

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

'Truth' publishes what has every appearance of being a genuine experience of Passive Writing, but the writer of the communication, apparently a former British official in India, thinks all spirits who do this writing are sad liars and will say anything to keep hanging on to the medium.

Of course, 'Truth' follows this communication with a good long column of persiflage. It enlarges upon the 'utter futility' of spirit writing. Why does not Shakspeare clear up once for all the uncertainty about the authorship of his Plays? Why does not the victim spot his or her murderer? Why are not all our problems, historical, scientific and legal, all solved and set at rest? Why—but why go on?

'Truth' suggests that the evidence indicates that the communicating spirits are of 'a low order of intellect.' They give forth 'twaddle.' They lie. Not always, dear 'Truth'! They are often as sensible as 'Vigilant,' and at least as truthful as 'Truth.' But it is further suggested that there is a need for 'rescue work among ghosts.' The writer, however, soon drops his thin mask of gravity, and says, 'Of course, if you look upon a séance as a sort of drawing room entertainment got up for the benefit of distressed spirits, no one can say anything against it. . . . The spirits are obviously of no use to us, but that is no reason why we should not be of some use to them.'

If there is a grain of seriousness in this chaff, and we think there is, the writer admits the reality of spirit communications: and that is really all we ask in the direction of 'Truth.' For the rest, we wish him further enlightenment. 'Truth' and 'LIGHT' seem to go together.

We have occasionally had to notice the significant tendency of modern liberal Jews to look with sympathetic eyes upon Jesus, and even to claim him: though this is more in evidence in America than in this country. The latest instance of this occurred in Arkansas, in an Address by Rabbi Louis Witt given before a Ministerial Association of various denominations. But the good Rabbi took care to divest his Jesus of nearly all the theological and ecclesiastical drapery that nineteen centuries have imposed upon him: and he also took care to set forth the modern Judaism which makes the approach to Jesus possible.

The upshot of it all is that this is another instance of our contention, that it is the Religion of the spirit which is uniting and all-important, and that it is the religion of the spirit which will endure. It is the spirit of Judaism and the spirit of Jesus that are ultimately found to be at

one. 'Men see one another face to face,' says the Rabbi, 'as they have not done for two thousand years.' Why? Because time destroys the husks, and reveals the grain.

A sharp critical discernment by this masterly Rabbi deserves special notice. He says:—

At the very start, however, we are confronted by a somewhat unexpected question: Which Jesus are we to consider? For the common name covers a multitude of discrepant persons. There is the Jesus of John, a metaphysical Word made flesh; and the Jesus of Paul, seed of David and declared Son of God by resurrection from the dead; and the Jesus of the Vatican, the first link in a chain of apostolic succession culminating in the plenary inspiration of the Papal office; and the Jesus of Mary Baker Eddy, conceived and interpreted by Science and Health; and the Jesus of Emerson, the one man in all history who was true to what is in each of us; and the Jesus of Nietzsche, teacher of a whining ethics fit only for slaves:—which Jesus shall we consider? In truth Jesus has undergone the same transformation as all great historic personages. He has become less a person than a symbol. He is a colossal composite. Every age reads its own thought into him. The Jesus of Emerson and the Jesus of Pius X. might pass on the street and not even nod to each other. The one Jesus might clasp the hand of the Jew in cordial fellowship, and the other Jesus might regard him as a stiff-necked infidel.

The Rabbi thinks that the crux is in the question of Messiahship: and he boldly gets away from it by giving up both Old Testament and New Testament Messiahship. The Jews dreamed it, he says, and the Christians were taken in by the dream:

The whole Messianic hope was merely a beautiful vision of ancient Jewish seers woven out of impassioned idealism and patriotic yearning, but, after all, nothing more than a sublime fabrication of mortal mind intoxicated with deity. It is true men are growing better day by day, and the time is coming, although it is as yet far off, when righteousness and peace will reign on earth:—there is 'one far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves'—and in so far as the Messianic hope predicts this future state it is grounded in historic fact and human need; but in so far as it awaits the advent of some mystical being who will smite physical nature into terrific convulsions, and by the blast of his trumpet resurrect the dead from their dust, and through favouritism to this or that sect inaugurate the reign of justice and blessedness on earth in so far as it awaits this it is nothing more than an illusion which must fade under the growing rationalism of man.

Thus the liberal Jew and the liberal Christian meet at last in mutual recognition of Jesus as the witness to spiritual Religion—the Religion that underlies all attempts to bring the human heart near to the Great Mystery of God, for guidance and consolation. That Religion belongs to the Human Race, not to any special member of it. It is that which will ultimately unite us all, because it gets beyond the multitudinous expressions to the universal soul.

Science, or, rather, a certain school of scientists, is ever ready with the statement that we can know nothing of anything beyond the bounds of Matter. Lately, in the dissolution of the atomic theory, it has hesitated, but it still affirms nothing that can be construed as faith in things

spiritual. On the other hand, scientists of the new order are giving us great encouragement. They suggest that sheer scepticism is sheer folly, that we can, at all events indirectly, know something about God and immortality and the providential order of the world.

But, although they are very welcome, it is hardly the scientists that we want most. We want prophets and poets and mystics; men and women who are soul-conscious, who have the witness in themselves, who can stand up and triumphantly say 'I know!' The scientist may say that is no evidence: but what if St. Paul is right in his splendid generalisation that 'spiritual things are spiritually discerned'? What more reasonable? Nature is not a cheat: at all events not on the grand scale. Her wants prove supplies; her longings are prophecies of fulfilments; her commonest bodily appetites and instincts prove gratifications. Shall the marvellous seizure of the breast by the unthinking babe prove Nature's want and supply, and the soul's seizure of itself and God and Life prove nothing—prove, in fact, only that man, in the higher reaches of his being, is a fool, and that Mother Nature can tell her supremest child her greatest lie?

We believe that many of our readers found the Mott fragments very acceptable. Here is another, that will bear a good deal of thinking about:—

THE DEPTHS.

I am looking deep down into the universe. I see God at work in all the plains of heaven, in all the fields of earth; in the planets and the stars. A wonderful and glorious sight. Is He not there, in yonder bush? Is He not here, in these stones and dust? See how He is piling up those great white clouds in the horizon. The rooks that flap their black wings against the distant sky, is not God with them, too, contracting every muscle, smoothing every feather, sustaining every heart-throb and every vibration of brain or nerve? There goes that marvellous great sun, with all his golden arrows of pure light. Down he dips behind the hills, and the golden arrows shoot past us, and without them we are cold and dark. But God is in the darkness. I see Him there, the formless but living and eternal Spirit. These dim eyes, these little lenses with which we catch the outlines and the colours of some lighted objects, what are they compared with that inward eye which looks through absolute darkness and through infinite space, and sees the eternal beauty in a thousand million ever-changing phases? Thank God for eyes to see the light. But there are no words fit to thank Him for the soul, which sees where no light penetrates. Our eyes deceive us. They show us ugly things as well as beautiful. But the soul, which has full vision, finds no ugliness, only beauty and joy for ever.

At the great 'National Free Church Council' Conference at Southport, the retiring President, Dr. J. Rendel Harris, in an Address at the opening meeting, referred to the vivid expectation of news from the spirit world that seemed to be in the very air we breathe. He said:—

It will be within the observation of all of you who occupy yourselves with the progress of the world's knowledge, either in the world of matter or the world of spirit (worlds which are supposed to be more nearly contiguous to-day than they were reckoned in the old time), that there is a renewed expectation of positive results among those who are most at the front in their special subjects. It is one of those peculiar periods when we stand on tip-toe, because of things that are felt to be approaching the field of vision and are making themselves at home within our horizon. It would be out of my province to discuss whether Sir Oliver Lodge is right in saying that in the explorations of the spiritual world we are engaged in the excavation of a tunnel, and have reached the point where we begin to hear the pickaxes of the excavators at the other side of the tunnel. I hope it may be so, of course, for I have a large circle of acquaintances at the bright end of the tunnel and on the sunny side of the mountain, and I should be glad to be in closer touch with them.

That is the right state of mind and the right attitude,

and we hope all 'the brethren' will profit by the good example: but they must hurry up if they want to get any credit.

Mrs. Browning tells us, in her subtle poem of 'Aurora Leigh,' that there are people who always sigh when they say 'Thank God!' What does the sigh suggest? Doubt? Resignation? A reserve of fear? Probably a blend of all these. Let us forget to sigh, thankful for life, for death; and accept all that comes for joy or struggle, certain that Providence and the angels are busy in this and all worlds. Let us have no regretful reservations and no postponed reckonings with God.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A meeting of the Members and Associates of the Alliance will be held at the SALON OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, SUFFOLK-STREET, PALL MALL EAST (near the National Gallery), on

THURSDAY EVENING NEXT, MARCH 19TH,

WHEN AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN

BY THE

REV. JOHN OATES

ON

'The Spiritual Teachings of the Poets—
Wordsworth and Browning.'

The doors will be opened at 7 o'clock, and the Address will be commenced punctually at 7.30.

Admission by ticket only. Two tickets are sent to each Member, and one to each Associate, but both Members and Associates can have additional tickets for the use of friends on payment of 1s. each. Applications for extra tickets, accompanied by remittance, should be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Secretary to the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

Meetings will be held in the SALON OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East (near the National Gallery), on the following Thursday evenings:—

Apr. 2.—MISS LILIAN WHITING (author of 'After her Death,' 'The World Beautiful,' &c.), on 'The Life Radiant.'

Apr. 30.—MR. JAMES I. WEDGWOOD, on 'Auras, Halos, and the Occult Significance of Colours.'

May 14.—MISS E. KATHARINE BATES (author of 'Seen and Unseen'), on 'Psychic Faculties and Psychic Experiences.'

May 28.—MR. GEORGE P. YOUNG, President of the Spiritualists' National Union, on 'The Physical Phenomena of Mediumship in the Light of the Newer Chemistry.'

