

Light:

A Journal devoted to the Highest Interests of Humanity, both Here and Hereafter.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon)."

The Rev. Dr. Hawley, having published in the *Saratoga Eagle* a long paper containing the usual theological arguments against Spiritualism, has drawn forth a reply* from Dr. Brittan, the Editor-at-large, whose business it is to wait and pounce on the little flies who buzz round his web. This particular Doctor is a very learned fly, and his buzzings extend to much length in the *Saratoga Eagle*. The editor seems to have been exceptionally fair and tolerant, and Dr. Brittan certainly makes the most of the opportunity at his disposal. He meets the Doctor on his own ground, the words of Scripture, and fairly pelts him with texts to prove that the sacred volume is permeated with Spiritualism. This is, no doubt, an effective retort on one who has used that method, but it has little effect on most persons. "Spiritualism, sir," said a pompous person to me, after I had, at his own request, done my best to explain to him its pretensions, "Spiritualism is necromancy." "Well, what then?" "Necromancy is forbidden by God." "Where and to whom?" "To the Jews." "Quite so, and many other things too. Hares, for instance." I used Dr. Brittan's method, and took my controversialist to the Mount of Transfiguration. He said that I made a blasphemous use of a sacred event. But he had nothing else to say. This is useful so far as it goes; and Dr. Brittan's argument is an effective and forcible *tu quoque*. It is more; it is an eloquent and serviceable vindication of Spiritualism.

There are certain subjects which crop up at intervals and form matter for discussion, and perhaps for divergence of opinion. Those who have derived their opinions from Spirits in whom they have learned to place confidence, are ready to do battle for that form of truth which has been so commended to them. They are not, perhaps, very ready to see that there may be other aspects of truth, and that what at first sight seems opposed and even irreconcilable, may be, after all, only another view of many-sided Truth. And we are all of us disposed to forget that even Spirits whose aims we believe to be good, may be, and often are, as ignorant as we are of the deeper mysteries that encircle us and them. If we are to sit at the feet of any Gamaliel among the Invisibles, it behoves us to keep the Standard of Reason ready for use. If what is said commends itself to that ultimate arbiter, after we have used the best means in our power of "trying the Spirits," then we can and ought to do no other than accept it, subject to the right to reverse our acceptance when good cause is shewn. Thus thinking for ourselves in sincerity and openness of mind, we shall hardly go far wrong, and shall, at least, be preserved from mental rust and intellectual sloth.

I am thinking of the subject of Re-Incarnation. But before I say anything on the broad question, let me explain what in the printed communication of "Imperator" seems to need it. These teachings, dating back now to a distant period, are of so private a nature that the selection of portions that may reasonably be published is no easy matter. Hence many

omissions. What is now being printed from time to time was copied for me by the kindness of a friend, and I have not had time for revision, or, I should rather say (for the words are printed *verbatim*), for excision and explanatory comment. The teaching in question was given in reply to a question of mine which followed on a séance in which I had been much perplexed by the positive utterances of certain Spirits, who assumed great names and an attitude of exact knowledge. It is to them that the expressions quoted by "Arkase" were applied. These particular Spirits were utterly dogmatic, absurdly vain, and I should say, of the type that Swedenborg calls "confirming Spirits." To them, and not to the general teachers of Re-Incarnation, the rebuke was particularly applicable.

There are a number of Spirits who teach the doctrine, which, "as popularly understood," my Spirit-teachers uniformly reject. Whether (as I am disposed to believe) there be a sense in which the doctrine is true, or not, I am not sufficiently instructed to tell. I have endeavoured to pin myself down to *facts*, and to leave *theories* (at any rate of late years) to evolve themselves in orderly course. I have so strongly recognised the danger of losing myself in mere speculation; of building one theory on the insecure basis of another, until the whole baseless edifice topples over; that I am fain to avoid what I cannot fathom. When I was distressed (as I often used to be) by the seeming contradictions in Spirit communications, Epes Sargent, the most sagacious, as he was the most active and experienced Spiritualist I ever knew, used always to bring me back to *facts*. "Never mind these theories," (he used to say), "they are matters of opinion even among such Spirits as can reach us: and in splitting hairs you are wasting force, and losing precious time." He used to say that there was so much need of enforcing our plain facts, Psychography, Clairvoyance, the Spirit Hand, &c., that opinions could wait.

It remains, however, that I have never yet succeeded in getting from any Spirit with whom I have been in communication, though some purport to have left the earth thousands of years, any endorsement of the Re-Incarnation theory. I have read with care Kardec's voluminous writings, and I see in them much to admire, but they do not carry conviction to my mind. I have Roustaing's "The Four Gospels Explained by the Writers," now, and I will endeavour to read it with care and thought, in the hope of getting more light. I have no sort of doubt that I shall find in it something to admire and carry away, but whether it will convert me is another matter. One of the most attractive qualities in the literature of Spiritualism to me is the various aspects of one great central truth that are presented in it. I cannot harmonise them all in my present ignorance; but almost all of them attract me in some mood or other, and I am content to believe that "they are but broken lights of" the great Central Truth, and that "Thou, O Lord, art more than they." At any rate, I should wait and ponder long before I ventured to reject a system of teaching which has obtained so wide an acceptance as Kardec's. We shall err, I feel sure, if we accept any teachings as absolute and final. They must be submitted first of all to the test of Reason; and I, for one, would gravely distrust any Spirit that refused that test. They must be read in connection with the special causes that called them forth. "One man's meat is another man's poison." They must be referred to their source. All well-intentioned Spirits are not wise. A stranger from another planet who should interview the first labourer he met as to the nature of the British Constitution might hit upon a well-meaning man, but would hardly be likely to get a wise answer to his question. And lastly, they must be read with all allowances for faulty mediumship, errors in transmission, preconceived ideas, and, especially, for the method of allegorical utterance usual with Spirits. The surface explanation is generally the one least true. It is fair

* "Is Spiritualism Lawful and Right?" By S. B. Brittan, M.D. London; E. W. Allen, Ave Maria Lane, E.C.

however, to say that in this matter of Re-Incarnation these considerations do not seem at first sight to apply.

Much the same remarks apply to the popular conception of the Divinity of Christ. It is hardly worth while to point out that the vulgar idea of that profound mystery is crude and unsatisfying, nay (as I shewed in a recent Note), in some of its coarser presentations, shocking and repulsive. These abstruse theological dogmas do not stand handling. Whatever subtle truth underlies them is evanescent, and one finds it gone while the hard vulgar shell remains in evidence. To me it seems a truism, to say that the vulgar idea of vicarious atonement through a humanised God is wrong; essentially wrong in conception, and at once seen to be so, morally and religiously, by any who can think outside of a theological groove. It is against the *form* which these ideas have assumed in the course of ages that the efforts of wise Spirits will be found to be directed. That is human; the underlying idea frequently is Divine. It will greatly assist the mind in estimating the moral value of certain theological ideas, if the attempt is made to conceive of them as freshly propounded, and stated in the language of to-day. Let anyone, for example, conceive of the Spiritualist's idea of God and the hereafter as the orthodox and accepted Faith of Christendom; and then let him go on to picture to himself what would be the reception accorded to a teacher who should propound, in the vigorous language in which our new gospel is proclaimed, the Calvinistic conception of God, the doctrine of an eternal Hell of material fire, the Apocalyptic notion of Heaven, and the popular idea of the nature of Christ and his atonement. That contrast, once realised, will do more to shew how we have progressed than any other method with which I am acquainted.

M.A. (Oxon.)

EVENINGS WITH MR. MORSE.

An exceedingly good company assembled to meet Mr. Morse on the occasion of his third evening at the Great Russell-street Rooms, on Monday last.

Several written questions of an interesting character were handed in at the commencement of the meeting. The "controlling Spirit," after the usual greeting, invited these to be submitted. The first was:—

"Describe the nature and process of trance, as affecting you, the operator, and Mr. Morse, the subject." In reply, the control said that the first requisite was susceptibility on the part of the subject, and the second, power on the part of the operator. But even where these two conditions were present there were more difficulties than might at first be imagined. There might be many disturbing influences in the state of mind of the subject, or of the circle in which he was sitting. It is very important that the subject should be in a condition of perfect health. Some people have the idea that mediumship is a state of disease, or, at all events, that it produces a state of disease, or that a state of disease is favourable to it. It is true that disease will sometimes produce psychical phenomena, but we maintain that the highest health is compatible with the highest mediumship. Next, the mental state of the subject must be passive. Our own medium's mind is rather active, and that often interferes with our influence. The next essential, and, perhaps, this is the most important of all, is what may be termed quietness of soul—harmony of spirit. These are the three important requisites as regards the subject—physical health, passivity of mind, quietness of soul.

