liberty of joining her in the sincere expression of it. Having regard to the fact that it is now over sixty years since the value of magnetism was first demonstrated in London by Baron Du Pôtet and Dr. Elliotson, it is astonishing that the science is so little practised, or even understood, in this country to-day. But British prejudice—and especially medical prejudice—is difficult to overcome, and it is mainly due to this prejudice that magnetism has not progressed in England to the same extent as in France and other parts of the world. It is most desirable, both in the interest of science and for the general good, that greater activity be displayed by those who have adopted magnetism, and those who are investigating its many claims, with a view to extending the proofs of its reality, and to creating for it a much wider sphere of usefulness. This can only be done by the consolidation of forces in the way Mrs. Stannard suggests ; and the establishment of a society for the study and practice of magnetism would not only be the means of bringing the subject more forcibly before the scientific world, but would also help greatly to dissociate it in the minds of the multitude from trickery and superstition. I see no reason why such a society should not be formed, and if a sufficient number of those readers of 'LIGHT' who are especially interested in magnetism would agree to meet for the purpose of discussing the subject, it might be the means of forming the nucleus of a large and important institution. I should be pleased to render what little assistance lay in my power, should the suggestion meet with any response.

ARTHUR HALLAM.

23, Dante-road, Newington,
London, S.E.

CARDIFF.—Mr. Wm. Cooper desires, on behalf of himself and family, to express most grateful appreciation of the very numerous expressions of sympathy and loving regard towards his dear wife, Mrs. Jane Cooper, in her critical illness. He is thankful to say that she has been much cheered and supported thereby, and begs that (being unable to reply to these kind friends individually) they will accept this very sincere acknowledgment of their several loving messages.

MATTER ; AND BEHIND IT.

BY THE REV. J. PAGE HOPPS.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, ON FRIDAY, THE 2ND INST.

(Continued from page 536.)

Mount we up, then, to the sublime thought of

A LIVING UNIVERSE.

And not only living, but intelligent in every part, from mineral to man, in varying degrees and modes of intelligence. Every atom, every cell, every process, every slightest throb of advance, seem guided by an independent and graded intelligence.

Every minutest part seems self-evolving, self-selecting, self-adapting. There is no appearance anywhere of blind chance ; there are no vague hesitations, no stumblings. Indeed, what we sometimes call 'Dead Matter' often seems a good deal more alive and more knowing than we are.

We are deceived by the appearances of mechanism in Nature ; but nothing is merely mechanical, as a process ; everything is vital, to the minutest cell, which works on its own account as though it knew its work and did it in perfect independence. Pass from the microscopic cell to the mighty forces of gravitation and the tides. Are not the tides a kind of breathing, induced, indeed, by an external force to which we give the name of 'gravitation' ; but what is the force of gravitation itself but a subtle demand, a pull of resolute choice ?

The very soil of the field has a sort of intelligence, with ceaseless collective instincts. Sir William Crookes and many other great investigators hold that even minerals supply curious indications of a choosing faculty. The same may be said of crystallisation, which exhibits many traces of elementary life, with extraordinary mathematical precisions ; and what are chemical affinities but rudimentary forms of selective power ?—I was going to say rudimentary forms of affection, remembering Charles Kingsley's quaint way of dealing with the philosophers who gave mechanical explanations of natural phenomena. Said he : 'All their analyses could only darken with big words the plain fact that the water hated the oil with which it refused to mix, and the lime loved the acid which it received into itself, and like a lover, grew warm with the rapture of affection' ; and did not an older Darwin sing of 'The loves of the plants' ?

How near this brings us to the idea that Love is God ! and what is Love but the longing for union and the loathing of isolation—the shrinking from stagnation and death, and the yearning for expression and fulness of life ? and this is precisely what we find in every atom and throb of Nature.

Obviously, then, in its every field and at every stage,

EVOLUTION IS A VITAL PROCESS.

The very terms by which we try to describe it show that. It is a 'struggle for life,' it involves 'the survival of the fittest,' it is conditioned by efforts, needs and desires. Low down, it is a blind battling for advantage : higher up, it is the striving for the realisation of longings 'with groanings that cannot be uttered' ; and the highly inspired writer of these last words had a clear-shining glimpse of the mighty truth, when he looked beyond the struggling human being and saw that 'the whole creation' shared in this campaign, this process of evolution, this struggle for life.

Thus, through the whole range, along all the glorious octaves of being, from vortex or atom to molecule and man, we find life and living power ; and the whole culminates in the crowning discovery of unity, not only in purpose and will, but of every part of the mighty mechanism ; so that phenomena as wide apart as colour and magnetism, heat and electricity, sound and light, are now traced home to one source ; until, at last, the distinction between Force and Matter breaks down and leaves us with nothing but a vast unseen sea of mystery from which at first emerged, and from which emerges still, not Matter, but something infinitely nearer—thrills of Mind.

Now it is precisely this which enables us to form at least

AN ELEMENTARY IDEA OF GOD

as omnipresent and omniscient,—the one creator of all things, in whom we all literally live and move and have our being, from whom all things proceed and back to whom all things will return. In an ascending scale, with a break nowhere, are we not compelled to pass on to The Highest—from the transitory to the eternal? Does it not look as though some all-pervading Spirit were in this Body of Nature,—as though the Universe were alive, as a whole and in every part, just as a man is, in the unity of his selfhood and in the separate myriad cells that compose his body?