AN AFTERNOON SOCIAL GATHERING will be held at 110 St. Martin's-lane, W.C., on April 9th, at three o'clock.

FOR THE STUDY OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA the following meetings will be held at 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.:—

CLAIRVOYANCE.—On *Tuesday next*, March 17th, Mrs. Atkins will give clairvoyant descriptions at 3 p.m., and no one will be admitted after that hour. On the 24th, Mrs. Imison. Fee 1s. each to Members and Associates; for friends introduced by them, 2s. each.

TRANCE ADDRESS.—On *Wednesday next*, March 18th, at 6.30 p.m., Mrs. Annie Boddington on 'The World: Visible and Invisible.' On the 25th, Mr. E. W. Wallis. Admission 1s.* Members and Associates free. No tickets required.

PSYCHIC CULTURE.—On *Tuesday*, March 24th, at 2.45 p.m. for 3 o'clock, Mr. Thurstan's class for psychic culture will meet at South Kensington Museum (Brompton-road entrance), for the practice of psychometry.

TALKS WITH A SPIRIT CONTROL.—On *Friday next*, March 20th, at 3 p.m., Mr. E. W. Wallis, under spirit control, will reply to questions from the audience relating to the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism, mediumship, and life here and on 'the other side.' Admission 1s.*; Members and Associates free. Visitors should be prepared with written questions of *general interest* to submit to the control.

* **MEMBERS** have the privilege of introducing *one friend* to the *Wednesday and Friday* meetings without payment.

SPIRITUAL HEALING.—On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Mr. A. Rex, the spiritual healer, will attend between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., to afford Members and Associates and their friends an opportunity to avail themselves of his services in magnetic healing under spirit control. As Mr. Rex is unable to treat more than four patients on each occasion, appointments must be made in advance by letter, addressed to the Secretary, Mr. E. W. Wallis. Fees, one treatment, 7s. 6d.; course of three, 15s.

ON PONTIFFS: ANCIENT AND MODERN.

THE WORK AND THE WORKERS.

When we talk of a pontiff nowadays we mean the Pope; and him we call the sovereign Pontiff. We use this title of his to signify a supreme arbiter in spiritual matters. It is not that we necessarily believe that his judgments are binding upon us in the realm of that which is spiritual. But we find the word a convenient one, because it enables us to convey in a single expression the idea of spiritual supremacy, which is a thing we are often forced to admit into our discourse, though the warmth of its intellectual welcome is apt to vary considerably in different individuals. Some men can only find rest for their souls in the infallible utterances of the pontifical Voice, and others would fight to the last against the suggestion that they should heed the Voice at all. Yet the pontiff has played a large part in the world, and is destined to play a larger.

The pontiff is, in truth, the bridge-builder, and in all ages peculiar honour has been paid to him who could eliminate the physical obstacles to the free intercourse of mankind. 'Pontiff' is the modern form of 'pontifex,' and pontifex is as undoubtedly derived from the Latin words 'pons' (a bridge) and 'facere' (to make) as is the chicken from the egg. It is true that it is never used in that exact sense in any Latin author that we possess. But the reason is, probably, that the word had acquired its special politico-priestly significance by the time that the Romans had developed the literature of which the small surviving portion is among the highest intellectual treasures of the world. Yet, though the word was never used to mean simply a bridge-builder, the ancient and original association of ideas was retained by reason of the Roman pontiffs having charge of the Sublician bridge at Rome. The final transformation of the term into its modern sense is well outlined by Longfellow in the 'Golden Legend':—

Well has the name of Pontifex been given
Unto the Church's head, as the chief builder
And architect of the invisible bridge
That leads from earth to heaven.

The reason why the bridge-builder has played so great a part in assisting human progress is simply this: that the more men of different races and ideals come into active social contact, and gain thereby a greater command of natural resources, the faster does the human race move upwards towards its goal. The original pontiff did but span a stream or a chasm. But when his task was done, he and the rest of his tribe were brought into contact with another little world. So tribe was linked with tribe and nation with nation. The knowledge which was the possession of the one was blended with the mental heritage of the other, and the racial powers were toned and amalgamated and invigorated when these things led, as they nearly always do, to intermarriage. It was not always a peaceful process. There were opposition and misunderstanding, much bloodshed, and a great deal of misery; but somehow, through it all, the pontiff pushed on with his bridge building operations. When the stream was too wide for his antique engineering he made a floating bridge, and

called it a ship; so that, where formerly he could only place a bridge where he could see the supports at both ends, he now prepared to start at one end without seeing the other at all, or even being sure that there was a place to put it. Columbus fixed one end of the Atlantic bridge, which is nowadays called the 'Lusitania,' and had to go three thousand miles into the unknown deep before he discovered the foundations for the other. And in our own time the pontiffs bridge the oceans with cables, and Mr. Marconi is a Supreme Pontiff who bridges them with nothing at all! We do not even trouble to walk across the bridge from London to Manchester. We simply sit down in it, and the bridge itself moves off and carries us over the intervening distance, giving us a nicely-cooked dinner as we go.

'All this,' says the critical reader, 'may be true enough. Doubtless it justifies you in saying that the pontiff has played a large part in the world, but it scarcely supports your claim that he is destined to play a larger. It rather indicates that his work is nearing its finish.' So it might be if there were no other worlds than this. But even when the pontiffs have annihilated the obstacles of time and distance here, there will still remain, among the physical potentialities which will tempt the art of the bridge builder, the spaces between the earth and the moon, and between the earth and her sister satellites of the sun. The true pontifical mind will never be satisfied to rest content at one side of a chasm, howsoever vast and apparently impassable, when the other side is in plain view, and offers solid footing for foundations. But the pontiff who destroys only physical obstacles has long ceased to have a monopoly of bridge-building enterprise. Nowadays there are people with pontifical aspirations in the direction of erecting bridges between the material and the spiritual spheres. In truth, these ambitious architects have leagued themselves together for the better achievement of their designs, though for reasons which are doubtless well understood by themselves they do not dignify their union by some such name as the Association of Matter and Spirit Pontiffs, but choose to call it the London Spiritualist Alliance.

The Spiritualist as Pontiff represents such a novel collocation of ideas that one is tempted to leave the reader to meditate upon it for a while, before taking him any further. But this much let us add—when Sir Oliver Lodge tells us that the barrier between the twin worlds is 'wearing thin in places,' it is only his way of saying that we can see the other side of the chasm which the modern pontiffs are eager to bridge. Yet even the bridge itself is only a beginning. A tree trunk, dexterously guided in its fall, was no doubt one of the earliest of bridges; and he who felled it soon discovered that so far from his bridge having exhausted his potentialities of conquest, it only opened the way to new realms, and drew him onwards towards a consummation which we see in the great viaducts and railways, the cables and the Atlantic greyhounds of our own day. What a vast mass of achievement separates the fallen tree trunk from the new bridge over the Zambesi gorge! What a vision of conquest opens out between the flinging of a viaduct across the space that divides material from spiritual, and the ultimate subjugation of all the unimagined realms of beauty and aspiration that lie on the other side! Surely we may say that the bridge will be firm and strong, since there are the most earnest and capable of pontiffs working at both ends. In fact, they serve their apprenticeship at this side, and go on with their training at the other. And as, from time to time (and amid opposition as of old), they report progress from that other end, we may realise what has been won for the world by its pontiffs, and what a duty we owe to their task and their memory when, as members of the London Spiritualist Alliance, we become co-operators with their tireless and beneficent band.

BARRISTER, LL.B., B.Sc.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.—Those Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance who recollect the fine Address which was given by the Rev. John Oates last season will naturally anticipate a treat next Thursday, when that gentleman will deal with the spiritual teachings of Wordsworth and Browning.

OTHER-WORLD GLIMPSES.

Writing in the 'Sheffield Independent' of February 25th, the Rev. T. W. Holmes, evidently a Church of England clergyman, gives a vivid and poetical description of the sense which came to him of the presence of an 'invisible companion.' Sitting in his study after a beautiful musical service, and reading George Macdonald's 'weirdly beautiful' book, 'Phantastes,' he was sensible, he says, of 'a shadowy blur in the glass before me; a sudden gleam of colour in it, a consciousness of eyes looking down upon me from it'—which he further describes as 'a reflection of my Invisible Companion and of a lady standing by his side.' The 'invisible companion' was a son who had passed over and whose presence he had already felt near him; and in the lady he soon recognised a daughter whom he had lost as an infant thirty years before. He continues:—

While I stood amazed and trying to recall the past, and failed, a voice that had in its singular sweetness a strange suggestiveness of one heard long ago, said quietly, 'Father.' And as she spoke I knew that I was in the presence of my own child grown up in the Father's house to lovely womanhood since we laid the child's tired feet, and folded hands, and radiant head to rest in a village graveyard where my ministry first began, and where loving hands still keep it green. The boy at her side, who had never seen her until she had found him in Paradise, seemed troubled at my momentary difficulty in recognising her, which vanished when he saw the unutterable gladness which then took possession of me, but he held his peace with the wisdom which thoughtful children learn so quickly. I need not tell here how rapturously I gazed into the blissful face; how eagerly, our greeting over, I listened to the music of a voice in which I detected, I could not help feeling, an accent of reproach.

'Father,' said she, 'how is it that through all these years I, who have been longing to come to you, to comfort you, have never been able to get you to see me or to hear me? Sometimes I was so near to you that I seemed to hear your hand upon the latch that was to let me into your heart of hearts, but it never stirred. There have been times when I have heard you talking to yourself about me; but never to me. I have heard you when you were alone recalling aloud the days of my childhood. I have accompanied you down pleasant country lanes when the stillness of morning was so profound that I wondered you did not hear the rustling of my robe over the grass. You can never know how disappointed I have felt that I, who was at your side, went along the road with you, met no recognition, got not a word. Often have I seen you with a sigh kiss the little ring that contains a bit of my hair, and all the while the soul of a living woman, hungry for love, walked unheeded by your side. It is hard, for thirty years, even in heaven, is a long time to have no intercourse with those we love. And mine is but the common grief of all the "dead." From the hour of our departure the door is shut against us, we become outcasts from the family circle; we drop out of your prayers. And some we have loved the most become afraid of us.'