Now—turning to our part in the work—there is emanating from all of you a species of atmosphere or aura. This is to us a visible and real presence, and is the medium connecting the physical and the Spiritual. This refined substance forms the point of contact between us and you. By means of this link, the operator on our side is able to use the power of his will over the subject on your side, in a similar manner to the way in which the earthly operator works in mesmeric phenomena. The result depends primarily on the presence in sufficient quantity of this very subtle substance, although the result will differ in almost every case in consequence of the personal characteristics of the medium; and secondarily, the harmony prevailing in the individual's own mind, and in the circle. On our side, the part we have to take requires long-sustained exertion, and the wonder is frequently to us that this form of mediumship is as successful and as free from confusion as is often the case.

The second question was put in the following form:—

"You are fairly acquainted with the needs and qualities of existence in both worlds. Upon the basis of ours, can you exhibit a comparison or contrast of or between the two, distinctly designed to help forward our fitness for prompt usefulness and happiness on arrival in yours?" In response the "control" said: There is both a contrast and a similarity between the two lives. We will take the similarity first. In one world as in the other, we are ourselves. Apart from your physical and other environments, you as well as ourselves are essentially Spiritual beings. You as well as ourselves are self-conscious beings possessed of a mental, moral, and Spiritual nature. The great difference between us consists in the external circumstances by which you are surrounded. That which you now call the subjective is with us the objective. The inhabitants of the Spiritual world are, identically with you, Spiritual, moral, and mental beings. It is therefore necessary for them also to possess a means, that is, an organisation, through which they may be able to express their nature. If your world is in any real sense of the words a preparation for ours, there must be a similarity between them. If the methods of procedure which are recommended to you as the best in your world, are not such as will be any good to you for the next world, then the next world has not been presented to you in proper form. Part of the question which has been put to us is—How are you to reap the benefit of the similarity? So far as your world is concerned, if all its inhabitants were honest and virtuous there would be far more happiness in it than there is to-day. When you speak of the Spirit-world, you speak of its honesty, love, virtue. If such things make the Spirit-world beautiful and glorious, can they not make your world also beautiful and glorious? The same principles make both worlds glorious. By living a life in accordance with such principles you are making the best preparation for the life to come.

The unfoldment of mind in your world is the cause of much of the progress in your world;—and we say further, that the unfoldment of mind while in your life is one of the best means of enabling you to grasp the truths and realities of the next world when you pass into it. Everything which has a tendency to develop the mental and moral nature is a means of fitting you for the world to come. Some people advocate the putting off until the future of many things which might better be done now. The deferring may be a curse to the individual, while the taking hold of the principles and knowledge now might be a blessing. The life which best unfolds all the powers here is the best preparation for the life which is to come. The life that is provides within itself all that is necessary to prepare you for the life that will be. It may be said that much of this is sentimental and commonplace, but it will be found to be practical also.

Now with regard to the contrasts between the two lives. Your powers and energies now work for the most part in the external, in the objective. You are often painfully conscious that the means which you accomplish to bring about certain ends are awkward and cumbersome. For instance, in sitting down to write a letter to a friend, how you wish you could convey your thoughts direct. It is very rare in your world that this can be done even between those most united. But this longing is the prophecy of its realisation by-and-by. This is an instance of what we mean when we say that what is now subjective to you will then be objective. Having got rid of the cumbersome mechanism of the material life, you will understand other modes of communication, and other means by which thought is transmitted. The industries of life are also with you tied down by material bonds, but when you rise superior to matter, you will be able to see behind this phase of the material universe. As you are now living in the external, you will then be living in the internal.

Under certain circumstances you can even now rise above the ordinary conditions of life in some respects. If you wish to prepare yourselves to reap the full benefit of the contrast between the two lives, you should study the psychological side of life now. Why not strive to cultivate the powers of your Spirit now? This need not in any way interfere with the physical. But if your soul has eyes, why not endeavour to make yourselves aware of their existence? If your soul has ears, why should they not sometimes listen? If your soul has senses, why should they not be, to some extent, unfolded? If your world's conditions are bad, try and purify and improve them, so that the soul may begin to know and to use its powers. Then, when your circumstances change, will you be all the better prepared to enter into another and a higher life.

[We are compelled to defer a report of the remainder of the evening until next week, and will only mention that another "Evening with Mr. Morse" will take place on Monday, the 16th inst., at 7.30, at 38, Great Russell-street.—Ed. "LIGHT."]

SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS—ARE THEY REAL?

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The object of writing my last letter was, candidly, to call forth information and invite honest investigation. I have looked with some anxiety for a reply fairly set out to the various paragraphs of my letter, and am much disappointed to have received none better than that contained in an address by Mr. Adshead at Belper. In this he misrepresents me, I hope not wilfully, and misconceives the questions put by me. I very clearly said that I am a strong believer in Spirit existence; it is matter of Divine Revelation. It is the Spirit Manifestations to which I take exception, and the so-called Theosophy which they have called into existence, which certainly goes far to supersede the revelation of the old Book as of the "dead ages"; that Word which has been "tried to the uttermost, therefore the servant of the Lord loveth it." Now that old Book bids us "try the Spirits, whether they be of God, for many false prophets are gone out into the world." We are told to "believe not every Spirit."

I am charged with affirming that the manifestations are all diabolical. I never said so. I want "more light." What I did say was that the diabolical theory should not be decried as silly or irrational; that these are of God or the Evil One; and to this I stand. The reasoning of Mr. Adshead is fallacious. He instances many things of God that have been made bad use of. That is not the question; but the question is rather this: Can anything from God, or of God, be in itself bad? It is not a question of extrinsic use, but of intrinsic character. Divine manifestations are manifest, useful, rational, in harmony with God's revealed will. All others are either directly diabolical or indirectly so, when done by trick and hypocrisy.

As to the "phenomenal aspect," I would have expected a better reply to all the cases given in my letter, and a good logical *distinguendo*, discriminating rationally between the act of conjuring and Spirit manifestation. As I have already said, I know how raps have been made and can be made, that no one can detect; and so easy is it to beget illusion of the senses that a whole company can be persuaded that sounds come from a place other than the real one. I will undertake to tie a pencil and a slate together, so that writing shall not be done on that slate. As to a challenge to me to produce raps similar to certain others, or, as Mr. Fowler asks, to do all that he will do or have done, who is there with any intelligence that does not see the fallaciousness of such reasoning? It takes a long practice to produce raps at all in the particular form that is usual—six months, sometimes a year. Miss Fox told us that she and her sister sat before a roaring fire until the feet presented thereto, by, I suppose, liquifying the sinovial fluid, enabled them to put one toe over another, and return it with such force to the normal position as to make loud raps inside the boot. I have seen that most successfully done; the catching the knees of the medium stopped it. This, however, is only one mode out of many. Dr. Potter's friends may not make the same raps or exactly similar ones, but raps just as marvellous and as hidden as to origin. This is going on here in Sheffield now.

As to great names they weigh nothing with me. The politest and most learned of ancient peoples successfully practised augury. We all know that the oracles of antiquity were clever tricks. I have attended on their death-beds conjurers and fortune-tellers, notably a renowned gipsy, who was converted to God, I trust, under my ministry. She told me it was all wicked imposture and her relation of how intuitions and shrewd guesses were acquired was most interesting as a study, though very painful as a contemplation, and shewed me clearly that, as in physical nature there are but few genera, but a multitudinous variety of species; so, in the mental and psychological department, few genera, great variety of species, and but few grooves in which minds work; and as we can trace species, however varied, to their genus at once, so can we mental speciality to its source. Tables rap in the line of the mental proclivity of the sitters.

When a Spirit lifts me and carries me about against my will, I will believe it.

A word in conclusion on the *cui bono* aspect. I read with great pain the article of "M. A. (Oxon)" in a recent number of "LIGHT." He says reason now-a-days revolts from the bondage of dogma (this is his general proposition) and demands demonstration in matters concerning the future. He leaves no room at all for faith, and while he writes about Christ and Christianity he practically rejects their whole teaching. "If ye believe not that

I am He ye shall die in your sins." He "was the true 'Light' that lighteneth every man" who will. I have not yet seen one fine truth, taught or pretended to be taught by these Spirit manifestations, that is not taught with loftier tone and authority by the Word of God which has brought life and immortality to light." *Cui bono* then?

In conclusion, when gentlemen of the Spiritualistic school write and speak again of "the Church" let them honestly say what Church. Rome, "the apostacy," trod science under foot; and as to Servetus, he was put to death, not for mere opinion, but for violent factious demagoguery, leading a movement similar to one which afterwards culminated in the "Reign of Terror." He might have held his opinions for ever. He was a Bradlaugh and would have overturned society, but in those days persecution had not been unlearned after the centuries of wicked slavery and bondage under the pressure of that Spirit nightmare which "confined the intellect and enslaved the soul." May I ask why the celebrated Miss Showers has ceased her manifestations, among some of the most startling of the age?—Yours truly,

Sheffield.

