

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

'WHATSOEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!'—Paul.

No. 1,507.—VOL. XXIX. [Registered as] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1909.

[a Newspaper.] PRICE TWOPENCE.
Per Post, 10s. 10d. per annum.

London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd.
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FRIDAY, December 3rd, at 3 p.m.—
Admission 1s.; Members and Associates, Free.
Talks with a Spirit Control ... MRS. M. H. WALLIS.

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, and FRIDAY, at 11 a.m.,
Spiritual Healing ... MR. A. REX.
For further particulars see p. 566.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

All subscriptions of new Members and Associates joining the London Spiritualist Alliance now, will be taken to include the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1910.

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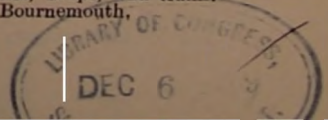
A Lecture will be given on Friday, December 3rd, by
REV. JOHN TODD FERRIER on 'THE LIVING TEMPLE,
ITS FOURFOLD NATURE,' illustrated with diagrams.
Chair—Rev. J. Gomersall.

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The Chair will be taken by Mrs. E. M. Walter.

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OR,

THE OTHER SIDE OF LIFE

In the Light of Human Experience and Modern Research.

BY

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With an Introduction by the Rev. Arthur Chambers.

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'The work has been written with a view of enlightening those many sincere seekers after Truth who are asking for something more definite as to Life Beyond than has been presented in much of the teaching of the past. The open-minded reader of this volume will find in it much that will amply repay him for a careful study of its pages. The important value of this work is the author's effort to show the agreement between the declarations of Scripture and the acknowledged spiritual facts of present-day experience.'—REV. ARTHUR CHAMBERS.

'This book forms a valuable exposition of the teachings of Spiritualism, and a compendium of the indisputable facts and reasoning on which they are based. We could not wish for a better book than this to put into the hands of sincerely religious persons of any denomination who have doubts as to the position held by psychical phenomena in regard to religion, and to the permissibility of research into the domain covered by Spiritualism. All such inquirers will be reassured and encouraged by the perusal of this excellent volume.'—'Light.'

'We know of no better or more suitable work. The book is so temperately written, so packed with splendid evidences as to the reality of communion between spirits and mortals, that we can unreservedly recommend it to all and sundry as the best book of the year upon our subject, distinctly meritorious from first to last.'—'Two Worlds,' November 6th.

'There is no slipshod work here, but on every page the book bears evidence of great research, continuous thought, and unflinching care. This is a book worth reading.'—'Sheffield Daily Telegraph,' October 21st, 1909.

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AFTER DEATH—WHAT?**SPIRITISTIC PHENOMENA AND THEIR INTERPRETATION.**

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This book is a treasure-house of facts relating to Spiritistic phenomena and apparitions of the dead, interpreted by a scientist who has been won over from the ranks of extreme scepticism on the subject to the side of a belief in the reality and genuineness of the phenomena in question.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

In George Fox's 'Journal' there occurs the following shrewd note: 'I came upon a people who relied much on dreams. And I told them except they could distinguish between dream and dream they would mash or confound all things together: for there were three sorts of dreams. Multitude of business sometimes caused dreams: and there were whisperings of Satan in man in the night season: and there were speakings of God to man in dreams.'

We commend that (on the whole) wise deliverance to our Devil theory critics who so roughly 'mash or confound all things together,' both when they read their Bibles and when they listen to what we have to tell them.

Why, for instance, does not a man in the responsible position of the Rev. Swainson try to discriminate? Why 'mash' and 'confound' all the varying texts in the Bible? and why 'mash' and 'confound' the good and the bad elements in Modern Spiritualism? Did it never occur to him that if some of these spirit communications are angelic, he may be drifting seriously near 'the sin against the Holy Ghost'?

A unique little work has just been published by 'The Cremation Society of England,' entitled 'Cremation in Great Britain.' It contains a history of the modern Cremation movement, a summary of the Cremation Act of 1902, a full account of the regulations for carrying out Cremation, and an interesting series of illustrations of Crematoria in a dozen different places in England.

The following extracts from a useful chapter 'About Cremation' will perhaps help to reconcile some to it who still shrink:—

So long as the population of England was small, and most people lived in villages or in towns which were insignificant in size compared with our modern cities, burial of the dead in the midst of the living did comparatively little harm; besides, the causes of disease were at that time little known or investigated. But in the last century the population increased very rapidly, and, owing to the invention of machinery and the necessary concentration of industry and factories, hundreds of thousands of men poured into the towns and rendered it imperative to consider the question of the public health in a way that was quite unknown before. It was found, among other things, that churchyards were centres from which disease spread to the surrounding houses; investigations were made which revealed a horrible condition of burial vaults and graves; and the result was that a law was passed in 1855 forbidding interment within the boundaries of cities. This, however, was only a temporary remedy for the evil. A number of cemeteries were at once formed on the outskirts of London and elsewhere; but the growth of the Metropolis has been so rapid that it has overtaken the cemeteries, and they are now, in most cases, surrounded by dwelling houses,

as at Brompton, Kensal Green, Norwood, &c., and the old fatal conditions are being reproduced over again. The metropolitan boroughs are now making new cemeteries still further out, but London increases so rapidly that before these latest cemeteries are half-filled, they will be in the midst of thickly populated suburbs. There is only one remedy possible for this evil—an evil which is incident not to London alone, but to all large cities—and that remedy is Cremation. When it is considered that about seventy-two thousand persons die in London alone every year—or two hundred a day—it is really almost incredible that people will go on sowing the ground around the city in which they live with a ring of decomposing matter.

By means of Cremation a human body is reduced in the space of an hour into harmless gases and a small amount of clean, white ash.

Cremation has been recognised by Parliament. The Home Secretary has made regulations as to the maintenance and inspection of Crematoria, and has prescribed in what cases Cremation may take place, and the forms of notices, certificates, and declarations which shall be given or made before Cremation is permitted.

Cremation is the only remedy for the present-day unnatural conditions of burial, facilitating the disposal of the dead reverently and decently without danger to the living.

We regret to see so much emphasis laid upon urns, columbaria and formal burial or retention of ashes after Cremation. All that, in our judgment, is in the wrong direction. Nothing could be better than the reverent placing of the small amount of ashes under the surface of the earth near the roots of a beautiful tree.

We have received verbatim reports of the discussion on Christian Science at the Congregational Union meeting at Sheffield. Mr. Paget's Paper was little more than a slaughterer's attack upon Mrs. Eddy and all her works. Dr. R. F. Horton was more really critical and therefore more just. While he almost sternly reproved the bad philosophy of Christian Science, and its undue glorification of Mrs. Eddy, he, at the same time, gave a generous tribute to its influence for good. The following passage will console many a believer for Mr. Paget's harsh and hard attack:—

There are large numbers of people, hundreds and thousands throughout the world, who have become happier, and, as far as we can see, better and sweeter, for their belief in this teaching. Some have passed from a cheerless agnosticism into this soul-satisfying knowledge; others have passed from Christian churches, where they were listless, and entered into Christian Science, where they are intensely interested and even enthralled.

Nor do we find, to set off against these advantages, those moral corruptions which so often steal into new and enthusiastic religious movements. We do not hear of moral slips, of shady proceedings, of malversation of money. The ethical effect, so far as we can see, is wholly good. Judged by their fruits, Christian Scientists can claim a favourable verdict. Here is a force in the world which, whatever may be the errors or the perils connected with it, makes for purity, for happiness, for love, and, above all, for a Christian temper, qualities of character and life which we do not wish to discredit.

Christian Science is, notwithstanding its philosophy, or perhaps because of it, on the spiritual side in the conflict with materialism. It is on the side of virtue against vice. Speaking generally, the followers of this cult from the beginning, and still more when they have been in it for a little time, are good, amiable, and attractive, and they make life easier for themselves and for others; they keep the mind open to religion and to God. This, perhaps, is the best point of all—they keep the mind always open to religion and to God.

A propos of the Thomas Paine celebration, 'Current Literature' prints conflicting opinions from 'Blackwood,' 'The Times,' 'The Nation,' 'The St. Louis Mirror,' and 'The New York Truthseeker.' The last two are laudatory. 'Current Literature' says:—

William Marion Reedy, in the St. Louis 'Mirror,' extols Paine as 'a greater reasoner than Jefferson,' and remarks that his 'blasphemies' have become the commonplaces of modern Christian apologetics. Mr. Reedy says further:—

'Thanks to the late Moncure D. Conway, we have learned the truth about Tom Paine. To-day we know him for a man who brought philosophy to the service of humanity, who put the ordinary man in the way of thinking for himself. With whatever fault of method, he was a spiritual emancipator, a dissipator of theological and monarchical fog. He glorified common sense in writings that seem reactionary now to people grown cynical and *blasé* under the prosperity and liberty he established. . . . To Paine, men were more than things. Prelates and plutocrats and parasites disparage them. He was the friend of the common people, an apostle of brotherly love, a believer in a God uncheaped by mortal and immoral attributions. It is time that justice should be done to the memory of this man who strove and suffered for his fellow-men. He is one of the chief saints of the Church of Man.'

In an appreciation published in the New York 'Truthseeker,' Mr. W. M. Van der Weyde, Secretary of the Paine Centenary Celebration, adds:—

'It seems almost incredible that such a remarkable man as was Thomas Paine could by any process whatever be so utterly buried in oblivion for so many years. The same type of bigotry and fanaticism that burned defenceless old women at the stake for witchcraft inspired the efforts to bury the memory of the great Deist. And it is only in the past few years that an age of reason dawning in the world brought again to light the illustrious man we are proud to honour. As it is, only a sadly small proportion of the world's people knows anything at all about the author-hero of the American Revolution, and the total knowledge possessed by many persons concerning Paine is that "he was an Atheist"—which he was not.'

The present indications are that posterity will preserve the favourable, rather than the unfavourable, picture of Thomas Paine. His influence is steadily growing. Clergymen participated in the centenary exercises. New editions of all his important works have been lately published. And his admirers are at this moment converting the house he occupied at New Rochelle, New York, into a permanent museum to be devoted to his honour.