I was very still while she spoke. I did not know what to say. It was so new and strange to me. At last I said: 'I did not know, my child, how to reach you; at what trysting place to find you; through which of my senses, for I only thought of them, I could have access to you. I knew no other avenues by which a mortal could approach the immortal except death. I have read much, with a long-sustained but always baffled purpose, to discover the possibility of such intercourse. I have met with some—great scholars and men of genius—who have affirmed that only a thin boundary wall, in which they have found a narrow postern door, separates this world from that which is your home. I have not yet found it. It has been hidden from me. I have envied them. That is all.'

Then the daughter asks him how it came about that since the boy had passed to the other side he had recognised a companionship invisible to other people. She tells him that 'the hateful and untrue and pagan word "dead" is what bars the doors of the living heart against those who would come in,' whereas characters in fiction are accepted as real more easily than the 'dead.' But, continued the spirit daughter:—

Is it possible, ought it to be thinkable, that the pale ghosts of fiction are closer to human spirits than the vital spirits of their dearest; that the loveliest chamber of the soul—Imagina-

tion—was built and furnished to be the reception room for such guests alone? There is no tragedy sadder than this.

We can only come as God comes. We enter in by the same door as He. We are spirits as He is, and spirit is accessible without the stairs up which once, like you, we had to tread. The men and women whom we find it easiest to reach are those to whom the gracious Spirit that pervades the universe gains access most easily. The Quaker in the quiet meeting-house, tremulously watchful for that Spirit's lightest touch, recognises ours. Whittier knew us and welcomed us. We are guests that must be expected, waited for, welcomed. The indubitable sign which proves that we are near is what your poet Wordsworth had in mind when he wrote of

That blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lightened;—that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections lead us on
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul.

To him, the poet of immortality, who believed that 'though inland far we be, our souls have sight of that immortal sea which brought us hither,' nothing was a greater reason for praise, nothing to be less feared than these 'obstinate questionings of sense and outward things, fallings from us, vanishing; blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realised, before which our mortal nature trembles like a guilty thing surprised,' which, 'be they what they may, are yet the fountain light of all our day, are yet a master light of all our seeing.' Watch for and cultivate this sacred mood. It is the 'gate beautiful' through which we enter. Keep the path that leads to it clean.

Inquirers often ask why their departed dear ones cannot come to them and communicate with them; this experience beautifully voices the question from the other side, why the 'living' cannot feel the presence of the still more living when they do come and do try to communicate with those on earth. Their disappointment at the failure is as great as ours; but while those here are content to vaguely theorise that the departed are 'not permitted' to return, those who have passed on know that they *are* permitted and *do* return, but that those left behind are insensible to their presence and unresponsive to their love and tenderness.

SPIRITS OF HEALING.

On Sunday evening, the 1st inst., at the Spiritual Mission, 22, Prince's-street, Oxford-street, W., Mr. James MacBeth Bain delivered an address on 'The Work of Healing Spirits in the Service of Souls,' of which the following is a synopsis.

Mr. MacBeth Bain said that there were as many degrees in the order of healers as there were healers, whether incarnate or ex-carnate, so that the degrees were practically unnumbered. 'Every healer is a healer on the plane of his present unfoldment; and his work is for that plane only. In working in that degree he may sometimes take upon himself the disordered conditions of those he is seeking to heal. I say "sometimes" advisedly, because, generally speaking, the outflow of life is so great in the healer that, though he may take on his body the disordered conditions of the patient, they are carried out of his body by the flow of the new energy.'

From a long practical experience of the subject, the lecturer was convinced that one of the central principles in the work of healing lay at the root of the great doctrine of vicarious suffering. Those who were sensitive enough took upon themselves the diseased conditions of other souls, and the service, even though it were involuntary, was yet a vicarious suffering. This Christly or vicarious suffering was the only solution of the suffering undergone by many an innocent soul. Such souls took upon themselves the sins and infirmities of others, becoming identified with the evils to such an extent that they became plunged into depths of depression, feeling themselves utterly abandoned of the Highest. This mysterious principle entered into all sympathetic healing whether of the body or of the soul.

This was the great mystery of the labour of the Christ-soul when it fulfilled, as it ever must do, the most trying and even perilous service of taking upon itself the unholy or unwholesome conditions of the spiritually disordered. Yet in

these processes some of the highest and holiest arcana of the unseen realities were unveiled, and many of those who suffered for others would, if they could realise this truth, have an unending source of strength and consolation, for they would then know why they were suffering, for whom they were suffering, and the good service they were rendering to humanity.

'I have often,' said the speaker, 'had to comfort those who were perfect in the will of blessing, but who, owing to physical infirmity or other cause, were unable to fulfil in practice their desire to be of service. I have assured them that whether it be from their sick room or their invalid chair, or out of their straitened circumstances, their will of blessing was not ineffectual, unless they made it so by fretting over the delusion of its inefficiency. I have asked: Does the saint who had advanced so far in the life of the spirit that he must perforce withdraw from all physical contact with mankind, therefore withdraw from service? Nay, rather, we know that it is the very fact of his entering into the higher realm of efficiency—into the spiritual state or realm of causation—that compels him to dwell apart, and assuredly this is so, as all know who have attained to this high degree of spiritual potency.'

There was no more beautiful watchword for the soul on entering sleep at night, or on waking in the morning, than such a word as, 'May every soul be blessed,' and the feeblest body could utter such words. In such an utterance there was the power of physical health, and the sign of spiritual health, for it induced a state of quiet and blessedness into which the power of physical good might flow and so bless the body. And it was the sign of spiritual health, 'for when the soul is in health she always wills good to others.'

Dealing with the service of souls discarnate, 'which is the more perilous service,' Mr. Bain said it was necessary that those who essayed to enter upon this service should be bathed in the waters of the Great Love, 'for if even the least faculty of the soul be not so sanctified we are vulnerable there, and the poisoned arrow of death may pierce the heel of Achilles.' The whole nature, indeed, needed to be unified in power, and purified in love.

Describing one of the modes of spiritual healing, Mr. Bain said: 'A simple, pure or generous human soul being found fit and worthy for this holy service, into its light is drawn the diseased and disordered soul who needs the service of cleansing or healing. This diseased or dark soul is received with the open arms of compassion by the innocent soul. For, being generous, its very principle of life is self-sacrifice. But as surely as it receives into its embrace of compassion this unholy substance, so surely does it take into its very life-stream the poisons or elements of death, or conditions of disorder, wherewith the diseased soul is afflicted. Thus does it enter into the very estate of the soul given to it to serve. This estate may be so dark, so utterly cheerless, that to the pure and innocent soul it may, indeed, be a very entrance into, and an abiding in, hell. And the depression or actual anguish of the pure soul will be in proportion to the darkness or depth of the low estate in which the unholy soul dwells. This depression or anguish indicates that for the period of service the pure soul actually recognises the infirmities of the impure one as its own, and as long as the service lasts the innocent one is actually bearing and suffering for, or because of, the iniquities, infirmities, diseases, or sins of the other. So great may become the strain of anguish that at times there arises the most poignant temptation to break through it all, either by cursing the suffering or by denying the power of the Spirit of Good to be in it. Now this is the great temptation of the denier of good. To yield to it is to fail in service, and once the suffering servant of good yields to this subtle trial the nexus of compassion is broken and the service of good is interrupted, though only to be resumed when love has strengthened the serving soul.'

The lecturer affirmed that the pain of such ministry, when loyally endured, blessed both healer and healed. For the serving soul the suffering was a necessity of the Divine law. Until it had fulfilled its function of service it could not enter into its rest. Such was the true meaning of vicarious sacrifice, and of spiritual healing on its inner or mystical side.

THAT belief in a future life must have a basis of fact or it will fail is becoming more and more apparent to thoughtful minds. If heaven and hell, or a spirit world, exist, they do so within the universe, not outside it, and are therefore facts in Nature and are subjects for inquiry and investigation like any other natural facts. That there is a scientific basis for belief in a future life is demonstrable, and we are pleased to see that the Rev. John Page Hopps will deal with this important branch of research at Little Portland-street Chapel on Sunday evenings, March 15th, 22nd, and 29th, at seven o'clock. All the seats are free, and all visitors will be welcome.

SPIRITUALISM IN THE KABBALAH.

So much of mystery is connected with the word 'Kabbalah,' which has become a proverb for anything obscure and enigmatical ('cabalistic'), and this great monument of misapplied industry has such a reputation for embodying profound and mystic learning, that it is perhaps as well that it should be brought into the open daylight of a modern language. A translation of the Zohar, one of the most important sections of the Kabbalah, is appearing in 'The Word,' an American theosophical magazine, and a third impression of Mr. S. L. MacGregor Mathers' book, 'The Kabbalah Unveiled,' has been issued by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., Limited, price 7s. 6d. *net*. This contains a translation of three of the books of the Zohar, or a small portion of the whole Kabbalah, and even these were previously accessible to many students in the Latin version of Knorr von Rosenroth, so that the book discloses nothing that is really new. It will, however, serve to make evident to English readers the small amount of valuable grain which is to be found in an overwhelming bulk of chaff, such as plays upon the arrangement and numerical value of letters, and an anthropomorphic delineation of Deity, which to us sounds ridiculously crude.