But there we stop. We know not, we understand not, the mode of being of that infinite and omnipresent Life and Power—any more than we know and understand our own. All we know is that by an overpowering necessity we are compelled to infer Him; and that this mysterious, all-pervading source and continent of all movement and manifestation which we call the Ether,—nowhere absent and everywhere the cause and home of every atom,—is the nearest we can get to the omnipresent God, by the route of Science; and we have done all that is at present possible for the discovery of Him in Nature when, in that eternal and illimitable ocean of being and phenomena, we find all the indications of intention, forecasting, volition and persistence, whose movements cause all things to be, in a cosmos, a universe of infinite order, determined by consecutive evolutionary processes, evidently working and ceaselessly working for an appointed end—

‘To which the whole creation moves.’

Here again we arrive at the great conception of Unity in what is well called a Uni-verse, and more profoundly and comprehensively than than the coiners of the word imagined. It is one in its origin, its structure, its life, its intelligence, and its gravitation or grasp. Once we delighted in expatiating on the wonderful diversity of Nature, and there is room for that; but the wonder of the coming century will be the knowledge of its unity—a unity with ascending grades of life and consciousness from a grain of sand to God.

It may be admitted—and willingly admitted—that the conception of God to which this carries us ends in an unproved inference and an unimaginable cause; but this need not disturb us. As the great thinker and preacher of ‘The Unknowable’ has told us,—we may legitimately draw that inference and cite that cause, though we can go no farther. ‘The momentum of thought carries us beyond conditioned existence to unconditioned existence; and this ever persists in us as the body of a thought to which we can give no shape’ (‘First Principles,’ by Herbert Spencer. Sixth edition, p. 79); but it is tremendously real to us, and is ours by an intellectual necessity. And, after all, what an immense inference it is!—what a transcendent cause!

God has been well defined or indicated by the phrase ‘The eternal not ourselves, which makes for righteousness.’ But it would be just as true to say—which makes for colour or beauty, or cornfields, or apple-orchards, or electricity, or intellect, or love, or for anything that Evolution means. God, in effect, is the real substance (that which stands under) from which all His manifestations proceed. Therefore, He is the source of all Life, the conditioning of all Law, the guardian of all Order, and the assurance of all Progress: and it is here that the word ‘Father,’ as applied to Him, attains deep meaning. It can only be a symbol, but it is a perfect symbol if we take it as indicating that He is the Producer and the Providence of us all.

WHAT, THEN, OF EVIL?

What of that which seems to repudiate Fatherhood, and does not seem to be included in the unity of all things in God? The answer is now obvious. The Universe is evolving self-contained and self-reliant personalities, not automata: and this is the only way. Evil is either good on pilgrimage or an imperfect and perverted form of life, probably self-adjusting. Man can fail to reach the highest. That tells the whole truth; and that is the law of all life. It is inseparable from creation by evolution as distinct from creation by magic. Hence the failure of man to reach the highest is not a thwarting of God: it is only a temporary

thwarting of man. It is imperfection or failure for the time, or misuse, as when we turn love into lust, self-defence into cruelty, desire for advancement into the selfish beating down of others, patriotism into arrogant domineering, and even religion into superstition or a spirit of persecution. But God and the unity of all things in Him remain.

And now, gathering up these many clues, we can pass on to regions beyond the present boundaries of Science. Is not the culmination of Life to be found in the Unity of Life? and is not the highest known manifestation of God the manifestation of a Law which makes for Harmony, and ends selfish isolation in the triumph of the spirit—or, as some would say, (and why should we not say) of the spirit of Jesus Christ? Hence the highest evolved form of Religion is based on the sublimest affirmation the world has ever known; ‘God is Love (ay! and Love is God), and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God and God in him’—actually so, literally so, for he who mounts up, in the scale of being, to the emotion of Love, passes on to the planes of being wherein is the secret of God.

Assuredly, if we could effectively get the world to occupy this point of view, old things would pass away, and all things would become new. We should have no more need to fight with texts or carry on the battle of the creeds. The greatest of the sciences would be Psychology, the noblest of all studies would be the Theology of the Spirit, and the sublimest of all interests would be Religion, for religion would then be scientific, and Science would be religious. Nothing could prevent it, for we should all go together to the Unseen for the origin of Man, and to the omnipresent source of all Motion and Life for God. And all this would be determined on the well-worn road of Science, and would come as a decision from the laboratory, not as an assertion from the Church.

But I see here

A MEETING-PLACE FOR ALL

on the sure ground of knowledge of Natural Law as the expression of the infinite Mind, in the light of which knowledge all our old creeds seem childish or impertinent. On that high vantage-ground, and in that clear light, there will come wonderful adjustments of all the old controversies. We shall understand Inspiration, Miracles, Incarnation, Atonement, Revelation, Prayer, The Spirit-world and the Spirit-self; and the way of Salvation will be seen to be identical with the way of Spiritual Evolution into a higher grade of spiritual life, and nearer to the ideal centre of life in the Ideal God.

Is not the whole of Religion in this—to face God everywhere and in everything;—to receive and respond, to hear and obey, to enter into His secret wherever there is life, to find the higher leadings of the life, and to yield to them, to be confident and trustful because nothing can ever separate us from Him?

