

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

'WHATEVER DOTTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT.'—Paul.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Mr. Andrew Lang's new book, 'Magic and Religion' (London: Longmans, Green and Co.), is a collection of Essays on his favourite subject, the evolution, origin or making of religion. He is fighting a good fight in a forest, where knowledge of skirmishing and the art of ambush are of chief value. He is one of the keenest in this direction, and it is at least good fun to watch him: he is so *very* patient, slim, and sly!

The present volume takes us into tangled and little-known by-ways, and the topics dealt with are rather curiosities of folklore than studies in history or theology; but they are decidedly entertaining, thanks to Mr. Lang with his pretty ways.

The Chapter on 'Magic and Religion' begins with a paragraph of great value. We commend it to the people who are so persistent in their pelting of us with Old Testament texts against spirit-communion:—"The sin of witchcraft is as the sin of rebellion." The idea which inspires this text probably is that a person who seeks to obtain his ends by witchcraft is rebelling against the deity or deities through whom alone these ends should be sought. Witchcraft is also an insult and injury to the official priests who regard the witch as the surgeon regards the bone-setter, or as the geologist regards the "dowser" or water-finder who uses the divining rod.

We have always held that rivalry and jealousy had a good deal to do with these Old Testament denunciations of 'witchcraft.'

'The Daily News,' a few days ago, gave us a long and lively review of this book of Mr. Andrew Lang's; but the reviewer had obviously had no great knowledge of his own, as he kept his punt very close to the shore and Mr. Lang. Anyway, in relation to Spiritualism, he does not know his A B C. Fancy anyone saying: 'Spiritualism follows Christianity'! There is no sense in which that is true. Spiritualism is not in the slightest degree a development on the lines of Christianity. Its genesis is entirely elsewhere. Its line of life, in point of fact, begins far beyond the rise of Christianity. The greatest book of Spiritualism in the world is the Old Testament. Next to that, we must turn our attention to the so-called 'heathen' world, with its experiences so well known to Mr. Lang. And still next to that, we have the independent researches and adventures of millions in later days and civilised latitudes. And even organised Spiritualism owes but little to the direct promptings or assistance of Christianity. It is, in fact, purely scientific and experimental; or an incident in human life.

We have just been looking through a pile of cuttings from the papers of the last few weeks. It is astonishing how soon these lose colour, not to say meaning:—so rapidly are we living! We paused before the following, however—such a contrast to the kind of life whose standard we are always trying to keep high!—

A famous Birmingham sporting man named Brown is dead. He was the backer of many redoubtable pugilists, including Frank Murphy, the man who carried everything before him both in England and America.

Some weeks before his death Brown boasted that during his lifetime he had drunk between three and four thousand pounds' worth of champagne.

We often wonder what a gross, brutal, and champagne-sodden animal like that will try to say for himself on the other side.

Here is also a paragraph which is neither off colour nor unmeaning. It is from 'Truth':—

To men whose memories reach back half-a-century there is a touch of irony in the spectacle of a Naval and Military Exhibition to celebrate the jubilee of the Crystal Palace. What a commentary upon the vanity of the illusions of 1851! The Great Exhibition was to usher in a reign of Peace—to bind the nations together in universal brotherhood, to substitute friendly rivalries of art and science and industry for the barbarous conflicts of armies and fleets. But those bright hopes were soon shattered, and now, after the lapse of fifty years, the building consecrated to the triumphs of Peace is given up to the worship of Mars.

Yes; and given up to the worship of Mars, as a celebration of its creation as the Temple of Peace. Such are the painful ironies of life!

Closely connected with that, here is an extract from the Agnostic paper, 'The Literary Guide':—

What are the fruits of the Christian tree? What is the Christian tree? If the only true Christian tree was that which sprang from the sayings of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, it must have perished almost as soon as it began to exist. St. Francis of Assisi tried to plant this tree afresh, but, though his own life was a brilliant example of noble self-sacrifice, the history of the Order which he founded shows that, when practised on any considerable scale, the precepts of Jesus lead only to disastrous and anti-social results.

But take the Christian Churches as forming the Christian tree, and then let us inquire, What are its fruits? Within the Church they have been arrogance and schism, discord and quarrel, torture and burning, imprisonment and social ostracism, almost from the days of the apostles to the present time. And what fruits have the Churches to show as the result of their influence upon the world? Never in the history of mankind have the preparations for war been on so terrible and gigantic a scale as in Christian Europe at this hour. What have the Churches done to moderate the horrors of war, or to hasten the dawn of the golden era of universal peace?

The picture is somewhat one-sided—is perhaps even a trifle unjust; but it is distressing enough that such an indictment should be by anyone considered deserved.

Poor human nature! whatever good thing it touches it taints: whatever good thing touches it, it perverts: and its very visions of unity and brotherly love become matters

of contention and division. It has been so with the Christian Church itself; and it would be unkind to unnecessarily 'point the moral and adorn the tale' with more modern instances. But one of these it is our duty to chronicle. Judge Clarkson, of Nebraska, has just resigned 'a commanding and responsible position in the Christian Science movement,' and withdrawn from it for reasons which he has set forth at great length. The tenor of his manifesto may be gathered from the following brief extract:—

To Mrs. Eddy and her following—speaking, of course, of the general conditions, there being thousands of exceptions—applies what Job recognised in his own case: 'The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me.' (Job iii. 25.) She and they are judged as they judge. They are a self-deceived, self-hypnotised, self-mesmerised people, and are to be pitied from one's heart. I ask of Christian Scientists, who are not so far gone but that they may still hear and see, whether they truly believe that the Christian Science methods and practice have, when the general result thus far is considered, been prolific of the fruits of the Spirit, which are these: 'Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.' (Gal. v. 22.) I contrast with these the fruits of the flesh: 'Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies' (Gal. v. 20), and ask, of those who are so situated as to know the general conditions, which kind of fruits are to the front. If it be admitted that the latter class seem to have the advantage, or even to hold their own, I ask whether we have not for a sufficient length of time experimented with building up a constantly strengthening and expanding and terrorising evil as the cause of our failure to do God's work and to come into His peace.

Mr. A. P. Sinnett, writing in 'The Sun,' says of 'Christian Scientists':—

It is utterly foolish to ignore the dazzling results these people sometimes obtain, however little their proceedings may seem to fall within any definite category of intelligible mesmeric method. I know of half a dozen cases in which serious internal troubles, for which ordinary doctors could prescribe nothing short of formidable operations, have been decisively cured by the Christian Scientists. Because such people often fail and take money for trying their best, the suspicious O.P. regards them as conscious impostors, to whom criminal penalties ought to be awarded. They seem to be working in the dark, and without any clear understanding of the conditions of sensitiveness, and so they do not know in any given case whether they will succeed or fail. But however tainted all proceedings of this kind become when mixed up with pecuniary interests, the rough and brutal behaviour the Christian Scientists are apt to encounter in cases of failure is more discreditable to the intelligence of the period than their own highly unscientific methods are discreditable to them.

The following is another extract, which gives the positive side of the good Judge's faith:—

As, in summer time, well-screened doors and windows bid defiance to insect pests of every kind, so God kept in your consciousness is a mental, spiritual wall, impregnable against, insurmountable by, any evils, any enemies. As you drop off to sleep at night, think, the last thing, of God as Spirit, tender love, life, all about you. Think of yourself as the spiritual child of God, joint heir with Christ of God. Think of yourself as eternal in God. Think of your fellow-men as like you, you and they having your fatherhood and motherhood in God. Think of God, and that God has made all that there really is, and know that God never made anything unlike Himself; so that in making you and your fellow-men, He did not make you the sick, sinful, suffering, unhappy, restless creatures you seem to be, but made you in His image and likeness—the image and likeness of Good—Harmony, Perfection, Spirit. If you wake up during the night, instead of worrying over your sleeplessness or any of your mortal cares, think of God as with you, about you, keeping you, loving you, sheltering and clothing you, healing you, cleansing you. And so, too, in the hours of the day, know that you live in God, move in God, have your being in God; that all your intelligence is from Him, all your strength and courage are from Him, all your eternal peace and joy are in Him. Make Him your companion, and you will find Him preferable to any other.

You need not struggle in your attempts to keep God in your consciousness. Simply know that He is all-present, all-protecting, just as you know that the air is about you, just as you know that the sun shines, just as you know that

your heart beats, just as you know that you breathe; just as you know anything which you have learned through your physical senses, so know God through your spiritual senses.

We have always said that Re-incarnation is a risky thing to play with. It is so fatally easy for some people to fancy they were once kings and queens. We are now assured that the notorious Dr. Dowie has solemnly announced that he is a re-incarnation of the prophet Elijah. If this goes on we shall need a legal registration office, for the appropriation of celebrated characters, to prevent duplications. It might bring in a handsome revenue to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

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Early one Sunday morning I woke, and slept again, dreaming in that second sleep that I saw my mother, who had 'passed over' eighteen years before. She was dressed as she had been in her coffin, and was standing at a doorway opening into a dark passage. She looked very kindly at me, and when I kissed my hand to her she smiled and kissed hers back again. Then I wanted her to notice my husband (elect), who was standing by me, and taking hold of his sleeve, I attracted her attention to him. To my intense joy, she nodded and smiled to him also, and kissing her hand to him, she faded away. I awoke very happy, feeling sure that she approved of him, and when I told the dream to my father he said, 'If your dear mother consents, my child, I cannot withhold mine.' This was the only time I ever dreamt of my mother.

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I was present at the dinner party alluded to, and, so far from being jealous of Frau Rothe, as Professor Sellin has thought proper to suggest, I was delighted beyond measure with the wonderful manifestations which occurred through her mediumship. I am sure, moreover, that there was no antagonistic feeling on the part of any of the guests, and that everything was done to ensure Frau Rothe's comfort and happiness. With the exception of one occasion we were not in the house when Frau Rothe gave her sances.

FLORENCE ELGIE CORNER.

HOW I FOUND THE LIGHT.

A NARRATIVE OF PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT.

By REV. HOLDEN E. SAMPSON, LATE OF DURBAN,
NATAL.

To give an adequate record of the experiences of my life, and particularly of the last few years, is an impossible task in the short account that the columns of a journal can permit. For my humble conviction is that it is necessary to follow the whole history of a man in order to comprehend the true bearing and nature of his future life and destiny. It is therefore at no inconsiderable risk of my statement being absolutely mis-comprehended, and I myself being regarded as a deluded and fanatical creature, that, for the sake only of the benefit it may prove to mankind, and in the interests of the science of spirit and soul, the higher science, which, when properly studied and investigated, will prove the 'Open Sesame' to all the sciences of Nature, I write the following brief narrative of my spiritual experience in the school of occultism.

I am a clergyman of the Church of England, and forty-two years of age. I was born in York, in the year 1859, on June 27th. From my earliest recollections I was a thinker and dreamer, and have never in my life settled down to run with the stream of the ordinary world-life. My father was the most saintly and consistent of all Christian ministers of my acquaintance, absolutely unworldly, and purely innocent of the smallest stain of self-seeking. He belonged to that school of Christian thought that has now almost died out, the Evangelical Calvinistic school. It was the reiterated enunciation of this creed of predestination, original sin, hell and heaven, that made my boy-life a secret terror, paralysing all my ambitions and thoughts of worldly attainments in the incessant fear I had of death and judgment, God's wrath, and hell in the finish. My beloved father's cast-iron creed lent him, during his early and mid-age (the only time when I really knew him, and he me), an extremely rigid and stern aspect, and, for the sake of my ultimate good, he visited upon my boyish peccadilloes the sternness of a judge, as I thought his manner and treatment of me at that time. I came so to regard my father in the light of the human personification of the stern, relentless God of his Calvinistic creed that I trembled at his footstep, and dreaded the glance of his eye, as the criminal dreads the gaze of his judge.