To Spiritualists, however, this volume presents two points not altogether devoid of interest, as showing that spirit phenomena were known to the Rabbis. In the treatise called the *Idra Rabba*, or Greater Holy Assembly, Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, in a company of ten persons, was expounding the Divine nature, and calling on each in turn to speak upon one of the ten essential attributes of divinity. The commencement of the sitting is thus described: 'They kept silence and they heard a voice, and their knees knocked together with fear. What was the voice? The voice of the Higher Assembly, which had assembled above. For out of Paradise came the souls of the just thither, that they might hearken.' 'It is said in the Arcanum of Arcana that when Rabbi Simeon opened his mouth the whole place was shaken, and his companions also were shaken.' On one occasion, after a Rabbi had spoken in his turn, Rabbi Simeon called upon him to speak a second time. But before he rose, 'a voice came forth and said: "One angel doth not undertake two messages."' It would appear that another spirit control, through another medium, was needed to deal with the second question. In the *Idra Zuta*, or Lesser Holy Assembly, Rabbi Simeon told how he had previously been on the point of death, and had seen fire surrounding his house as a protecting circle. He also said that a deceased Rabbi was present in spirit, with seventy just spirits around him. On another occasion, as related in the Zohar, while Rabbi Simeon was discoursing, an aged and venerable stranger arose in the midst of the assembled company, added further instruction, and then vanished.

Mr. Mathers' book is dedicated to the authors of 'The Perfect Way,' Dr. Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, and in his preface he says:—

I wish particularly to direct the reader's attention to the stress laid by the Kabbalah on the Feminine Aspects of the Deity, and to the shameful way in which any allusion to these has been suppressed in the ordinary translations of the Bible, also to the kabbalistical equality of male and female.

I have much pleasure in dedicating this work to the authors of 'The Perfect Way,' as they have in that excellent and wonderful book touched so much on the doctrines of the Kabbalah, and laid such value on its teachings. 'The Perfect Way' is one of the most deeply occult works that has been written for centuries.

From the learned and scholarly Introduction which Mr. Mathers prefixes to his translation, the reader will obtain an excellent general idea of what the Kabbalah contains, and a summary of the esoteric doctrine which it enunciates.

'If men not only believed but knew that there was for them a life beyond the grave, the mystery of pain and sin would melt away, the decline of old age would be an interesting episode, the buoyant hopes of youth would gladden the whole human race, the sting of death would vanish, and sorrow and sighing would flee away.'—*LIVERPOOL POST*.

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ROME OR REASON.

It is well that we should be reminded from time to time of the supreme alternative that still faces us, without flinching, in the world of spiritual thought. That alternative is Rome or Reason: and we say this without prejudice and, for the moment, without bias, and with the cool admission that it is just conceivable the authority of Rome may be superior to the claim of Reason. What we propose to do, in fact, is to state that supposition with the help of a remarkable Discourse by a powerful priest in America, delivered at the installation of the new Archbishop of Massachusetts. It is the most simple, the most thorough-going and the most courageous claim for Rome that we have seen for years; and, in the sharpest and most masterful way, it sets forth that claim in the name of Christ and God. He says:—

Nineteen hundred years ago Jesus Christ established upon earth a visible kingdom which was to exist forever:—a supernatural kingdom, supreme over all natural kingdoms. Christ gave to that kingdom a constitution and a form of government, reserving to himself the right of moulding its policy and directing its destiny through his supernatural agents, the Pope, the Bishops, and the Priests of the Church for all time.

The Pope, the Bishops, and the Priests are his successors. As he was not to remain on earth in visible presence to decide and define these teachings, it was necessary that he should appoint another to exercise that high and holy prerogative; it was necessary that he should place over his earthly kingdom a head, a visible sovereign vested with supreme authority—authority not only to pronounce in doctrinal matters, but to govern and to rule, to administer and control the world, embracing society and all its parts and all its members.

His kingdom was to be one. Unity was to be a distinguishing feature of it, an essential characteristic—unity of doctrine, unity of government, unity of sacramental institutions. It was, indeed, to be divided into territorial parts, as are the empires of men, but in the respects mentioned it was to know no such thing as division or separation of parts. The Divine Master revealed but one religious truth, or one body or system of religious truths, to the world, and he could authorise the teaching of no other without contradicting and stultifying himself.

Now the maintenance of such unity was impossible without a supreme head, without a centre of unity. Had he not appointed such a head over his empire, and had not this head, by acknowledged rights and obligations, been enabled to exert an influence over each of its parts, those parts, abandoned to themselves, would soon have taken a course of development contrary to each other, a course which would have led to the dissolution of the whole body.

Now, as one head could not supervise the whole world-wide kingdom, divinely ordained Bishops and Priests were appointed; and these completed the instruments by which, throughout all time, Christ would manage and direct the Kingdom or Church. The power which he gave to its first rulers was destined to continue:—

It began its existence beside the throne of the Cæsars. The same subjects who in temporal affairs obeyed the laws of the Roman Empire bowed before the power of the new institution and recognised in it a master infinitely greater than Cæsar. And during the nineteen centuries that have elapsed since its foundation there has been no empire, no state, which has not beheld its citizens yielding to its claims and submitting to its sway.

'Infinitely greater than Cæsar,' be it noted:—the Pope, the Bishops and the Priests of Rome divinely placed above all earthly monarchs and all inferior thrones. The Pope is the King of kings:—

From the elevation of his chair, one and immutable, the father of millions of men scattered all over the earth raises his voice, which teaches. He is believed. He names bishops: they are received. He promulgates a law: it is respected. He pronounces a judgment: it is submitted to. Distance, geographical lines, climate—nothing detracts from the majesty which commands and the obedience which accomplishes.

Hence, said this masterful and outspoken Priest, it follows that the Archbishop, now being enthroned, 'is crowned with honour and power by the supreme head of Christ's kingdom upon earth.' 'He is a divinely appointed monarch over a division of the realm wherein Jesus Christ claims and exercises the right of sovereign lord and master.' 'And he is guilty of no extravagant pretension when he declares that God has placed him on the throne of empire.' 'He is called by Christ, just as the apostles were called': and Christ says to him: 'Mount upon the throne of truth, speak to men, to kings, to nations; fear nothing! Every authority will bend before your words, bring down everything high which lifts itself up against the knowledge of God.'

We have kept our promise to state the claims of Rome without prejudice, and even without bias, and we shall remark upon them without temper and without scorn. The central claim is simply overwhelming, and it is not to be wondered at that it fascinates or hypnotises many. It is as difficult for some to resist as it is difficult for others to give in to so gigantic a claim, especially as there is no other claimant: and it does seem reasonable that a divine revelation (if there is such a thing) should be committed to the charge of a divinely inspired custodian and interpreter. If one could just manage to believe that, all the rest is so very easy. But can we believe it?

It is when we turn from the claim to the fact that the crumbling begins. We are told that if Christ had not appointed a supreme head, men, left to themselves, 'would soon have taken a course of development contrary to each other, a course which would have led to the dissolution of the whole body.' But is not this precisely what has happened in spite of the 'supreme head'? Men have taken a course of development contrary to each other: and the dissolution of the whole body is imminent. Powerful Priests, surrounded by the splendours of their shrines and the adorations of their devotees, may deceive themselves as to the real trend of the great human tide, but the stern fact, we may imagine, is clear to Christ. If he knows anything about it, he must know that the Priest's claim is as empty as it is artificial. If he ever sought to establish such a kingdom, and to appoint such a successor, he has failed, but we see no evidence that he did either. His kingdom 'cometh not with observation,' and it is as uncontrolled by human authority as it is free from external bounds: for it is a kingdom of the soul.

But, above all other considerations, there is one that is irresistible. If the claim as here stated is well founded it follows that the Church of Rome bounds the Church of Christ. All who are outside of it are rebels or lost sheep. If that were true, it would be the greatest proof of all that Christ has failed. Why? Because what was to have been a world-wide kingdom never held the world, and holds it less than ever to-day. When it seemed for a time to hold the world, it was cruel as well as merciful, and fought with weapons of ignorance and savagery as well as guided with rod and staff of discipline: and now, when it is losing ground, it is manifest that the boasted world-wide empire is dwindling to a querulous and irritable anachronism: its very Priests needing to be kept within bounds by threats and excommunications, and its devotees needing to be held by consigning them to obscurantism, in forbidding them to read freely.

We must confess to some sympathy with this courageous Priest in his challenge to a world of so much indifferentism in relation to Religion. There is too much freedom, he says: too much rationalism that, after all, is not half in earnest. Let it be granted: but the remedy is not in the sacrifice of all that makes for personal self-possession and responsibility. Our appeal must be to the witness within, to the individual reason and conscience, and to the Christ, speaking not through an external authority, but in the spirit itself. That way salvation lies: though we do not deny that the salvation may be also found in the Church of Rome, for God fulfils Himself, and Man may save himself, in many ways.

A DOUBLE RETURNS A CALL.

A gentleman living at Neuilly, near Paris, who signs himself 'D,' narrates in 'L'Echo du Merveilleux' a curious case of a 'double' performing a social obligation on behalf of the real person. Mme. D., in June last, received a call from an old acquaintance from the country, whom she had not seen for some years. This lady asked her to come soon to see her at Auteuil, as she would shortly be returning to her home. Mme. D. rather dreaded the prospect of returning the call, as she feared that her friend might ask her to testify in the legal business which had brought her to Paris.

One night Mme. D. dreamed that she had been to Auteuil and found that her friend was not in. A day or two afterwards the lady came again, and apologised for having been out when Mme. D. had called! On Mme. D. saying that she had not yet been able to arrange to pay this visit, her friend said that the *conciierge* of the house in which she was staying had seen and spoken to a lady who gave Mme. D.'s name and said she came from Neuilly; this lady did not leave a card, but the description given by the *conciierge* was precisely that of Mme. D.