S. G. POTTER, D.D.

[We have given insertion to the above letter because we do not like to seem unfair towards an opponent. But in truth we think but little good can come of it. Dr. Potter is evidently not in a frame of mind to be convinced. His talk about raps, for instance, is sheer nonsense to an experienced Spiritualist, who knows that they do not admit of such absurd explanations as he sets forth—who has seen, for instance, a piece of paper held up in the light, and shaken by gentle taps audibly given by an invisible power. The story about Miss Fox and her sister practising with their toes "before a roaring fire" is, moreover, a gross falsehood, and would not affect the question even if it were true. But we do not care to discuss the subject further with one who wants a sort of special intervention on his own behalf, and will believe only when a Spirit lifts him and carries him about against his will. We should suspect the quality of any Spirit who attempted his conversion by such a process. The Doctor will never come to the truth till he is humble enough to admit that he may now very possibly be in error, and of this he does not seem to have the slightest suspicion at present.—ED. "LIGHT."]

"A CLERGYMAN'S REASONS FOR UNBELIEF."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—You recently published under this heading a letter from the Rev. Dr. Potter. May I be allowed to say a word or two on the subject?

Dr. Potter's position is, to my mind, somewhat inconsistent. He seems to think that what we call Spiritual manifestations are all, or mostly, conjuring tricks; and he gives instances of what he has seen conjurers do, to prove that conjurers can do things quite as marvellous. Those who have not had the opportunity of close and careful observation, and who know but little of the arts of the magician, may perhaps be excused for confounding conjurers' feats of deception with the manifestations of Spiritual phenomena; and yet, as a matter of fact, they have nothing in common. Dr. Potter evidently thinks that he knows a good deal about conjuring, but having studied the subject for many years myself, both theoretically and practically, I can assure him that he knows next to nothing, and that his descriptions of the conditions under which he has seen some of the tricks performed would excite a smile from Maskelyne and Cook, as affording one more illustration of what they know by every-day experience—that it is one of the easiest things in the world to deceive men who think they are exceedingly wide-awake.

I suspect that, considering the attitude of Dr. Potter's mind, it would be very difficult to satisfy him that Spiritual phenomena are really genuine, and not illusions, and, therefore, I shall not attempt it. He may have been unfortunate enough to witness some base imitations; but, if he really wants to know the truth, he must be patient, and inquire further. Meanwhile, he should remember that testimony to the reality of the phenomena comes from thousands of competent observers, who have found them occurring in their own family circles, under circumstances that preclude the possibility of deception. And, again, if Dr. Potter appeals to the achievements of professional conjurers in support of his position, we, in our turn, can appeal to professional conjurers, too. Dr. Potter thinks that Spiritualism is all conjuring, but the most distinguished professors of the art say that it is not; and they, surely, ought to know. As proof I refer Dr. Potter to the declarations of Professor Jacobs, Robert Houdin,

and Samuel Bellachini (Court conjurer at Berlin), published from time to time in the pages of "LIGHT."

Dr. Potter says he should be glad to have any real facts demonstrated to him and that he is open to conviction. No doubt he fancies so, but he must excuse me for saying that I do not think he is. And I should be surprised if he were—for why should he care to have proof of the reality of Spiritualism when he has already decided for himself that no good can result from it, but a vast amount of evil? The rev. gentleman evidently would be sorry to find that Spiritualism is true, and yet has some fearful misgiving that it may turn out to be so after all. I am sorry for him. He asks for "more light," but keeps his eyes shut lest by any chance it should come.—Yours respectfully,

VERAX.

VICTOR HUGO'S PROFESSION OF FAITH.

Victor Hugo has frequent dinner receptions of his friends, literary, political, and personal. At one of them recently, he pronounced his adhesion to the Spiritualist faith. M. Arsène Houssaye, in the *Artiste*, reports some of the poet's sentences on the occasion:—

"What is dying but continuing to live? I invoke as witnesses the myriads of worlds summoning us with their bright symphonies. And beyond these myriads of worlds what is there? The Infinite, ever the Infinite! Should I utter the name of God some of you would smile, you who think there is no God! . . . But why do they think there is no God? Is it because they believe in the forces of Nature? Without God it is but dust! They would look at the lesser side of things when the great side dazzles them! What is the earth? A cradle and a tomb. But as the cradle has its dim beginnings the tomb has its bright openings; it is the door closed upon earth, it is also the door opening upon worlds of which we get glimpses only from this side. You imagine that in a few days or a few years you will see me buried. You will not keep me here; your six feet of earth will make no night-darkness for me; your worms of earth may consume what of me is perishable, but that is not my life, not me with my faculties and form; nothing on earth can hold these. Yes, let us live as if we belonged to the visible, but let us also live as if we belonged to the invisible. I cannot be long among you. Believe me, my friends, science will go on making discoveries, but she will never be in the right unless under the leading of a bright ideal."

SAUDA EFFENDI.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—My notice on Sauda Effendi (your compositors read it Sanda) in your last issue not having been first submitted to him for approval, he wishes me to amend some mistakes which I committed. Thus, Effendi is not a title given to under-governors, but to many other employes in Egypt, and he obtained this title for being a translator of the "*Gouvernerat Général de la Compagnie Universelle à l'Isthme de Suez*." Again, I styled him a magician or adept, and he wishes me to contradict this, he being only a healer by the laying on of hands. And a truly great healer he is, for on the evening of the 31st ult., as I was walking with him in Archer-street, Bayswater, we were attracted by a crowd surrounding an old woman stretched on the pavement, and who was thought either dead or dying. To open a passage through the throng, to approach her, utter a short prayer, take her by the arm, place her in the middle of the road, and make her walk firmly, followed by an astonished crowd, was the work of two minutes.—Very truly yours,

29, Colville-road, Notting Hill, W.

G. DAMIANI.

January 2nd, 1882.

[We have had other communications stating that Signor Damiani has been misinformed on several particulars; that Sauda is a Syrian, and not an Egyptian; that, instead of living principally on fruit, only varying his diet by occasionally partaking of eggs and milk, he also takes meat and wine; that so far from being reluctant to advertise his gifts, he does so by means of printed papers, announcing his fees as a thousand francs for a consultation, and five thousand for taking the charge of a case; and that though undoubtedly he is a powerful mesmerist, his cures in London, though very satisfactory in many cases, have at present certainly not been "astounding."—Ed. "LIGHT."]

"On mother's knee, a naked new-born child,
WEeping thou sat'st, while all around thee SMILED;
So live, that sinking on thy last long sleep,
Thou then may'st smile while all around thee WEEP."

(Translated from the Persian.)

HOW SPIRITUALISM IS WORKING IN BRAZIL.

Under the heading of "Universalisation of Spiritualism," in its December number, the *Revue Spirite* invites attention to an announcement in the *Revista da Sociedade Academia*, whose publishing office is No. 54, Praça d'Acclamação, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The *Revista* is the organ of the Brazilian Society of Spiritualists, naively calling itself here the Brazilian group of the human family. Having the object in view, it says, of drawing more closely together the bonds of fraternal action among Spiritualists, it proposes to exchange the *Revista* and all its publications for the organ and publications of any and every other Spiritualist society, wishing to place them on the bookshelves and reading tables of the library of the society, which is open to the public.

COMPETITIVE THESES.

Further:—In order to attract the attention of all, down to Materialists, to the study of the Spiritual world, we invite—it says—theses to be sent in: the subject to be—*God, the human soul and its immortality scientifically demonstrated*. As an extra inducement to engage in this work, the Society offers the sum of two contos de Reis (about 5,000 francs) to the writer of the accepted thesis, in addition to the prize awarded by the Academy. (What the prize is is not here specified.) This is the programme:—

1. Every thesis sent in to be distinguished by a motto, and accompanied by a letter containing a duplicate of the motto, and the name of author, date, and abode. Theses are receivable up to December 31st, 1882.
2. Theses written in a foreign language to be accompanied by a translation in Portuguese. (Translators may be found at any Brazilian or Portuguese legation or consulate.)
3. The thesis accepted will be printed at the expense of the Society. Theses written in foreign languages can be published with the translation.
4. Every thesis will be numbered correspondingly with the registration of the letters accompanying the theses, which letters will be kept inviolable.
5. A council will be appointed, consisting of representatives of the scientific and philosophic schools, in due time, which will examine and report upon the theses.
6. After discussing the council's report, the Academy will appoint a time for opening the letter corresponding to the thesis most approved.

At a formal meeting of the Academy, the author of the thesis most approved, or his representative, will be invited to receive the prize awarded by the Academy. In addition he will receive from the Society the sum before mentioned.