Finally life became unbearable to my extremely sensitive nature. I ran away from home at sixteen years of age, but my father afterwards placed me in a large wholesale merchant's house in Sheffield, where, though kindly treated by my employers, I lived a miserable life for five years. Being naturally a spiritual and sensitive creature, and physically extremely weak, I suffered the acutest mental torture from the rough and hard life I lived among a set of typical Sheffield workmen, who, as is their wont, with all their generosity and goodwill, had no compassion for a young 'gentling,' who must take his lot as they all did. And so I did; and never a soul heard me breathe a complaint of the hard life I endured. But at the age of twenty-one years I was free from the yoke of apprenticeship, and, without delay, staying only a few days at my father's house, I moved to London. I failed altogether in my hopes of obtaining any suitable employment, and, after a month or two in endeavouring to accustom myself to a high stool and a desk in the firm of City merchants, I soon persuaded the firm that I was no good as a clerk, and received my *congé*.

My father then offered to send me to the London College of Divinity, Highbury, to study for holy orders. At Highbury I remained until I was ordained in 1884. During the latter part of my training, I had the privilege of coming under the powerful spiritual influence of a revered and holy man, then nigh upon his ninetieth year, a venerable old saint and philosopher, Dr. Asa Mahan, one time Principal of Oberlin College, U.S.A. This man taught a doctrine which he called 'The Baptism of the Holy Ghost,' which raised the entire subject of the 'Holy Ghost' to a level immeasurably above the current orthodox teaching. With a bounding

heart I embraced that teaching, and became a warm and earnest disciple of this veritable Master of the Faith of God. It brought a new incentive to my life, a spiritual exuberance, which communicated itself to all with whom I came in contact, a power of preaching, of testimony, of persuasion, of devotion, and self-sacrifice, which soon brought me into difficulties with the stable orthodoxy of the Church. It happened in this manner. On my coming under the noble and lofty teaching of Dr. Asa Mahan, my soul went out for the great mass of suffering humanity that were crowded in the slums of East London. I gave up all my leisure time at college to preaching in the streets in Ratcliff Highway and Whitechapel, receiving many a 'baptism' of brickbats and mud at the hands of the 'Hooligans' of that date. On my ordination, I selected the curacy of St. Benet's, Mile End-road, Stepney, and there I made all the effort in my power, according to the 'Evangelical' light in which I had been trained at college. Only I was charged with the 'heresy of Perfectionism,' because I preached everywhere, as the main plank of my teaching, that a man 'filled with the Holy Ghost' had no room, occasion, or excuse for 'sin.'

One Sunday I preached to this effect in my church, and instanced an 'uncontrollable temper' as incompatible with a man 'filled with the Holy Ghost.' The sermon proved epochal in my destiny, physically and materially. My worthy and otherwise estimable vicar was himself a man with a temper, as I found afterwards, and was mortally provoked at my sermon. On the following day, meeting him in the vestry, he lost all control of himself and treated me to a fulmination on my self-conceit at daring to preach that I was an 'holier man than he was.' He concluded by saying, 'If I held the doctrines that you do, Sampson, I would not eat the bread of the Church for another hour.' I parted with him in silence, and, after consulting with one or two clergy and fellow-thinkers, three of us left the Church there and then, and offered our services to what we fondly believed to be the only *live* Christian institution existing, the Salvation Army. I remained in that organisation long enough to be persuaded in my mind that I had made a mistake. I found that the 'spirit' of the Salvation Army was not the same spirit that moved me. It came to a strange finality, in this wise. I was then at the head of the training home for cadets, at Clapton, under the supervision of Mr. Herbert Booth, a young and clever man, General Booth's youngest son. He was delicate, and the spiritual management of that large institution, on the men's side, was entirely in my charge—a work I loved and magnified in the light of the great spiritual responsibility it involved. One day I called all the cadets together, and addressed them on the subject of praying for the Holy Ghost. The results of that address were very remarkable. Many of the young men wept and confessed to unacknowledged wrong-doing, and some even to crimes, committed before their 'conversion' but never acknowledged. All these men proved their repentance by communicating to those they had wronged the confession of their wrong-doing. Some of these young men begged permission to spend the night together in prayer, which I granted. I went to bed at twelve o'clock, and, worn out, fell asleep. At three o'clock I was awakened by a curious feeling of some inaudible sound, so to speak, and arose in a state of mystification. Then I bethought me of these young men at prayer. I quickly went to the room I had allowed them to occupy for the purpose, and a strange sight met me. All these young men were either in a state of ecstasy, and oblivious to mundane things, or were lying rigid on the floor. I examined these latter. They were perfectly unconscious and rigid, and the only sign of life was in the beautiful smile which lit up their countenances. But they were talking, in a distant sort of tone of voice, *as if they were a long way from themselves*, so to speak. Neither did they stir a move. They were apparently conversing with spirits of departed friends and relations, and the nature of their conversation was wonderful to listen to. After a great deal of trouble I got these men to their beds, and, by dint of a commanding voice, I succeeded in sufficiently arousing the unconscious ones, and helping their tottering feet to their beds also. These phenomena continued for five days, during which I neither slept nor took food, except in one or two occasional snatches.

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NATAL.

To give an adequate record of the experiences of my life, and particularly of the last few years, is an impossible task in the short account that the columns of a journal can permit. For my humble conviction is that it is necessary to follow the whole history of a man in order to comprehend the true bearing and nature of his future life and destiny. It is therefore at no inconsiderable risk of my statement being absolutely mis-comprehended, and I myself being regarded as a deluded and fanatical creature, that, for the sake only of the benefit it may prove to mankind, and in the interests of the science of spirit and soul, the higher science, which, when properly studied and investigated, will prove the 'Open Sesame' to all the sciences of Nature, I write the following brief narrative of my spiritual experience in the school of occultism.

I am a clergyman of the Church of England, and forty-two years of age. I was born in York, in the year 1859, on June 27th. From my earliest recollections I was a thinker and dreamer, and have never in my life settled down to run with the stream of the ordinary world-life. My father was the most saintly and consistent of all Christian ministers of my acquaintance, absolutely unworldly, and purely innocent of the smallest stain of self-seeking. He belonged to that school of Christian thought that has now almost died out, the Evangelical Calvinistic school. It was the reiterated enunciation of this creed of predestination, original sin, hell and heaven, that made my boy-life a secret terror, paralysing all my ambitions and thoughts of worldly attainments in the incessant fear I had of death and judgment, God's wrath, and hell in the finish. My beloved father's cast-iron creed lent him, during his early and mid-age (the only time when I really knew him, and he me), an extremely rigid and stern aspect, and, for the sake of my ultimate good, he visited upon my boyish peccadilloes the sternness of a judge, as I thought his manner and treatment of me at that time. I came so to regard my father in the light of the human personification of the stern, relentless God of his Calvinistic creed that I trembled at his footstep, and dreaded the glance of his eye, as the criminal dreads the gaze of his judge.

Finally life became unbearable to my extremely sensitive nature. I ran away from home at sixteen years of age, but my father afterwards placed me in a large wholesale merchant's house in Sheffield, where, though kindly treated by my employers, I lived a miserable life for five years. Being naturally a spiritual and sensitive creature, and physically extremely weak, I suffered the acutest mental torture from the rough and hard life I lived among a set of typical Sheffield workmen, who, as is their wont, with all their generosity and goodwill, had no compassion for a young 'gentling,' who must take his lot as they all did. And so I did; and never a soul heard me breathe a complaint of the hard life I endured. But at the age of twenty-one years I was free from the yoke of apprenticeship, and, without delay, staying only a few days at my father's house, I moved to London. I failed altogether in my hopes of obtaining any suitable employment, and, after a month or two in endeavouring to accustom myself to a high stool and a desk in the firm of City merchants, I soon persuaded the firm that I was no good as a clerk, and received my *congé*.

My father then offered to send me to the London College of Divinity, Highbury, to study for holy orders. At Highbury I remained until I was ordained in 1884. During the latter part of my training, I had the privilege of coming under the powerful spiritual influence of a revered and holy man, then nigh upon his ninetieth year, a venerable old saint and philosopher, Dr. Asa Mahan, one time Principal of Oberlin College, U.S.A. This man taught a doctrine which he called 'The Baptism of the Holy Ghost,' which raised the entire subject of the 'Holy Ghost' to a level immeasurably above the current orthodox teaching. With a bounding

heart I embraced that teaching, and became a warm and earnest disciple of this veritable Master of the Faith of God. It brought a new incentive to my life, a spiritual exuberance, which communicated itself to all with whom I came in contact, a power of preaching, of testimony, of persuasion, of devotion, and self-sacrifice, which soon brought me into difficulties with the stable orthodoxy of the Church. It happened in this manner. On my coming under the noble and lofty teaching of Dr. Asa Mahan, my soul went out for the great mass of suffering humanity that were crowded in the slums of East London. I gave up all my leisure time at college to preaching in the streets in Ratcliff Highway and Whitechapel, receiving many a 'baptism' of brickbats and mud at the hands of the 'Hooligans' of that date. On my ordination, I selected the curacy of St. Benet's, Mile End-road, Stepney, and there I made all the effort in my power, according to the 'Evangelical' light in which I had been trained at college. Only I was charged with the 'heresy of Perfectionism,' because I preached everywhere, as the main plank of my teaching, that a man 'filled with the Holy Ghost' had no room, occasion, or excuse for 'sin.'

One Sunday I preached to this effect in my church, and instanced an 'uncontrollable temper' as incompatible with a man 'filled with the Holy Ghost.' The sermon proved epochal in my destiny, physically and materially. My worthy and otherwise estimable vicar was himself a man with a temper, as I found afterwards, and was mortally provoked at my sermon. On the following day, meeting him in the vestry, he lost all control of himself and treated me to a fulmination on my self-conceit at daring to preach that I was an 'holier man than he was.' He concluded by saying, 'If I held the doctrines that you do, Sampson, I would not eat the bread of the Church for another hour.' I parted with him in silence, and, after consulting with one or two clergy and fellow-thinkers, three of us left the Church there and then, and offered our services to what we fondly believed to be the only *live* Christian institution existing, the Salvation Army. I remained in that organisation long enough to be persuaded in my mind that I had made a mistake. I found that the 'spirit' of the Salvation Army was not the same spirit that moved me. It came to a strange finality, in this wise. I was then at the head of the training home for cadets, at Clapton, under the supervision of Mr. Herbert Booth, a young and clever man, General Booth's youngest son. He was delicate, and the spiritual management of that large institution, on the men's side, was entirely in my charge—a work I loved and magnified in the light of the great spiritual responsibility it involved. One day I called all the cadets together, and addressed them on the subject of praying for the Holy Ghost. The results of that address were very remarkable. Many of the young men wept and confessed to unacknowledged wrong-doing, and some even to crimes, committed before their 'conversion' but never acknowledged. All these men proved their repentance by communicating to those they had wronged the confession of their wrong-doing. Some of these young men begged permission to spend the night together in prayer, which I granted. I went to bed at twelve o'clock, and, worn out, fell asleep. At three o'clock I was awakened by a curious feeling of some inaudible sound, so to speak, and arose in a state of mystification. Then I bethought me of these young men at prayer. I quickly went to the room I had allowed them to occupy for the purpose, and a strange sight met me. All these young men were either in a state of ecstasy, and oblivious to mundane things, or were lying rigid on the floor. I examined these latter. They were perfectly unconscious and rigid, and the only sign of life was in the beautiful smile which lit up their countenances. But they were talking, in a distant sort of tone of voice, *as if they were a long way from themselves*, so to speak. Neither did their lips move. They were apparently conversing with spirits of departed friends and relations, and the nature of their conversation was wonderful to listen to. After a great deal of trouble I got these men to their beds, and, by dint of a commanding voice, I succeeded in sufficiently arousing the unconscious ones, and helping their tottering feet to their beds also. These phenomena continued for five days, during which I neither slept nor took food, except in one or two occasional snatches.