It would appear as though, while Mme. D. was preoccupied with the thought of having to pay a call which might lead to an unwelcome request, her 'double' had gone to the house and had been seen by the *conciierge*; Mme. D. had only been aware of the visit and its result through a dream-remembrance. A 'double' that can discharge one's minor social obligations would be regarded by many as a convenient substitute for personal attendance.

INTERMENT.—On Monday, March 2nd, the body of Mrs. M. J. Beardsworth, the wife of Mr. E. Beardsworth, president of Hawkshead Hall Society, Southport, was interred at the Blackburn Cemetery in the presence of Mr. Beardsworth and a number of relatives and friends. The service at the graveside was conducted jointly by Mr. Hickory, Congregationalist, and Mr. F. Hepworth, resident speaker at the Blackburn Spiritualist Temple. Mrs. Beardsworth passed away on February 27th, after a long and trying illness, in the sixtieth year of her age.—COR.

INTERESTING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

Two valuable Papers dealing with 'Interesting Personal Experiences' were read by Mr. H. Biden Steele and Mr. Angus McArthur before a large meeting of the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, on Thursday evening, March 5th, Mr. H. Withall, Vice-President, in the chair.

MR. H. BIDEN STEELE said: It seems strange that I should be called on to speak of some of the experiences which I have had during a few years' research of an, as yet, short life, to an audience among whom one sees men and women of renown and wide experience in the occult world of adepts, writers, lecturers, and mediums.

A great difficulty appeared in the way of my agreeing to come at the chairman's request, in that many of my researches into the realms of the 'ultra-normal' and the consequent happenings have taken place either directly or indirectly in the course of my profession, and I had, therefore, to consider the desires and feelings of others more than of myself, and as a result I shall have to leave unsaid much which would have been of far greater interest than the subject matter of my short address to-night.

Being some years ago left much to myself in a very small country hamlet, with Nature as the sole companion of my hours of thought before and after the day's work and study, without access to any books dealing with the natural or so-called 'supernatural' world, I was greatly astonished and as pleasantly surprised to find myself becoming in some unknown manner the gradual possessor of knowledge and ideas of and concerning the existence and nature of a Deity, the purpose of His works, the reality of a *something* in man beyond what was visible to the eye, and of the 'soul' of all things.

The sun, the sky, the clouds, the world of trees, flowers, and woods, the insects, birds, and animals became a source of constant study and delight in the discovery of 'purpose' underlying every shape, form, and habit—and thus burst upon me the first idea of any *meaning* in the oft-heard mention of an all-just, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God, to whom the sparrow was sufficiently important to receive care, and yet who was the ruler of the universe which I saw by day and the starry heavens I scanned by night.

The great ideas of justice, power and wisdom were thereafter always present to influence each research and decision, upsetting the hitherto readily accepted (though not *realised*) teachings which had been instilled into my mind regarding the fall of man and the forgiveness of sins: namely, that life on this world determined hell or heaven as an alternative for all eternity; the necessity for absolute belief in, not *the* Christ, but the Jesus Christ of the local pulpit as the only escape from everlasting damnation, no matter how pure and holy an unbeliever might be, or lofty his religious ideals, or even if he had never heard or had a chance to hear of that Jesus Christ and his teachings (as interpreted by the local representative of the Church); the passing into nothingness and nowhere at death until some undetermined date when the world would end and judgment take place on the actual physical body, resurrected. (How much sympathy one felt for the sick, the lame, and the deformed, in that they would never be relieved from their useless worn-out bodies: and how one feared the awfulness of cold, black, cheerless death which sowed sorrow on all—the toll of the bell, the slow tramp of the mourners, the black clothes and palls all adding to this dismal fear.) The idea that a man could be cut off in his prime by an illness or accident, for which he was not responsible, without having the opportunity of continuing his good work either here or hereafter seemed utterly incompatible with the justice or wisdom of an all-just and wise God. Was such a man created solely to start his labours and be suddenly stopped by the hand of fate, to let the crop fail for want of complete sowing or reaping?

I came into touch with death by the loss of a dear sister, and my whole nature revolted at the idea that she was going

to be consigned to the cold damp earth under these awful conditions—to rot and decay until the indefinitely postponed last day : and, sad at heart and weary, in the most prosaic surroundings of a schoolroom I had, that evening, a most vivid vision and saw her whom I loved, in a radiant, flowing garment, pass upwards to a great light, her eyes turned towards it in utter happiness until she was met and greeted by a large company of similarly radiant ones who appeared to be waiting to welcome her, and the vision passed away amid strains of grand and beautiful music.

From that moment my ideas entirely changed.

The thing which struck me most about the vision was that she had no wings, neither had those who met her, and yet they all moved, or glided, through space without apparent effort. The whole of my training had given me the idea that only men and angels existed—the former on earth, the latter with wings to fly in heaven ; for surely the Scriptures said, ‘with twain they do fly,’ and in all the biblical and stained glass representations of angels, wings of white, or varying hue, are shown. Had I *imagined* the vision for myself they all would certainly have had wings, and my sister would have had to pass over a great sea or lake to a place before the Throne of God, whereon He would have been seated, to judge her for heaven or hell, according to the book of the recording angel, with Christ by His side to intercede and obtain forgiveness of her sin ; but instead of this I saw the company of welcoming spirits with a total absence of wings, throne, and judgment seat.

The fact that the picture was so contrary to all my preconceived notions was proof to me that what I had seen was outside my own brain or thought, and set me thinking deeply ; it also gave me the certain conviction that whatever happened to the body *the soul could never feel the grave*, and in the place of sorrow came an intense happiness in the knowledge that she lived and that death had no sting ; for though God may have made man of the dust to return thereto, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a ‘living soul’ to inherit *immortality*.

Going to reside for a while with friends near London, books came into my hands which, throwing a new and truer light on the Old and New Testaments, showed them to literally *teem* with assertions, information and details of man’s duality and the life hereafter. One day I was in the drawing room at afternoon tea, my hostess entertaining some of her friends who had come from different parts by rail, and were strangers to each other until introduced. Being asked to remain to dinner, all accepted save one, a Mrs. X., who had to go to London, and shortly afterwards she left us without, however, mentioning where or why she was going.

After dinner we returned to the drawing-room for music and conversation, and at 9.15 p.m. a lady was seated at the piano playing when, *suddenly*, two visitors, strangers before that day, simultaneously exclaimed, ‘Why ! Mrs. X. is sitting on the settee,’ and a third looked and corroborated this, but a moment later they saw her no longer. It is easy to imagine the interest this apparition excited, and the discussion on the ‘astral’ which followed ; the visitors then departed and we all retired.

At breakfast next morning my hostess was turning over her letters, in the curious way which some ladies have of worrying themselves as to the writers and contents from a perusal of the envelope when the opening of the envelope would at once settle the point, when she said ‘Why, here is one from Mrs. X., what can she be writing about so soon ?’

She opened it and, with an exclamation of surprise, read out the contents, which explained that on the night before, the writer had had to write an article on an occult subject, and left us for that purpose. But while sitting at her table in her room, a friend quietly reading by the fire, she lost consciousness of her surroundings, only to find herself in my hostess’s drawing-room, miles away, on the sofa—amongst us all seated chatting, and she gave details as to the positions in which we were, naming the fact that Miss So-and-So was playing the piano, and giving the hour, which was the same as we had noted. She added in her letter that on coming to herself she found that her friend, who had been reading, was by her side

thinking that she (Mrs. X.) had fainted, and was much reassured at her becoming normal, and astonished at the news she brought.

About this time I came across a planchette, of which I had heard a great deal, and, being sceptical, I took it stealthily into a room by myself. I sat down, put it on some paper on a table, placed my hands upon it, and waited—but nothing happened. ‘Ah, I thought so,’ gloated my mind, ‘perhaps it can tell me what there is for dinner !’ (man’s eternal interest), and in a moment it rushed about and stopped. I took up the sheet and read in bold characters the one word ‘M-E-A-T.’ Anyway, it was truthful in the forecast and had the better of me that time.

After this, meetings and séances were attended, and at the first public gathering the speaker gave me some strikingly accurate facts concerning myself and most satisfactory descriptions of some of the departed. It was then that I first came to hear of ‘spirit guides.’

To those who dwell almost entirely in cities the statement that ‘Nature sleeps’ conveys little or no meaning, but to those who have been in close communion with her it is pregnant with truth.

Taking a dislike to the closeness of London all day and all night throughout the year, I turned again to the days of the old vagabondage, and obtaining a small tent, made of a very light material sufficiently weatherproof to be serviceable and small enough to carry in the pocket or in a knapsack, I used to sleep out in fields, gardens, woods, or by riverside (and, in fact, do so now), wherever permission could be obtained. Lying with the doors open and the clear starry sky overhead, the silence of night only broken by the ripple of the water lapping against the bank and the cool evening breeze passing gently over the face, one realises an entirely new world of sensations. Just before dawn I have passed out of the tent and across the meadows ; the whole world has been asleep—absolutely asleep—the trees motionless, the grass colourless, the clear sky sprinkled with watch lamps (the windows of heaven), and neither a bird, beast, nor insect to be seen ; everything has been so intensely *speaking* of sleep that I have had almost the feeling of disturbing Nature, of being a thief in the night, and have been inclined at once to creep back silently to rest before being caught ; it is an extraordinarily keen sensation, and one only to be realised when experienced. Then turning to the East a glow appears, the sky brightens, the trees become tipped with a golden, pinky colour, while in the West all is still night. Then the birds waken and chatter all at once, making a tremendous din, almost discordant ; suddenly there is silence so acute that involuntarily one turns to see what has happened, and at the moment one faces east the rim of the great golden sun appears, to fulfil the promise of God that it *shall* rise ; when, as though by a prearranged signal, the whole bird world gives forth a great and glorious chorus of praise and song, harmonious and stirring, and the day has begun.