The John Ouseley Company (London) sends us two noticeable books by J. M. Stuart-Young; 'The Seductive Coast: poems lyrical and descriptive from Western Africa,' and 'A Cupful of Kernels, Stories, Studies and Sketches, mainly from the West African Coast.' No one could fail to recognise the sunny sheen, the sealike swing and the breezy buoyancy of these books, but many would probably feel a bit uncomfortable here and there on happening upon some of their amatory rhapsodies and allusions. They might, indeed, have well been spared.

Mr. Stuart-Young is capable of doing brilliant work of the Kipling and Louis Stevenson kind; and we have indications of it here.

SPIRITUAL development, the cultivation of self-reliance and personal self-mastery, and the maintenance of control by the higher self over the lower appetites and tendencies is a life-long business and one that requires constant attention. That there is pressing need for individual and collective watchfulness and reform, was recently emphasised by the Lord Chief Justice, who said that: 'From his forty years' legal experience he could say that 90 per cent. of the crime committed in this country could be traced to over-indulgence in drink. He believed in the reduction of public houses, and he wanted to see the public house made more of a refreshment room to the temperate man than the drinking place of the drunken man. The excessive expenditure on drink in the United Kingdom, £160,000,000 a year by all classes of the community, was appalling. It was a very sad fact that upwards of sixty thousand men and women died every year from the effects of intemperance.'

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

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

THURSDAY EVENING NEXT, DECEMBER 2ND,

WHEN AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN BY

MR. L. STANLEY JAST,

ON

'The Place and Purpose of Ritual in the Spiritual Life.'

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

1909.
Dec. 16.—MR. E. WAKE COOK, on 'The Purpose of Existence.'

1910.
Jan. 6.—REV. T. RHONDDA WILLIAMS, on 'Towards Unity.'

Jan. 20.—Social Meeting at 110, St. Martin's Lane (at 3 p.m.).

Jan. 27.—MRS. C. DESPARD, on 'The New Womanhood.'

Feb. 10.—MR. J. W. BOULDING, on 'The Ordination of

"Doctor Sceptic," or the Value of Critical Examination in Matters of Belief.'

Feb. 24.—MR. ANGUS MCARTHUR, on 'The Psychic Element

in the Greek Testament.'

[This Lecture neither assumes nor involves any knowledge of Greek on the part of the audience. The Lecturer, however, believes that by using the original text he can throw a clearer light upon the psychic problems of the New Testament.]

Mar. 17.—LADY MOSLEY, on 'Spiritual Healing.'

Mar. 31.—MR. GEORGE P. YOUNG (President of the Glasgow

Association of Spiritualists), on 'The Trend of

Modern Science towards Spiritualism.'

Apr. 14.—MR. EBENEZER HOWARD (Garden City Pioneer),

on 'Spiritual Influences toward Social Progress.'

Apr. 28.—REV. JOHN PAGE HOPPS, on 'The Ministry of

Angels.'

May 12.—MR. EDMUND E. FOURNIER D'ALBE, B.Sc. (pro-

visionally).

MEETINGS AT 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.,

FOR THE STUDY OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

CLAIRVOYANCE.—On Tuesday next, November 30th, Miss Florence Morse will give illustrations of Clairvoyance, at 3 p.m., and no one will be admitted after that hour. Fee 1s. each to Members and Associates; for friends introduced by them 2s. each.

MEDIUMISTIC DEVELOPMENT.—On Thursday next, December 2nd, at 4 p.m., Mr. George Spriggs will conduct a Class for the Development of Mediumship, for Members and Associates only. Also on December 16th.

THOUGHT EXCHANGE.—At a special meeting on Wednesday next, December 1st, at 4 p.m., Mr. H. O. Wolfe Murray will speak on 'A Mathematical Method of Psychic Development.' Discussion will follow. On Thursday, December 9th, at 4 p.m., Mr. Frederic Thurstan, M.A. Discussion.

TALKS WITH A SPIRIT CONTROL.—On Friday next, December 3rd, at 3 o'clock, Mrs. M. H. Wallis, under spirit control, will reply to questions 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 inquiries of general interest to submit to the control. Students and inquirers alike will find these meetings especially useful in helping them to solve perplexing problems and to realise the actuality of spirit personality.

SPIRIT HEALING.—On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Mr. A. Rex, the healing medium, 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 a limited number of 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.

MEMBERS have the privilege of introducing one friend to the Friday meeting without payment.

In accordance with No. XV. of the Articles of Association, the ordinary annual subscriptions of new Members and Associates elected after October 1st will be taken as covering the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1910.

ELUSIVE ATOMS AND EVASIVE ETHER.

Many reference have been made in 'LIGHT' to the mystery still surrounding matter—that *something* which in most of its varied forms seems to ordinary observation so real, tangible, palpable, visible, yet whose ultimate constitution is a problem which taxes the utmost efforts of scientific men. Matter enters into the subjects dealt with by Spiritualists in various ways: we strive to show that matter is not to be considered as the ultimate reality, but rather as the means of manifestation of spirit on the particular plane on which we consciously live; and it is one of our main points that matter is largely under the control of spirit, namely, of our own spirits incarnate, and sometimes of the spirits of those who have left this material plane of manifestation. We are interested in scientific views on the constitution of matter, because they tend at present to show that matter is but a product of force, acting upon a universal substance which cannot of itself be defined as matter, while force appears to us to take its rise in a world above all that is usually styled material.

The views of learned men, whether speculative philosophers or scientific experimenters, on the constitution of the material universe are admirably set forth in a book by Ronald Campbell Macfie, M.A., &c., entitled 'Science, Matter, and Immortality' (Williams and Norgate, price 5s. net). The author states plainly, yet concisely, the progress of knowledge, from the earliest philosophers to the latest experimenters, on matter, with its atoms and electrons, on the formation of the earth and the solar system, on the beginnings of life, and the evolution of man; and from all this he deduces, first, the idea of a God: a conscious power that is the cause of all—spirit as well as matter; and he goes on to consider what the future may have in store, what continued evolution may bring forth, and concludes that the tendencies of selection, heredity, and environment will be to accentuate the manly and womanly qualities of the sexes and perhaps to develop new faculties.

The chapters dealing with the constitution of the material universe form a fascinating exposition of the course of scientific thought, which, after establishing in the Atom of Dalton an apparently hard and indivisible basis of matter, has discovered that even this (though still the unit of chemical combinations) is itself of complex structure, and owes its properties to still smaller 'corpuscles' or 'electrons' contained within it. The discoveries of Dalton seemed to show that the atom of one substance was entirely different from that of another; an atom of hydrogen was still hydrogen, an atom of iron was iron and nothing else. At present, as the author says:—

It is very difficult to believe that a thin, light gas like hydrogen, or heavy liquid metal like mercury, and a solid substance like a diamond, are all made of precisely the same primordial substance, but so it is. The particles are precisely the same in every instance; and the difference in the atom is merely a question of the number, arrangement, and movement of the corpuscles. An atom, as now conceived, is not a solid thing. The atom of hydrogen contains a thousand corpuscles; the atom of mercury a hundred thousand; and every one of these corpuscles is 'intensely, wondrously alive,' and gyrates and rotates with enormous velocity, the power developed being correspondingly colossal.

All that can be said of corpuscles is that they appear to be centres of force; they can be acted upon by forces in the same sense, though not in the same way, that a billiard-ball

is struck by a cue. Force, then, is one necessary constituent of the atom, and force is not material. The other constituent is the swarm of whirling electrons, and as to the electron all we know is that it conveys an electrical charge, and seems to be, as Sir Oliver Lodge defines it, 'a peculiarity or singularity of some kind in the ether which is of perfectly uniform density everywhere.' It is almost as though some force was able to produce points or knots (electrons) in the otherwise uniform ether, and send these dashing about with almost inconceivable speed, forming systems (atoms) which are themselves in extremely rapid motion.

What then is ether, the only basis of matter that might itself be regarded as material? Whether it can be truly so regarded we cannot tell; its properties are paradoxical to a degree. Though imponderable, and apparently so tenuous that the earth and planets glide through it without friction, its power of vibrating six thousand billion times in a second, for the conveyance of light, proves that it is both elastic and dense—so dense that, as Sir Oliver Lodge says, 'matter by comparison is like gossamer.' In fact it seems to be possessed of properties which, when applied to matter, appear to be mutually incompatible and contradictory; we might therefore regard it as standing as far outside all our conceptions of matter on the one side as force does on the other. Matter, then, would appear to be composed of two things, force and ether, both of which are totally distinct in nature from itself.

Another extremely fascinating subject is that of protoplasm—the physical basis of life. While no kind of matter is unresponsive to force, the peculiar power of response which we call growth and life is confined to protoplasm; given protoplasm, all living structures can be accounted for by evolutionary processes—but how did protoplasm acquire its property of manifesting life? What makes the atoms come together in such a form? All that the author can say is:—

When we consider the complexity of an atom, and the myriads of permutations and combinations through which every atom has passed on its journey through space and time to the brain of a man, we realise that only the hand of a Purpose could ever have brought it safely there. It is sometimes suggested that the chemists will in time be able to make protoplasm in their laboratories. It is quite possible that protoplasm may be produced, but the chemist who produces it will not be the maker of it. All that he will be able to do will be to set certain molecules at work to collect others.

As with life, so with mind; it seems to be a manifestation through a material combination, but one not necessarily following from the combination itself. Science fails to account for life and mind, as it fails to account for matter; science observes, but is powerless to explain. As force differentiates ether into electrons to form atoms and matter, so a higher force aggregates atoms to form protoplasm and brain-substance, and a still higher manifestation of force is able to utilise brain-substance to display consciousness, with all its results. But brain-substance is only the instrument: life and consciousness themselves are beyond all accident of material manifestation.

In his concluding chapters the author says:—

Death should be to men a beautiful hope, and not a fear. It cannot be the end. The scientific logic that would say so is easily refuted by philosophy, and philosophy can easily go further; it can show that when we talk of *beginnings* and *ends* of consciousness we talk nonsense. Birth and death are only finite terms, useful enough for the finite judgments required in everyday life; but used with respect to consciousness they are meaningless.

Science now gives up her dogmatism—birth and death, the beginnings and endings of things, the nature of matter, and many other things are beyond her—and she finds herself a mighty mystic in the midst of a mightier mystery.

A man may believe in inevitable law and yet believe in God. A man may understand the scientific view of brain-cells and yet have a simple faith in immortality.