But Nemesis came on the sixth day. The tidings of these proceedings reached headquarters, and Mr. Herbert Booth came down and delivered a series of addresses on the subject of 'To work is to pray'; and so ended these strange 'séances.' A week afterwards I went for a brief rest (they thought I needed it after all these 'spiritual gymnastics') at Hastings. I went, *incog.*, to a 'holiness meeting' of the Salvation Army, was recognised, and invited to address the meeting. I did so, with the result that half a-dozen people were taken with the same trance-like seizure, and the scenes of Clapton were repeated at this Hastings 'barracks.' I should say that, previous to my joining the Salvation Army, when on a fortnight's visit to Jersey, I addressed a crowded meeting at St. Heliers, and one strong and good man had a similar trance-like seizure. After this extinction of the spiritual movement at Clapton, which I now believe was a 'Spiritualist' movement, and would, if unchecked, have created the Salvation Army into a powerful centre of the Higher Spiritualist activity, I left the Salvation Army.

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FOOD IN RELATION TO HEALTH.

BY 'VERAX.'

(Continued from page 382.)

Dr. Dewey's personal experiences are extremely interesting and instructive, and indicate the evolution of his theory and practice as regards the 'no-breakfast plan.' He had been attending sick people, and was himself a sick man, suffering acutely from indigestion. He reached a condition when general collapse seemed impending; and his friends began to comment upon his wretched looks, but none were wise enough to realise that his need was for words that reminded of life, not death. Chancing to meet a friend who had recently returned from Europe, the traveller began to talk about the exceedingly light breakfasts that were customary in all the great centres where he had been. Shortly afterwards Dr. Dewey remembered that when in ordinary health he had no desire to partake of breakfast and he ceased to take it, but he experienced such a sense of general exhaustion from power wasted over an unneeded meal on the previous evening that his morning coffee was craved as the morning dram by the chronic toper. But now, his abstinence from the morning meal resulted in a sense of comfort, cheer, and such mental and physical energy as had never been realised by him since his young manhood, and the dinner which followed was taken with an acuteness of relish, and a power of digestion, that were a new, rich experience, and he abandoned all eating in the morning, with such good effects upon himself that his friends soon remarked upon the improvement. Up to this time his war had solely been against feeding when acute sickness had abolished all desire for food, and he had never thought of advising anyone to do without food when desired, much less that any of the three daily meals should be given up; but the improvement in his own case was so immediate and so marked that he began to advise the same course to others, with the result that each one would make known the redeeming work to suffering friends, and so the idea spread in a friend-to-friend way. Ordinarily in America the breakfast is believed to be the most important meal of the day and is regarded as being absolutely necessary as a means for supplying the strength that is required for the forenoon labours. This belief is urged with an insistence which warrants the conclusion that it is popularly imagined that a night's sleep—instead of being strengthening and refreshing—is more exhausting than the day of labour. To go into the fresh air, or do anything 'on an empty stomach' is generally held to be inviting a fainting fit by the way; but there were scarcely any cases in which Dr. Dewey's 'no-breakfast plan' was fairly tried, in which there was not sufficient improvement to prevent all possibility of a return to the heavy breakfast that had been abandoned. 'Many of my patients became thin under the régime,' says Dr. Dewey, 'but as this was attended by an increase of strength, not even the alarm of anxious friends without faith was ever able to induce a return fully to the old ways.' Here, then, is a gleam of hope and promise for those who suffer from too much bulk. Why continue to be stout and burdened when you can reduce your size and obtain strength by the simple plan of abstaining from breakfast, for Dr. Dewey affirms 'that, in every case and in every respect, except the weight-loss, the improvement was wonderful!' But how could the loss of weight be explained? To this question he replies:—

'After much thought there was a sudden flash of the truth: there was an abnormal weight and bulk, due to the general dropsy of debility, similar in character to the swelling of the feet and limbs in the old and feeble. The thickened walls of the blood-vessels, under the new conditions, toned with health, caused absorption and relieved the sufferer from the distension resulting from the effusion of water into the cellular tissues; thus a toning up of the entire vascular system results from the adoption of the no-breakfast plan and the fasting cure. It seems to me that no method of health culture, none in the treatment of disease, can have a sound physiological basis where the facts—that food only restores waste, that lost strength is only restored by sleep—are not taken into account. . . . For a time I failed to look beyond the ailments of the stomach for curative results, until really surprising news began to reach me from many sources. There would come to me those who

had to tell about clearer vision, acuter hearing, a stronger sense of smelling, &c.,—senses that were not thought to be affected by disease; or there would be news that chronic, local ailments, as nasal or bronchial catarrhs, skin diseases, hemorrhoids, or other intractable diseases, in some mysterious manner were undergoing a decline under the new régime.

The "no-breakfast plan" with me proved a matter of life unto death. With my morning coffee only, there were forenoons of the highest physical energy, the clearest condition of mind, and the acutest sense of everything enjoyable; but the afternoons were always in marked sluggishness, by contrast, from the taxing of digestion. Without realising that the heavy meals of the day were a tax upon the brain, I began to feel more generally tired out than the severest taxing from a long forenoon of general activity ever made me, and there would be several hours of unfitness for doing any kind of service well. . . . It was only after the missing link was found and added to the chain that I could fully realise the enormous waste of strength and the mental and moral degradation from eating food in excess, because the anticipations of relish are taken for the actual needs of the body; the fact being that over-eating is so universal from the general ignorance of practical physiology that few stomachs have time for a full clearing, with the needed rest, before the time for another filling arrives.*

The conclusion that is arrived at by Dr. Dewey is that for the highest possibilities for a day of human service there must be a night of sound sleep; and then one may work with muscle or with mind much longer without fatigue if no strength is wasted over untimely food in the stomach, no enforced means to develop health and strength. When one has worked long enough to become generally tired there should be a period of rest, in order to regain power to digest what shall be so eaten as to cause the brain the least waste of its powers through failure to assimilate. One need not always wait until noon to eat the first meal. Those in good health have found that they can easily go till noon before breaking the fast; but in proportion as one is weak and failing the rule should be to stop all work as soon as fatigue becomes marked, and then rest until power to digest is restored. To eat when one is tired is to add a burden of labour to all the energies of life, and with the certainty that no wastes will be restored thereby.

In regard to drink, Dr. Dewey strongly condemns the use of alcoholic liquors and contends that water is the body's only need, and that in very moderate quantities, as 'no mortal ever needs a drop for health's sake except when thirsty. . . . Taking large quantities without thirst only entails added work upon the kidneys, and thus it becomes a factor in the development of Bright's disease and other forms where the tendency exists. The actual need of water is made clear in every case; the need always disappears before hunger can become possible.'

The readers of 'LIGHT' will be familiar with the long fast of Mr. Milton Rathbun, of New York, in June, 1899, when he was twenty-eight days without food of any kind; and again in 1900, when he fasted for thirty-five days until 'keen hunger' was experienced. He was engaged in his ordinary business on both occasions and was (and still is) in splendid health. Mr. Rathbun was one of Dr. Dewey's earliest converts and is a living example of the benefits of his 'no-breakfast plan.' Full particulars of these 'fasts' are given in this book,* as also a number of others, of even longer duration, which were followed by beneficial results.

The fact that 'the brain is the real nutrient centre of the body,' was recently emphasised by the 'Medical Brief'; and 'Scientific Siftings' stated that 'medical scientists have now demonstrated that a brain cell actually loses part of its substance during action,' and that 'it has been found that if an animal whose brain cells have been exhausted is permitted to sleep, its cells readily recuperate, and new material is supplied from the blood until the cell is as good as new.' These testimonies are confirmatory of Dr. Dewey's main argument, and the experiences of his patients, and many of those who from reading his book have adopted his 'plan,' in England as well as in America, bear out his claims as regards the beneficial effects of the practical application of his

teachings in daily life. Dr. Dewey contends that 'the plan not to eat in time of health until there are normal need and desire for food, which are only developed after several hours of morning labour, and not to eat at all during acute sickness, are the easiest of all means to maintain health, and to regain it when lost.' At any rate the remedy is so simple that it is well worth a trial, especially by those who suffer from nervous strain and dyspepsia, or who are becoming too stout, or who desire to cultivate psychic sensitiveness, strength of will, mental power, and clairvoyant perception. The Rev. Geo. F. Pentecost, D.D., testifies that though for a day or two after giving up his breakfast he suffered slight headaches, he soon found they were just the dying pains of a bad habit. After a week had passed he never thought of wanting breakfast, and felt no suggestion of hunger before one o'clock. From boyhood he had been subject to severe sick headaches, but these all disappeared after he gave up his breakfast. He lost a large portion of his surplus fat and was still decreasing when he wrote his experiences after a few months' trial of the new plan. He said:—

'My complexion and eyes have cleared, and all fulness of face and the tendency to flushness in the head have disappeared. I experience no fulness and unpleasantness after eating as I often did before. As a matter of fact, though I enjoy my meals, I do not think I eat as much as I used to do; but I am conscious of better digestion; my food does not lie so long in my stomach, and that useful organ seems to have gone out of the gas-producing business. I am conscious of a lighter step and a more elastic spring in my limbs. I go to my study and to my pulpit on an empty stomach without any sense of loss of strength, mentally or physically—on the other hand, with freshness and vigour which is delightful. In this respect I am quite sure that I am in every way advantaged.'

This seems, indeed, to be the unanimous testimony of those who have fairly and fully adopted the 'No Breakfast' cure.

A GOOD TEST.