NOTE.—In this programme Academy and Society seem distinct; but in the *Revista* they seem conjoined. This translation is from the French, while the *Revue Spirite's* translation was from the Portuguese. In double translations obscurity will sometimes arise. For clearness, intending writers should communicate with the *Revista*.—[Tr.]

"The Society will forward a historical summary of Spiritualism in Brazil to every Spiritualist centre which communicates with it, and in this matter reciprocity is expected, because the interest is the same on both sides. This would lead," it says, "to a veritable Spiritualist congress. Animated by the same sentiments, true Spiritualists have little need to meet within four walls for agreement, for generalising an idea; being one in spirit, and bound together by the same mission, they ought to interchange thought in whatever part of the world they may be."

Augusto Comte seems to be held in esteem by Brazilians, for the Society concludes by asking other societies and individuals who may have communications from that philosopher, to kindly forward them. It is engaged in a complete study of him and his works, and thinks such communications might help. In return the Society promises a copy of the work when completed. "Positivism," it concludes, "is making proselytes every day in Rio Janeiro. It is for these we are working, and what we do will lead to more important work, which will be easily comprehended by Spiritualists."

B.N.A.S. DISCUSSION MEETING.—As already announced, Mr. Thomas Everitt will read a paper at seven o'clock, on Monday evening next, at 38, Great Russell-street, narrating some of the many wonderful experiences which he has had, extending over a period of many years, through the mediumship of Mrs. Everitt. We hope to see a large gathering of members and friends. Admission will be free to all.

THE SHAKERS.

The small sect called Shakers in this country is very different from that of the same name in America. A popular miscellany published in Detroit, and which is also issued in London, the *Weekly Free Press*, has recently given a serious and lengthy notice of the latter. We collate the following particulars from it :—

About a century ago there was a secession from the Quaker body in England. A secession from a body, which was itself a strongly marked secession, would necessarily feel that it had socially isolated itself. The seceders turned their thoughts to America, where they hoped to establish a home after their own hearts. They sent some of their members to seek for a locality where they could realise their ideal. They purchased a tract of land, pasture and forest, of 4,500 acres, near New Lebanon, in the State of New York. The land was to be held in common, and the proceeds go into a common treasury. They were to form only one family, of which the head was to be a woman, Anne Lee. The marriage relation was annulled; families broke up; celibacy was held to be essential to the highest Christian life. The New Testament they declared to be their guide. Anne Lee they regarded as the woman spoken of in the 12th chapter of Revelations; they said she spoke languages unintelligible except by the dead, with whose Spirits she was said to be in constant communion. Their blessings, temporal and Spiritual, they ascribed to her as the agent of Christ, the first celibate and Saviour of mankind. A meeting-house was built near their dwelling. The men and the women entered by opposite doors, and occupied opposite sides; and strangers were assigned the back part of the house. The meetings opened in silence, which was broken by one of the ministers rising and making a short exhortation to live a holy life. The worshippers then rose and formed in lines as if for dancing. One would start a monotonous song; all would keep time with their feet, jumping a few inches from the floor and advancing in regular order, increasing the rapidity of the movement as the singing grew more animated. This was kept up until their nerves were wrought to such a pitch that they were sometimes thrown into convulsions, and it was common for them to shake as if with ague. From this they obtained the name "Shakers," which has clung to them. During their dance they were frequently stopped by the ministers to listen to a harangue. That over, the dancing was renewed with increased fervour, the men throwing off their coats and springing up high. At times the exercises were varied by whirling around rapidly, like the Oriental dervishes. These forms were said to be suggested by a passage in the 31st chapter of Jeremiah: "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both the young men and the old together; for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them and make them rejoice from their sorrow." They alleged that they were continually having revelations from the Spirit world. They taught that there is not one heaven and one hell, but an intermediate state, in which there are gradations of happiness and misery, in which rewards and punishments are meted out in accordance with the degree of holiness or sin attained in life. Mills, factories, and shops were established on their farm, and everything necessary for themselves was manufactured on their premises. Woollen goods, hats, bonnets, barrels, tubs, buckets, brooms, dried herbs, garden seeds, preserved fruits, and cheeses were sold. So exact and honest were they that their goods always commanded a premium. Their farm of rich meadow and woodland was stocked with imported short-horn cattle and English sheep. Their herds were unsurpassed in America, and many of the most popular families of short-horns in the country can be traced to them. Their prosperity attracted converts who flocked in until one house after another had to be built to accommodate them. A dozen or more branch communities were successively established in various parts of the adjoining States. Their broad-brimmed hats, home-spun coats, and scuttle-shaped straw bonnets, became as familiar as the peculiar garb of their Quaker neighbours who settled around them. Adventurers, disappointed lovers, broken-hearted husbands, widows, spinsters, wanderers, and men out of employment, have from time to time gained entrance, but finding no field for their several individualities, only a quiet home, self-sacrifice and a constant round of work, they have not been anxious to remain. The children that they took from the poorhouses and asylums, and reared, were claimed by their parents, or rebelled at the thought of spending their lives out of the world. So, many have always left. They who remained were those who entered from

religious conviction. The older ones, as they die, have been replaced, of late years, in lessening numbers.

In conclusion, the *Free Press* intimates that the latest news it has received about the Shaker friends is to the effect that some portions of their land are let; some of their factories are silent; storehouses are less well-filled, stock less well looked after; things generally, without shewing poverty, taking on an air of decadence; farmers regretfully shake their heads just as they might if they saw, in the distance, the departure of good and kindly neighbours.

INSTANTANEOUS COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LONDON AND CALCUTTA.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The letters in your last two numbers under this heading are of exceptional interest and value. The evidence as to the reality of most extraordinary phenomena is exact, and may be taken as conclusive to those who know Mr. Meugens. The second letter is a wonderful advance on the first. But it appears to me that still another step may be taken which is needful to place the fact of a physical "miracle" having been performed beyond reasonable question. We are bound to exhaust every possible explanation before admitting that a sheet of paper has been conveyed by an unseen intelligence from Calcutta to London and back in the course of a few minutes.

It may have occurred to others that there may be means by which the thoughts and even the handwriting of a person may appear on paper at a distance. I do not mean to suggest that this is the case, but it would not be more marvellous than many psychical phenomena which we know are real. And, in our ignorance of the relationships of time and space to Spiritual conditions of existence, we cannot say that there may not be latent powers in man capable of accomplishing this with as much ease as we ordinarily write on a sheet of paper before us.

The point, however, to which I wished specially to refer is this. We have Mr. Meugens' testimony—testimony independent of that of the medium—that a particular sheet of paper was in Calcutta. It would be "another step" if we could have independent testimony that the same sheet of paper was in London. I would suggest that an attempt should be made to repeat this experiment, and that arrangements should, if possible, be made by the medium in London that a person holding some official position, or some friend whose name would carry confidence with it, should be present to initial and date the sheet of paper in London, both before and after it was written on.

We should then have independent testimony at both ends, and evidence of a physical "miracle," as well as of psychical phenomena, which it would be exceedingly difficult to invalidate.

I shall be glad if you think this idea deserves a place in your next issue, and am, yours faithfully,

A STUDENT.

January 1st, 1882.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I see an account by Mr. J. G. Meugens, of Calcutta, of the transporting by Spirit power of a letter from London to Calcutta, Mr. Meugens remarking:—"I do not think any more striking manifestation of Spirit power could ever have been granted to any investigator, nor can I see any way of accounting for this extraordinary result other than the Spiritual hypothesis."

Doubtless, the evidence is convincing to your correspondent and to those who know him, but it is unlikely to convert any sceptic. I say this without in the least wishing to doubt Mr Meugens' word.

If the Spirits can do what they did for him, why cannot they do something that would convince outsiders?

Why not transport (as a contemporary suggests) a copy of the *Times*, or part of it? This could be shewn in Calcutta to the Governor-General or the *Times* correspondent and all the leading men of the city, and their testimony to the fact would make a sensation such as would astonish the world. Excepting on the assumption that the whole contents of the paper had been telegraphed to Calcutta and set up there and printed off to defraud the witnesses, no other explanation would, it seems to me, be possible but the Spiritual one.—I remain, yours truly,

Manchester.

F. A. BINNEY.

It gives us real pleasure to be able to chronicle the announcement by its publishers, that with the beginning of the New Year the number of pages of "LIGHT," the new London journal, will be increased from twelve to sixteen.—*Banner of Light.*

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"

4, NEW BRIDGE STREET,
LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "LIGHT." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their sances.

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding, and enclose stamps for the return postage.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post free to any address within the United Kingdom, or to places comprised within the Postal Union, including all parts of Europe, the United States, and British North America, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"LIGHT" may be obtained direct from our Office, and also of E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and all Booksellers.

Our Correspondents will greatly oblige us if they will take care, in every case, to write on ONLY ONE SIDE of the paper.