We can forgive so illuminating an author for being content with simple faith; but even as philosophy goes on where science halts, so Spiritualism goes still further than philosophy and gives us, not faith, but a demonstrated certainty of life independent of the body and continuing, after bodily dissolution, to manifest with undiminished intensity.

AN HONOURABLE RECORD.

The 'Eastbourne Gazette' recently published a well-deserved tribute to our old friend, Mr. Robert Cooper, one of the oldest inhabitants of the town, who passed to spirit life in his ninety-first year on November 5th. Anti-Spiritualists who declare that Spiritualism is injurious to health and morals, and causes insanity and premature death, will find it difficult to maintain that contention as regards Mr. Cooper, whose long and honourable record disproves their assertions. A correspondent, writing in the 'Eastbourne Gazette,' says: 'When Eastbourne was in its comparative infancy, he was one of its leading lights. Devoted to literary and musical pursuits, and to all progressive movements, he let slip the chance of becoming one of our richest business men. It was not until he met with a cycling accident fifteen years ago that he ever experienced the need of medical treatment; he possessed a healthy body as well as a clear and vigorous mind, and his end was calm and peaceful.'

Mr. Cooper married Miss Argles, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Argles, Vicar of Aylesbury, and of their five children, four, two sons and two daughters, still survive. Apart from the business capacity which he displayed in early life, Mr. Cooper possessed more than ordinary abilities. For some years he acted as organist, first at St. Mary's Parish Church and afterwards at Holy Trinity Church. Mr. Cooper composed and published a selection of chants and hymn tunes, and also several songs, including 'The Better Land' and 'Over the Downs.' He was one of the founders of the Eastbourne Gas Company and its first chairman and, as a member of the Local Board, was always an advocate of progress. In politics he was a staunch Liberal, sincere, honest and courageous. He wrote and published 'Health in Nature' and 'Reminiscences of Eastbourne,' and after he became a Spiritualist he was instrumental in establishing 'The Spiritual Times,' one of the first papers devoted to Spiritualism. When the Davenport Brothers came to this country he accompanied them on their tours, and made explanatory speeches regarding the phenomena of Spiritualism and the manifestations which occurred with the Davenports. He made a considerable fortune, which he largely expended in promoting the spread of knowledge of Spiritualism.

PROGRESSION, A DIVINE LAW.

When Nature rings down the curtain of night on the scene of human activities, something will have happened which will exert an influence never to be lost, obliterated, or eradicated. Think of it: for good or ill, to-day's thoughts, motives, and deeds will affect us and exert an influence upon all our future conditions, both here and in the future state. Each one of us has been busy altering conditions, creating circumstances, and exercising a personal influence upon others, the full measure of which can never be known, but which must inevitably be linked into the chain of agencies and activities which will continue throughout the ages in an ever-enlarging sphere, affecting the destinies of the peoples of the earth, making progress, justice, and righteousness more and more possible and rapid, or else retarding the growth of the knowledge of truth and putting back the fingers on the dial of evolution. Things can never again be the same.

A small thing leads to mighty results. A spark will set fire to a city, blow up a magazine. A seed dropped from a bird's beak will split rocks, and, by the growth of a tree, cause a landslide. A child may question and confound the great and learned. A vain and egotistical man may cause war, and deluge a continent in blood and tears and misery. A question asked by a child of strange noises heard about a house threw open the door of communion between two worlds, and confounded the materialism of the age by revealing a new world, more marvellous than that discovered by Columbus, a supposedly idle dreamer. Growth is the divine password in all realms.

The religions of other times exert a shaping influence on the moral and spiritual expression of the present humanity,

even in the re-action which brings about a revolt against the tyrannies and blasphemies of creeds, and crimes of priests and churches. Exactly as God-in-Nature writes His thoughts and expresses His wisdom in the book which we call 'the earth,' so in the realm of mind, Divine truth and wisdom have been deposited in the Temple of Humanity, building up its most marvellous proportions, reaching greater altitudes just as course on course the stones are laid by the builders in the structures which express the thoughts and serve the needs of those who require them.

The 'living present' contains all the results of past seasons: the growths and decays in the physical realm. The humanity of the hour is what it is, physically and mentally, as the direct outcome of past experiences; and in the same manner the religious tendencies, aspirations, and unfoldments of this generation are related to and have been made possible by these past revealments and attainments—nay, more, the sunlight of this morning's dawn reveals to the watchful eye traces of future expansions. Judging by past developments, man is not content to think only of the present, but plans and performs with a view to future good. Not content with last year's garments, yesterday's food, he discards the outworn clothing for the more fitting raiment, and partakes of fresh aliment to meet his present needs, knowing more fully what is best suited to his nature and requirements. A new day is dawning; old things are passing away; pains and penalties, hunger and thirst, 'birth pangs,' and 'growing pains,' are being experienced all around; old forms of thought, modes of expression, garments of belief, patterns of faith and creed, are growing seedy, small, frayed, ragged and old-fashioned, rapidly becoming obsolete. 'Behold, I make all things new!' And Spiritualism, with its demonstrations of man's psychic powers and his persistence beyond the incident of death, is giving us extended views of life and duty and destiny which are indeed revealing to us a new earth, a new humanity, and a new heaven.

B. G. E.

'HIS OWN PLACE.'

Even the Baptists are catching up our gospel—or a part of it. Mr. F. A. Jackson, writing on 'His Own Place' in 'The Baptist' for November 18th, says:—

The putting off of this vesture of the body leaves untouched and unchanged the living man who does not die. The outwardness of the new world does not change the inwardness of the old life.

He surmises that some may say:—

It is all very well to say that we are what we will to be and that we are this forever, but what of those whose will is an infirm will from their birth, who start out with everything against them, whose conditions cripple them all the time?

To such as these Mr. Jackson says he believes that 'one of the glad surprises of the Better Land will be the wonder of some to find that their own place is beyond anything that they ever dared to dream.' But then he harks back to the old bad dream of the foreverness of misery. He pictures two roads, one bright and the other dark, and talks of 'sins which ruin both body and soul,' 'sins which, fixed in a man's life, fix also his doom,' and says 'the unmerciful find a place where mercy does not come,' and so on, without a word regarding the possibility that over there, as here, the gates are open for those who repent and desire to return to the Father's home, or that those who lead the purer, wiser, and more loving life will rejoice in ministry and will delight to serve those who suffer. He forgets that sympathy and love overcome mercilessness and uplift the fallen, and that those who love will find no place that will hold them back from loving kindness, or satisfy them while there are unhappy spirits to be ministered to and brought to the light. He makes no allowance for the re-active influence of pain, and utterly ignores the fact that spirits, having their own instincts, thoughts, visions, and service, as he says they will have, will want to improve, and will not aspire in vain. True, we reap as we sow—but it is not true that all the sowing is done here and all the reaping there! The wise and loving ones over there will manifest their wisdom by helping, teaching, and encouraging the 'spirits in prison' to cease to do evil and learn to do well, and in this way both classes will sow new and good seeds for the harvest time, when, from east and west and north and south, all shall ultimately be gathered home.

REINCARNATION IN A NOVEL FORM.

Novels in abundance have appeared in which the 'problem story' turns on the reality or otherwise of the supernatural; but Mr. R. J. Lees has presented to us, in his new book, '*An Astral Bridegroom*,'* a thorough-going discussion of the doctrine of reincarnation, showing up the absurdities and incongruities into which too hasty believers in it are often betrayed, and putting forward a suggestion, if not a theory, as to how a person may be caused to remember, apparently, the details of supposed previous lives. One of the ladies who professes to believe that she has been reincarnated is obviously frivolous, but the two girls, around whose hallucinations the story revolves, are evidently under the serious impression that their imaginations are really recollections of past lives. To disabuse them of this belief is the object of their friends, and especially of two of the characters, who go about the matter in ways as diametrically opposite as their opinions. Between these men there is a rivalry, an intellectual duel, which lasts throughout the book.

First we have the doctor, whose attention has been called to a curious incident in the childhood of the heroine, who 'remembered' that, some years before, she had lived in a neighbouring village and had fallen into a well. Just as she is to be married, and shortly after the visit of a presumed Oriental fakir or 'Mahatma,' she suddenly discovers that she had, long ago, been the bride of an Indian prince, and had escaped by flight from the duty of being burned on his funeral pyre. For this, the curse had been laid upon her that for seven successive lives her marriage should be frustrated. The doctor was a student of occult phenomena, but he invested them with 'the mystic draping which' artistic culture feels to be so appropriate to the great borderland inquiry,' and he gave close attention to Theosophy, while the other investigator 'dispensed with all these mystical trappings, and regarded the matter in the light of natural phenomena to be carefully examined and intelligently interpreted.'

This latter character is an army pensioner of small means and humble position, but he has studied Myers' 'Human Personality' and has made a close experimental study of dream-life and the influence of suggestion. After thirty years' study of 'both sides of the occult' he has come to the following 'rough conclusion' on the subject of reincarnation:—

The men who first started this idea knew nothing about heredity, pre-natal influences, hypnotism, alterations of personality, and other psychological problems which are transforming our ideas of mental science to-day, to say nothing of the phenomena of Spiritualism, which compel the recognition that discarnate souls have the power, under certain conditions, of invading the psychical state and entering into actual and easy communication with us.

Gertrude, the young lady who believes herself to be under the curse, sees in the Academy a picture resembling her Indian prince, and on tracing out the girl artist, Viola, finds that she, too, has memories of him, and of a life intervening between that and the present one, when the two young women lived in Rome and Gertrude was Viola's mother. But, as the pensioner points out, this shows that her marriage had *not* always been frustrated, and there is confusion in other details of the respective memories of the girls, when they come to be compared.

The pensioner concludes that these stories of past lives have been impressed on both the young women by a single person, and in the end he succeeds in finding out who that person is, and letting a flood of light on the doings of the Oriental fakir. In the meantime, in order to test his own theory, he himself impresses on Gertrude the memories of two other intermediate lives, and declares, by way of explanation, that he has succeeded in retaining a full and clear memory of all that he does in the hours of sleep, that he has met and conversed with the two ladies during bodily sleep, and that he then took

occasion to make the suggestion just referred to. He also asserts that 'while our body sleeps we ourselves are away holding intercourse with souls who have passed across the stage of this world and played their part before us,' and that dreams may sometimes be 'haunting fragments of dim recollections' of these experiences, 'which would-be teachers, who know no more than their helpless dupes, have declared to be half memories of previous lives, and on this flimsy foundation have erected the fantastic theory of reincarnation.'