It is in this direction we must go if we are to rise above mere animalism and mere materialism. And go in this direction we shall. The Law of Evolution will determine it, for, now as ever, the Great God who is the Soul of the omnipresent and omniscient Body from which all things come, sends forth at once His message and His mandate—

BEHOLD! I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

THE CHAIRMAN having invited remarks from the audience,

DR. GEORGE WYLD expressed the pleasure he had felt in listening to the address of Mr. Hopps, in which he had been extremely interested, and he particularly admired the manner of its delivery—in the ‘spirit of reverence, truth, and love.’ He had himself defined matter as ‘that which is caused by its substance, namely, spirit.’ Sir William Crookes had said he was not certain that there was such a thing as matter, and Lord Kelvin suggested that the final atom was a ring of force; and matter was therefore but a congregation of rings of force. Luminiferous ether Dr. Wyld suggested as ‘the body of the Eternal Spirit; and gravitation as the will of God; and forms of matter as the materialised thoughts of God.’ He desired to thank Mr. Hopps for his excellent summary of what might be called Spiritual Physics.

MR. J. MARTIN seconded the proposed vote of thanks to Mr. Hopps. He had listened with intense delight to his earnest utterances, and had been very much struck with his remark that Herbert Spencer was nearer to us than is

generally supposed. He recollected hearing Faraday, a good many years ago, say that an atom of matter was simply a centre of force.

MR. HOPPS suggested that the prevalent materialistic ideas of religion were the cause of the hostile attitude of Herbert Spencer and others, but the more spiritual conceptions of science and religion which were now beginning to prevail were bringing such men nearer to the spiritual interpretation of the great problems of life.

MR. E. W. WALLIS, in supporting the vote of thanks, said that he felt greatly indebted to Mr. Hopps for his thought-provoking paper. It was, however, difficult to discuss it on the spur of the moment, because, being so closely reasoned, time was needed to study it before an opinion could be expressed. Perhaps it might not be amiss to remind them that Mr. Dawson Rogers had given utterance to similar ideas in an address to the Alliance in 1889, when he said that 'the senses of touch, sight, taste and hearing were all purely mental sensations—living realities which could not be given by the death-like inertness of imaginary matter,' which, he suggested, might be, in reality, 'spirit in one of its many manifestations.' Mr. Rogers at the same time directed attention to the fact that in dreams the senses of touch, sight and hearing are active, and the dreamer apparently dwells in a visible, tangible and audible world, and if it were possible to imagine our life to be one long dream, we should, throughout the whole of it, have the same sensation as we are having now of dwelling in a visible, tangible and audible world; and yet we do not say that the surroundings of, and our sensations in, our dream world are due to the existence of an external matter, because when we awake we look back from another plane of consciousness—just as we shall one day look back upon the natural plane from the plane of spirit—where our affections and thoughts are spiritual substances. Mr. Wallis quoted a reply made by Sir William Crookes to a question by the editor of 'LIGHT,' that 'all we know is a collection of properties which in the aggregate make up what we call matter,' which, 'when we come to hunt it down to its ultimate atoms eludes our grasp and floats away in a stream of ether vortices.' Mr. Wallis thought that the great difficulty in nearly all these subjects was in the definitions, many of which did not really define, and only divided those who were seeking for knowledge. Sir William Crookes said that many so-called definitions of matter 'amount to no more than this: matter is that which possesses the properties of matter.' It was very stimulating to have such a clear and luminous presentation of this difficult subject as the one to which Mr. Hopps had treated his hearers that evening, and he cordially supported the vote of thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN put the motion to the meeting, when it was unanimously adopted, and cordially acknowledged by Mr. Hopps.

A SPIRITUAL CHURCH ?

The following article, which appeared in the 'Harbinger of Light' for October, will doubtless be of interest to our readers:—

'A correspondent in South Africa appears to be much exercised mentally at the prospect of the establishment of a spiritual church in London, and in a letter headed "Sacerdotal Spiritualism," which he has forwarded to us for publication, vigorously denounces the movement and its advocates. He is evidently very much in earnest, and thinks that all sorts of evils would flow from the consummation of the project. This we fail to realise; there are many persons, new converts to Spiritualism, who, having been church members all their lives, feel the need of a substitute for the congregational meeting, and an assembly (whether called a "church" or association matters little) where spiritual ethics would be presented without dogma and accompanied by simple religious exercises, would not only accommodate them, but serve as a bridge to lead others still in the churches on the road to Spiritualism. A church of this kind would have no *authority* over Spiritualists at large, and would only be supported by those in sympathy with it. The correspondence in "LIGHT" on the subject does not hint at a Spiritualist hierarchy, and if the establishment of such were attempted, we feel sure it would fail of its object, the enfranchised Spiritualist being a freethinker in the highest sense of the word. Some look upon Spiritualism as a science, others as a religion, the philosophical Spiritualist realises it in both its aspects.'

MISS ROWAN VINCENT.

The mortal form of Miss Rowan Vincent was interred at noon of Saturday last in the St. Pancras Cemetery, Finchley, in the presence of a considerable number of friends, who, notwithstanding the distance from town, had gathered together to testify once more their affectionate regard for the departed. Amongst those assembled were:—

Mr. Dawson Rogers (President of the London Spiritualist Alliance), Mr. Thos. Everitt (President of the Marylebone Association) and Mrs. Everitt, Mrs. Brinkley, Mrs. J. M. Bell, Miss V. Bell, Mrs. Damer Cape, Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. Cole, Mrs. and Miss Corp, Mrs. Dawson, Mrs. Edwards, Mrs. Finlay, Miss Fullagar, Rev. J. Page Hopps, Mrs. Hannant, Mr. Leigh Hunt, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lucking, Sister Louie, Mrs. D. Martinez, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Meads, Miss MacCreadie, Dr. T. C. Marsh, Mr. E. Mason, Mrs. Potts, Mr. Potts, jun., Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Sutton, Mr. Geo. Spriggs, Mr. Thoburn, Mr. and Mrs. Turner, Mr. and Mrs. H. Withall, Miss H. Withall, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Wallis, Mrs. Willsher, and others with whose names we are not acquainted.