Subscriptions for 1882 are now due, and should be forwarded to our Office without delay.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY: A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST.

By George Wyld, M.D.

We have all heard much of late years of the parallel between the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha* and Jesus Christ; but we have not heard so much about the contrasts in life and doctrine between these two founders of the two great religions of the world.

Most students of Buddhism have arrived at the conclusion that the morality taught by Gautama could scarcely be surpassed in excellence, but that his system might be a philosophy but could not be a religion in the accepted sense of that term, inasmuch as it denied the existence of a rational God or Creator, and consigned the soul of man, after successive and oblivious re-incarnations, to total extinction.

Believing as I have hitherto done that many Buddhists were *Theosophists*, that is, seekers after the wisdom of God, I could not accept the atheistic and nihilistic interpretation of the teachings of the pure and gentle Gautama; but the recent publication, by Trübner, of Colonel Olcott's "Catechism of Buddhism" seems to confirm these views, as hitherto expressed by Max Müller, Rhys-Davids, and other learned Orientalists.

I had always thought that *Nirvana* signified that rest in entrancement through which the soul as an active consciousness existed in God, but this Catechism of Buddhism entirely dissipates that idea.

In the second volume of Max Müller's "Selected Essays" published this year may be found learned and interesting papers regarding Buddhism, and I now avail myself of the information thus given, in my present brief review of Colonel Olcott's Catechism.

This Catechism, although it contains only 28 pages, must be regarded as a work of considerable value and importance, because not only is it the first attempt to produce in English a Catechism or formal epitome of Buddhism, but because it, in a brief form, gives the result of British Oriental scholarship, as confirmed by the Buddhist High Priest of Adam's Peak, and Principal of the Buddhist College.

We may therefore accept of this Catechism as an authorised statement of the Buddhistic system as taught by the highest authorities in the Buddhist Church of Ceylon.

In studying this Catechism the first thing that strikes us as surprising is the fact, that although Buddhists are said to number 500,000,000, and to have existed for 2,400 years, yet no Bible or Catechism of the system has hitherto ever been published for the instruction of the believers.

This, as a beginning, forms a remarkable contrast to the fact

*Sakya-Muni was the family name; Gautama the clan; and Buddha means enlightened; and so the full title is—The Lord Sakya-Muni Gautama The Buddha

that the Christian Bible has been translated into every important language or dialect in the world, and has been flooded over the world in millions.

Notwithstanding this Oriental apathy, Colonel Olcott, who we may take for granted now avows himself openly as a convert to Buddhism, with the enthusiasm of a recent convert declares his belief that Buddhism, as the most scientific of all religions, is destined to become the religion of the whole world!

In his enthusiasm he gives the population of the globe as about 1,300,000,000, and the Buddhists being about 500,000,000; he adds—"not quite half the population of the earth."

But according to the most recent statistics the population of the globe is close on 1,500,000,000, and admitting that nominal Buddhists may number 500,000,000, we find them not "one-half nearly," but *one-third* exactly, of the inhabitants of the earth.

Of these 500,000,000 nominal Buddhists, nearly 415,000,000 are Chinese, thus leaving about 85,000,000 as the number of Buddhists residing in Siam, India, Thibet, &c.

Now of these supposed 415,000,000 Chinese, taken in the lump as Buddhists, we know very little; but this we know, that in China there are three religions, those of Confucius, Laa-tsi, and Buddha, and that idol worship and the worship of Spirits and of forefathers, is very common; and religion as such is considered of little serious importance; and if so I think we may conclude that Chinese Buddhists have no very close resemblance to their founder, and that Chinese Buddhism is not likely to become the universal religion of the future.

The followers of Christ, on the other hand, number 390,000,000, and if we estimate the value of a religion by the physical, moral, and intellectual qualities of the nations holding it, we must arrive at very different conclusions to those of Colonel Olcott as to the religion of the future.

Buddhism has now existed on the earth for 2,400 years; but during that long period of the earth's history it has, with the single exception of its founder, produced not one man of great historic importance.

Buddhism has not produced a single example of greatness in the arts, sciences, or literature.

No great painter, or poet, or thinker, or discoverer, or mechanic, or chemist, or geologist, or electrician, or astronomer.

No Plato, or Aristotle, or Galileo, or Copernicus, or Newton, or Watt, or Stephenson.

No Phidias, or Apelles, or Raphael, or Michael Angelo, or Leonardo, or Murillo, or Rubens, or Velasquez, Reynolds, Hogarth, Wilkie, Rosa Bonheur, Landseer, Turner, Meissonier, or Millais. No La Place, Franklin, Davy, Faraday, Lyell, Playfair, Fraunhofer, or Darwin.

No Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Burns, Scott, Tennyson, Spinoza, or Dickens.

If so, then we ask—where is the intellectual material by means of which the world is to be converted to Buddhism?

It may be replied that Buddhism is the science of the soul, and that it has nothing to do with the arts and literature. But to this I would say that a true science of the soul must bring that soul *en rapport* with the Divine Spirit, the fountain of all knowledge and wisdom; and hence it is that the greatest discoverers in all ages of the world have been men deeply interested in Divine things. But as Buddhists ignore the Divine, they have thus shut out the Divine sources of Inspiration.

In Colonel Olcott's Catechism, p. 19, we are told that there is no personal God and no Creator, but that two things only are eternal, viz., *Akasa* and *Nirvana*, and that "everything has come out of this *Akasa*, in obedience to a law inherent in it."

Now this *Akasa*, so far as the Western mind can see, has its nearest equivalent in Magnetism, and for myself I believe that all physical nature has its foundation in Magnetism, and that the cohesive force in matter is magnetic force.

If so, then so far good; but whence came Magnetism, and how came it to be a law?

"The Buddhist," says Colonel Olcott, "cannot conceive of a Creator," but neither, I reply, can the Christian conceive of a self-created law of *Akasa*.

But Colonel Olcott says, "*Nirvana* is eternal," and on p. 10, he thus describes that unthinkable quantity:—

"*Nirvana* is a condition of total cessation of changes—of perfect rest—of the absence of desire, and illusion, or sorrow, of the total obliteration of everything that goes to make up the physical man."

"Before reaching *Nirvana* man is constantly being reborn; but, when he reaches *Nirvana*, he is reborn no more."

This definition of *Nirvana* is sufficiently obscure, but Max

Müller gives a discussion between a teacher and a scholar. The scholar asks, "Does Nirvana exist, and if so, where is it?" To which the teacher replies, "The position of Nirvana cannot be defined any more than you can define the position of the flame of a candle which is blown out."

Now, if Nirvana is eternal, and a condition of perfect rest, how came it to exist, and how can it be said to exist at all, seeing that existence can only be philosophically conceived as an active or passive force?

And, if it is "as a flame blown out," how this extinguished flame can, with the assistance of Akasa, create worlds and work out man's perfection, is surely a puzzle beyond unravelling by the Western mind.

But, if before Nirvana arrives man is "constantly being reborn" in all possible and troubled forms, and with total unconsciousness of all previous individualities, one can scarcely be surprised that he should long for an ending to all this phantasmagoria by a final rest in total abnegation!

In answer to Question 122, "Does Buddhism teach the Immortality of the Soul?" the answer is, "Everything, man included, is subject to change. That which is subject to change cannot be permanent, and so there can be no immortal survival of a changeable thing (like the soul)."

But "man's unsatisfied desires at death," the "last yearnings of the dying person" are reborn as a new aggregation or individuality.

This survival of "the last yearnings" of the dying man, as an individuality, might be accepted as the Christian doctrine that "as the tree falls so it lies," were it not that we are informed that these materialised last yearnings have no recollection of their paternity, nor have the constantly reiterated or re-incarnated "last yearnings" any remembrances until Nirvana is arrived at. But as Nirvana has been described as if it were a condition of obliteration, it is not explained why remembrances should at such a moment only be possible; this Nirvana being, according to its Sanscrit derivation, simply "a blowing out."

Now, as to those who are destined to arrive at the ultimate knowledge of this Nirvana, the Catechism seems contradictory, for, in reply to Question 72, it is said, "A Buddhist is a being who, in some future birth, is sure to appear on earth as a Buddha"; but, in reply to Question 76, it is said, "It is not in the nature of every man to become a Buddha, for a Buddha is developed only at long intervals, when absolutely required as a teacher to shew the forgotten path to Nirvana, but every being may equally realise Nirvana by conquering ignorance and gaining wisdom."

In reply to Question 69, it is said, "True science entirely supports this doctrine of Re-Incarnation as cause and effect, for science teaches that man is the result of a law of development from a lower to a higher evolution."