The pensioner thus concludes—and through him Mr. Lees is evidently speaking for himself—that the belief in memories of previous existences is due to an imperfect understanding of 'the life we live when asleep.' What we learn during our nocturnal psychic excursions is brought to the normal mind afterwards as though it were the memory of something that had happened to ourselves in a previous existence, and Mr. Lees evidently has in view the possibility that these experiences may be either gleaned from intercourse with discarnate spirits or conveyed to us in the same way that thoughts and expressions from those in the Beyond are suggested to trance mediums and impressional speakers. We do not suppose that this book will influence the opinions of those who are firmly committed to an attitude either for or against reincarnation, but the long experience of communion with the spirit world enjoyed by the author entitles him to a full and fair hearing, and to a serious consideration of the arguments which he marshals with skill and interest in a story which also contains a sufficient element of mystery to render it thoroughly readable by the uninitiated.

LIGHT AS A CURATIVE AGENT.

On Monday, the 15th inst., lecturing before the Psycho-Therapeutic Society at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, Mr. Dudley D'A. Wright, F.R.C.S., F.Z.S., described some of the effects of light on the human organism. Light increased the absorption of oxygen and excretion of carbonic acid. Absence of light retarded the chemical changes in the tissues: starving animals, and men accidentally entombed, lived longer when deprived of light and in a state of complete rest. Absence of light also produced a softening of the tissues, a kind of fatty degeneration.

In a State Penitentiary, where the convicts practically never left their poorly lighted cells, over sixty per cent. of the deaths were from tuberculosis of the lungs. When the light in the cells was increased and unhealthy convicts were given one hour's sun bath daily, the deaths from phthisis were reduced to one-third of the previous record and the total deaths from all causes to less than one-half. The Persians, Brahmins, Buddhists and Hindus all knew and availed themselves of the beneficial effects of light. Sun baths were much used by the ancients. The heat rays of the sun increased the temperature of the body, stimulated the heart, brain and other organs and dilated the capillary vesicles of the skin, through which a larger volume of blood circulated, relieving an overworked heart and congested internal organs. In this country, especially in towns, owing to deficiency of sunlight, use was made of arc and incandescent light baths, white or coloured. Red light stimulated vitality in the anæmic, and gave force, sensitiveness, development, and growth. Blue was sedative to hyperæsthetic and neuralgic subjects; it calmed maniacal excitement, aided will-power, promoted stability of ideas and character. Golden yellow aided intellectual development and arrested melancholy. Green was restful, yet cheering. Violet calmed moral trouble and nervous tension.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. E. CARR.—We are unable to publish mere general statements in recommendation of mediums. Details of striking evidences of supernormal power, of spirit influence and proofs of spirit identity are always welcome. 'FELLOW SPIRITUALIST,' LIVERPOOL.—We have received a letter from 'T. H.,' Birmingham, for you, which we will forward if you will kindly send us your name and address. Several letters intended for this issue of 'LIGHT' are unavoidably held over until next week.

* '*An Astral Bridegroom*.' By ROBERT JAMES LEES. Wm. Rider and Son, Ltd., 164, Aldersgate-street, E.C. Price 3s. 6d. net.

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M. LOISY ON THE RESURRECTION.

'The Contemporary Review' Article by Cyril W. Emmet, on 'M. Loisy's view of the Resurrection,' is noticeable chiefly as an indication of the crumbling away of the old crude belief in the physical Resurrection of Jesus. Many inevitable attempts to escape from that have been made, and all kinds of ingenious loopholes have been chiselled away for the bewildered and uncomfortable prisoners. Indeed, almost every rational-minded person who felt at all free, has had to do something to spiritualise a story which, in its gross physical sense, had become rather a stumbling block than a help to faith.

M. Loisy, at once the most patient of students and the most charming of writers, is one of the latest contributors to a way of escape, but, unfortunately, his rationalism has run away with him. He has been so anxious to get rid of the old grossness that he has sacrificed the explanation which is at once so obvious and so complete. He resolves the post-mortem appearances of Jesus into mere subjective visions, born of memories and affections. He loses himself in 'la région subconsciente,' and says:—

En l'état d'exaltation où vivaient les premiers croyants, tout ce travail, qui déroute l'analyse par sa complexité, s'est opéré, spontanément et rapidement, dans la région subconsciente des âmes où se préparent les songes de tous les hommes, les hallucinations de quelques-uns, les intuitions de génie. (In the state of exaltation in which the first believers lived, all this work, which by its complexity defies analysis, was carried on, spontaneously and rapidly, in the subconscious region of their minds, in which are elaborated the dreams of all men, the hallucinations of some, the intuitions of genius.)

And this appears to be his general account of the development of 'la pensée chrétienne':—a rather impoverished outlook!

M. Loisy takes great pains to undermine the story of the Resurrection of Jesus. He dismisses the predictions by Jesus of his death and resurrection, as unhistorical, and holds that Jesus, instead of anticipating his death, actually expected a dramatic *dénouement* which would demonstrate his Messiahship and establish the kingdom of God upon the earth, so that, as Mr. Emmet reminds us, we are thus debarred from supposing that the ground had been prepared for a belief in the Resurrection by any direct teaching of Jesus himself. M. Loisy also dismisses all the parts of the story which keep the body of Jesus in evidence; the treatment of his body by Joseph of Arimathea, the visits of the women to the tomb, and the appearance of the angels to the women. All have to go, according to this remorseless critic. As for 'the legendary embellish-

ment of the story' that Jesus was to rise and did rise on the third day, that is 'due in part to the popular belief that the spirit haunted the body till the third day after death, in part to the choice of Sunday by Gentile Christians as the day of worship, as being the "day of the Sun," and in part to the influence of the Old Testament prophecies of Jonah and Hosea.'

In this dearth of expectation, and this absence of material, we have to account for the sudden and mighty upspringing of belief in the resurrection of this crucified and despised reformer. As Mr. Emmet says:—

The Apostles had been dazed by the catastrophe, and had fled to their own homes. Yet gradually, within a comparatively brief period, they came to believe that this Jesus 'was alive and active in a sense in which this could be said of no other departed leader. The belief transformed their views of their Master and of the Bible, changed their characters, and enabled them to begin the conversion of the world.'

Something had happened, and even Loisy urges that the Church was built up on faith in the risen Christ. How did this faith come about? Loisy finds its origin in the neighbourhood of visions, and specially in a vision seen by Peter. That may carry us far or but a little way, in proportion as we enlarge or reduce our notion of a vision: and, of course, this at once lands us at our own staircase. Utterly free as we are from all the entanglements of the needs of the flesh, so far as persistent life and personality are concerned, we can only be surprised at the curious neglect of our solution by so sharp and so free a man as M. Loisy. But Mr. Emmet, who modestly but firmly follows him as critic, sees what the master-mind misses. He says, plainly enough: 'In a sense, the appearance of spirits, and messages from the spirit world, are facts, i.e., certain people have undoubtedly had psychological experiences of this character.' But are these experiences objective? It is this that interests Mr. Emmet, and he asks whether these take their origin from the personality of the departed, and therefore correspond to a reality which exists outside of the mind of the percipient, or whether such experiences are subjective illusions, 'projected by the subconscious self of the percipient,' and standing in no relation to the personality from which they claim to come. If the first answer be ultimately proved to be true, says Mr. Emmet, we shall go some way towards explaining the Resurrection narratives, in a sense which both science and religion can accept.

That is practically our answer. We are not over-anxious to make a stand for every detail of the Gospel stories, and some portions of them evidently need editing, but the main stream seems to us to be just what we might expect; and, although we should admit that the Resurrection of Jesus is 'unique' in the sense that it stands historically and influentially by itself, we should still urge that it illustrates a universal law—a fact true for the human race and not only for this one member of it.

Both M. Loisy and Mr. Emmet make much of the Christ of 'spiritual experience,' but this is a phrase which is to us quite vague and which may indeed be used as a pleasant little refuge from any positive belief in a personal Christ in the spirit-world. We do not for a moment think this is true either of M. Loisy or Mr. Emmet, but we are always a little extra on the alert when we hear people talking about the Christ of spiritual experience, and about Immortality on the lines of George Eliot's 'O may I join the choir invisible!' which originally meant, and means now more often than not, 'O may I live on in my contribution to the human store!'—an excellent wish, but, so far as any real Immortality is concerned, only a decorative sham.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

At a meeting of the London Spiritualist Alliance, held in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, on Thursday evening, November 18th, Mr. J. J. Morse demonstrated the resources of trance mediumship by answering written questions addressed to him by inquirers in the large audience.

MR. H. WITTHALL, the Vice-President of the Alliance, who occupied the chair, in the course of his preliminary remarks said: 'We have somewhat broken away from our established rule of devoting these evenings to lectures. We had hitherto thought that anything in the way of trance addresses or mediumistic work was better relegated to the séance room. But on this occasion we have asked Mr. Morse to appear on our platform, because we feel that he holds an exceptional position. He has been before the public as a lecturer on Spiritualism for, I believe, forty years, during which he has addressed from eight to ten thousand audiences, and the present state of the Church generally in its relation to Spiritualistic philosophy, I think, points to the fact that he and similar speakers have had a marked effect on the thought of the present age. Those Churches have shown that they accept Spiritualistic teachings, although they do not, as a rule, acknowledge the source from which those teachings were obtained. Nevertheless, it is doubtless a great satisfaction to Mr. Morse to feel that he has done so much good work. Many of you know him as Editor of "The Two Worlds," which he has ably conducted for some three or four years. Mr. Morse has one control whose name is as well known to many of you as that of Mr. Morse himself—I mean "Tien Sien Tie," who on earth was a Chinese, a mandarin of the second class—a highly cultured and intelligent man. He tells us that when he had been in the spirit world a good many years he attended a conference of spirits who were anxious to establish communication with the earth, and volunteered to help in bringing about that communication. At first he decided to work in his own country through some Chinese medium, thinking that he could influence his own countrymen better than the people of other races. Eventually, however, he resolved to attach himself to an Englishman and selected and watched over an unborn child, so that when Mr. Morse was born, he was, so to speak, prepared for the work which he had to accomplish. At the first Spiritualistic meeting Mr. Morse attended he went rather as an antagonist than as a believer, but at that meeting the conditions were formed whereby this Chinese control was able to entrance him and begin his career as a speaker. We are very glad to have Mr. Morse and his Chinese control with us to-night.' (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN then put to Mr. Morse (who was by this time entranced) the various questions propounded, receiving the answers which follow:—

QUESTION: 'How will it fare on the other side with those who have been lonely on this side—those who have not strong family ties and who have made scarcely any friends?'