This have I often experienced, but each time with the same keen delight, and when I saw the world sleep I understood what the saying meant that ‘the night brings counsel.’ For at that time the body rests and the soul is free to meet other souls, and, conferring with them, receive comfort, consolation, and advice ; making friends in the other world, so that when death intervenes an entrance is made into a realm already known and peopled with familiar faces and kindly friends. This knowledge gives great comfort and allows us to gain help in difficulties by going to sleep with the whole facts of the dilemma clearly set forth in thought, and on waking the matter seems easy and the course quite clear, where before all was doubt and perplexity. I have never tried this in vain or found the advisers incorrect.

The things that perhaps most strike one in attending public circles are the anxiety of some sitters in their eagerness to help, and the desire of the medium to interpret the signs received. Both these inclinations often lead to incorrect deductions from true facts, and are to be deplored.

At recent circles I have heard the medium ask such vague questions as ‘Does anyone know the name of John—I get the name John ?’ ‘Had anyone a relative who suffered from the

chest?' and in each case the claimant has been eager and willing to reply, 'Yes, I had an Uncle John,' or, 'Yes, my aunt suffered from her chest.' Yet if any of us on going home to-night said to one of the family circle, 'I met a person' (sex unnamed) 'who suffered from the chest,' or 'whose name was John,' unless the person so described was a closely intimate friend the identity would not be guessed; again, if either of us attempted to delineate the features of one we met here to-night, describing hair, eyes, and face, the identity would not be known without particulars of dress or association.

At a recent circle the medium told me *positively* that I was going across the sea and, when I shook my head, said: 'Oh, yes, you are, and you are going to Gibraltar'—still I shook my head—'but I *know* you are, for I see a rock and across it is written Gibraltar.' Still I thought it more than improbable, and the medium said: 'Oh, I get a fresh condition, and see you are at the parting of the ways in a troublesome matter; that rock is symbolic, it is to tell you to remain firm and rely on your own self, as isolated as Gibraltar.' Now that was perfectly correct and fitted into the case exactly; the advice was helpful and wise, and being acted on turned out for the best. There should be more calmness and deliberation in such matters.

Being consulted in a case of much vagueness, wherein my visitor knew from several sources that grossly libellous statements were being made, and had already been widely disseminated, I asked for particulars of exact words, persons, and dates; it turned out to be one of those numerous but difficult cases where little scandals, saying nothing but suggesting much, had apparently been so sent broadcast as to result in innuendoes of great harm and clear accusation, the perpetrators of which, however, could not be traced. We were able to ascertain that a certain person knew much about the affair, but, on being approached, would say nothing for fear of detrimentally affecting the others; so we borrowed an article from this person and took it to a well-known psychometrist, who carefully went into the conditions, and described four sets of two persons each. Their exact personal descriptions were given so accurately that they were clearly identified, the names being obtained in two cases, and the psychometrist proceeded to give day by day (naming the days of the week and month) the interviews which took place, the rooms wherein they had happened, the time of the day, the positions of the persons in the rooms and the gist of their conversations. It was then an easy matter to go and see each party separately and represent that all the facts were known, showing this to be so by letting certain details out, and thus to get full admissions from them. As a consequence, the libels were stopped, explanations and apologies given, and all were satisfied, without the lengthy process of the Court, which so many people fear (as the world always says that there is no smoke without fire), and this by means of evidence which would have been insufficient to found an action upon.

Being run down with those indefinite symptoms of not feeling fit, which most of us experience at times, I went to a healing medium, to whom I was quite unknown, and on sitting down she went under control of one who gave his name as a somewhat famous surgeon of years ago. This spirit spoke to me *at once* as follows:—

You are much run down and should be careful—most careful—if your brain is to keep at its present speed of hard work. You require more nourishment just at present. The two meal a day plan is too sufficient—you must have three. You are quite right to do without meat, but add fish to your dietary for a while. To many persons I would recommend a stimulant, but not to you, as you have been an abstainer for about two years, and its sudden introduction into the system would not do any good.

All this was said without a word from me, and every assertion was entirely correct. Any doctor could have told me that I was run down and running the brain hard; but no doctor could have told me that I was a non-flesh eater, taking only two meals a day, and that I had been an abstainer for two years. The advice carried great weight and brought much benefit when followed.

We often hear of 'automatic writing,' and it certainly seems to be a common occurrence when looked for, and recognised when found. I take it that any writing mechanically done without the conscious effort of the writer is more or less automatic. Often one sits down to write on a certain matter and gradually the attention appears to be diverted, but the pen runs on until one is surprised to find much written which was not actually in his mind, although not beyond the scope of his knowledge. This is automatic writing of the 'lesser' nature, for it may be that the writer was inspired (inspiration does not always signify lofty and holy thoughts transcending the mental capacity of the one inspired), or he may have come into tune with one of the storehouses or centres of thought-energy existing in the occult or psychic planes, of which we hear so much under different names, and thus drew knowledge through him, or acted as a channel for its transmission, which would be beyond the scope of his own personal information, as in absolutely automatic writing.

However this may be, an interesting case of automatic writing came to my notice, which is as follows: The under-surgeon of a West of England hospital of note, having heard of this subject, on several occasions sat with a pencil listlessly held over a sheet of paper while reading a book, and obtained marks and letters, followed later by words and intelligent sentences. He was interested and kept strictly accurate note of all that occurred. At the time, his chief being away on vacation, he was left in charge, waiting to take his holiday on the other's return, and had accordingly made all arrangements to go to a watering-place in the North—a considerable journey. One evening, while sitting in the manner described, shortly before the expected return of the chief, he got a sentence, 'Don't prepare, as you won't get your holiday yet.' This was apparently rubbish, and certainly was contrary to his ideas as expressed in the preparations made. However, the paper was dated and filed away. In due course the senior doctor returned and resumed his duties. He was in the best of health as the result of the change, and the journey was made by the person I speak of to the place as arranged. That evening, after he had settled down to a meal and was thinking of unpacking, he received a telegram calling him back at once, to take charge again, as the senior surgeon had met with a serious *accident* (not an *illness*) and was incapacitated. These are the facts, explain them who can.

I have other remarkable experiences which I should like to mention, but time is too short, and I would rather raise my voice in warning mediums against too much of what is fortune-telling pure and simple, for which the sitters are generally most to blame. How often have I heard questions such as these: 'Am I to get married?' 'Shall I have more money?' 'Will my project be successful?' 'Shall I remove?' and I have heard one say, 'I am to be married shortly—will my married life be happy?' and in each case there has been an answer. Over and over again, without asking for the information, I have been told that certain things would happen; for instance, I was assured that 'on May 25th next (four weeks ahead) you will meet a Mr. Sanderson (man described in detail) and do business with him!' The day passed and I have not seen the man yet. If I had taken it for granted that I should go to Gibraltar, and had planned all accordingly, I should have found myself in a nice fix.

I take it that if one is put in possession of the *full* facts of a person's surroundings at a given time, and the influences bearing upon him, he can (as in working out a chess problem) arrive at a probable conclusion of what may result therefrom, provided such conditions are not affected by some new and unexpected influences. It may well be that the medium is best fitted to do this, being sensitive to the influences at work, but if more than this can be foreseen, then the future must be preordained, in which event fate creates destinies, and we cannot alter them anyhow. This is, of course, entirely contrary to the idea of justice and free will. I plead for the exercise of good common-sense in dealing with every branch of this great subject—not *suspicion*, but *fair reason*—and that the recipient should only accept what is given him if it absolutely conforms to his highest conception of good and honest common-sense.

There is one other incident which I wish to mention before closing, and that was a will case. A lady was left penniless on the death of her husband, owing to her having no knowledge whatever of his affairs, and on thorough search being made no papers, books, or a will of any kind being found.

Armed with his signet ring and watchchain we went to a medium, who was able to give information as to a room in a remote part of London which the deceased husband used, under another name, and as to a desk in that room. On a journey and search being made both were found and identity established, but no will was among the papers or any reference thereto. On again conferring, we were informed of a recess in the desk and the method of opening it: it was only after diligent search, armed with this definite instruction, that we found the recess and—the will, under which, I am glad to say, the lady entirely benefited in a considerable estate.

So that psychometrists are of use.

The greatest benefit which I have received from the study of the subject has, however, been from the series of beautiful addresses which it has been my privilege to hear on Wednesday evenings at the Alliance—especially those of Mr. E. W. Wallis, whose words are always those of wholesome common-sense, poetically expressed, and I trust many more will see fit to attend these meetings now that their attention is drawn to them.

My conviction, however, in the occult is not *yours*, and *my* experiences, although convincing to *myself*, will not convince *you*, and I would recommend inquirers and students alike to take note of the small things, and conviction will follow as sure as the day follows the night; for humanity has progressed in thought since the time of the apostles when we read, 'And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; others said, we will hear again of this matter' (Acts xvii. 32). There are fewer mockers *now*, and when the day is done we shall hear the Angels say, 'He is risen,' and after the sleep of death we shall follow the echo of their voices, until the gates are reached and heaven changes from a *dream* to a *reality*. (Loud applause.)

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF CLAIRVOYANCE.

A singular and interesting instance of the practical value of clairvoyance which came under my notice recently may also interest your readers.

Some two and a-half years ago a lady consulted Sinfi Lovell, and was told, amongst other things, that in about two years time her husband would disappear without leaving any trace of his whereabouts, that all search would be fruitless, but that he would eventually return to her exactly three months from the time he went away.

About two years after the above interview, in the month of August the lady again called, stating that her husband had disappeared in July and all search had proved unavailing. This time she was told that he had gone abroad with the intention of seeking a fortune in one of the colonies, and that she would hear where he was on or before September 5th.

The lady actually heard from her husband at 10.30 p.m. on September 4th, saying that he was in Canada, and asking her to forgive him for having deserted her! She was advised by some friends to write him a severe letter demanding a full explanation, failing which she would not receive him again. Sinfi Lovell, however, counselled her to write saying that she would forgive him, and begging him to return. 'If you do not do this,' she added, 'I see that he will in a moment of despair blow his brains out, but if you write as I advise he will come back on either the last day in September or the first of October.'