I suspect Mr. Darwin would rather stare at this application of his doctrine, but any way this doctrine of evolution as applied to man is not a science, but only a suggestion—an ingenious suggestion, but one rejected by the great majority of the inhabitants of the Christian world—the idea that man first arrived on this planet as a materialised angel and fell into various degradations being the generally received opinion, and one which the belief in the creative power of Spirit would seem to confirm.

But, further, this so-called law of evolution does not in any way support the mystical idea of Re-Incarnation; the entire argument of evolutionists being founded on the conduct of the natural law of generation.

It is somewhat curious that a catechism of Buddhism should omit its Decalogue, or what may be called the Ten Fundamental Laws of Morals, but I give them as follows, from Max Müller's volume:—

1. Do not kill.
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not commit adultery.
4. Do not lie.
5. Do not get intoxicated.
6. Abstain from unsuitable words.
7. Abstain from public spectacles.
8. Abstain from excess in dress.
9. Do not have a large bed.
10. Do not receive silver or gold.

By way of comparison I add the Ten Commandments given by Moses, one thousand years before Buddha was born:—

1. The Lord thy God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind.
2. Thou shalt not worship graven images.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.

4. Thou shalt sanctify and rest on the seventh day.
5. Thou shalt honour thy father and mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness (lie).
10. Thou shalt not covet the things of others.

It will be thus observed that the laws against adultery murder, falsehood, and theft are the same in both Decalogues.

The Buddhist Decalogue has the advantage over that of Moses in denouncing intoxication, foolish words, and extravagant dress, but when it denounces all public spectacles it is surely weak; when it denounces the use of gold and silver it is in error; and when it denounces a large bed it is simply foolish. As if a selfish immorality could not be cultivated on a small bed, and a high Spiritual life be compatible with a large bed. But the wonderful characteristic distinction between the two Decalogues is that Buddha entirely ignores God, while Moses enunciates the grand doctrine of the unity of God.

The life of Gautama Buddha and his moral code were self-denying, pure and beautiful, and Rhys-Davids says:—"The edicts are full of lofty righteousness—obedience to parents, kindness to children and friends, mercy towards the lower creation, indulgence to inferiors, reverence towards Brahmans, suppression of anger, passion and cruelty and extravagance; generosity, tolerance, and charity."

All this is always admitted, but when Colonel Olcott says, "It is a peerless code of morals, and no man who ever existed sacrificed so much for our sakes," he says that which is easily disproved.

Even Moses, who lived in a dark age one thousand years before Buddha, teaches a lofty righteousness, obedience to parents, mercy and rest for the brute creation, kindness and rest for servants and for the stranger in the land, and he lived and died for his people, accepting nothing for himself.

Buddha beautifully says, "A man who foolishly does me wrong I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him the more good shall go from me," and thus Buddhists claim priority for Gautama over Jesus in propounding the law of forgiving and loving enemies.

Moses, however, as is not generally known to superficial students of the Bible, one thousand years before Buddha, says, Leviticus xix., 18, "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself and be kind to strangers, remembering that thou wast a stranger in the land of Egypt."

But Jesus goes far deeper and with greater power says, "I say unto you love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you."

How then can Colonel Olcott call the code of Gautama a peerless code, and how can he say that "no man who ever existed sacrificed so much for our sakes"?

It is true that Gautama was a king's son, and forsook a palace for a cave in order that he might study his own soul and preach truth and righteousness.

But is it so great a sacrifice to forsake the luxury, and indolence, and languor, and ennui, and bad health, and discontent of an Eastern Zenana and a walled garden in order that one shall reach freedom, and obtain the inestimable wealth of Spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and power?

Hundreds of Christian ascetics have done in like manner, and although Gautama forsook a palace for the woods and caves, he was yet surrounded by loving and adoring disciples. He lived a contented life, and died a quiet and peaceful death.

How different it was with Jesus, with One who, although born in a manger, could easily, by His Spiritual wisdom and power, have made Himself King of the Jews, and could then by His power have driven the hated Romans into the sea and made Himself master of the world.

But He refused this life when it was within His reach; He refused the kingdoms of the earth when offered to Him, and lived as a wanderer, having nowhere to lay His head. He lived a life of incessant anxiety and toil; cured innumerable sick and diseased and devil-possessed people; taught the most perfect religion and morality; but was for ever in danger of His life and was ultimately scourged, spit upon, and crucified. Compared with this, the grandest life of self-sacrifice that has appeared on this earth, the life of Gautama was but as a dreamy and quiet Epicureanism.

Some Buddhists I have met have not only questioned the

existence of Jesus as an historic fact, but have even asserted His non-existence on the ground partly that the oldest Christian MSS. date no earlier than the fourth century, thus leaving a hiatus of 300 years for the growth of the Myth!

I venture to assert that no man who has strong individuality of character could ever doubt the fact of the historic Jesus. Men may invent subtleties and reasons from their doubts, but the quality of individuality in the mind reveals the truth in history.

For myself, I have no doubt whatever of the historic Gautama, for I hold it to be impossible that 500,000,000 of human beings could continue to worship a code, unless derived originally from a living and visible man.

At the same time it will surprise some of my readers to know, on the authority of Max Müller, that very few Sanscrit MSS. are older than four or five hundred years, and none older than the ninth or tenth century—that is, from 1,600 to 2,000 years after the death of Gautama.

That he existed as a man I have no doubt, but I question very much whether the doctrines given by this kindly and simple mind had any very exact resemblance to the incomprehensible doctrines contained in the hundreds of folios of Buddhistic MSS.

Buddhism no doubt teaches a beautiful system of morals, and Gautama the Buddha was doubtless a good and a great man; but Buddhism as now propounded cannot be called a religion in any sense of that word.

It denies the existence of a rational God, and gives in His place a form of Magnetism and Negation.

It has no idea of what is called holiness, and it addresses no prayers to any being higher than man's inner nature, and it denies the immortality of the individual man or soul.

And this is the system Colonel Olcott prefers to the perfect moral and Spiritual teachings of the Christ, and is the religion which he believes is to become the religion of the future!

Buddha taught morality as a way to self-annihilation; Christ taught morality as a way to God and perfect happiness.

Buddha promises Nirvana, or "a blowing out," as man's highest destiny; Christ through His disciples promises immediately at death a happiness which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive,"—a promise which those, who while on earth have ascended in holy trance, have frequently experienced and thus proved.

This doctrine of Re-Incarnation and Nirvana explains how it is that Eastern Theosophists obstinately deny, in the face of innumerable facts, the reality of embodied Spirits ever appearing on this earth.

But possibly the Buddhism of Colonel Olcott and the Ceylon High Priest may no more represent the truest and highest Buddhism than ordinary verbal Christianity resembles the mystic and esoteric teachings of the Christ.

Finally, I would ask, how can Buddhists call themselves Theosophists?

The meaning of that term is, *one who seeks the wisdom of God*; but if there is no Spiritual God and no Creator who is our Regenerator, and no being higher than Nirvana, then the term *Theosophist* is absurd.

The term Theosophist does not occur in Buddhistic MSS., but is chiefly Christian, and Jacob Böhme is called the great Christian Theosophist.

He was a man who had all the moral qualities of Gautama. In trance he had revealed to him the nature of matter, of man, of Christ, and of God, and he for ever declares from personal knowledge that Christ in man is eternal life. He knew that "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," and as he departed this life the harmony of the heavens was opened to him, and, calling on the Lord Christ and on the Lord God of Sabaoth, he yielded up in peace and happiness his living soul.

OLD AND NEW.

Where are they hidden—all the vanished years?

Where is the laughter flown to—and the tears?

Perished? Ah nay!

Beauty and strength are born of sun and showers;
Shall these not surely spring again in flowers?

Yet let them sleep, nor seek herein to wed

Effect to cause;

For Nature's subtlest influences spread

By viewless laws.

This only seek, that each New Year may bring
Out of new gifts, a fairer, softer spring.

H. D. JENCKEN'S WIDOW FUND.

It is known to many that Henry D. Jencken, barrister, late of the Temple, passed away suddenly on Saturday, the 26th of November, 1881, leaving his wife and two children, boys, (ages eight and seven), totally unprovided for.

Mr. Jencken's ordinary practice was sufficient for his current expenses; but his losses of capital were heavy, through the failure of several joint stock companies in which he had taken shares.

It may be in the remembrance of many that serious injury was inflicted on Mr. Jencken in Spain by a mob. The case was before our Parliament, but no compensation could be obtained from the Spanish Government.

Mr. Jencken was for about seven years the active hon. secretary of the Association for the Codification of the Laws of Nations, and was also the author of several law books. His sudden death, and the consequent blight on the widow and two lads, creates for them our sympathy; and the desire that it take a practical shape. After pondering over the plans for effectively meeting the emergency, the one selected as the most useful is:—

Raise a thousand pounds, and invest the same in Municipal Bonds, yielding from 4 to 4½ per cent. per annum interest; and pay over the interest so received, by way of annuity, to the widow, until her decease; then, either continue the annuity to the sons, or apportion the capital to them in equal parts, as the trustees may decide.