ANSWER: 'Companionships are matters of attraction and affinity. Circumstances exercise a determining influence or direction in the forming of companionships and friendships, and therefore in this world it may sometimes seem that people are absolutely alone, with no one to interest himself in them, with no ties of affection, sympathy or kindred or mutual purpose and interest. Yet such people, in going through this world, are not always convinced that they are absolutely alone. They may have interior resources upon which they can draw; they may live a contemplative life and attract to themselves inspirations from their immediate earthly surroundings; they may also, psychically speaking, be in association with people invisible to them, and from these unseen, invisible friends there may flow forth inspirations and suggestions which may bring the twain closely together, and perchance at night, during the hours of sleep necessary to the physical organism, the indwelling spirit may either come into active relationship with the other side of life or be

temporarily dissociated from the bodily organism and for a time become a denizen of that other side of life, and during these experiences may find that friendship is a reality. The spirit will meet and mingle with those whom it then understands to be its friends, and spiritual ties may bind them together, so that when at last a greater dissociation occurs and the person "dies" and thus enters freely and fully into the second state of life, he finds those friends there waiting with a glad welcome, and whatever loneliness and consequent sorrow he may have experienced while in the flesh is forgotten—together removed from his thought by the happiness of the full entry into this divine friendship which has been formed in the somewhat singular manner to which we have just referred. No one can be absolutely alone. Each measurably affects the other, not always consciously, but none the less really, and it is probable that could this particular lonely person range through the whole of human life, he might discover affinities and sympathies and people with whom he could enter into some commerce of thought with pleasure and profit. But under the artificial circumstances of human life, which do not allow the full play of the spiritual and social elements in man's nature, many people are condemned to tread a lonely path.

'It fares with them, then, that when they pass to the other side of life they are sure to find some companionship, some friendship, and as friendship cultivates and draws out the qualities of the immortal soul, that friendship which they have experienced on these nocturnal visits to the other world has developed them spiritually and affectionally, and they are thus prepared to take up the friendship in its full completeness when they dwell permanently upon the spirit side of life.'

QUESTION: 'What kind of life do children of twelve or fourteen years old lead in the spirit world? Do they keep the memory of their life on the physical plane, and are they conscious of the doings of their parents?'

ANSWER: 'As to one part of the question, we may say that it is a happy fact that in many cases children are not acquainted with the doings of their parents! Do they remember their earthly associations? Put it to yourselves, friends. Did not your senses and your mentality seem most active about this period of your life? Had not everything a freshness and beauty about it which you look for in vain in after years? Roses were never so beautiful, their perfume never so sweet, the glancing shadows on the rippling stream never made such a sweet picture as in the days of your childhood. Supposing then that, not exactly "unspotted from the world," but in a condition of comparative ripeness and beauty, the child passes from this stage of life. Surely, if it takes its mind with it, it must remember from where it came—the earth—its friends, its parents, its companions, the circumstances of its life. Now, this child, so remembering, will not necessarily regret the translation that has taken place. The child has tasted but little of the sweets and bitters of life; there is no real longing after the flesh-pots, so to speak, developed in its affections, so it naturally turns to the circumstances in which it finds itself. It finds its happiness there, and as in the spirit life all associations depend upon affinities and attractions, its associations, governed by these twain laws, will bring it into the company of other children of the same status, mentally, morally, and spiritually as itself. Let us observe just at this point that there are millions of children passing from this world every year. Hundreds of thousands out of these millions depart, scarcely exciting a regret at their departure. It is somewhat sad to say that many parents are, indeed, glad to be relieved of the burden that is taken from their shoulders when the child leaves the home for the other land. It would be futile to attempt to argue for a single moment that such children have a strong desire to go back to the parental surroundings—to return to the home where love is not. It would be absurd to suppose that such affection would exist between these children and such parents. The child, however, is not left alone. There are thousands upon thousands of men and women who have never had the sweet word "Father" or "Mother" addressed to them in this life, but in whose hearts there has lain

dormant that love which parentage calls forth. They have craved beyond words sometimes to hear the prattle of infancy, to feel a tiny hand caressing their faces. They die. May we suggest to your mind that God is good, after all, and that He has never endowed His children with any faculty which cannot in the nature of things be ministered to? Do not fall into the common error of saying that these people we have referred to are indications of the fact that God *has* endowed certain people with faculties to which life does not minister. That argument is based on an entirely false conception of existence. You are limiting your concept to the earthly life and assuming, as so many do, that unless a thing is realised on this stage of life it will never be realised at all. There is the mistake. And here is the value to you of the fact of spirit return, for spirits tell you emphatically that those who have been deprived of the joys of parentage on earth find in the succouring and training of these poor social outcasts ample opportunities for the realisation and practice of the quickened and purified desires which are with them on the other side. And in the care and training of these children they find ample opportunity for their education, training and culture, the *educing* of their powers of consciousness, intelligence, love, and all the sweeter graces that you predicate as existing in spirit life. Surely there is a providence for the child on "the other side of the way"—colleges, institutions, schools, methods of education and development. Some of them would be laughed at, perhaps, if presented to *this* world educationally—yet the best of the systems which you have adopted for the cultivation of your children have resulted from the inspirations received from educationalists on "the other side of the way." The child in spirit life, then, is cared for, trained, and carried safely along the period of its early development until it attains its full stature, and stands "clothed and in its right mind." It is then free to pursue its own career, if it so desires, and take whatever course seems best to it. Now, do not imagine that the life of the child or the adult in the spirit world is one long continued and persistent effort to get wiser, to obtain more knowledge and become better educated. Why, just think of it. When you get into that other life you begin to realise that you are going to live for ever and ever. And you wisely say, "Why should I wear myself out by persistent effort when I have all the ages to acquire what I wish to know?" The great joy of the spirit life is that you are not compelled by circumstances external to yourself to painful exertions such as those to which you are subject while in the flesh. The joy of living, of gaining knowledge, and the consciousness that you have all the ages of the future before you are your compensations for many of the sorrows you endure in this mortal life, and these mean joy unspeakable for the child."

To the questions, 'How are differences of age adjusted in spirit land? Do infants grow after passing over? At what age do they mature, and what happens to the old and infirm of mind and body?' the control replied briefly that the old and infirm of mind and body were simply such by reason of the natural decay of the organism through which the indwelling spirit operates. When that organism was left behind and the indwelling personality emerged at death, it assumed the spiritual body which was its vehicle on the other side of life. That body already existed in the physical body, and reached its completion when the individual attained his prime physically. Therefore when he had got rid of the recollections of his earthly conditions he adjusted himself quite naturally to the 'prime' period of his existence, and all men were young and all the women beautiful in the 'Homes of the Hereafter.'

Answering the questions: 'Do *all* people survive bodily death? Can bad people grow worse on the other side, or will all progress to higher states?' 'Tien' said: 'If all people do not survive bodily death the whole doctrine of human immortality might be at once dismissed. "Can bad people grow worse?" Certainly they can; if you can only work out a portion of that badness which you have inherited, then the mental and moral portion of it which you take with you must come out there in consequence of your

natural disposition or in the course of training directed upon you for the purpose of eliminating that natural badness by subordinating the evil tendencies to the higher faculties of your nature. In the course of time God "tries over" everything He has made, which is only saying, in other words, that all God's children will obey the divine impulse. Therefore ultimate, universal, and eternal progress is the destiny of mankind.'

'We hear,' wrote another inquirer, 'a great deal about evil spirits, demons, obsessions, and the danger of opening up communications with spirits. Is it a fact that the evil spirits are more numerous and more powerful than the good ones?' In the course of his reply, the control pointed out that the spirit people were 'exported from this world.' The opening portion of the question was, [therefore, a pointed reflection on the character of mankind at large, for if there were a greater number of evil spirits than of good ones, then it followed that the evil people in this world outnumbered the good! This conclusion, however, was too absurd for serious argument. No man was absolutely bad and no man entirely good. There was something of evil in the best man and something of good in the worst. The great object of all human progress and education must be to bring out the best, and the best would inevitably vanquish the evil whenever the opportunity was afforded. A great many people had been frightened away from the subject of Spiritualism by this cry of evil spirits and demons. Centuries ago it was believed that evil spirits played a great part in ordering the phenomena of Nature. Science, however, had explained the phenomena of Nature, dispelling with her clear light the gloom of that ignorance which believed that frightful creatures lurked in the caves, lived in holes in the ground, dwelt at the bottom of the sea, or existed invisibly in the great spaces of the universe. Science had explored the cave and found only a toad where the ignorant man had found a devil. Spiritualism had played a wonderful part in informing the world in regard to this very matter. It had demonstrated the fact that the communicators from the other side were all human beings who were able to prove their continued humanity. And no intelligent Spiritualist would argue for these demons and devils and black-souled beings that many people tried to frighten us with. Certainly there were evil-minded human beings against whom we needed to be constantly on our guard, and the intelligent searcher after truth in regard to spiritual matters, knowing that his way was somewhat unexplored—even dangerous—would tread warily, and would not accept from any spirit communicator any statement that did not commend itself to his reason. It was noticeable that these ideas regarding demons were commonly presented by so-called religious people, whose religion apparently gave them a more profound faith in the ability of devils to enlighten mankind concerning the mysteries of life in the hereafter than in the power of the angels to do so. The fact was that all this talk of devils on the part of these 'religious' folk was only an indication of the fact that they had no real knowledge of the future state such as they professed to have.