The lady wrote the letter, and her husband arrived in Liverpool on September 30th, and home to his wife on October 1st. He acknowledged that he had bought a revolver intending to blow his brains out, but that some instinct compelled him to go once more to the post office, where he received the letter which (through Sinfi Lovell's advice) had practically saved his life.

Who shall say that clairvoyance has no practical use?

BELIEVER.

JOTTINGS.

The 'Observer' of Sunday last said: 'Weird happenings are reported to have been taking place of late at the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Offices, opposite the old headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Department in Great Scotland Yard. In this building, it is said, anyone working late at night is apt to hear the doors slammed and the windows opened, and even see shadowy apparitions. No one has been able to trace these manifestations to any human agency. An underground passage has recently been discovered near the new building of the Woods and Forests Department, and coffins, it is stated, have been found there.'

In his review of Mr. H. Belloc's book 'On Nothing and Kindred Subjects,' Mr. C. E. Lawrence, writing in the 'Daily Chronicle,' says: 'Death is one of the Nothings examined in these luminous, humorous, uplifting pages. And a Nothing it truly is. Mrs. Grundy and the half-religious have done their best to make of the passing of man a grisly terror, with their mournful faces, gloomy garments, black horses, and horrid cemeteries; but is it not more spiritual, helpful, hopeful to regard death merely as the marching of soldiers through the mist, a brave progress towards a bright promise? If only the sham and false sentiment which hamper us and make us puppets for the gods to laugh at could be torn away!'

The many friends and admirers of the late Rev. H. R. Haweis among the readers of 'LIGHT' will be interested to learn that, as intimated in the 'Times' of the 5th inst., a memorial tablet has been placed in Marylebone Church bearing the following inscription: 'To the memory of the Rev. Hugh Reginald Haweis, M.A., Trin. Coll., Camb., for 34 years incumbent of St. James' Church, Westmoreland-street, of this parish. This tablet was erected by members of his congregation in appreciation of his genius, eloquence, and kindly spirit, and in recognition of the widespread good he did during the years of his ministry. Died Jan. 29, 1901, aged 63 years. "The Home Land."'

Some excellent Spiritualist doctrine is being preached at the New Jerusalem Church at Southport, by the Rev. J. Ashby, who on the 1st inst. spoke on 'Man's Resurrection: Some of the Changes which await him in the New World.' Taking the text: 'It is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment,' he showed that death in this sense was 'an orderly change provided for man's real advancement.' 'The death which consists in the passage from one world to another' came to good and bad men alike, and therefore was not the death spoken of in the passage, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die'; nor was it to the disadvantage either of the bad or of the good. 'Judgment' meant that 'men passing forward were taken up by the forces of the world into which they entered, and these forces would reduce the man to the true order of his inward life,' penetrating and regulating his whole spiritual constitution.

'All that man needed of this world,' continued Mr. Ashby, 'he took with him at death'; his consciousness and its faculties continued, but 'he would never return for his material body,' for 'that which goeth down to the grave cometh up no more.' The death of the body, in fact, was the resurrection of the man—of the personal identity of the individual self. Man came into the ideas and possessions of his inner self, into the perception of the real things of his interior life, and with these his outward surroundings would correspond. The changes would therefore not be fanciful or arbitrary, but 'natural' in the sense of orderly and fitting. The spirit of divine justice and compassion would lead men into true order, formation of character, and happiness through development and perfection.

With reference to our suggestion in this column last week that 'there are too many labels (or isms) already,' Mr. G. Morley says that he thinks 'there is a need for them all,' and that 'variety of thought is like the diversified beauty of a flower garden. Many men with many minds will always mean many schools of thought, and the multiplication of modes of expression. Spiritualism itself is the true foundation for all religion, and therefore is not in itself a sect; but, as old systems of religious thought that have not Spiritualism for a basis crumble away, the new, yet old, religion that admits Spiritualism as a basic truth will come into prominence.' Mr. Morley says also that the pamphlet by Mr. F. T. A. Davies, to which we referred, 'is published solely on his own responsibility. "Faithists" are united in the principles of brotherhood and spiritual endeavour, but they differ in matters of doctrine by mutual consent.'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

Actors in the Spirit World.

SIR,—I was much interested in 'Mano's' answers to 'A.V.' in 'LIGHT' of February 15th, and I wonder whether he would be able to get an answer for me on a subject which might interest others as well. We all believe that whatever talents we have here will be of use to us in the next world. For instance, a poet will still go on writing poetry, a musician still compose music, but what of an actor? Does acting (and it is a great talent) have a part in our life after death?—Yours, &c.,

A. M. C. P.

The Eucharist.

SIR,—Kindly permit me to ask if any of your readers can tell me what the Spiritualist version would be of the words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper, 'This do in remembrance of me,' which appear, I believe, in the twenty-second chapter of Luke only. My trouble is to reconcile them with St. Paul's version in 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26, and the Church of England and Nonconformist teaching upon the point.—Yours, &c.,

R. J.

SIR,—In reading Church history I have met with a curious tangle which I have never been able to get unravelled. It concerns the administration of the Communion. In the early days of the Christian Church the two elements, wine and bread, were always administered, and, if the Bible record is to be accepted, the one is as strictly ordered as the other. Later on, for some unexplained reason, only one was allowed. 'The Council of Constance declared the administration of both kinds of the elements of the Eucharist to be heretical.' (Crichton's 'History of the Papacy.') The reformers of Bohemia insisted upon having the two elements—it was, in fact, one of their chief demands—and later on the leaders of the Reformation did the same, but the Church, or Papacy, refused to grant it, the cup being denied, at any rate until recent times, though I believe both are now allowed. (Can any of your readers explain this, and say when and why the double changes were made?)

One would naturally think it would be the other way about, that the Church would try to establish the full rite, while the growth of knowledge and liberal thought would endeavour to limit, rather than extend, it. The Catholic Church claims to have been founded by Christ and to be still governed by him from the spirit realm, and yet one of its rites, if not its chief one, has been subject to these mysterious changes. Henry C. Lea says that the Eucharist originated as a substantial meal for the poor. ('History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church.')—Yours, &c.,

A. K. VENNING.

Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.A.

A Spirit Intimation Verified.

SIR,—I should like to place on record what I consider to be a proof of spirit return. On Sunday, March 1st, Mrs. Podmore was giving psychometric delineations at Henley Hall, Battersea, and told me that a spirit named 'James' was with me, showing a wreath consisting of white flowers with small clusters of violets; she also gave the name of 'Edward' in connection with it, and said that the wreath was a symbol for me.

Mr. James C. and Mr. Edward C. (brothers) were my employers for many years. Mr. James C. died four years ago, and so far as I knew Mr. Edward C. was alive and well. But when I got to business the next day, I heard that Mr. Edward C. had had a fit on the previous Saturday, and died the same evening.

The employes bought a wreath, and, to my surprise, it consisted of white flowers and small bunches of violets, just as Mrs. Podmore had described to me. The only explanation I can offer is that Mr. James C. showed the wreath to let me know that his brother had died twenty-four hours previously, and this occurred fourteen hours before there was any possible chance of my learning the fact in the ordinary way; moreover, Mrs. Podmore knew nothing whatever about me or my business.—Yours, &c.,

(Mrs.) A. E. STEBBENS.

45, Lucey-road, Bermondsey, S.E.

Past History in Astral Light.

SIR,—In 'LIGHT' of February 22nd 'W.M.' asks, 'Whether the communicators who replied to "A.V." can give any information as to the astral or akasic light in which all past history is said to be recorded; whether they or other spirits can see and read these records, and, if only certain spirits can do so, what is the cause of this apparent anomaly?'

To these questions I have received the following reply from my spirit friends:—

'If this inquirer refers to any form of physical light such as you are accustomed to see on earth, we have no such light here; our lights are spiritual and can only be discerned by the spiritual eye. These lights emanate from each object or person and are visible in a greater or less degree to each individual spirit, according to the development attained by that spirit; a prospect, object, or person may appear radiant and beautiful to one spirit whilst to another it would be almost invisible, or if seen might present quite a different appearance; so that in one sense there is no light, whilst in another the spirit world is full of it. Past history may be said to be written in spiritual light, as history can be likened to a mosaic picture or scroll made up of innumerable small pieces of different hues, each piece being a soul who has lived during the period illustrated by any particular section of the picture; but such a picture would not record the events of that period only, but would show broadly the general trend of the intellectual and spiritual development of the race during that time. If it was desired to read a more detailed account, a developed spirit could recast the mosaic, bringing the different pieces into groups representing special events; but each spirit must read for itself, although one spirit can teach another anything that the lower spirit is capable of comprehending. "W. M." will perceive, therefore, that there is no anomaly presented by the fact that one spirit may be able to read such a record with ease whilst to a spirit of lower development the record, if visible, would be without meaning.'

—Yours, &c.,

MANO.

The Obligations of Determinism.

SIR,—As pointed out by Mr. F. G. Foster on p. 118 of 'LIGHT,' it is well that *something* should 'awaken the slumbering sense of responsibility' and remind us that outward conditions need to be reformed, and that 'the great mass of the people want lifting out of the rut of their abandoned selves.' There are times when an aspect of truth has to be put forward even in an exaggerated (and therefore untrue) form in order that the public conscience may be strongly aroused, and so it appears to be with determinism as ordinarily presented. There is no doubt whatever that environment and heredity are strong determining factors in man's choice of a manner of life; but Spiritualists will deny that they are more than factors, or that they do more than influence the final result, which is determined in the strict sense by the interaction of environment, heredity, and the essential individual quality of the personality, in a word, the spirit.