As the amount that may be raised by the nobleness of the givers is uncertain, the trustees will be governed in the manner of adapting the funds as may seem best to the wants of the widow and children.

Several members of the Association referred to are much interested in the case; and desire the success of the appeal. They personally witnessed Mr. Jencken's earnest devotion to the objects proposed by leading legal minds of England, and on the Continent—that of codifying the European laws, so as to effect a *oneness* of action amongst the nations.

All donations paid into the Union Bank, Chancery-lane, to the credit of "H. D. Jencken's Widow Fund," will be acknowledged. It is simply suggested that *rapidity* of help is of vital importance.

J. IGNATIUS WILLIAMS, Temple, E.C.
J. ENMORE JONES, Enmore Park, S.E.

THE DIVINING ROD.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In the *Times* of the 27th ult., the following sentence occurs in an article on "Farming in Dakota," descriptive of a farm near Valley City, belonging to Mr. C. F. Kindred:—

"Water is got in abundance from a bed of sand 30 feet deep, and brought to the tanks by a pump worked by a windmill. An effort had previously been made only 100 yards further north to find water; a shaft, 138 feet, had been ineffectually dug. The bending of the willow twig carefully carried over the surface is said to have afforded indications which justified the present successful opening."

It would be very interesting if any of your readers could bring forward authentic instances of water having been found by such means. Especially would it be important to ascertain whether the indicating power appeared to reside in the rod itself, or was dependent on the rod being held or carried by particular persons

—I am, yours faithfully,

E.T.B.

January 1st, 1882.

A solitary blessing none can find;
Our joys with those we love are intertwined.
And he whose helpful tenderness removes
The afflictive thorn that wounds the heart he loves,
Smooths not another's rugged path alone,
But scatters blessings to adorn his own.

SPIRITUALISM AND SPIRITISME.—Of these terms the former is in general use in English and German-speaking countries, while the latter is preferred where French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese are spoken. Much refining has been expended upon the use of one rather than the other. The term *Spiritite*, as applied to an individual or a book, does not suit the English—it is too much like their word Spirit; while for the French the word Spiritual is too much like their *Spirituel*, which means witty and intellectual, as well as Spiritual. Our word is, however, getting more into use among them; some of their writers who evidently read American and English books and journals use indifferently the terms *Spiritisme* and *Spiritualisme expérimentale*.

SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA.

By E. W. Wallis.

The Spiritual philosophy is far reaching, and can rightly be employed to explain very many of the puzzling experiences and apparent anomalies of life, but some persons seem to imagine that every conceivable "ism" can be tacked on to it, and that Spiritualists should endorse every movement that has for its aim the reform or destruction of the existing order of things. Thus, there are many "cranks" who attach themselves to the movement, and are aggrieved if Spiritualists generally do not agree with their propositions, or grow enthusiastic with them upon their special hobbies.

I heard a speaker affirm most decidedly that she "would be ashamed to be sick," and intimated that everyone else should share in such sentiments. Disease, she claimed, was "due to violation of natural law, and there can be no sound or healthy mental life save through a healthy organism." Undoubtedly there is very much truth in this generalisation, but like all such assertions it covers too much ground, for we do not all commence our earth-life with the same healthy endowment; we have not the same advantages of disposition or education, nor are all called upon to tread the same road of experience and growth. Some are born sick, while others are liable to disorders, and others again, by force of circumstances, by strain and drain and anxious care, become subject to discordant conditions, and with enfeebled powers fall victims to disease in some of its many forms. It is *not* the whole truth "that sound mental action is wholly dependent upon perfect physical health." Disease has taught us more of human nature and its possibilities than robust health could possibly have done. Many deformed and suffering men and women have given to the world rich treasures of thought and example.

"Were I so tall to reach the pole, or grasp the ocean in my span,

I must be measured by my soul; the mind's the standard of the man."

I believe the truer wisdom is—to recognise that illness is as much a part of the necessary experience by which the soul powers are educated as sorrow or happiness, as trial and success. The cause of health and progress has been served as well by the consequences of disease as by the many other methods of enlightenment. There would be no need for physicians but for the sufferers; there would be no call for sympathy and the self-sacrifice of those angels of the home, those devoted "sisters of mercy" who nurse the sick, but for the pain and helplessness of the diseased. Nay, resignation, fortitude, patience, and hope are states of mind that have been nobly displayed by sufferers, and many a man and woman can date back to a serious illness or severe affliction or to a heavy trial, the time of their first awakening to a consciousness of the real purpose of life and its serious duties. Health is too often inclined to be careless; the robust are often unsympathetic; those can sympathise and comfort best who have themselves suffered most. As we often learn the *true* value of blessings only when they are lost to us, so do we become aware most fully of the value of health when we are sick. Nay, more, I believe that a Spiritual purpose is served in the pain endured, and that the soul's powers are frequently thereby increased—liberated from the thralldom of the body and its imperfect senses; the whole nature may be chastened and sweetened by such experiences as these, which are, therefore, as necessary to our schooling and development as the vigour and consciousness of power of a perfectly healthy state of body, which too few of us can ever enjoy.

Since writing my last I have been compelled to pass through a period of great pain, and have cause to be grateful to kind hearts and ready hands and sympathetic souls that strove earnestly and faithfully to alleviate my pain and encourage me. A stranger in a strange land, having no claim but that of my need, I received the utmost kindness, attention, and sympathy, and in this experienced a consciousness that there are "kind hearts everywhere." I am happy to say that I am now recovered, and feel quite strong and well again, and believe that my system has been benefited, as I am sure my mind has been, by this trial.

I am now in Worcester, the home of J. B. Gough, where, as he claims, he "suffered the misery of drunken slavery, and was born again into grace and freedom." This is a beautiful part of the country, and the town is one of which J. B. Gough can be justly proud. About 60,000 persons live here. I am struck by the large number of mediums who are to be found in almost

every town I visit. There must be nearly thirty public mediums in Worcester, practising as clairvoyants, healers, psychometrists, test and business mediums, besides private mediums; but in this country there are (or seem to be) more who practise publicly and receive a fee for their services than there are private workers. I do not find much home Spiritualism, and private sésances of a devotional kind are almost unknown. Still I would not be understood as implying that *all* are like this. There are very many truly religiously-minded people, who have deep faith in an All-wise, Loving and Good Father, and are anxiously looking for a more religious phase of Spiritualism that shall lift it from the plane of *head* (intellect—and cold, calculating Positivism and almost Materialism) to that of *heart* and conscience, love and purity, and *Spirituality*. This is felt by many to be the need of the hour, when Spiritualism shall be purified and dignified by the consistent and worthy conduct of its adherents, and especially its instruments the mediums.

Dr. Monck had visited Worcester before me and given public healing at the close of his lectures with considerable success. The society in Worcester has about seventy names on its roll, and holds regular Sunday services in the Grand Army Hall; the audiences average 300 persons at the evening meetings, and is one of the most *alive* societies I have yet visited.

Worcester, Mass.

THE LATE WILLIAM HOWITT.

The following letter has been received from Mrs. A. M. Howitt Watts, daughter of the late William Howitt, in reply to an inquiry which has been addressed to her:—

DEAR MR. DAWSON ROGERS,—You say, "I occasionally hear it stated that Mr. Howitt, before he departed, renounced Spiritualism." I should like to have this authoritatively contradicted in "LIGHT."

In answer I can assure you that there is no foundation for the allegation that my father "renounced Spiritualism." His conviction of the value to human progress of these investigations of the phenomena of Spiritualism remained to the end. *If sensibly and soberly conducted*, he considered the investigation of Spiritual phenomena of infinite value. He regarded them as an alphabet to a language which, when understood, must immensely widen the horizon of the human mind.—I am, dear Mr. Rogers, sincerely yours,

ANNA M. HOWITT WATTS.

19, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W.,

December 30th, 1881.

B.N.A.S.—Readers of "LIGHT" who are also members of the B.N.A.S. are kindly requested to remit the current year's subscription at their earliest possible convenience; and, as the extent of the Association's work must necessarily depend in a large measure upon the funds at its disposal, all who wish to see its sphere of usefulness extended during the ensuing year will, it is hoped, subscribe as liberally as their means will allow. Those who are not already subscribing members would do well to join without delay. Full particulars as to terms of membership, &c., will be found in the advertising columns of "LIGHT."—THOS. BLYTON, Secretary, B.N.A.S.