Turning to the question of safeguards against those 'evil spirits,' who were simply the departed men and women who had lived in the world, the control said: 'In this life if you shun evil companions and avoid their example, you are able, in the great majority of cases, to keep them at a distance, and live your own life as you should always live it, self-centred and determined to be the best within you that is possible. When you have to do with a dead man treat him in the same way. No sanctity belongs to a man because he is dead, and if you will be yourself and live your own life, keeping your will firm and sure, there is no reason why you should be afflicted with evil spirits. Like attracts like; black or white, it matters not. If the evil spirit enters your sphere it is because there has been a loophole somewhere. Obsession? Yes. You "obsess" one another. Each friend "obsesses" the other. Those of you who are deeply interested in the same thing are more or less "obsessed." Obsession, after all, is only a perversion of mutual sympathy and interests.

When you find a danger in that perversion, stop at once and claim the right to be yourself, and thus, nipping the obsession in the bud at the very beginning, you will render it absolutely impossible. Drive away the unwise spirit as you would the unwise friend from afflicting you spiritually, mentally or morally.'

(To be continued.)

JOTTINGS.

Referring to Mrs. Tingley in 'The Theosophist,' p. 170, Mrs. Besant ventures to make the following prophecy: 'She is being used to make a centre which will pass into the hands of the society she hates, and will form an important South Californian focus for its world-work. The Rome which slew Christians became a centre of Christian power a few centuries later. It is, indeed, a far cry from Imperial Rome to Point Loma, but the world-issues are greater, for one had to do with a sub-race and the other has to do with a Root-Race.'

A kindly correspondent writes: 'I often think that one of the great pleasures afforded by the knowledge of Spiritualism is the realisation of the bond of sympathy and kindly good-will which exists between our unseen friends and ourselves. The loyalty and absolute unselfishness of their friendship and their eagerness to be of service regardless of trouble to themselves, without thought of gratitude or reward, other than the satisfaction of being helpful, are really wonderful and quite beyond one's power of adequate appreciation. One cannot but feel how much people lose by their indifference and by their hostility to the idea of spirit companionship and guidance.'

Dr. J. Sackville Martin seems to think it is unwise to take ourselves too seriously. Speaking at Manchester recently he said, 'Martyrs, zealots, and fanatics have no use for a sense of humour, for if they have one they would not find it easy to die for the right.' There can be no doubt that by brooding, by pessimistic fear-thought, by narrow outlook and partisan feeling, many persons lose the sense of perspective, and are unable to maintain the poise and serenity by which they can make correct value-judgments. A saving sense of humour would dwarf many troubles, while anxiety and fear increase our difficulties out of all proportion. It is far harder to live for the right than it is to die for it, and a broad, tolerant and kindly mental attitude is an immense aid to charity, progress and peace.

According to the 'Star' of the 13th inst. the Rev. Dimsdale T. Young, in his lecture on Spurgeon, 'incidentally related an extraordinary story told him by Dr. Maclaren, who had it from Mr. Spurgeon himself. Mrs. Spurgeon, when her husband was going away for awhile, expressed a wish that she might have a piping bullfinch and an opal ring. Mr. Spurgeon, said Mr. Young, made this a matter of prayer. He afterwards went to the Tabernacle, and there among his letters was an opal ring, sent to be sold for the benefit of the Stockwell Orphanage. On his way to the station one of his old people met him, and said, "I want very much to send a present to Mrs. Spurgeon, but I have nothing but a piping bullfinch." If this story be true, the question arises, Who answered Mr. Spurgeon's prayer? Did some spirit friends impress his admirers to respond?

Two instances of 'phantasms of the living' are related in 'The Metaphysical Magazine' by James W. Donaldson on the authority of a certain Judge G. The Judge says that he and his brother, when boys of eight and twelve, were playing in a barn, when they saw their mother apparently passing the doorway. They ran round the barn in opposite directions, but did not find her; on returning to the house they found her busily engaged, and she had not left the house. In the second case, a young lady of unusual intelligence, who had won honours and scholarships from two colleges, while working on a difficult theme at midnight, saw a vivid apparition of her father, who asked if she was well, and vanished. It appears that her father had been anxious about her and her mother, as he was in a distant country and had not heard from them recently.

If we may believe Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, the declaration that there are 'harps' in heaven is true, for in his article on the 'Sixth Root-Race,' in 'The Theosophist' for November, he describes a gathering in 'the blue Temple,' at which each member of the congregation has in his hand a curious

musical instrument which resembles 'a small, circular harp with strings of some shining metal.' Each man (apparently it is a masculine heaven) aims his playing at the deva-priest, and through him it is transmitted in an upward mighty stream to a great circle of devas above, by whom it is sent forward to other and higher devas, who pass the streams onward until they are linked with 'the solar Logos Himself.' These streams 'make somehow the mighty twelve-stringed lyre upon which the Logos Himself plays as He sits upon the lotus of His system. It is impossible to put this into words, but I who write have seen it, and I know that it is true. [Italics ours.] He hears, He responds, and He Himself plays upon His system!'

The following letter, signed 'F. T.' recently appeared in the 'Daily Mirror.' It is a curiosity, yet it states frankly what many others think in private but seldom express. It is an interesting illustration of the materialism of a certain kind of belief based on the literal interpretation of Bible texts. No wonder Luther said that the Bible was like 'a nose of wax that could be fitted to any face'! 'F. T.' writes: "It is not death to die." So says the poet, and millions of people, including the hundred and one religions, believe it. Is this Biblical? Is it scientific? Certainly not. "Dead men tell no tales." The Bible is very emphatic on this point, for it distinctly says: "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after death the judgment." Before a judgment can take place there must be a resurrection. It also states: "In the day of a man's death his thoughts, hatred, and love, all perish, and he knows not anything that is done under the sun." Death is real. Extinction of life. They do not fall awake, but asleep. If the dead are alive, why call them dead? The impression that people are more alive when dead than they were when alive is absurd and illogical. Truly 'the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.'

Here are other sample curiosities. W. R. Stanton, writing in the 'Bournemouth Visitors' Directory,' challenges a Spiritualist to prove from any of the three accounts of the transfiguration that the spirit of Moses visited Jesus, and says that the Bible tells us that he 'spoke with Moses and Elias, not with their spirits.' Mr. T. W. Relf boldly declares: 'Men are not spirits.' We wonder what Mr. Stanton and Mr. Relf think a spirit is!

Mr. H. Fry, writing in the same newspaper, says, 'Spiritualism is based on the idea of inherent immortality or the present immortality of the soul. This is not a Bible doctrine, although so generally accepted. Bible teaching is future life by resurrection of the body and change to immortality at Christ's return.' Here Mr. Fry is mistaken. Spiritualism is based upon its facts, the phenomenal demonstrations of human survival, and it is these facts which are evidence of inherent immortality. Mr. Fry also declares that the Bible says nothing about 'the spirit of Moses, but Moses, and further, it tells us it was a vision (Matt. xvii., 9). If Moses actually appeared, why should it not be Moses in the body (resurrected)? Perhaps Mr. Fry will tell us how a flesh and blood body can be resurrected and exist for thousands of years in a spiritual world. We do not speak of the 'spirit of Moses,' but of 'spirit Moses.' The physical body was not Moses, it was his, for a time, but now he has another body, a spiritual one. How materialistic these physical resurrectionists are!

'JOAN OF ARC,' by Arthur Whetnall (published by Robert Culley, 25-35, City-road, E.C., price 2s. 6d.), tells once more the triumphant and tragic story of the Maid of Orleans, and bears testimony to her intense piety and sincerity, as well as to the reality of her guidance by unseen powers, who spoke to her in voices which none but she could hear, and whose counsel was always justified by success in every undertaking in which the monitions were carefully heeded and precisely carried into effect. The author has no special theory as to the voices. 'Joan was one of those great souls who work out life's purpose, whether they are born in a stable or amid the grandeur of a palace.' As to one of her tests given to the Dauphin, he says: 'Whether this action of Joan's was clairvoyance, or whether she was under divine guidance, the facts given are supported by unimpeachable evidence.' Perhaps in these days of half-conviction it is more important that facts should be shown to rest on unimpeachable evidence than that they should be 'explained' on the basis of any of the various conflicting theories. The book is well illustrated.

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.

Psychic Photography.

SIR,—It is to be regretted that so early in Mr. Wyllie's visit to this country it is necessary to write in his defence. Fortunately the difficulty can be explained; we are dealing with psychic photography, in which the laws governing normal physical photography are frequently overridden.

Some of the spirit people, especially when they are new to the subject, seem to find it very difficult to remember exactly how they looked in earth life, and refresh their memory by referring to a photograph or portrait. This they sometimes transfer or copy so exactly that undeserved suspicion is cast upon the unfortunate medium. Others may create further trouble by making, as it were, a psychic positive perhaps the full size of the plate, which they use again and again, and sometimes from one side and then from the other, giving the reversed appearance. Photographic mediums have suffered very greatly from this thoughtlessness on the part of some of their spirit sitters; others have, however, given three distinct portraits in as many minutes.

About eight years ago I was accompanied to Mr. Boursnell's studio by a friend who is a very good clairvoyant. He saw his American Indian guide by my side, and when the plate was exposed he mentally requested him to move over to the other side of the background. The result proved that he did so; the form was precisely the same, but reversed.

He seemed so pleased with his picture that at my next séance, a fortnight later, he came again, but to my disappointment exactly as before. He had been pitted with small pox, hence his name, 'Rain in the Face,' and in a sitting with a Leeds medium, shortly afterwards, he came to me and said he 'tried so hard to make those little holes in his face.' I explained to him, as I have to many other spirit visitors, the unfairness to the medium of coming exactly as before, and in several instances they have then exerted their will-power to build up a new form, and have appeared in quite a different pose.

Having heard from friends in the States, who have conducted most careful experiments with Mr. Wyllie, how thoroughly trustworthy he is and what extraordinary results he sometimes obtains, I have examined the photograph mentioned on p. 531 most critically, and am convinced that it is perfectly genuine. So far from being merely 'a poor copy of a reversed one,' it shows a painstaking endeavour on the part of the spirit to give most satisfactory evidence. The remembrance of the portrait is evidently (as is frequently the case) taken from the one in earth life, where he is seated and holding an open book with one hand. However, in the psychic one the head only is given, reversed, and so looking away from the centre of the picture, but with the hair slightly different. No collar or shirt-front or any part of the body is shown. Now, so far from being 'identical,' a further and most significant alteration is made. In the same place, where the book is in the earth portrait, there is a folded sheet of paper with very large letters, E. D. G., written on, and this is apparently held in place by a thumb. As the face is reversed, this paper shows at the back of the spirit, and, no doubt, has been placed in that particular position on purpose. Having many spirit photographs which I have not yet been able to identify, I have often wished that initials could be given. Possibly, if another trial is made and Mr. Girdlestone is requested to come differently, he will do so.