THE REV. J. PAGE HOPPS, who officiated in the Chapel by Miss Vincent's special request, read a very appropriate and impressive address, every sentiment of which was in full accord with the cherished convictions of his hearers.

The friends then moved in procession to the grave, following the coffin which, in the brilliant sunlight, was resplendent with a profusion of flowers by which it was almost hidden from view. Amongst the wreaths was one sent by the London Spiritualist Alliance, bearing as a motto the words—'In loving memory of a dear friend and zealous co-worker, who won the hearts of all who knew her.' Another, from the Marylebone Association, was in the form of a harp with a broken string, and bearing words expressive of the loving sympathy of the members of the Executive of that Association. Other beautiful wreaths represented the love and esteem of Mrs. C. J. Allport, Mrs. Brinkley, Mr. and Mrs. Blackmore, Mrs. J. M. Bell, Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Cooper and family and Mr. Leigh Hunt, Mrs. Damer Cape, Mr., Mrs., and Miss Corp, Mrs. Finlay, the Masters Finlay, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lucking, Mrs. D. Martinez, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Meads, Miss MacCreadie, Mrs. J. H. Mackay (Brighton), Dr. T. C. Marsh, Dr. and Mrs. W. Marsh, Mrs. Marion Norton, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Sutton, Mr. George Spriggs, and Mrs. Wiseman.

MR. E. W. WALLIS spoke, in accordance with the expressed wish of Miss Vincent, to the friends assembled at the grave. He said: We have now rendered the last services that love can offer to the poor tired body through which the spirit we all loved expressed itself. We bury the body in the sure and certain knowledge that she herself has already known a joyous resurrection. We offer these flowers, Nature's fair and beautiful gifts, as fit emblems of her sweet and loving nature. [The speaker here dropped some white flowers into the grave.] When I called to see Miss Vincent ten days ago she talked with me about the arrangements for the services on this occasion, and assured me that Spiritualism had been a great comfort to her. 'I have no fear of death,' she said, 'none whatever; I am longing to go, I know that it means fuller and freer life. I only regret the separation from my loving friends, which the natural limitations of the conditions of life on this side make necessary.' She was inexpressibly touched by all the sympathy and kindness shown to her by so many friends; again and again she said: 'The people have been so very good—so very kind.' She charged me to give her love to you all to-day, and said she would be here with us in spirit if it was at all possible. Her loving and buoyant nature drew out love from others. She reaped as she had sown. This was fully exemplified in the tender care, the loving nursing and sisterly devotion, of those affectionate friends who, like ministering angels, so unfailingly cared for and waited upon her through the many weary weeks of her suffering and did so much to soothe her pain and ease her passage to the other side. Grateful for all service, she was thoughtful for others, and remarked to those about her, when she was sore pressed, 'This is dreadful to you, I know—but to me it is pleasant. If this is dying, then it is pleasant to die.' I asked her, said Mr. Wallis, if she had any spiritual experiences, and she said that she had not had

many on the outer plane but on the spiritual side she was conscious of the presence of the spirit friends, and that they were doing all they could to help her; and near the end she said that she saw her own spirit body disengaging itself from the mortal form. Her bright, cheery spirit, her patience, fortitude and gentleness made the little room in which she suffered a sacred spot; it was a benediction to visit her and catch something of the spirit—brave and true—in which she bore her trials and anticipated the coming release. I am pleased to see so many of her dear friends and co-workers here to-day, and regret, as he does, too, that our brother, Mr. J. J. Morse, owing to his engagements in the North of England, is unable to be with us to share in this loving tribute to our sister. What more can be said? At such a time, when the heart is full, words fail us and we cannot express the emotions which rise within us. But there is one lesson, one thought, that always rises on these occasions when we are reminded that time is short and eternity long, and it is this: Life is too brief for misunderstandings, estrangements, sundered friendships, and bitter feelings. We are all brethren, all travelling the same road, and have the same end in view. 'Let no jarring thought divide us.' If such conditions exist, let us forgive and forget, and in this sacred hour let us seek reconciliation; let us put away all disagreements and press on to make the best and highest use of this life in unity and love. Death is only terrible when inharmony and unspiritual states of feeling exist; but, when love reigns and peace is realised, as it was by our arisen sister, then the grave is indeed robbed of its sting, and death loses its victory when the Death Angel calls us to 'Come up higher.'

Before separating the friends united in singing 'Nearer, my God, to Thee'—a hymn which, though written by a Unitarian lady (Mrs. Sarah Flower Adams), seems to be greatly appreciated, without exception, by all the churches, and was a special favourite with our arisen friend.

It may interest some of our readers to learn that previous to her decease Miss Vincent consigned to the charge of a trusted friend a carefully sealed envelope, with the intimation that it contains the description of a sign by which the authenticity of any message purporting to be given by her may be effectively tested. No one on this side of life knows what the secret is, and the document, which has been placed in safe custody, will in all probability not be opened for some months.