In a recent issue the Philadelphia 'Daily Bulletin' published the following testimony, by A. C. Armstrong, to some interesting experiences which go to prove spirit return:—

'On August 21st, 1887, my sister, a fragile girl of eighteen, a gentleman, whom I will call Mr. H., and myself, placed our hands upon a small stand to obtain, if we could, what are termed "table tipplings." My sister's right hand was immediately controlled, or began to move involuntarily. In a few moments she could not stop it, and we, two strong men, were equally powerless to do so. After the whole family and some of the neighbours had given up similar efforts in despair, my oldest brother marked out the alphabet on a sheet of paper and placed it upon the stand, my sister taking a seat in such a position that she could not see the letters. Then the runaway hand would touch first one then another, and my brother wrote on a slate the letters indicated until he had three rows across the slate, but could make no sense of it. Placing the slate on the stand and giving the hand the pencil, it pointed them off into words, and he read "Jefferson D. Snodgrass, New Martinsville, West Virginia, July 4th, 1886." My brother, unknown to us, had in 1882-3 corresponded with a young man by that name at that place. The last he heard from him was a postal card in July, 1883; so he wrote to the postmaster at New Martinsville asking if Mr. S. or his parents were still residing there. His reply was "Jefferson D. Snodgrass, of whom you inquire, died of consumption about July 1st of last year. His parents still reside here." I would add that none of the persons mentioned had ever seen anything of Spiritualism before, except Mr. H., and he was not present when the intelligence was obtained, having gone away to see if the annoying influence that moved her hand would depart with him, but it did not leave until satisfactory communication was established. Now, to my brother and sister and myself this experience is real evidence. To obtain it we only complied with the laws of nature. I can only say if you want the real evidence do likewise and obtain it. There is no patent or copyright on the process.'

If the facts occurred as set forth above the experiences narrated by A. C. Armstrong are indeed valuable as evidence of spirit influence and identity, but it is unfortunate that the writer's address was not also given for the satisfaction of the critical reader.

*The No-Breakfast Plan and the Fasting Cure.' By E. A. DEWEY, D.D. Price 4s. 6d. net. London publishers: L. N. Fowler and Co., Imperial-buildings, Ludgate-circus, E.C.

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MR. F. W. H. MYERS.—The will, with a codicil, of Mr. Frederic William Henry Myers, of Leckhampton House, Cambridge, who died on January 17th, has been proved, the value of the estate being £37,370.

had to tell about clearer vision, acuter hearing, a stronger sense of smelling, &c.—senses that were not thought to be affected by disease; or there would be news that chronic, local ailments, as nasal or bronchial catarrhs, skin diseases, hemorrhoids, or other intractable diseases, in some mysterious manner were undergoing a decline under the new régime.

'The no-breakfast plan' with me proved a matter of life unto death. With my morning coffee only, there were forenoons of the highest physical energy, the clearest condition of mind, and the acutest sense of everything enjoyable; but the afternoons were always in marked sluggishness, by contrast, from the taxing of digestion. Without realising that the heavy meals of the day were a tax upon the brain, I began to feel more generally tired out than the severest taxing from a long forenoon of general activity ever made me, and there would be several hours of unfitness for doing any kind of service well. It was only after the missing link was found and added to the chain that I could fully realise the enormous waste of strength and the mental and moral degradation from eating food in excess, because the enticements of relish are taken for the actual needs of the body; the fact being that over-eating is so universal from the general ignorance of practical physiology that few stomachs have time for a full clearing, with the needed rest, before the time for another filling arrives.'

The conclusion that is arrived at by Dr. Dewey is that for the highest possibilities for a day of human service there must be a night of sound sleep; and then one may work with muscle or with mind much longer without fatigue if no strength is wasted over untimely food in the stomach, no enforced means to develop health and strength. When one has worked long enough to become generally tired there should be a period of rest, in order to regain power to digest what shall be so eaten as to cause the brain the least waste of its powers through failure to assimilate. One need not always wait until noon to eat the first meal. Those in good health have found that they can easily go till noon before breaking the fast; but in proportion as one is weak and ailing the rule should be to stop all work as soon as fatigue becomes marked, and then rest until power to digest is restored. To eat when one is tired is to add a burden of labour to all the energies of life, and with the certainty that no wastes will be restored thereby.

In regard to drink, Dr. Dewey strongly condemns the use of alcoholic liquors and contends that water is the body's only need, and that in very moderate quantities, as 'no mortal ever needs a drop for health's sake except when thirsty. . . . Taking large quantities without thirst only entails added work upon the kidneys, and thus it becomes a factor in the development of Bright's disease and other forms where the tendency exists. The actual need of water is made clear in every case; the need always disappears before hunger can become possible.'

The readers of 'LIGHT' will be familiar with the long fast of Mr. Milton Rathbun, of New York, in June, 1899, when he was twenty-eight days without food of any kind; and again in 1900, when he fasted for thirty-five days until 'keen hunger' was experienced. He was engaged in his ordinary business on both occasions and was (and still is) in splendid health. Mr. Rathbun was one of Dr. Dewey's earliest converts and is a living example of the benefits of his 'no-breakfast plan.' Full particulars of these 'fasts' are given in this book,* as also a number of others, of even longer duration, which were followed by beneficial results.

The fact that 'the brain is the real nutrient centre of the body,' was recently emphasised by the 'Medical Brief'; and 'Scientific Siftings' stated that 'medical scientists have now demonstrated that a brain cell actually loses part of its substance during action,' and that 'it has been found that if an animal whose brain cells have been exhausted is permitted to sleep, its cells readily recuperate, and new material is supplied from the blood until the cell is as good as new.' These testimonies are confirmatory of Dr. Dewey's main argument, and the experiences of his patients, and many of those who from reading his book have adopted his 'plan,' in England as well as in America, bear out his claims as regards the beneficial effects of the practical application of his

teachings in daily life. Dr. Dewey contends that 'the plan not to eat in time of health until there are normal need and desire for food, which are only developed after several hours of morning labour, and not to eat at all during acute sickness, are the easiest of all means to maintain health, and to regain it when lost.' At any rate the remedy is so simple that it is well worth a trial, especially by those who suffer from nervous strain and dyspepsia, or who are becoming too stout, or who desire to cultivate psychic sensitiveness, strength of will, mental power, and clairvoyant perception. The Rev. Geo. F. Pentecost, D.D., testifies that though for a day or two after giving up his breakfast he suffered slight headaches, he soon found they were just the dying pains of a bad habit. After a week had passed he never thought of wanting breakfast, and felt no suggestion of hunger before one o'clock. From boyhood he had been subject to severe sick headaches, but these all disappeared after he gave up his breakfast. He lost a large portion of his surplus fat and was still decreasing when he wrote his experiences after a few months' trial of the new plan. He said:—

'My complexion and eyes have cleared, and all fullness of face and the tendency to flushness in the head have disappeared. I experience no fullness and unpleasantness after eating as I often did before. As a matter of fact, though I enjoy my meals, I do not think I eat as much as I used to do; but I am conscious of better digestion; my food does not lie so long in my stomach, and that useful organ seems to have gone out of the gas-producing business. I am conscious of a lighter step and a more elastic spring in my limbs. I go to my study and to my pulpit on an empty stomach without any sense of loss of strength, mentally or physically—on the other hand, with freshness and vigour which is delightful. In this respect I am quite sure that I am in every way advantaged.'

This seems, indeed, to be the unanimous testimony of those who have fairly and fully adopted the 'No Breakfast' cure.

A GOOD TEST.

In a recent issue the Philadelphia 'Daily Bulletin' published the following testimony, by A. C. Armstrong, to some interesting experiences which go to prove spirit return:—

'On August 21st, 1887, my sister, a fragile girl of eighteen, a gentleman, whom I will call Mr. H., and myself, placed our hands upon a small stand to obtain, if we could, what are termed "table tipplings." My sister's right hand was immediately controlled, or began to move involuntarily. In a few moments she could not stop it, and we, two strong men, were equally powerless to do so. After the whole family and some of the neighbours had given up similar efforts in despair, my oldest brother marked out the alphabet on a sheet of paper and placed it upon the stand, my sister taking a seat in such a position that she could not see the letters. Then the runaway hand would touch first one then another, and my brother wrote on a slate the letters indicated until he had three rows across the slate, but could make no sense of it. Placing the slate on the stand and giving the hand the pencil, it pointed them off into words, and he read "Jefferson D. Snodgrass, New Martinsville, West Virginia, July 4th, 1886." My brother, unknown to us, had in 1882-3 corresponded with a young man by that name at that place. The last he heard from him was a postal card in July, 1883; so he wrote to the postmaster at New Martinsville asking if Mr. S. or his parents were still residing there. His reply was "Jefferson D. Snodgrass, of whom you inquire, died of consumption about July 1st of last year. His parents still reside here." I would add that none of the persons mentioned had ever seen anything of Spiritualism before, except Mr. H., and he was not present when the intelligence was obtained, having gone away to see if the annoying influence that moved her hand would depart with him, but it did not leave until satisfactory communication was established. Now, to my brother and sister and myself this experience is real evidence. To obtain it we only complied with the laws of nature. I can only say if you want the real evidence do likewise and obtain it. There is no patent or copyright on the process.'

If the facts occurred as set forth above the experiences narrated by A. C. Armstrong are indeed valuable as evidence of spirit influence and identity, but it is unfortunate that the writer's address was not also given for the satisfaction of the critical reader.

*'The No-Breakfast Plan and the Fasting Cure.' By E. A. Dewey, M.D. Price 4s. 6d. net. London publishers: L. N. Fowler and Co., Imperial-buildings, Ludgate-circus, E.C.

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TAULER AND BEHMEN.

Two curious books have just been published by Messrs. Methuen and Co.: one of them, 'Thirty-six sermons by John Tauler, in their series of books known as 'The Library of Devotion'; the other 'Dialogues on the Supersensual Life,' by Jacob Behmen. It is never quite safe to speculate as to the reason why works of this class attract attention or come into demand; but it is a fact that at the present time they are offered to us from several centres, both of business and propaganda. May we hope that the world is getting a little weary and dejected with its debauch of wealth-worship, pleasure and strife? In all external things, the two notable mystics, John Tauler (1350) and Jacob Behmen, or Boehme (1600), were 'wide as the poles asunder.' The one was an intense Roman Catholic, a vehement adorer of 'The Virgin Mary,' 'mother of God,' and an impassioned preacher: the other was very closely akin to our George Fox, a poor shoemaker, a theological outcast from the churches, and a seer. But, in the deep things, they were at one, as all true mystics are.

Without knowing it, or without it being brought right home to him, Tauler's Mariolatry, churchmanship and church machinery were only the vehicle, or, at best, the symbols of his soul's faith. The precious jewel lay within. A vast deal too much has been said about Tauler, as 'a reformer before the Reformation.' He was, in truth, not a reformer of the Church at all: was, in truth, far more like a fiery son of it who would have died in its defence. But, in his mysticism, lay the germs of almost every imaginable protestantism, nonconformity, and heresy. In fact, his leading thought, as a teacher of spiritual religion, was the central doctrine of the Friends—the presence and power of The Inner Light.

There is much like this in Tauler's sermons;—in fact, this is about the sum of them: 'The soul must, above all things, exert all her strength to subdue her own free will, ready, for God's sake, to learn to give up all things, both great and small.' This is a melody, of which Tauler gives us a hundred variations, reminding us of Tolstoy who practically teaches as Tauler did, though with the utter sweeping away of all his doctrinal and ritualistic symbolism. The following, for instance, might have been written by Tolstoy:—

See how all this misery is brought upon this foolish people by praise and flattery, so that their salvation even is placed in great jeopardy. He who in this life cannot bring himself to feel peaceful, friendly, brotherly Love for his neighbour, and who cannot be truly resigned and obedient to his superiors, is in great danger of losing eternal salva-

tion. He who is not acting thus, will not be helped by all his prostrations, mortification of the flesh, or anything else, however important it may seem. It would be far better and more useful for men to set aside all visible and outward works of discipline, till they had learnt the true and real virtues of love and resignation, and had a real desire to do all only for the love of God and of their neighbours.