Now for a further experience showing that the friends can and do duplicate the appearance of former portraits. Lately, owing to the recently developed mediumship of two friends, I have had the privilege of photographing some partially materialised spirits in my own home. They manifested close to the background and were perfectly clear and visible to my two visitors and myself. Yet two of these forms are exactly like their last earthly photographs, except that they are now surrounded with spirit drapery.

It had long been my desire to obtain good portraits of my father and mother, and when the latter materialised to me recently at a private séance, I requested her to make the endeavour. Subsequently I mentally desired them not to copy any previous portrait but to make some alteration. Last week I had the joy of again looking on their loved features in a good light, and the four cameras I had in operation gave admirable results. Thoroughly grasping the importance of the suggestion, each of them appeared in the semblance of an article of attire never previously worn, and

therefore the portraits were quite different from any existing pictures.

Certain investigators in the past have had their faith shaken owing to the partial or complete disappearance of the sitter from the plate. This is a curious psychic effect of which I have many examples in my collection; in fact, one was obtained in my garden. A lady and gentleman were photographed standing side by side, but while the lady came out quite clearly, only the collar of her husband was registered on the plate. On one occasion I was the sitter, and three cameras were employed simultaneously. Two of the results were quite normal; but in the other, the chair on which I sat appears absolutely vacant, and my etheric body can be seen behind the chair. Messrs. Glendinning, Traill Taylor, and C. Lacey had somewhat similar experiences.

Poor Mumler and other photographic mediums have been persecuted and falsely charged with fraud because of faces of living people sometimes appearing on their plates as spirits. Yet this is quite possible, sometimes consciously, but generally unconsciously. As to the former, I have projected my etheric double, and it has been photographed eight miles away, and subsequently, having made the appointment beforehand, I tried the same experiment from where I was in Canada, 2,700 miles away, with satisfactory results.

Let us, then, in all these psychic problems, err on the side of charity, knowing from repeated experiences how many false charges have been made, and frequently by people who have taken no pains whatever to study this most intricate phase of mediumship.

This deplorable prejudice has had the effect of obscuring the truth of this valuable evidence for many years past, as well as causing the photographic mediums to suffer a martyrdom by having to live in an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion.—Yours, &c.,

H. BLACKWELL.

A Vision Experience.

SIR,—Your correspondent 'Wrangler,' on page 557, relates an interesting experience, and appears to be in doubt as to its meaning. A psychometrist knows that when close rapport is established between himself and some other person, the 'community of sensation' is often so marked that he identifies himself with the person for whom he is experimenting. Indeed, for the time being the sensitive is that person as regards his sensations and emotions. Mediums, too, are frequently affected by spirit people in a similar manner, and when that is the case they dramatically 'impersonate' the spirit and exhibit characteristic traits and actions by which the observer is able to identify the control. Surely in 'Wrangler's' case the same thing happened, and the speaker, who declared 'I am Eusebius,' knew what he was talking about, and desired to give evidence of his presence and identity as a separate intelligence. This case, it seems to me, is against, not for, reincarnation.—Yours, &c.,

PSYCHIC.

Spiritualism and the Pulpiters.

SIR,—To-day there is a great hubbub, and as of old the cry goes up, 'Our Craft is in danger.' The Rev. F. Swainson cries out against Spiritualism as godless Satanism; a reverend gentleman at a popular seaside resort preaches against the new doctrine, but heads his advertisement, 'I am a Spiritualist,' and he preaches on 'The Witch of Endor.' A well-known Jewish weekly condemns 'Julia's Bureau' and says that the whole thing 'smacks of ghoulish indecency, which to a healthy-minded person must be particularly repugnant'; the writer quotes 'the Witch of Endor' case, calls Spiritualism 'necromancy' and declares that 'the Almighty chastises such nonsense which influences credulous fools.'

Then to refute the charges of the clerical opponent, Spiritualists advertise special lectures on Spiritualism, taking their text from I. Samuel, xxviii. Thus the Bible is used by both parties. A wonderful book, it must be admitted.

The pilgrims of earth, it seems, must needs pass on toward the unseen, armoured, and with the sword of the spirit drawn. As the old town clerk of Ephesus naively put it to the mob, 'Seeing that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly,' and this is good, sound advice for our clerical opponents to-day. For, as history repeats itself, we may say with Gamaliel when the priests were taking counsel against Peter and his work, 'If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.'—Yours, &c.,

THOS. MAY,

Rayleigh, Essex.

A Question for Photographers.

SIR,—Kindly permit me to ask those of your readers who are photographers if they will try an experiment and favour me with the result.

I recently read that it is possible to produce 'psychic extras' in a manner which admits of the investigator providing his own plates and himself carrying out all the proceedings, the psychic operator never touching the plate or interfering in any way, except that when in the dark room he must be permitted to hold one hand above and the other below the plate for some time before it is exposed in the camera, 'to magnetise it.' The writer to whom I refer describes the process as follows: Get a small photo about one inch by one inch and a half, make it transparent, and alter the appearance with India ink, then take a piece of cardboard, cover it with luminous paint, put the transparent photograph over the luminous paint, and paste the edges to the card. Before 'magnetising' the negative, secrete this card, with the transparent photo covering the luminous paint, in the palm—'the arched palm'—of the hand that is held above the negative, ostensibly to 'magnetise' it. Anyone may hold the plate. The onlooker 'cannot see what you have in the hollow of the hand, which you hold above, but near to, the negative. The light emitted by the luminous paint is not bright enough to be visible, but it is strong enough to cause a reproduction of the photograph without affecting any other part of the plate.'

If this is true, it is important that the trick should be known by investigators; but I doubt whether it is true. Will a transparent photograph fixed over luminous paint be reproduced on a negative in the dark room, if held close to the plate in the palm of the 'magnetiser's' (?) hand as here described? Will any reader of 'LIGHT' try the experiment and let me know?—Yours, &c.,

ARTHUR BUTCHER.

Theosophy and Spiritualism.

SIR,—When Spiritualism was first spoken of in scientific circles there was a great outcry, and several scientific men investigated, with results which I claim constituted proof; but those who are antagonistic to Spiritualism accept no man's word. And so it will be, I am afraid, when I give my experiences as to reincarnation. But, sir, the Martian influence is strong within me and forces me to speak what I know to be 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' In the first place a memory came to me in quite the ordinary way, as physical memory usually comes, of an incarnation as a Goth. Then, under spiritual influence, I was shown a vision of several happenings of this very incarnation, but some of my ideas were corrected and enlarged upon. Further, it was pointed out to me that these memories would come to me without spiritual guidance. It may well be that all this will not be regarded as proof by my readers. Let me, then, give what I consider sufficient proof. As an example: I meet a person for the first time, and in the course of conversation I 'sense' his past, as regards but one incarnation. He acknowledges that what I 'sense' has already been conveyed to him. Further, at a meeting for 'psychical research,' one of the members, whom I never met before, goes into trance and describes exactly the same scenes as I had depicted, and refers them to the very person whose past I had psychically 'sensed.' If this is not sufficient proof for Spiritualists, then I must desist from my endeavour to spread the light of truth.

Your correspondent 'Not a Deva,' in 'LIGHT' of the 13th inst., asks: 'How comes it that these Devas who have never passed through human life are in the enjoyment of the spiritual world?' I answer that we do not know, because of our present limited conception of the whole. It is difficult to grasp the fact that these Devas exist, and it is still more difficult for the finite mind to understand the purport of their existence. We cannot tell why Devas are not human until we are further on the road to omniscience.—Yours, &c.,

L. A. BOSMAN.

SIR,—When Theosophy was introduced into Bradford some fifteen years ago, Madame Blavatsky being alive, I joined the society, and was the only Spiritualist in the local lodge. I never concealed my Spiritualism, but invariably supported it, in spite of the disfavour with which it was viewed. I also could not and did not accept the theory of spooks and shells, but openly opposed it.

Granting for a moment that the controls which speak and act through our mediums are only the 'shells of the souls and spirits of the dead entity,' it must be admitted that these 'shells' are capable of being worked into very intelligent entities, either by the mediums or by the floating reminiscences of the dead person. If, as is said by the 'shell

advocates,' these cast-off astral shells can pick up knowledge from a medium's brain, then these 'shells' are to all intents and purposes living persons, and they are doing a work which could not be done more efficaciously by the genuine soul or spirit. I have heard from these 'shells' language and prayers which for sincerity, spirituality, morality, and depths of feeling could not be excelled, or even, as far as my experience goes, equalled, by any preacher. These utterances could not, by any amount of stretching, be regarded as the result of any education or practice of the mediums, because in many cases the mediums, to use a homely phrase, 'did not know B from a bull's foot.' These 'shells' have proved what neither ecclesiastics, nor scientists, nor Theosophists, nor philosophers can prove, that after death we still live, and that as we sow so shall we reap. I say, therefore: 'All hail, ye shells and spooks, and ye Theosophists who, in spite of your supposed superiority to ordinary Spiritualists, admit the existence of astral bodies, which are practically the same as the "spirit bodies" of Spiritualism.'

But what do Theosophists say to the fact that in the 'Key to Theosophy,' written by H. P. Blavatsky, and edited by her years before her death, she declares, in a footnote, that 'spirits of the dead can and do communicate with living man'? H. P. Blavatsky started Theosophy, and in spite of her open dislike of Spiritualism she has acknowledged the fact of the possibility of spirit communion—not shell communion.

JOSEPH CLAYTON.

14, Rufford-street, Bradford.

[Madame Blavatsky was originally a Spiritualist, and at one time wrote numerous articles in defence of Spiritualism. But when she founded the Theosophical Society it would appear that she considered it necessary to draw a clear distinction between the new teaching and the parent movement.—Ed. 'LIGHT'.]

SIR,—I append a few short replies to some of the numerous questions raised by your correspondents concerning Mrs. Besant's recent address to the London Spiritualist Alliance.

The theosophical attitude towards the questions of 'F. S. L.,' 'Dilemma' and 'E. P.,' could hardly be better expressed than in the answer given by the latter's guides on page 550.