MR. AND MRS. THOMAS EVERITT IN CHESHIRE.

The friends in Cheshire have been gratified recently by a visit from those devoted and faithful veterans of our Cause, Mr. and Mrs. Everitt. In Chester and Rock Ferry sittings were given to the local workers and their friends, and the phenomena were very wonderful. The writers were present at two of the sittings in Rock Ferry, and the results were eminently satisfactory. The physical manifestations were of the highest and most convincing and indisputable character, and the direct voices, spirit lights, and rappings in reply to questions will never be forgotten; personal intercourse was resumed with old-time friends, amongst the number being Mrs. Britten, Mr. John Lamont, Mr. J. Shepherd, Mr. J. Catlow, and Mr. Britten, and in addition spirit guides and relations, the identity of the latter being demonstrated beyond question. Mr. and Mrs. Everitt also took kindly and helpful interest in the Rock Ferry Society, and on Wednesday, October 31st, a large audience assembled to listen to an address by Mr. G. H. Bibbings, of Bootle, the subject being 'Should Christians Denounce the Evidences of Spiritualism?' Mr. Bibbings held the attention of his audience for more than an hour, and was frequently applauded. To the delight of everyone Mr. Everitt presided, his earnest words being highly appreciated. On Sunday, November 4th, in the evening, Mr. S. S. Chiswell occupied the chair, and Mr. Everitt was the speaker. He addressed a large and enthusiastic audience, logically and forcibly demonstrating the existence of spirit, and the possibility of spirit communion, closing his remarks with the recital of some of the wonderful experiences which Mrs. Everitt and himself have had in their own home and in the homes of their friends. The visit has been a memorable one; the workers have been stimulated and inspired to renewed effort, and the interest of very many has been aroused and their spiritual nature awakened. May God and the Angels deal kindly with our friends in their declining years and spare them to us for many such encouraging visits.

S. S. AND F. A. CHISWELL.

THE GERMAN PSYCHICAL JOURNALS.

SOME INTERESTING INCIDENTS.

The October numbers of the 'Uebersinnliche Welt' and 'Psychische Studien,' although containing much interesting reading, have nothing that requires special notice in a weekly journal like 'LIGHT.' They are both run on the same lines, and their contents are for the most part long scientific and philosophical articles, dealing with 'occult' subjects, and running through several numbers.

'Uebersinnliche Welt' has two shorter papers; one of which is 'Some Remarks on Haeckel's Idea of the Universal Ether ("Weltäther"),' the other a short account of a séance of the Parisian Society for Hypnology and Psychology, taken from the 'Indépendance Médicale'; while among the 'short notices' in 'Psychische Studien' there is a brief paper 'In Memory of Friedrich Nietzsche,' the materialistic philosopher, who died at Weimar on August 25th of this year. A short sketch of his life and system of philosophy is given in this paper. A few appreciative words are also devoted to the late Professor Henry Sidgwick, of Cambridge, whose lamented decease took place on September 7th last.

The 'Spiritistische Rundschau' (Review) (late 'Psyche'), commences its first number with a short paper by the Editor, setting forth the aims and intended programme of the journal. It contains many interesting short articles, among which are 'A Vision of Carl von Holtei, the celebrated Silesian poet, extracted from his own autobiography'; an article on 'Inspiration,' by Joseph de Kronhelm, from 'Le Progrès Spirite,' showing that many great authors, poets, and painters have produced some of their greatest masterpieces under spirit influence; one on proofs of spirit identity, by Hermann Handrich, of New York; and a somewhat longer and very interesting article called 'Two Military Witnesses to Occult Facts.' The latter gives an account of a remarkable occurrence in the life of Field Marshal von Steinmetz, taken from his biography, and described by himself in a letter to a friend, dated April 14th, 1855. Briefly, the events were as follows: In April, 1854, the General lost his last remaining child, a beloved daughter, aged twenty-six. He was heart-broken at the loss, but was most distressed to find that, while in his waking hours he never for a moment forgot her, both his appetite and health were unusually good, and he slept soundly, without dreaming, the whole night. He speaks of his strong common-sense and absence of any tendency to mysticism, but adds that shortly after his sad loss he became conscious of a strange sensation, which he ascribed to his nerves being unstrung; this was a kind of pressure on the head and eyes, which, however, did not in any way affect his power of thought. Then a fortnight after the death he began to see a vision of his beloved daughter's head, in the light as well as in darkness. He writes: 'When in the daytime I cover my eyes with both my hands, so that I am in complete darkness, I see within my hands the head of my darling child, not as a portrait or a bust, but as though it were living; her lovely eyes look at me as they did in life, while her head turns naturally in every direction.' Many interesting details follow. The General's clairvoyance became strongly developed, and at the time of writing the letter, six months after the death of his daughter, he was able to hear her voice as well as to see her face and form, besides that of other spirits.

I think such accounts of supernatural phenomena, occurring *spontaneously*, and narrated, not by a third party but by the persons themselves, to whom they occurred, are especially valuable and worthy of consideration; so, although not in any way connected with German 'occult' literature, I will not hesitate to give an incident which came to my notice only a day or two ago, in reading Lord Roberts's most interesting autobiography, 'Forty-one Years in India.' It occurs on p. 30 of the first volume, and as it is very briefly narrated, I will give it in Lord Roberts's own words. He was at that time, as a young man, serving as his father's aide-de-camp at Peshawur, and speaking of the latter he writes:—

'Shortly before his departure an incident occurred which I will relate for the benefit of psychological students; they may, perhaps, be able to explain it, I never could.'