This is deep ploughing; and no wonder it tended to make some keen onlookers wonder to what the teaching of this ardent but practical and spiritual churchman might lead.

The testimony of Behmen was immeasurably more subtle in expression, but it came to the same thing. He was not so much a teacher, as a seer. He did not preach, he wrote; but he did not write as a literary man, and there is a great deal about his mystical style as well as mystical thought which is extremely like some forms of 'passive writing' we have seen. In reality, he was a medium. Early in life, when a poor boy, he had a remarkable meeting with a stranger who solemnly dedicated him to his work, and disappeared. Later on, he had a quickening of vision which suggested to him that he could 'look into the principles and deepest foundations of things.' Just before his death, he called his son and asked him if he did not hear the beautiful music, and soon after 'bade them farewell with a smile,' and died, saying, 'Now I go hence into Paradise.'

'The title of this book,' says the editor, 'is not altogether a good one'; for the idea of it 'is rather of Life behind, than above, the life of sense'; for Behmen held, as a central thought, that the Soul is a Being which has will or desire; that Will or Desire is of the very essence of the Soul; that this Desire is its torment or its bliss, 'a Fire of Anguish' or 'a Fire of Love': 'a Fire of anguish, so long as it is shut up in its dark self (or) a fire of love when it pierces through and escapes from its dark self-prison and burns freely and softly in unison with the Divine Love.' Here, as in the teaching of Tauler, we are led to the pure mystic's thought, that the 'Light-centre' is 'the Heart of God,' and that this is to be found, not in place, but in spirit-condition.

The third Dialogue, 'concerning Heaven and Hell,' is pure Spiritualism. The Scholar asks of the Master; 'Whither goeth the Soul when the Body dieth?' The Master pithily replies: 'There is no necessity for it to go any whither.' 'How not?' said the Scholar, 'must not the Soul leave the body at death and go either to Heaven or Hell?' 'It need not go forth,' is the imperturbable reply: 'the Soul hath Heaven and Hell within itself.' 'Understand what Heaven is. It is but the turning in of the Will to the Love of God. Wheresoever thou findest God manifesting Himself in Love, there thou findest Heaven, without travelling for it so much as one foot. And by this understand also what Hell is and where it is.' Then 'the Master' speedily drifts to that which is the very breath and soul of the mystic: 'Know, my son, that when the Ground of the Will yieldeth itself up to God, then it sinketh out of its own Self, and out of and beyond all ground and place, that is or can be imagined, into a certain unknown Deep, where God only is manifest, and where he only worketh and willeth. And then it becometh nothing to itself, as to its own working and willing, and so God worketh and willeth in it.'

This, as we have said, is pure mysticism. There is truth in it, of course, and the truth has vast ethical and spiritual possibilities, but it has also its perils: for the passionate flinging back of the spirit upon itself, in order to find God, may only lead to the subtle uprising of self, with the imaginary endorsement of God. Nor does it matter that this flinging back of the spirit upon itself is accompanied by the vehement cry: 'Sink self; destroy thine own will;

and in the emptiness and nothingness of thine own desire, seek and find Him': for, even so, the subtle process may end in unknowingly putting the inner self on the Throne, and calling it God. But still, the teaching is ethically and spiritually good,—needing, however, in addition to the suggestion of the grave danger we have already referred to, this further serious consideration, that no pietism, however saintly, could compensate for the loss of personal volition and of the keen sense of individual self-reliance and responsibility.

'THE BLESSEDNESS OF SUFFERING.'

In dealing with controversial questions it is important to choose our words with care and to be very explicit in our definitions. When we say that 'Suffering is a blessing,' we merely imply that suffering somehow or other confers or procures a blessing for us, that we purchase something pleasant—self-development, some of the virtues, or future bliss, for instance—by our suffering, which acts as a teacher or a temperer; we assert, in fact, that suffering has a utility. But if we speak of 'the blessedness of suffering,' we virtually assert that suffering *in itself* is a blessed thing; that it is a good thing to be in pain; that, in fact, bad is good. A great deal of sickly, unhealthy sentiment, and some bad philosophy, come from not perceiving the vital distinction in this instance between those paronymous words, 'blessing' and 'blessedness.' All suffering exhausts vitality, it weakens, breaks down the will, renders the sufferer humble and obedient; and it is very natural that it should be employed by the Church of Rome to keep the people in a humble and obedient condition. The natural result of such discipline is an abject mental state in monks and nuns, a 'perfection' which it takes a pious mystic like Eckhard to appreciate.

The idea that Jesus was 'a man of sorrows' is very often misunderstood in much the same way; so that it has come to be thought that there is something intrinsically 'blessed' in being reviled, spat upon, scourged and crucified. The sorrows of Jesus were altruistic; He felt the whole weight of the misery of mankind; anything but sorrow was impossible for Him during His life on earth, because He had ever present in His mind the sufferings of humanity. So little has this been understood by Christians, so lightly do the miseries of 'the great Orphan' sit upon their shoulders, that for centuries they have endeavoured to make themselves miserable by self-torture, with the absurd idea that by inflicting suffering on themselves they were imitating Christ, who, there is little doubt, would have been a Man of Joy had the world been happy, had He not so clearly perceived and so fully sympathised with the unhappy condition of mankind.

It is a mistake to think that suffering is a blessing in itself. Instead of making a general statement which people accept in a vague way 'for the sake of a quiet life,' let us take the different forms of suffering singly. Is consumption a blessing? Is toothache? Is bankruptcy? Is it a blessing to lose one's means of livelihood? To lose an arm or a leg? To lose parent, wife, or child? Yet 'Suffering' is merely the sum total of all these forms of suffering, which, taken singly, are curses. Do a multitude of bad things make a good one?

To believe that bad is good, or that pain is pleasure, is a sign of something akin to insanity, but there are a certain number of weak-minded people who seem to take an actual delight in inflicting pain on themselves, and who swallow disgusting things with relish; and such people perhaps would hold that suffering is in itself a blessing, and would speak of 'the blessedness of suffering.' And there

are people, scarcely less 'neurotic,' who tenderly nurse their sorrows and 'are never happy but when they are miserable.' Schopenhauer, who said, 'There is only one inborn error, and that is that we exist in order to be happy,' if he was in earnest, was certainly afflicted with that kind of insanity, an emotional insanity which is quite compatible with intellectual sanity, or at least with great intellectual power. That which is a blessing is the capacity to suffer pain, not the actual suffering. That which keeps a schoolboy straight is the fear of the rod, not its application, or else those who got most punishment would be the best boys, and those who deserved it least would be the greatest sufferers, and it would then be logical and just that this should be so.

'Blessed are they that mourn' can have only one sane meaning; and that is, that the turn to rejoice of those who mourn will come by and bye, and that their joy will be all the greater for having mourned. They will be comforted then, and those who now rejoice will do the mourning. And that brings up the question of Karma. Karma takes it for granted that 'justice' requires all to be equally comforted and equally tormented, and that the pains and pleasures of each should in the end exactly balance. It presupposes complete individual responsibility. It also takes for granted that the acts which we conventionally consider crimes or sins are in reality so. Now there is no natural or logical reason whatever that joys and griefs should be equally distributed, or that men should be 'compensated' for their suffering. Those who postulate that 'principle' either have recourse to some external will to account for it—the will of some being who acts as a school-master does when he allots the tasks and divides up the piece of cake; or else they assume a 'Law of Karma,' which necessarily takes on the nature and function of a personal God, 'who adjusts effects to causes,' according to His will—'God's justice,' as usually understood, being nothing but man's justice exercised by God. If it be justice that those who now mourn shall rejoice, it is equally justice that those who now rejoice shall mourn. And of that principle, as a law of Nature, independent of an extraneous and interfering will, there is no trace. If not caught by other men and punished, the most atrocious murderer will go unpunished, and thousands do so. To say that he will be punished in another world—as punishment is usually regarded—is a pure assumption, however practically beneficial the belief may be, or even however true. God cannot be supposed anxious to 'pay us out'; that is a purely human sentiment. If the change at death is one into completely new and more advanced condition, to punish a murderer over there would be like giving a grown person penal servitude because when a child he stole another child's marbles. We do not even know whether we may not be doing our neighbour an immense service by killing him; thousands kill themselves, and tens of thousands wish they were dead. The horror of death may very possibly be a race, not an individual, fear, made instinctive not for the happiness of the individual, but for the preservation of the human race. After all is said, Hedonism, or the philosophy of happiness, is undoubtedly spreading in the world; and as it is founded on natural instinct and common sense, it can well afford to smile at those who tell us of 'the blessedness of suffering.'

ILLNESS OF MRS. J. STANNARD.—Owing to severe illness, which narrowly missed being typhoid fever, Mrs. Stannard was unable to deliver her lecture at Cavendish Rooms on Sunday last, and will probably be unable to address the meeting of the Heaton and Byker Spiritualist Society, Newcastle, on Sunday next, as advertised last week. She is, we are glad to learn, improving in health, although but slowly, and as soon as she is fit to travel will proceed to Whitley Bay, near Newcastle, for change and rest.

OLD-TIME EXPERIENCES.

(Continued from page 375.)

I have been asked to say something about the private sittings with Mrs. Cadwell, before mentioned, ere I end this series of old-time experiences. Well, on the whole, those private sittings were disappointing to me, for they led to no new developments, and for those, chiefly, I was seeking; the phenomena were mostly repetitions of what I had seen before, but they happened in a better light. By the end of the series of sittings there were some spirits who could come out and for a short time face three gas jets turned nearly on full, although most of them could stand only two shaded jets half turned on; but even this was a much better light than usual at that time; while at present, by all accounts, the light at all materialising sittings has dwindled down to 'darkness visible.' To get new and progressing phenomena, I think a circle would have to develop its own medium, for the fully developed professional mediums get into a groove, and repeat the same manifestation over and over again, the different cabinet spirits each taking his or her 'turn,' like the performers on a variety stage. Each medium, as I said before, has specialties. With the Eddys several spirits occasionally manifested at the same time; with Mrs. Williams I have seen three at once, although one at a time was the rule; with Mrs. Cadwell never more than one; but at Mrs. Caffrey's I have seen as many as seven fully materialised forms at the same time. Two things used to happen frequently at the Caffreys' which I never saw anywhere else; one was the materialisation of a spirit at the far end of the room, behind the horseshoe or semi-circle of sitters. I asked a female form who did this, how she could materialise so far from the medium; she said it was because no one was looking, for it was more difficult for her to stand the gaze of twenty or thirty pairs of eyes when materialising. The other peculiar phenomenon was the coming of the forms apparently through, or out of, the wall or closed door. The cabinet stood just beyond folding doors, which slid to from the sides; and, when closed, these doors shut out the cabinet. Mr. Caffrey used to close them, and invite anyone who liked to tie the knobs together; and when the doors had in this way been secured by various cords, handkerchiefs, and bits of gummed paper, we retired to our seats, and spirit after spirit would come through the closed doors. The reader has no doubt seen a log pushed under the water; the log reappears above the water much as a whale appears as it rises to the surface; well, the forms came through the closed doors, or out of the wall, just in the same way, and with as little apparent effort as if no door or wall were there. At the Caffreys' and Mrs. Williams', the spirits used sometimes to come with dresses illuminated with phosphoric sparkles, and when the power was feeble this illumination bore a faint resemblance to the effect produced by luminous paint; but no one who has experimented with luminous paint would possibly mistake this spirit illumination for it.