Many of Mr. Foster's arguments tell quite against the case for absolute determinism by heredity and environment as put forward by Mr. Pye. If these two factors explained all, why do we find such differences in brothers and sisters brought up in the same surroundings? Why have 'no two human creatures exactly resembled each other'? No one, of course, would assert that the loafer, who rejects life's choicest blessings simply that he may avoid having to work, possesses an *uncorrupted* power of choice: the choice he makes may be dependent neither on heredity nor environment, for his own brother may be an active and enterprising man. It is the fact that he is *not* a 'healthy individual having full control of the life forces' that makes him a loafer. But we must not judge mankind by its worst specimens.

The first two of the 'facts' which Mr. Foster gives as the bases of his assumptions are truisms, while numbers three and four beg the whole question by an appeal to some assumed, but not proven, 'laws of man's being.' The loafer's free, but unfortunate, choice seems sufficient answer to this line of assumption.

On the whole, we see two directions in which public moral effort is needed: first, to improve environment, as Mr. Foster eloquently insists; secondly, to arouse the spiritual nature so that it may strive successfully against adverse heredity or environment, or both together. For, let the hereditarians say what they will, we Spiritualists *know* that there is in man a spark of divine life, a spirit, or soul, which is not merely the product of heredity and which can lift the individual above the apparent limitations of environment. If it were not so, there would be no 'self-made' men, no 'self-educated' teachers of humanity.—Yours, &c.,

B. S.

Two Incidents.

SIR,—On Sunday evening, February 23rd, during the service at the Mechanics' Hall, Nottingham, a lady in the audience (Mrs. Rees) saw a white dove suddenly appear flying in circles over the heads of my niece and my wife, and carrying in its beak an envelope of a blue-grey colour; it then flew towards me (on the platform) and back to my niece. A few minutes after, and whilst Mrs. Rees was still wondering of what this could be symbolic, a letter in a blue-grey envelope was handed to my wife informing her that her sister had just died, about forty-five minutes before. I need scarcely say that the dove seen was *not* in the physical body.

The other incident was one of the many interesting descriptions given by Mrs. Place-Veary. She described minutely the appearance of a man about sixty years of age to one in the audience, who, however, had no recollection of such a man. She asked his neighbour if the visitor was for her—it was not. Going back to the man, Mrs. Veary said the visitor was for him, that he had put a hand on his shoulder, and had just told her that this man, as a boy, lived in a village; then, laughing, she said: 'He has just shown me an old brown snuff-box, and he says that you used to fetch snuff for him in this box when you were a boy.' Then it all came back to him, he remembered the incident and the man!—

Yours, &c.,

J. FRASER HEWES.

Nottingham.

Father Vaughan and Satanic Spiritualism.

SIR,—Father Bernard Vaughan is reported by the 'Daily Mail' to have said on Sunday last, in his sermon on 'The Devil, the World, and the Flesh,' 'that *not a little* of the Spiritualism in fashion among certain sections of the community was satanic'; that 'he knew of no more insidious method of drawing persons away from God than by inviting them to the perilous quicksands of occult research'; that 'they were dealing with psychical phenomena over which not only had they no control, but the nature of the occult forces of which they knew absolutely nothing'; and that they should not 'seek to learn from the spirit world what God himself has not already revealed.' But, sir, kindly permit me, through 'LIGHT,' to ask Father Vaughan, with reference to Satan, or the Devil: Who, or what, and where is he, she or it, and can he give proof that he, she or it exists at all? Will he give proofs and examples that Spiritualism is satanic, and recite why he advises all men not to seek information about the abode we are all to inhabit after casting aside the mortal coil? And lastly, how does he dispose of 1 Cor. xii. 1-11; 1 Epistle of John iv. 1; Matthew vii. 7, and many other passages of similar import? Quoting from the doctrine of the Roman Catholic faith, I find it is declared that the congregations *must* believe 'the truths taught by the Church,' because the 'Apostles taught the Church' and 'God taught the Apostles,' and in proof, 'Because the Apostles worked miracles.' Those miracles were the exercising of the spiritual gifts referred to in 1 Cor. xii. 1-11, and which are recognised and taught by all true Spiritualists. If our teachings and practices are 'satanic,' so, therefore, were those of the Apostles whose works are quoted as the foundation of the Roman Catholic faith!—Yours, &c.,

SPIRITUALIST.

Man's Free Agency.

SIR,—I am much indebted to 'B. S.' for his clear and detailed exposition of free-will principles in 'LIGHT' of February 1st, which sets forth, in better terms than I could have used, my ideas on the subject. There is, however, one weak point in his letter. He says that as the capacity of rising above limiting conditions is not always manifested, it is a potentiality which, by exercise, may become a capacity. But that the capacity is often latent does not alter the fact. Man has been described as 'a thinking animal,' but the fact that very many have not learnt to use their minds as thinking organs does not falsify the definition. Moreover, does not the very meaning of the phrase, 'having the capacity,' contain a hint that the power is potential as well as actual?

I have carefully read Mr. Pye's letter in the same issue and tried to appreciate his necessitarian argument, but cannot see my way to accept it, because it does not go to the root of the matter. Mr. Pye may find it necessary to go from North London to the Bank, but surely he has a free choice of many routes to take, and, above all, of the attitude of mind he will carry with him, which will make his journey a painful, laborious struggle, or a happy outing.

No one claims that free-will is absolute—that man can perform impossibilities, live under water or soar up into the air for instance; but within the limits of possibility, and provided there are one or more alternative courses, man is a free agent, if he chooses, and has learnt how, to use his will.

As I understand the best writers on the philosophy of the subject, the hereditary and environmental conditions are the self and not a foreign power. As T. H. Green, in his work on 'Philosophy,' says: 'Since in all willing a man is his own subject, the will is always free.'

I spoke of Determinism as being materialistic because it emphasises the physical environment to the exclusion of man's spiritual nature. Undoubtedly it is so. Man is essentially a spirit; and to subordinate spirit to matter is materialism. And now Mr. Pye boldly affirms 'that man is not responsible for his actions.' This is a woeful lapse from spirituality, and quite untenable by a Spiritualist. Mr. Pye would turn the world into a vast lunatic asylum, and make the God we are supposed to love and worship as a righteous being, a delusion of mechanical automata made to think to order! That man is a responsible being is one of the chief pillars of the spiritual philosophy, and it stands to reason, therefore, that Determinism and Spiritualism are at opposite poles of thought. But it seems to me that the question is easily put to the test. A habit is assuredly one of the most obvious results of heredity, environment, and conditions; let anyone select one of his particular fixed habits, such as smoking, meat eating, drinking, bad temper, or other selfishness, and try if he cannot eradicate it by will power. If he can, and I know from personal experience that he can, he possesses free will. If he cannot it merely proves that his will power is not sufficiently strong. If he wishes to continue the experiment he must go through a course of will training, and then try again. Let me recommend this experiment to the readers of 'LIGHT' as a capital self-discipline, altogether outside of the question of free-will.

If Mr. Pye has dug down to the bed-rock in his search for truth, as he says he has, all he has to do now is to separate the dross from the pure gold.—Yours, &c.,

A. K. VENNING.

Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.A.

SOCIETY WORK.

Notices of future events which *do not exceed twenty-five words* may be added to reports *if accompanied by six penny stamps*, but all such notices which exceed twenty-five words must be inserted in our advertising columns.

STRATFORD.—WORKMEN'S HALL, ROMFORD-ROAD, E.—On Sunday last Mr. H. F. Leaf impressively compared the 'Lives and Teachings of Buddha and Jesus.' Mr. George F. Tilby presided. Sunday next, Mrs. E. Neville, psychometry.—W. S.

CLAPHAM INSTITUTE, GAUDEN-ROAD.—On Sunday last Miss MacGrigor's address on 'Mental Healing' gave general satisfaction. Mr. H. Boddington presided. Sunday next, at 7 p.m. prompt, Mrs. A. Boddington, address and clairvoyant descriptions. Choir practice at 6.30 p.m.

FULHAM.—COLVEY HALL, 25, FERNHURST-ROAD, S.W.—On Sunday last Mr. Gee's address was much appreciated. Mrs. Monteith sang a solo. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Miss Violet Burton. March 18th, at 8 p.m., Mr. Kepple. Lyceum every Sunday, 3 p.m.—W. T.

BRIGHTON.—MANCHESTER-STREET (OPPOSITE AQUARIUM).—On Sunday last, morning and evening, Mr. E. W. Wallis delivered excellent addresses. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m. and 7 p.m., Mrs. Podmore, addresses and clairvoyant descriptions; also on Monday, at 8 p.m., séance, 1s. each.—A. C.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—On Sunday last the visit of the London Union delegates met with every success and a record attendance in the evening. Sunday next, at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Mr. Kelland. Monday next, at 7 p.m., Faithful Sisters; 19th, at 8.15 p.m., public circle.—W. U.

HACKNEY.—SIGDON-ROAD SCHOOL, DALSTON-LANE, N.E.—On Sunday last Mr. Robert King lectured on the 'Rationale of the Circle,' and ably answered questions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Wesley Adams, trance address; soloist, Mr. Wittey. Tuesday, 17th, at 4 p.m., ladies' work party, at 39, Mildenhall-road.—N. R.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—73, BECKLOW-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday morning last Miss Baxter conducted a circle. In the evening Miss Chapin gave a good address and clairvoyant descriptions to a crowded audience. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., circle; at 7 p.m., Mr. D. J. Davis. 19th, Miss Alice Webb. Wednesday and Friday, at 8 p.m., members' circle.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday last Mr. Leigh Hunt kindly took the platform in place of Miss MacCreadie, who is still indisposed, and gave nineteen clairvoyant descriptions, of which fourteen were recognised. Mr. Matthews' solo was well received. Mr. G. Spriggs presided. Sunday next, at 6.30 for 7 p.m., Mr. E. W. Wallis on 'To Disestablish Hell.'—A. J. W.