'My father had some time before issued invitations for a dance which was to take place in two days' time—on Monday, the 17th of October, 1853. On the Saturday morning he appeared disturbed and unhappy, and during breakfast he was silent and despondent—very different from his usual bright and cheery self. On my questioning him as to the cause he told me he had had an unpleasant dream—one which he had dreamt several times before, and which had always been followed by the death of a near relation. As the day advanced, in spite of my efforts to cheer him, he became more and more depressed, and even said he should like to put off the dance. I dissuaded him from taking this step for the time being; but that night he had the same dream again, and the next morning he insisted on the dance being postponed. It seemed to me rather absurd to disappoint our friends on account of a dream; there was, however, nothing for it but to carry out my father's wishes, and intimation was accordingly sent to the invited guests. The following morning the post brought news of the sudden death of the half-sister at Lahore, with whom I had stayed on my way to Peshawur.'

M. T.

PROFESSOR FLOURNOY'S MEDIUM.

In connection with the editorial notice of Professor Flournoy's work, 'From India to the Planet Mars,' it may be of interest to such readers of 'LIGHT' as are not members of the Society for Psychical Research to know that the last number of 'Proceedings' contains a very valuable article by Mr. F. W. H. Myers, which discusses in some detail the extraordinary mediumship of Mlle. Hélène Smith. The whole article, like all that Mr. Myers writes, repays careful perusal; but there is one passage which may be justifiably isolated from the context and quoted as an alternative to the Professor's theory that Mlle. Smith had been shown a Sanscrit grammar; and to the other hypothesis that her knowledge of Sanscrit was obtained in a previous incarnation. Mr. Myers says:—

'I shall set forth, as barely as possible, a theory which Professor Flournoy has not invoked. I agree with him that the notion of the truth of the Indian romance must be quite dismissed. But I do not therefore think it certain that Mlle. Smith must have unconsciously seen de Marlès' history or a Sanscrit grammar.

'On the contrary, I think it just possible that the knowledge of de Marlès and of Sanscrit may have been clairvoyantly acquired by Mlle. Smith's subliminal self—or even may have been communicated to that subliminal self by a spirit which may have been concerned in the composition of these romances.* I should defend this apparent absurdity somewhat as follows:—

'If spirits do act upon human minds, they probably act sometimes to amuse *themselves*, as well as to please or inform us. I know of no evidence, indeed, of their having any power to injure us, but I think there is a good deal of evidence of tricky, playful interference. I think that a kind of literary impulse to write or act out *romances*, through the intermediacy of some human being, is perhaps one form of this mystifying intervention. . . . The possibility can hardly be tested but should, I think, be noticed here.'

In connection with the subject of telepathy from the (so-called) dead, Mr. Myers quotes from Professor Flournoy's book the following remarkable incident:—

'In a sitting at my house (February 12th, 1899) Mlle. Smith has a vision of a village on a height covered with vines; she sees a small old man coming down thence by a stony road. He looks like a "demi-monsieur"; buckled shoes, large soft hat, shirt-collar unstarched, with points rising to his cheeks, &c. A peasant in a blouse whom he meets bows to him as to a personage of importance; they talk a patois which Hélène cannot follow. She has an impression that she knows the village; but she cannot identify it. Soon the landscape disappears, and the old man, now clothed in white and seen in a luminous space (implying that he is in the next world), seems to come nearer. At this moment, as she sits with her right arm resting on the table, Leopold dictates with the forefinger, "Lower her arm." I obey; Hélène's arm at first resists strongly; then yields at once. She seizes a pencil and during the usual struggle as to the way to hold it: "You are squeezing my hand too hard!" she cries to the imagined little old man, who, according to Leopold, wishes to write through her. "You hurt me; don't press so hard; what can it matter to you whether it is a pencil or a pen?" Then she drops the pencil and takes a pen, and holding it between thumb and

forefinger,* writes slowly in an unknown handwriting, *Chaumontet Syndic*. Then returns the vision of the village; we wish to know its name; and she ends by perceiving a guide post on which she spells out *Chessenaz*—a name unknown to us. Finally having, at my desire, asked the old man the date at which he was Syndic, she hears him answer "1839." Nothing more can be learnt: the vision disappears, and gives place to a possession by Leopold, who in his big Italian voice talks at length about various matters. I question him on the incident of the unknown village and Syndic; his answers, interrupted by long digressions, are to this effect: "I am looking; I turn my thoughts along that great mountain with a tunnel in it whose name I do not know. I see the name of Chessenaz, a village on a height, a road leading up to it. Look in that village; you will find the name [Chaumontet]; try to verify the signature; you will get a proof that the signature is really that of this man." . . . Hélène, when awake, could give no information. But next day I found on a map a little village of Chessenaz, in the Department of Haute-Savoie, at twenty-six kilometres from Geneva. A fortnight later Hélène sees the vision of the other day reappear—the village, the little old man, but accompanied by a *curé*, who seems intimate with him, and whom he calls "my dear friend Bournier." Leopold promises that this *curé* shall write his name for Hélène.

'At the next sitting in my house, March 19th, I remind Leopold of this promise. The *curé* at last takes her hand as the Syndic had done, and writes very slowly, "Burnier salut."