With regard to our private sittings with Mrs. Cadwell, Mrs. Cadwell's mother used to come out and harangue us at length about reincarnation, which she declared was a fact, although the medium herself did not believe in it. When I first learned that this spirit upheld reincarnation, I thought that now at last I would get some information about it more reliable than the laboured arguments of the Theosophists, or the absurd fancies of Eastern religions; but I soon found out that the spirits, or at least 'Mother,' knew no more about it than myself; and that on the other side, as on this one, reincarnation is a matter of opinion; for she told us that some spirits believe in it, and some do not. This spirit, a tall powerful form, used smilingly to allow her hand to be 'scrunched' as much as the most muscularly powerful sitter liked to scrunch it; she also used to ask someone to feel her pulse, which would be strong and full, and, while you were feeling it, would suddenly cease altogether, and not the faintest sign of a beat would be felt until you asked for it to pulsate again, and then it would immediately bound up as before. Then she asked you to put your ear to her heart, which would be beating strongly in a normal way, when, at a request, it too would absolutely cease. Then she would

politely request you to put your finger in her mouth, and you would grope round in vain for the vestige of a tooth, or even of a palate, and a moment after, when you made a second exploration, a very fine mouthful of teeth closed gently but firmly on your finger.

It is rather curious that one becomes accustomed to these truly marvellous phenomena. After a while it seems to you quite natural for a spirit to do incomprehensible things, and you are liable to be a little surprised when someone who has never witnessed them before expresses unbounded astonishment. To the experienced seance-goer, 'Mother's' performances, if not quite 'chestnuts,' were often not very new; but a spirit used to come to one of the members of our circle, who showed a unique and puzzling peculiarity. The form was that of a girl some fifteen years of age, and it professed to be the spirit of a sitter's daughter, who had died before birth, and had grown up in Spiritland. Now this form had no nails on either hands or feet. She placed her naked and beautifully shaped foot on the knees of the sitters and let them examine it by sight and touch; the place where the nail ought to have been was distinctly defined, but there was no nail, only soft skin. That the same peculiarity existed in the hands was, of course, easily verified. The father of this spirit was quite satisfied that the absence of nails was proof positive that this was a spirit born direct into the spirit world, before the physical frame was fully developed; and the other sitters accepted this belief, with the exception of my friend the doctor; for he declared that however immature the child might be when born, it would have nails in a more or less rudimentary form; and that the entire absence of nails was no more proof of development in Spiritland than the entire absence of eyes or nose would be. If the child grew up in Spiritland without nails, it would, he argued, have been born without nails in the world, and it must in any case be regarded as a 'freak' of Nature. I have heard of other cases of children born before their time, who materialised as having grown up in the other world, but I never heard that any of those forms were without nails; and if spirits can stop the heart's action at will, and can cause their teeth and palates to disappear, they might not find it very difficult to take off their nails and leave them behind, when they pay us a visit!

A tall, graceful 'cabinet' spirit, whose forte was the manufacture of gauze, came in great force at these sittings. She was a frequent visitor at the regular sittings, and used to pull yards and yards of a peculiar, fine gauze out of any part of a sitter she chose. If you were sitting cross-legged, she would pull it out of your foot; if you held out your hand the gauze would apparently come out of the end of your fingers; I have seen her pull at least a hundred yards of the material out of an old gentleman's bald head. Now, this stuff was like very fine mosquito netting, but it had no stiffening in it, and the mesh was peculiar; and she allowed my friend, the doctor, to cut off a piece about six inches square, to see if he could match it in New York (instantly mending the hole by passing her hand over it). For several sittings the Doctor reported failure, and the spirit was in great glee; but at last he brought a foot or so of a material which was quite indistinguishable from the true spirit gauze, with which both spirit and mortal carefully compared it. The spirit was very much chagrined—quite angry. She slapped the Doctor, and called him 'a horrid thing,' and, in fact, behaved in a way that made me once more reflect how very human these spirits are. It seems the Doctor had found a peculiar make of gauze which, when the stiffening was washed out of it, became looser in texture, and exactly resembled the 'spirit gauze.' It must be understood, however, that this discovery how to imitate the material in no way militates against the fact that the gauze was produced at the sittings in a truly phenomenal manner—the spirit in a minute or two pulling out of the sitter's foot a pile of gauze two feet high and three in diameter, her arms being bare nearly to the shoulders, and the light quite bright. The gauze thus made was generally taken back into the cabinet; sometimes it melted away on the floor.

This *humanity* of the spirits suggests a rather serious consideration. The old idea was that when we die we shall

get rid of our imperfections and impurities ; we shall, as it were, be sent to the wash, where all our stains and creases will be scrubbed, and ironed and mangled out of us, and our rents sewn up. By the application of a process, more or less painful while it lasts, our hearts will happily become inclined to keep God's law. But what if this belief be all wrong? What if when we die, instead of being washed and ironed, and made nice and clean, and fit for celestial society, we were to be hustled into the next world in all our rags and dirt? Which of us would then be admitted even into the servants' hall of Uphere, to say nothing of the drawing-room? It would rather seem that, if we get bad habits here, they stick to us in Uphere. I am not thinking of any dreadful vices when I moralise in this way, but of the little vanity of a spirit that paid us a single visit during this series of sittings. She would give no name, and came 'because she wanted us to see her beautiful dress.' She bore the three gas jets fully turned on, and let us examine that beautiful dress, which was of satin, richly embroidered with silver and small pearls. I wondered then, and still wonder, whether she has a large wardrobe laid up where thieves do not break in, and no camphor is required ; and I wonder how the other young ladies of Uphere feel about it !

(To be concluded in our next.)

BUDDHA'S ILLUSIONS.

Buddhism calls itself a pure moral philosophy. The accuracy of this auto-definition is doubtful, for it deals entirely with man and leaves God out of the question ; its vibrations are purely positive, and its lamas, in company with most churchmen, high priests, theologians and certain unmentionable classes, are Inversives of a malignant type, while its ascetics become unreliable, ill-mannered, and petulant.

The Lord Buddha having been born a prince, married a princess, and begat a son. He was struck with the difference between his lot and that of his poorer brethren, his attention having been drawn, despite all his father's precautions, to these matters by an Appearance. Accordingly he went into the jungle to fast and to meditate, not upon the Mind of God towards the sons of men, not upon birth, or death and the after life, but upon human misery. And his conclusion was that it was due to Ignorance. And this is true, as true then as it is now. But this is only one of the many facets of truth. Naturally in the course of his fastings and meditations he discovered some other truths, and also had some illusions. People who overdo fasting always have illusions. Amongst his discoveries was the necessity of re-birth. Now our Lord Jesus put forward exactly the same truth, referring not to a physical but to a spiritual re-birth ; and had he had the same recorders as Buddha, doubtless the idea of reincarnation would have appeared in our New Testament. It does not. Perhaps because the world in the time of Jesus was six hundred years to the good.

Now it is admitted that the sayings of Buddha were orally transmitted for many generations before they were written, from which it may by analogy be inferred that much error crept in, and that it is as difficult to know what he really did or did not say as in the case of Jesus the Nazarene. Such an error was that of mistaking spiritual for physical re-birth. Both Buddha and Jesus taught 'Ye must be born again (R. V. 'from above' in margin), and when scribes came to set the teaching down, they, in their honest fanaticism and desire to be impressive, attributed 500 reincarnations to Buddha and declared that he remembered them. So important a teaching would surely have been alluded to in his dying moments, but he merely said 'Work out your salvation.'

Of Buddha's illusions was his law of Karma, a law of bondage which, as such, can have no place in any scheme of freedom. He saw not God and believed in no Creator, how then could his teaching be other than limited to man all through? He was no true occultist, for he perceived not that man is the microcosm ; so his law of Karma dragged at his heels, a veritable chain and shot of hindrance, so that only those who do not believe in a Creator can believe in Karma and reincarnation, for, according to Buddha's teach-

ing as handed down, the two are inseparable. Karma there is, but of a totally different kind. Nor were the eyes put in the head looking backwards. Perhaps, as has been before pointed out, the law of reincarnation held good up to a certain period of world-history, in which connection let us examine the story of Hagar and Sarah, which can very clearly be made to apply to the doctrine of reincarnation, is called by Paul of Tarsus 'an allegory,' and is very fully explained in his letter to the Galatians chap. iv., v. 21 to end. Hagar means 'flight,' Sarai 'contention,' who became Sarah 'princess' or 'victorious.' Nicodemus, the questioner of Jesus concerning re-birth, also means 'victory of the people.' 'Cast out the bondwoman,' says Paul, 'so then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.'

Ishmael means 'God hears.' This refers to his offspring, who became a great nation of cave-dwellers, otherwise those that dwelt in darkness, and, mark, in the *shadow* of death, which is illuminated and finally dissipated by the Sun (Son), rising, poetically distorted 'dayspring' (it also has another meaning) from on high. Note too that Ishmael's wife came 'out of Egypt.'

The very simplest explanation of the inequality of things in this life is to be found in the selfishness of man and the tyranny of the strong over the weak.

In the coming days when God shall wipe away all tears, the strong will help and protect the weak, the rich will give bounteously to the poor, and the mighty co-operate with the humble, for the reign of love, known as the Millennium, shall have begun in earnest, even as now it is only faintly shadowed forth.

H. W. T.

PREVISION.

Prevision is one of the most perplexing of the many puzzling experiences which the student of psychical problems has to face, yet the testimonies to prophetic perception on the part of sensitives are so numerous that neither 'accident' nor 'coincidence' will account for them. Writing in 'Eleanor Kirk's Idea,' Alice Bell Campbell tells of a dream-vision which occurred to her during her stay in London when visiting her friends in this country. She says :—

'I was present at a funeral and noticed every detail—the snowstorm, the pall-bearers (who were all strangers to me), the church (Episcopal) where the service was held, and the flowers on the coffin. I pressed forward in order to see the name on the lid, but was unable to do so owing to the quantity of flowers. And what seemed so strange to me was, that right in the centre, and covering the name, was a bunch of coloured roses tied with ribbon. I related this—vision, as it seemed to me—at the breakfast table the following morning, and one of the listeners remarked : "You are going to hear bad news from abroad—maybe death." Within twenty minutes of this time I received a cable from my sister in Victoria, British Columbia, saying : "Seriously ill ; come at once." Strange to say, this entirely obliterated, as it were, the vision from my mind. I telegraphed and secured a berth on one of the Allan Line steamers for Montreal, and when I arrived in Victoria found my sister had become interested in the Higher Thought, and was receiving treatment for healing. At first I began to interest myself in it for her sake, and kept my mind so centred upon health that I never once thought of my vision. After several months she relapsed and finally passed on—it was on a Thursday, November 19th. At the time the weather was beautiful, especially for the time of year, but on Friday night before the funeral (which was to be on Saturday) it turned very cold, and in the morning the whole place was covered with snow.