An astral shell is an astral body in process of disintegration, analogous to the decomposition of a physical body. When discarded by the entity that inhabited it, it drifts about aimlessly in the astral currents until finally dissolved into its constituent astral elements. Meanwhile it may be temporarily revived and utilised in various ways.

The Devas do not, as assumed, escape the treadmill round, and the inequalities and seeming injustice of human life. On the contrary, they must all sooner or later be drawn into the vortex of human existence; forgetful, like all of us, for the time being, of their divine origin, as the following quotation from Mrs. Besant's 'Pedigree of Man' explains: 'Every being in this universe has passed through the human kingdom, or must pass, if he has not already passed it; if he has passed beyond it, he must have passed through it; if he has not reached it, he will have to pass through in the future. It does not depend on this globe, nor on this race. "Man" is the battle ground of Matter and Spirit, and every being must fight his battle and conquer, before he enters on his divine kingdom.'

Mrs. Besant's knowledge of the truth of reincarnation rests largely on her recovered memory and investigation of some of her own past births.

No student of Theosophy, and certainly not Mrs. Besant, would assign a limit to human progress or bind man to the possibilities of three worlds only. Besides Theosophists and the orthodox, most Spiritualists would, I think, acknowledge to a belief in super-human beings. Mrs. Besant's conviction in respect to these exalted entities is founded on her own direct perception of them on super-physical planes, in addition to similar experiences of many of her intimate friends; but this, of course, is no proof of their existence, any more than is the recollection of one's own past lives, to others. The testimony of the dwellers there, as of dwellers here, should be accepted only with caution and discrimination, not with foolish credulity; for there are tricksters and illusionists on both sides, many more in fact on the other. Moreover, it is as impossible to describe in speech or writing the experiences and perceptions of a totally different state of consciousness such as that of the astral plane, as it would be to explain to a man blind from birth the difference between red and blue.

—Yours, &c.,

W. HUDSON HAND.
(Colonel.)

SIR.—While commending your wish to have the question of reincarnation properly discussed in the pages of 'LIGHT,' I certainly think that the article by Dr. J. M. Peebles, on p. 548, is so puerile that I and those who think with me must refuse to accept it as a serious contribution to the controversy.

It is, of course, quite immaterial where the theory comes from, and what seems to Dr. Peebles a 'quaint' speculation is to us a matter of course. Why should reincarnation mean a 'probability' of sinking deeper and deeper into sin? Do human beings, then, as a rule retrograde during their existence on earth, and are worldly conditions getting steadily worse so as to make this downward movement inevitable? It is urged that a plurality of unremembered past lives cannot be incentives to virtue. Lives are not incentives to anything, virtue or otherwise; they are a hard necessity. The incentive to self-improvement, as indeed the principle of life and the prime-mover in the whole scheme of Evolution, is the divine Spirit or the will of God. Why should the Ego be *once* incarnated 'for clearer individualisation,' and not many times? Is it quite certain that it will be sufficiently 'individualised' by that one earthward flutter? and on what does Dr. Peebles base his belief in the Ego's pre-existence? The 'philosophy of heredity' is no philosophy, but a mass of inconclusive facts, and it does not account for any inequalities, whether affecting geniuses or plain men. I know families where the children, born of the same parents and brought up under identical conditions, are extremely dissimilar; my own family being an excellent case in point. I defy any critic of reincarnation to trace the connection between my parents and myself, and account satisfactorily, on the approved lines of hereditary influence, for my character and attainments. The same kind of testimony is found on every page of accessible history. We see men of singular ability and resource springing from obscure places, sons and daughters of plain, unimaginative parents without spiritual insight or intellectual attainments. Nor does education satisfactorily dispose of these differences.

Reincarnationists do not quarrel with the inequalities of life; we explain them. We have no fault to find with Divine ordinances. But all these imaginary difficulties are rational, compared with Dr. Peebles' 'test' of a speculation's merits. Reincarnation is no good because it has not taught Hindus to outdo the Westerner in material 'blessings'! It would be equally permissible to assume that these wonderful Western inventions are the practical outcome of the belief in hell, which has always been an integral, aye, a fundamental, part of the Christian faith!

Reincarnation is based on a thousand facts; it does not nullify any Divine law, let alone the law of Evolution, which is precisely the same thing in its spiritual aspect; it does not in any way degrade the aspirations of the spirit, but simply gives these aspirations their obvious explanation. Among the evolutionary benefits are mercy and forgiveness. They are developed, in the fulness of fruition, like all other great and God-like qualities, in the course of our labourings through all those phases of Being at which we are trying to guess, and I cannot think that any man who has wittingly embraced the doctrine of reincarnation has thereby surrendered any fraction of his merciful and other moral impulses. Finally, quoting numbers of adherents to a particular faith in discussing questions of philosophy is absurd: those inert millions of Hindus have no more to do with reincarnation than the countless millions of immoral Westerners and the spiritually unawakened Sunday-Christians have to do with the teachings of Christ.—Yours, &c.,

J. M. BORUP.

SIR.—Mr. Snell's letter puts the case between Theosophists and Spiritualists in a nutshell. It has constantly been my experience that what appeared to me to be a flaw in Theosophical teaching was never one at all, and was perfectly comprehensible and rational in the light of deeper study. Every objection we take to details of the teaching simply resolves itself into an inadequate understanding of the system. Unfortunately many Theosophists adopt an attitude of contempt for Spiritualism, but that contempt invariably vanishes in the light of deeper knowledge. We must remember that Madame Blavatsky started the Theosophic movement by Spiritualistic phenomena, and that Mr. Sinnett, a very distinguished occultist, constantly makes researches in this direction. I, personally, was able to accept occult teachings without needing the evidence of a future state which Spiritualism alone can give; but I do not see that this is a reason for tabooing Spiritualism altogether. It is easy to talk about tolerance, but difficult to practise it!—Yours, &c.,

H. O. WOLFE MURRAY.

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.

SPIRITUAL MISSION: 22, Prince's-street, Oxford-street, W.—On Sunday evening last Miss Florence Morse gave lucid and interesting answers to questions.—67, George-street, Baker-street, W.—On Sunday morning last Miss Morse delivered a helpful address. She also gave clairvoyant descriptions and messages after each service. Sunday next, see advt.—F. S.

MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—Cavendish Rooms.—On Sunday last Mr. E. W. Wallis delivered an apposite and interesting address on 'Man's Survival as Man; or Spiritualism and its Critics.' Mr. George Spriggs presided.—Percy Hall.—On the 15th inst. Mrs. Imison gave successful clairvoyant delineations and helpful messages. Sunday next, see advt.—D. N.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.—24, MARKET PLACE.—On Sunday last Miss Violet Burton spoke on 'The Awakening of the Spirit,' and answered questions. Interest is steadily increasing. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Webb, clairvoyante.—T. C. W.

STRATFORD.—WORKMAN'S HALL, ROMFORD-ROAD, E.—On Sunday last Mr. Snowdon Hall gave an impressive address on 'The New Religion,' and ably answered questions. Sunday next, Mr. J. Kelland on 'Spirits in Prison.'—W.H.S.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—On Sunday last Mrs. Beaurepaire gave an address and clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., circle; at 7 p.m., Mr. Osborne, address. Saturday, 8 p.m., social evening.—B.

BRIXTON.—CARLTON HALL, TUNSTALL-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Underwood gave an address on 'Philosophy or Religion.' Sunday next, address; all welcome. December 5th, Miss V. Burton.—A. B.

STRATFORD.—IDMISTON-ROAD, FOREST-LANE.—On Sunday last, at the anniversary meeting, Mr. Smith spoke and Mrs. Smith gave clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Smith; at 7 p.m., Mrs. Neville; Thursday, Mr. Wrench.—H.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—SURREY MASONIC HALL.—On Sunday morning last Mrs. Beaurepaire conducted a circle. In the evening Miss M. Graeter, Miss Ridge and Mr. G. Brown delivered addresses. Sunday next, at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long.—E. S.

CLAPHAM.—RICHMOND-PLACE, NEW-ROAD, WANDSWORTH-ROAD, S.W.—On Sunday last Mr. Osborne spoke ably on 'My Fiddle and I,' and gave successful psychometric delineations. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., circle; at 6.45 p.m., Mr. Simpson, address.—C. C.

HIGHGATE.—GROVEDALE HALL, GROVEDALE-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Abrahall conducted a circle, and Mr. H. Leaf gave an interesting address and clairvoyant descriptions, and answered questions. Sunday next, from 10 a.m., helpers urgently required to distribute literature; at 7 p.m., Mr. H. G. Swift.—S. B.

MANOR PARK.—CORNER OF SHREWSBURY AND STONE-ROADS, E.—On Sunday evening last Mr. C. W. Turner spoke on 'The Coming Religion.' On the 18th, Miss Middleton gave psychometric delineations. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Effie Bathe on 'Death and the So-Called Dead.' December 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, Sale of Work in aid of building fund.—C. W. T.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—73, BECKLOW-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday evening last Mr. Abbott gave a fine address and answered questions. On the 18th inst. Mrs. Podmore gave successful psychometric readings. Sunday next, at 10.45 a.m., public circle; at 6.45 p.m., Mrs. Atkins. Thursday, 7.45, Mrs. Neville. Wednesday and Friday, 8, members' circles.—J. L.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Neville spoke on 'Work in the Spirit Spheres' and gave psychometrical delineations. Sunday next, at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Mr. G. R. Symons, address. Monday, at 7 p.m., ladies' circle. Thursday, at 8, social evening and dance at Raleigh College Hall. Tickets 6d. each.—J. W. A.

HACKNEY.—240A, AMHURST-ROAD, N.—On Sunday last Mr. Robert King delivered a powerful address on 'What Spiritualism Really Is,' in reply to the Rev. F. Swainson. Sunday next, Miss Violet Burton. Monday, 8 p.m., Miss Sainsbury. Saturday, December 4th, social evening and sale of work. Miss Sainsbury, psychometry, &c.—N. R.

BRIGHTON.—MANCHESTER-STREET (OPPOSITE AQUARIUM).—On Sunday morning last a good public circle was held. In the evening Mr. F. G. Clarke gave an address. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m. and 7 p.m., Mr. D. J. Davis. Mondays, 8, and Wednesdays, 3, clairvoyant descriptions. Thursdays, 8.15, public circle.—A. C.