'I wrote to the Mairie at Chessenaz, and the Mayor, M. Saunier, was good enough to answer me at once. "During the years 1838 and 1839," he said, "the Syndic of Chessenaz was Jean Chaumontet, whose signature I find in various documents of that date. We had also for *curé* M. André Burnier, from November, 1824, to February, 1841, during which period all the *actes des naissances*, &c., bear his signature. But I have found in our archives a document with both signatures, which I send you."

'[Reproductions of actual signatures and of signatures given by Mlle. Smith. The handwritings are markedly similar.]

Mr. Myers adds that careful inquiry made it clear that Mlle. Smith had never been at Chessenaz—still less consulted its parish archives.

Those who feel the need of a psychical research dictionary may be glad to know that a glossary of terms has been already published by the Society, and may be obtained for a few pence on application at the office, 19, Buckingham-street, Strand.

H. A. D.

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.

'Social Meetings for Inquirers.'

SIR,—I have received so many letters from those present at my first 'Social Meeting for Spiritualistic Investigation' who wish to come again, that I should feel it a favour if you will kindly permit me, through 'LIGHT,' to make it generally known that all to whom the meeting proved helpful and interesting are most sincerely welcome to attend on November 20th and December 4th and 18th, at 8 p.m., at my house.

Those who wish for introduction and a card of invitation can apply as stated in my article in 'LIGHT,' of September 8th, and each application must be accompanied by a *stamped* and *addressed* envelope.

These four meetings will complete the first series, which will be held in their present form till Christmas; after that I shall organise another series, to embody still further that which appears to be desirable and of practical value in the further development of this work.

On November 6th I received at my 'At Home' over seventy guests, and had also to refuse many late applications owing to excessive numbers, and this fact is more eloquent than any words of mine could be to prove what limitless scope there is for really practical work amongst investigators, where intellectual teaching and honest mediumship go hand in hand, so that psychical research may be conducted upon a *reasoning* and *reasonable* basis, whereby fact can be deduced from evidence, and the emotions kept in subjection to the intelligence.

The lamentably credulous attitude of so many Spiritualists towards what is known as supernormal phenomena impresses me more and more with the necessity of more advanced study as to their *possible* causes, before attributing

* M. Flournoy, by careful research, has discovered a rare and antiquated history of India by de Marlès which is undoubtedly the basis of the incidents of Hélène's somnambulist romance of the Hindu princess.

* Mlle. Smith's habitual way is to hold the pen between the forefinger and middle finger.

everything which occurs in the séance room to spirit agency. The potentialities of the sub-conscious self in moments of excessive spiritual exaltation during a séance where trance mediumship is being developed are almost completely ignored, with most delusive results to all concerned. Then again, undoubtedly, psychic force can be manipulated by the minds of the sitters unconsciously, as well as by discarnate entities; and I am ever increasingly convinced that etheric pressure and etheric vibrations under favourable conditions can, and undoubtedly do, produce knocks, noises, and movements of material objects quite apart from either spirit agency, identity, or intelligence.

And finally (to avoid subsequent disillusion) let me urge the imperative necessity of obtaining *conclusive* proof of spirit identity before accepting celebrities as controls, and vague, valueless communications as valuable evidences of spirit return and communion.

EFFIE BATHE.

Hurstborne Lodge, Aschurch Park Villas,
Goldhawk-road, W.

The New Church.

SIR,—The inspired writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg are certainly a splendid training ground for the practice of abstract thinking on our onward path to the reunion of science with religion. Your correspondent, 'Claude Toby,' will, I trust, some day agree with us that Swedenborg invariably states: 'The Lord alone is infallible,' because He is invariable Wisdom.

The internal or spiritual sense of the Word is certainly fallible and erroneous, namely, to the extent of our defective understanding of it. You cannot buy the understanding as you can buy a Bible.

However little we may succeed in attaining to that Quality of the Lord's infallible or invariable wisdom, we have grown in the Lord, we have brightened our spiritual Qualities. There is little difference between attaining to it by simply reading the Bible, or by trying to grasp the internal sense of some of its books. The attainment of Quality as man is the vital point aimed at by Swedenborg. The ministers of the New Church seem to put a rather potent pronouncement on this interior or spiritual sense. But it is of no lasting benefit unless a man becomes a better man.

The correct rendering for 'Logos' has been a stumbling-block for many writers on religion. The 'Logos' is the second degree in man's conception of Creation. Creation ever was and ever will be. To conceive the principles of Creation to some extent, the human mind of the Ancients, Swedenborg's angel inspirers, and the *obscure* Lights of some of the non-religious philosophers for once agree in one point. Namely, that there exists in eternity:—

1. The divine Substance—Life is Substance. It is perceived by man as the first degree of Creation.

2. There is born in eternity, from the Father—Divine Life, the Son, the Logos, the Divine Wisdom, the Word through which all things are made, the infallible Word. This divine wisdom is the form of the creative Divine Life. It is perceived by man as the second degree of Creation.

3. The Father—Divine Love (first degree), continually creates through His Son, Divine Wisdom (second degree), a material Universe (third degree), for the raising up of a Human Race, that they may attain to a good Quality, like unto Himself, because He *intends* them to live with Him for eternity for purposes of Divine happiness and usefulness.

This is vaguely perceived by man as the third degree of Creation, the material Universe. Yes! Creation is intended for Divine happiness and usefulness.