'Among the many flowers sent was a pretty bunch of roses, and a message saying that they had been gathered for her when she was still in this life, and asking that they might be placed on the coffin. It was not until I arrived at the church in a blinding snowstorm and saw the coffin at the entrance with the pall-bearers (all strangers to me before coming to Victoria), and in the centre the bunch of coloured flowers, that I remembered my vision. It all came back to me in an instant ; there was every detail just as I had seen it.

'It is said that "coming events cast their shadows before." It was certainly so in this case ; it was eight months from the time of my vision until the out-picturing of it.'

How are experiences of this character to be explained? Can any of our readers suggest a 'working hypothesis'?

CONSOLATIONS OF SPIRITUALISM.

FROM 'THE BANNER OF LIGHT.'

Whatever criticism of Spiritualism may be offered by its opponents, none of them can deny that it is the greatest comforter that has ever visited this 'vale of tears.' Its philosophy of life and its purpose are the most cheering and hope-inspiring that have ever been presented to human reason. It shows us the uses of all our experiences, sorrowful as well as joyous, and leads us to a reconciliation with whatever may be our fortune or fate. It teaches optimism of the most pronounced character, by pointing out the spiritual uses of adversity and affliction. It makes clear the fact that suffering is an indispensable means for soul growth. Thus it meets the demands of all reasoning minds for the why and wherefore of experiences that once were inscrutable, and shows the wisdom of trials which once were an enigma, if not an offence to our short-sighted vision.

Furthermore, Spiritualism opens to us great sources of strength that sustain and buoy us up in the struggles of life. It brings us the direct support and active assistance of our spirit friends, who impart new life, energy, courage, and hope. We are no longer alone, but angels and ministering spirits come into our Gethsemane and by psychic power strengthen us for renewing the conflict with adverse forces and circumstances. When earthly friends desert us, or fail to give us the aid we need; when we grow weary with defeat, and vain effort to achieve our ambitions; when disappointment and despondency weigh down our spirits, and hope becomes forlorn; when worn out by hardships, and prostrated by disease and pain, so that life does not seem worth living, how consoling and comforting it is to receive the loving, sympathetic and inspiring ministrations of our dear departed friends, who draw near to help us, and heal us in body and in spirit!

But, above all, when death comes and robs us of the dear companionship of kindred and friends; when we are bereft of the aid of those upon whom we have depended, and who have been indispensable to our support and happiness; when we are left alone, and all life's plans and hopes are blighted; when tumultuous waves of sorrow roll over us, and we feel shipwrecked on a cold and barren coast; when heart-broken and disconsolate with unutterable grief, we mourn the loss of loved ones gone forever from the mortal forms which held them close in tenderest associations, oh! how consoling and comforting is the knowledge which Spiritualism gives that our loved ones are not dead, nor gone far off beyond the reach of our longing, clinging affection. How blessed is the tangible demonstration of their nearness and how consoling is every message they bring assuring us that they love us still, and walk hand in hand with us to help in every emergency when our human strength fails. How glorious is the full realisation of their guardianship and interest in all our experiences, which they help us to bear with courage and fortitude. How uplifting is the inspiration by which they quicken all that is divine in our spirits, and give us unutterable emotions of joy, peace, and spiritual blessedness.

THE RESURRECTION BODY OF CHRIST.

In 'LIGHT,' No. 1,047, p. 50, I saw a question concerning the resurrection body of Christ. A 'Seeker after Truth' wanted to know what had become of the physical body of the Lord, if it be true that his appearances after death were those of a materialised spirit.

In No. 1,050, pp. 93 and 94, very good and satisfactory answers are given to this question, pointing to the probability that Christ's physical body was dematerialised; and the spirit answer, p. 94, even asserted this as a fact.

Now I should like to direct your attention to a very clever essay about the Resurrection of Christ by Hofrath Professor Max Seiling, in Nos. 13 and 14, July, 1901, of the 'Ueberrinnliche Welt,' a paper you sometimes quote, and which is our society's literary organ. In that remarkable essay the author is much inclined to explain the disappearance of the physical body of Christ by the fact of dematerialisation;

such a fact seems to him perfectly natural, because he, with four other scientific men, witnessed one day the *partial dematerialisation of a living person*. This person became perfectly restored again to the possession of all her limbs; but the fact of partial dematerialisation had such a fearful effect on her health that her hair 'grew white in a single night.' The person to whom this dreary event happened, as a well-known established fact, is one of the most renowned mediums. I will not name her, because Herr Seiling did not choose to do so in his essay; but any of your readers who wish for more exact information will find it in Herr Seiling's pamphlet: 'Meine Erfahrungen auf den Gebiete des Spiritismus,' published by O. Mutze, Leipzig.

L. HRTZ,

Member of the Munich Society for Scientific Psychology.

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.

Is it Wrong to Seek Communion with the Newly-Departed?

SIR,—This question, raised by your correspondent in your issue of July 27th, is no doubt an important one, and one to which sufficient attention is not paid by Spiritualists.

Speaking generally, one may safely say that it is better to allow some little time to elapse, before any attempt is made to open communication with those newly passed on. For various reasons we should consider the mental condition of the departed ones; and, although on sentimental grounds we like to think that such are perfectly happy, we must not lose sight of the fact that even as we grieve for their loss, so do they—unless they are utterly devoid of all feeling—grieve to feel that they are parted from us.

If we grieve, they grieve also. This being so, it is wise to allow some little time to elapse till we and they have become somewhat used to the new conditions, before seeking to open up communion. And, after all, what can they tell us before they have had time to learn something of their new life?

How often we hear of the contradictory messages which spirits give. Are we not justified in assuming that in their anxiety to tell their friends what their life is like, they often send messages before they are able to speak fully on the subject? They merely give their first sensations, and imagination supplies the rest. It is far better, as a rule, for the newly born spirit to get away from earth conditions for a time, and learn something from actual experience of the new surroundings. Then, when he or she feels strong enough to come back without displaying too much emotion (which, although very natural, only hampers success), communication may be opened up.

To those who have recently lost friends I would say, 'Let those friends make the first move in the effort to communicate. But, of course, you must give them the opportunity. If you are in the habit of attending seances, continue to do so. If not, then you may resort to one of the various methods open to inquirers; but do not seek for a message from any individual spirit. If the spirit friends desire to talk to you, they will do so if they are able, and you give them the chance.'

J. A. WHITE

21, Foxbourn-road,
Batham, S.W.

The Spiritualisation of Mediumship.

SIR,—My excuse for sending this letter is the article by A. K. Venning, of July 13th, on the above subject. Men see and judge of facts differently; and there are as many minds as men. Now I think that A. K. Venning, and many who think like him, are mistaken, and that they look upon the mission of Spiritualism in a wrong light. Letters have appeared in your columns deploring the want of intellectuality in Spiritualism and its mediums, and wishing to organise the cult on a more refined basis, or on a higher plane of expression. But Spiritualism has not come to promote intellectuality, or to found a new sect; it has come purely to *prove* to people that there is life after death; that we can, under certain conditions, commune with the departed, and that many so-called orthodox beliefs have no groundwork in fact. To disparage the so-called lower phases of mediumship is like cutting away the rough stones on which a beautiful building is placed, so that the building will soon fall. The poets, orators, artists, &c., &c., spoken of by A. K. V., never proved, nor can prove, a single fact

connected with the other world. They have enlarged and beautified the spiritual idea, but never turned a materialist into a religious man. All my reading and all my experience show me that no man has become a believer in Spiritualism except through the lower phases of mediumship, materialisations, clairvoyance, tests, table rapping and tilting, combined with the information given at the same time. Even Jesus depended for His success upon His reputed miracles, which were certainly not intellectual expressions. Has a single person been converted to Spiritualism by the flowery language of our most popular orators? These intellectual speakers have caused people to investigate, but it is the 'lower,' despised phases that have caught them. The lower forms of mediumship may not satisfy the cravings of educated minds, but they have proved the truth of Spiritualism, which no amount of talking could have done.

Now when an educated mind has become satisfied of the truths of Spiritualism, there is no reason why he should not mix with other sects, where intellectuality, and that alone, can satisfy him. Once convinced that certain things, or creeds, of Spiritualism are true, he cannot lose possession of them. Wherever he goes he remains a Spiritualist, whether joining in the Episcopal service or the Roman Catholic. The man, once convinced by illiterate, uneducated mediums, who can scarcely speak a score of words grammatically, is always a Spiritualist.

Does a man who goes every Sunday to a church or chapel necessarily subscribe to all the doctrines of him whom he delights to hear? Certainly not. He goes to the place because it suits him, as a whole, better than any other. In the same way I can attend the Episcopal church, because I like its services better than the Spiritualists' services; and yet I am a thorough believer in Spiritualism.

If advanced spirits do not communicate through the lower forms of mediumship, it is because they cannot. There is a different platform for them; but without the lower platform they would be quite useless. Let us not, then, pretend to despise the lower forms of mediumship. They are the backbone of Spiritualism.

JOSEPH CLAYTON.

Organisation.

SIR,—In reference to Major Thatcher's letter in your issue of the 3rd inst., I should be thankful if he would kindly tell us the name of the organisation to which he refers in his second paragraph.

FRED. WILLIAMS.

What is Spiritualism?

SIR,—This is a question usually asked by outsiders, but it would seem that it will have to be asked by those who have been under the impression that they were Spiritualists. I recognise the astuteness with which Theosophists have taken advantage of the hospitality of 'LIGHT' to advocate their pet doctrine of reincarnation in its columns, but I was not prepared to find that matters had gone so far that a writer quoted in the 'Lyceum Banner' was proclaiming that doctrine to be 'a reasonable hypothesis.'

The first lesson which I learned in Spiritualism, now something like eight years ago, was that it proved, not merely asserted, the existence of the individual life after death. But for that certainty, Spiritualism would not have interested me. The second lesson I learned was, that the spirit had opportunities of endless progress in the after life; and, but for the element of progress, Spiritualism, though proving an unbroken existence, would have been to me without its great and moral attractiveness. Now, however, I learn from the 'Lyceum Banner' that for a spirit to occupy a succession of bodies on the earth is a reasonable destiny to look forward to.

The spiritualistic doctrine of continued life and unending progress is fundamentally different from the conception of an endless succession of 'baby shells' as the home of the spirit. The two ideas are mutually destructive, so that no person can logically hold both. For anyone professing to be a Spiritualist to advocate reincarnation is—sincerity being conceded—merely to betray a chaotic state of mind.

I notice in the last number of 'LIGHT' (August 10th) three points of interest. In the article signed 'C. de Krogh,' the writer expresses the hope that before long reincarnation will be 'accepted by everybody as a wise, merciful, and glorious truth.' Yet in the article signed 'Isabel de Steiger, F.T.S.,' I read: 'Reincarnation appears to me more of a threat than a hope, only a degree less bad than mere survival in some sub-mundane plane, for it seems endless and Karma never to be exhausted unless someone helps who is more than human.' I leave these two writers to answer each other. I gather from 'Vir' the refreshing suggestions that (1) we ought always to be inquiring; (2) that while inquiring we should constantly dispute; (3) that anything that is definite is a dogma. It is noteworthy that the first thing 'Vir' selects for censure as a dogma is 'Progression in the spiritual world.'

A. J.

Herr Kaibel and 'Animism.'

SIR,—I am glad that 'LIGHT,' of August 10th, has given space for the criticism by 'M. T.' of Herr Kaibel's articles in 'Uebersinnliche Welt.' I have not seen the original articles, but from the excerpts given I have come to quite a contrary opinion from 'M. T.'

'M. T.' appears to think that if an inquirer finds nothing in the phenomena of a given medium except evidence of her remarkable powers, such a person should cease to believe in spirits. But this, I think, is illogical. Let me give a parallel case: A man brings me a sample of alleged gold ore. I analyse it, and find that there is no gold in it, and therefore I must believe that there is not such a thing as gold ore. Herr Kaibel is quite entitled to believe that there are spiritual beings all around us, and yet that Mrs. d'Esperance's phenomena are no proof of this, but are only proof of certain powers she possesses.

Then as to the logic of Herr Kaibel respecting the forms of spiritual beings which 'M. T.' repudiates, I think it is unanswerable. He says: 'Man in his rude material state needs the organs of the body; he needs feet to walk with, hands to hold with, eyes to see with, ears to hear, &c. All this is done away with in the transcendental world' (or rather state).

I have felt from the very first that a spiritual being could have no use for the form we now have as physical human beings, because such organs would have nothing to do, and, even if they existed at the first, must necessarily perish from lack of use. We are entitled in full assurance to say that nothing exists in nature that is devoid of utility. Far more certainly may we say that this is true in organic beings.

But Spiritualism is not affected in any way by the reasoning of Herr Kaibel, even if all Spiritualists accepted his conclusions. No person can prove the existence of spirits from physical manifestations, as has been shown over and over again. The only real proof of their existence is given when by trance speaking, direct writing, or otherwise, a communication is made of facts unknown to anyone in the circle, by a spiritual being also unknown to them, which facts on investigation are afterwards proved to be true.

As to form it is a term of material existence, and can have no meaning when applied to spirit. There can necessarily be no such thing as a spirit form. I have seen forms clairvoyantly and as materialisations at least two hundred times, but I have never supposed that these forms were the spirits they represented. In clairvoyance they are thought images caused by the action of minds either on this side or the other. Materialisations are the same, with added matter from the medium's body.

Some people of limited view may wonder why I am a Spiritualist, and I wonder how any person not otherwise convinced could be made a Spiritualist by any phenomena, either of Mrs. d'Esperance or any other physical medium. The name 'Animism' is the only thing that is new in Herr Kaibel's beliefs. I have held the same views for at least thirty years, and all the time I have been proud to call myself a Spiritualist.

VIR.

Animism? or Spiritualism?

SIR,—In my article 'Animism? or Spiritualism?' published in 'LIGHT,' of August 10th, there is a slight printer's error of one word, which alters the sense of a passage. The word 'grass' is printed for graves (Gräbern in the original); it should be 'luminous balls, which came out of the graves.' I shall be obliged by your inserting this, otherwise I may be accused of inaccuracy in my translation.

M. T.

Reincarnation.

SIR,—Pray allow me a few lines in answer to your correspondent, 'Admirer.'

On one point, at least, he and I can shake hands; since, as I took occasion to mention in my former letter, I also am a great admirer of Mr. Savage.

If 'Admirer' had read my letter a little more carefully, he would have perceived that I 'emphatically state' nothing on my own authority. My contention was that, before persons rush to arms to contradict the teachings of a certain school, it might be worth while to ascertain with accuracy what those teachings really are. Because to quarrel with people for teaching what they do not teach is about as useful as Don Quixote's tilt against the windmills, and excites ill-feeling where none is called for.

On this ground, I proceeded to state what are the teachings of the Theosophic school as derived from the profound spiritual teachings of the East from countless ages. I also explained a misconception of Mr. Savage's, and showed that the Eastern attitude of mind is by no means changed in the

present day from what it always has been. The Easterns have not got tired of their belief in reincarnation, and begun to fancy that they would like to believe in something else; they are wiser than to suppose that their belief can alter facts. But, through all the ages, while accepting reincarnation as an immutable and inevitable truth, they have perceived that the great aim and object of each individual soul is so to pass through the successive stages of re-embodiment that it shall finally extricate itself from that law, and be free. A very different matter from the state of things supposed by Mr. Savage; and in that statement I shall be supported by all who know.

A. E. MAJOR.

SIR,—It is possible, I think, after a careful study of 'Spirit Teachings' to frame a hypothesis to allow for the element of 'reincarnation' in the evolution of the soul. On p. 27 of the 'Teachings' mention occurs of the earth's being 'the highest' of seven spheres. Seven spheres after them are called spheres of purgation or purification, and seven spheres above them spheres of contemplation. Now, may it not be that our incarnation on earth is, *relatively to our births in the six lower spheres*, a 'reincarnation'? Our state here has been determined by the deeds done in bodies in six other earths, just as our state in the upper spheres will be determined by the deeds done primarily on this earth, though, of course, our deeds here are the resultant of prior deeds elsewhere. Consciousness of change from one life to another does not appear to start till removal from earth to the first sphere of purgation. It is easy to imagine, however, that souls disembodied in spheres lower than the earth sink into a sleep analogous to the sleep that generally overtakes souls entering the first sphere of purgation, and that in this condition they are incarnated through the agency of 'guides,' who have made all things ready to suit their 'fate,' which astrologers and other mystical geniuses may read.

I hope I have made myself sufficiently clear. I agree with your remarks this week that we want both Spiritualism and Rationalism.

J. M. P.

Manchester Spiritualist Alliance.

SIR,—I know you are glad of any evidence in proof of spirit return, so it gives me pleasure to send you this one.

On Sunday evening last I was speaking for the New Ardwick Society, and stayed to the after-circle, when Mr. O. Pearson said to me: 'I got a name, but do not like to give it.' I said: 'Please give it.' He then asked me if I knew anyone of the name of Ellen in connection with John Lamont. I said 'No' at first, and then said: 'Oh, yes; Mrs. Ellen Green; but he would call her Nellie.' Mr. Pearson replied: 'I have a great impression that some verses are desired to be written, and that these verses are to her, and I should not be surprised if he had made a promise to write some verses for that lady.'

On meeting Mrs. Ellen Green at the reception just given by the Manchester Spiritualist Alliance to Mrs. Mellon, I mentioned it at once to her, and she said: 'Well, that is strange; I was at Belper on Sunday, and a medium, Mrs. Welsh, was controlled by John Lamont, and wrote me two verses.' I think you will agree with me, Mr. Editor, that it was a peculiar incident and worthy of note.

I have not had the pleasure as yet of attending any of the meetings of the London Spiritualist Alliance, of which I have the honour to be a member, but I feel that we, in Manchester, owe a deep debt of gratitude to our friends of the Council of the Manchester Spiritualist Alliance for the trouble they take in providing such delightful and enjoyable evenings as that we have just had, and in affording us the opportunity we should not otherwise have of meeting such celebrated mediums as they bring from such great distances.

KATE TAYLOR-ROBINSON.

Tweed Green, Whalley Range.

Charity I

SIR,—'And now remaineth Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity.'

I feel strongly impressed to call the attention of your readers to the low state of the National Spiritualists' Fund of Benevolence for the month of June.

In disposing of the tickets for the garden party held here on August 10th, I was struck by the want of knowledge evinced by several friends, and I feel sure that many readers just glance at Mr. Morse's monthly letters, and do not read them carefully; so with his permission and yours, I shall be glad to explain matters more fully.

The case stands thus. In your issue for July 13th, I was

grieved to see that Mr. Morse, the genial, indefatigable worker, says, in plain English, vigorous and unmistakable, that if the Fund be not better supported he will be compelled to give it up.

In this case what will become of those poor souls who have benefited by it up to now? They are of our own religion; they are our own brothers and sisters; and if we cannot give great sums to help them, let us give small—pennies make pounds, as we all know. Is it the trouble of sending it to Mr. Morse? Think of *his* trouble, year in and year out, and help to lighten his burden. 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' Won't somebody, won't everybody, help? Think it well over, friends, and do your best, your very best, to get a good all-round collection for this good cause, and thus prove that we realise the importance of the principles we teach, of the brotherhood of man and the sisterhood of woman.

KATE TAYLOR-ROBINSON.

P.S.—May I be allowed to point out that, although July's fund realised, I think, £10 14s. 8d., there still remains a deficiency for June of eight or nine pounds?

Automatic Writing.

SIR,—A letter in 'LIGHT,' made me try 'automatic writing,' not 'Planchette.' The pencil writes, but sometimes I cannot read a word of it, at other times it replies falsely, and at other times it gives very extraordinary information as to coming events, &c., signed by a deceased person, who was very dear to me. I am wholly at a loss what to think or do. Can anyone help with advice or experience?

JOHN NUTON.

SOCIETY WORK.

CLAPHAM COMMON.—On Sunday next, at 3 p.m., a debate will take place upon 'Spiritualism and the Early Church,' in which Mr. W. R. Ray will uphold the spiritualistic position.

CAMBERWELL.—GROVE-LANE PSYCHOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, 36, VICARAGE-ROAD.—On Sunday last, Mr. Clegg gave an interesting address upon 'Spiritism and Spiritualism,' and Mrs. Miller gave good clairvoyance.—S. OSBORN.

SOUTHALL.—1, MILTON-VILLAS, FEATHERSTONE-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Carter, of Shepherd's Bush, gave a trance address, and was successful in giving clairvoyance and psychometry. Some strangers present were impressed, and realised that there is something in Spiritualism. We hope to have another séance from Mrs. Carter shortly.—E. B.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, 73, BECKLOW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday last Mr. Hurrell (vice-president) conducted the meeting in the absence of the president, Mr. W. Chaplin, who is taking a holiday. Mr. Phipps (treasurer) read an address, and several friends gave their experiences. One gentleman brought some drawings of spirit lights, drapery, &c., which interested everyone. On Sunday next, meeting at 6.30 p.m.—C.

SEVEN KINGS, ILFORD.—It is proposed to form a Psychical Society for the purpose of uniting persons in the district interested in Spiritualism. The conditions of membership are, a sincere desire for the discovery of truth, the diffusion of truth, and the application of truth to the welfare of humanity. Preliminary meetings will be held on Sunday evenings at 54, Elgin-road, Seven Kings, Ilford, commencing at 7 o'clock, August 25th and September 1st.—THOMAS BROOKS, Convener.

CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—On Sunday evening last there were large attendances at both the morning and evening services. The second address delivered by Mr. W. E. Long, upon 'The Holy Ghost,' proved deeply interesting. Next Sunday morning, at 11 o'clock, a public circle will be held; at 3 o'clock, the children's school will meet; and at 6.30 p.m., the third of the series of addresses will be delivered by Mr. W. E. Long upon 'The Holy Ghost.'—J. C.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday last Mrs. Stannard was prevented through illness from giving her promised address. Much sympathy with her was expressed by the speakers and the audience. Mr. Everitt, president, gave some of his thrilling experiences, and intensely interested the large audience. Madame Montague was a visitor, and in a very kindly spirit offered to answer questions, which her inspirers did in a masterly manner. Everyone expressed their thanks to Madame Montague, and their sympathy and good wishes to our esteemed worker, Mrs. Stannard. On Sunday next Mr. E. W. Wallis will give a trance address upon 'The Secret of Salvation.'—GEORGE SERRIGGS, Acting Secretary.