There are many Swedenborgians, but there is only one Swedenborg. This earth has not yet brought forth a man to expound divine truths in direct continuation of Swedenborg's 'Process of Thinking.' That would require a man who would be a giant as regards scholarship, a child as regards humility and self-negation. Such scientists we have not nowadays. But Humanity needs another soaring eagle of the spiritual realm.

May the infallible Logos, the Lord, grant that the present day rulers of the New Church may increase in tolerant forbearance towards us the less enlightened. May He grant that the more advanced Spiritualists raise themselves to the discovery of that key of many mysteries—the rational understanding of Swedenborg's Philosophy of Religion, and his concise method of thinking and reasoning.

34, South Hill Park, OTTO DEUTSCHMANN.
Hampstead Heath.

Infallibility of the New Church.

SIR,—I am much obliged to Mr. Toby for his explanation, and pleased to find that it is 'not the Bible' but the 'Word' in the Bible which he holds to be infallible. In that case it would be a matter of importance, one would think (from the New Church point of view), to have 'the Word' given to us pure and free from its misleading incrustations. Has the Swedenborgian Society done so? and under what *name* is the

book to be had? for I have never heard of it, nor apparently anybody else. Even so, the question arises, is this 'Word' infallible, or is Swedenborg's *interpretation* of it? How can Swedenborg know that a scripture is inspired infallibly unless he is himself infallibly inspired to declare it and make it evident? I do not see the evidence of this in the 'True Christian Religion' or the 'Canons of the New Church.' To assert that 'there is but one God who created all things,' and that 'that one God is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth,' seems not to me an infallibly inspired assertion, but the contrary. It is inconsistent with sound reason. Had he said 'There is but one God, and in that God is a Trinity of attributes—Wisdom, Love, and Power,' I could understand him; and that Love and Wisdom were manifested in certain men, of whom Jesus was one, with greatest fulness, I could understand.

Or had he said that there was a Trinity in the Man Jesus, of Mind, Soul, and Spirit—an at-one-ment of the particular with the universal; or that Jesus Christ was the 'Son of Man,' the Spouse of His Church, the Father of the age to come, the truth of this could be easily understood.

I am glad to hear of the 'distinction in inspiration.' This, so far, is good; but, after all, must not the internal sense of enlightened man be the judge of what is and what is not? In the book 'The Original Genesis,' which was refused to be even advertised in a New Church organ, all this is expressly put forth in the preface, and for the benefit of your readers who do not possess it I may quote this paragraph: 'Infallibility is not claimed for these versions of the Scripture though given by Inspiration of the Spirit—the latter claim being very different from the former, for the inspiration of the mind no more necessarily implies infallibility, than the Divine breath of life breathed into man (or by man) implies freedom from all diseases, accidents, or miseries incidental to life.' This, I think, puts the matter on a firm basis. I am glad also that 'the New Church admits of progress or change of mind in those gone to the other side,' but why is Swedenborg an exception? For the *reason* of the refusal to admit any advertisement even of 'The Original Genesis' was that it was 'not quite consistent with the teaching of Swedenborg when on earth.' Therefore there is no progress or change of view for Swedenborg! Unfortunate man, how sad! No progress, no further light, no change of views for him. I can almost fancy his saying, 'Deliver me from my friends.'

Your readers can have a copy of 'The Original Genesis' (1s. 1d. post free) from the Editor, Sec., O.A., 3, Evelyn-terrace, Brighton, and duly compare it with the Authorised Version. In it is no bloody sacrifice spoken of except to condemn it, no infallible priesthood. Hence perhaps the distrust of some, while to others the reverse. The more I read it the more spiritual correspondences I find.

I may add for the amusement of your readers the fact that the booklet was refused by an Old Church paper and a *New Church* with horror! the one because it was 'Swedenborgian,' the other because it was 'not'!

I. O. M. A.

Planchette.

SIR,—I have had a planchette for about a year. It will move but not write for me, though soon after placing my hands upon it, I feel (being deaf I do not hear but friends present do hear distinctly) a clicking noise. These clicks vary in rapidity and force, often resembling an explosion of tiny crackers. Have any of your readers had similar experiences and is there any interpretation of these clicks?

NEOPHITE.

SOCIETY WORK.

DOWLAIS, SOUTH WALES.—On Sunday last Mr. E. S. G. Mayo delivered a fine address upon 'Spiritualism: What is it?' to a large and deeply interested audience.—W. M. H.

BATTERSEA SPIRITUALIST CHURCH, HENLEY-STREET, S.W.—Mr. Kenworthy's addresses on Sunday last were delivered to good audiences, the morning's subject supplying inexhaustible material for thought; Mr. Fielder presided. The evening's subject was equally replete with interest as dealt with by Mr. Kenworthy. One is undeniably uplifted and encouraged whilst listening to such noble ideals being so ably and earnestly portrayed. Mrs. Boddington presided. At the close of each meeting Mr. Kenworthy replied to questions. On Sunday next, at 11.30 a.m., public discussion class; at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., subject, 'The Outlines of our Future Work'; on Tuesday, at 6.30 p.m., Band of Hope; on Thursday, at 8.30 p.m., public circle; on Saturday, at 8.30 p.m., social evening. Henley Hall is getting too small for our increasing work. If any friends know of a hall to let at a reasonable figure within a radius of four miles, they are requested to communicate with the Hon. Sec., Mr. H. Boddington, 99, Bridge-road, Battersea.