EXTRAORDINARY CASE OF CATALEPSY.—An extraordinary case of catalepsy is reported from Rouen. At the Hospice Général, or public hospital of that city, it appears there is a woman at the present time who has been 33 days in a state of somnolence. From this she has only recovered for a few moments every night, just long enough to take sufficient food to keep her alive. The woman, who is 37 years of age, was first taken ill in the same manner 14 years ago, since when she has had several similar attacks. Twice during her present illness she has remained asleep and without food for four days. Her respiration is described as very regular, while in every respect she presents the appearance of a healthy person in a sound sleep.

JONATHAN KOONS, who, ever since he opened his Spirit-rooms in Athens, Ohio, in 1850, has been an enthusiastic worker for Spiritualism, is travelling in Florida for his health, and we are glad to learn that he is receiving marked benefit from the visit.—*The Two Worlds*.

At a sésance given by Dr. Slade at Fall River on the evening of the 30th ult., twenty-two well-known and reliable gentlemen were present "out of mere curiosity," says the *Daily Sun*, all of whom were fully satisfied that there was no deception in the surprising phenomena that occurred.—*Banner of Light*.

A translation of D. D. Home's book, "The Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism," is about to be published in the French language. Funds to do this have been provided by a lady.—*The Two Worlds*.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

"The Spiritualist."

The editor writes on "Mediums at Séances," and his remarks are worth consideration by mediums and circle-holders alike. It is argued that "the medium must be thoroughly comfortable and satisfied with the sitters he is to meet. The impressions on his own mind are the chief factors." . . . And it is further insisted, "that the medium should have plenty of vitality, and not have been worn out by bodily or mental exertions during the day. It has been noticed with powerful mediums that before a good séance they are usually overflowing with animation, scarcely able to sit still for a moment, in other words, as a relative of one of them once remarked to us, 'bouncing about like a parched pea in a frying-pan.'" . . . "At séances at which these conditions are present, the best tests of genuineness are usually obtained without any conditions being imposed by the sitters. . . . There is no holding of hands on the part of those present at Captain James's séances; the medium is not treated like a criminal, but like a gentleman, and is not allowed to be subjected to insults from any sitter, by the very proper precaution of never inviting to the séances any person who is ignorant and conceited enough to have decided beforehand that all the phenomena are imposture, despite the evidence to the contrary recorded for more than thirty years by his superiors in religion, science, and experimental investigation of the subject." The article closes with the following pertinent remarks:—"On the other hand, when a physical medium is thus properly treated, the demands made upon him in certain directions should be exacting and inflexible. If no tests are imposed, he should understand that no manifestation can be expected to be received as genuine, or to be published, unless the evidence of its truth is absolute, independently of any personal belief in his good faith. Also his life when thus protected from evil psychological influences, should be such as to bring no disgrace on the movement, for in the records of Spiritualism the injuries inflicted at times by certain physical mediums have been grievous."

"The Medium."

The editor, referring to the close of 1881, writes as follows, in an article headed "The End of the Old World of Spiritualism":—"We close the year with a clean book, so that there may be no bitterness in our spirit as we enter upon the Hopeful Future. The truth is—there are the most opposite influences in the spiritual atmosphere, and we may, in putting ourselves under the leadership of mediums, be saturated with the most diabolical sentiments. We know that many are sorry for how they have been misled towards us in the past, and we freely forgive them, knowing that they did not act except under spirit-impulsion, which obsessed them for the time."

A copious index is given of the volume now closed. It occupies four pages, and should prove very useful. A report of a sermon by Rev. C. Ware, and many items of interest, make up the current number.

"The Herald of Progress"

The opening article by "E.M.W." deals with "Modern Spiritualism and the Millennium," in the course of which the writer makes the following appeal:—

"Let us, then, prove to the world, by the purity of our lives, the sincerity of our motives, and the charity of our actions, that this new light is indeed the dawning of that 'Millennium' which has been the dream and hope of every age, and in the bosom of our homes let us develop and encourage that holy flame of thought which shall reflect its light on every hearth and kindle the spark of love in every human breast. If we do this, Spiritualism will gain a strength which the combined powers of Ignorance and Prejudice cannot vanquish."

"Through the Fog into the Clear Light" is a pretty little novelette by A. D. Wilson. Concerning the Newcastle Society's difficulty with Miss Wood, the following from an editorial upon "The Blackburn Cabinet" will be read with interest:—

"The Committee of the Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society regret that circumstances have arisen preventing the commencement of sittings for materializations in the above cabinet. The real causes of the disaffection on the part of the medium are not known, and the Committee have avoided any public statement of their position, because their course has been so generous and straightforward that they require no other support. Should any friends have any hesitation in endorsing the action of the Committee, the following letter from Mr Blackburn will put them right:—

"Your esteemed report to hand. When I read in a contemporary its report of your meeting, and then saw nothing in *Herald*, I was staggered, and I concluded a London or other ENEMY is at work in various ways—smashing up séances, smashing the *Herald*, and lifting up said paper. The INFERNAL attack upon me that the new machine was got up by one or two persons, and it entailed expenditure of vitality extra, which ought to be paid for, is a remarkably lame excuse. Mrs. E. H. Britten said, 'no honest medium would refuse to sit in that cabinet,' and long before the cabinet was ready, I told Miss Wood in my letter that if she would assist the Committee in proving this test to their satisfaction, I would give her £5, and it would benefit her and all honest mediums by its being reported through the press. She replied by letter thanking me and accepting the offer! thus shewing she is at fault

under some queer guidance. Any body's opinion of its UTILITY is valueless to me, as I do it to enlighten the public by positive proofs of the truth of materialization.—Yours, &c,

"CHARLES BLACKBURN."

Mr. Blackburn has evidently been misinformed concerning some "London or other enemy." No doubt our contemporary will open its columns to Miss Wood, and we shall then learn her version of the matter.

"The Banner of Light."

"During our visit recently to New York City," writes the editor, "we called at the rooms of J. V. Mansfield, and were much gratified by an examination of some of the curious and artistic contents of his rooms and cabinets. The description of several of the items of his collection—for the Doctor has a *penchant* for this work, and now has quite a museum at his residence—was very interesting to us. Many of these articles came to him by direct donation—sometimes, he informed us, from parties who were strangers to him, but who were led to do so really through Spirit influence, though they had not the slightest knowledge of Spiritualism *per se*; his own special Spirit-friends and their own uniting to cause the articles to be deposited in his rooms in order to act as magnets to draw the donors there in time, as investigators of the Doctor's development. Among the curiosities shewn us at that visit may be specially mentioned a golden crucifix which was worn by Josephine at her marriage with Napoleon Buonaparte, in 1786; it was presented to F. Wiley by Napoleon Bertrand, and came in regular and authentic form to Dr. Mansfield. We also saw in this collection a silver tankard, over one thousand years old, which was taken from one of the mounds of an Inca in Peru, South America. Dr. Mansfield has also in his possession a small statue of Robert Emmet, which was made in Europe; the party who gave it to him informing him at the time of presentation that there was not another of the kind in the United States."

"It is stated that Dr. Monck is receiving such numerous invitations from all parts of the country to give materialization séances, in consequence of the recent publication of Judge Dailey's statement regarding the materialization of his daughter unexpectedly and in the light, without cabinet, through the Doctor's mediumship, that he desires us to state he is unable to accept such offers, as his power is now concentrated in healing, which occupies the whole of his time, and renders it impossible for him to reply by letter to his kind correspondents."

"Religio-Philosophical Journal."

An article upon "Constructive and Destructive Spiritualism," by A. B. Spinney, M.D., contains among other thoughtful expressions the following:—"Experience has demonstrated to us that public circles are injurious, as a rule, to the cause, and unfavourable to the highest condition of mediumship and often detrimental to health; yet no duty is more important and attended with better results than the maintenance of private circles and séances. In the place of the family altar and daily prayer, each Spiritualist's home should have family reading, singing and circle, that the equalization of nerve forces, harmony of thought, gentleness of affection, and the communion of loved ones may, all combined, cheer, strengthen, encourage, elevate and inspire each member. There are thousands of extremely sensitive mediums all over our land, that cannot endure the inharmony and magnetic conditions of public gatherings and circles; these rare spiritual flowers can be made to bloom under home culture and gentle sympathy, thus becoming a well-spring of life to themselves, and an ornament to the world, a source of joy and comfort to those gone before."

"The Two Worlds."

"For more than twenty-seven years," writes A. T. D., in the above paper, "I have been a patient, persevering, and, I think, an honest investigator of the so-called Spiritual phenomena; have called on more than thirty mediums (in British settlements and various parts of America)—men, women, and young ladies; have witnessed many extraordinary physical manifestations; received numerous beautifully interesting and important communications; and have been thoroughly convinced, by repeated and undoubted facts, of the sublime and consoling truths of *Spirit-existence* and *Spirit-intercourse*."

"In the early stage of inquiry, a young lady, of respectable family, was a visitor, and one evening, in the presence of several friends, was strangely affected by some foreign influence. She unconsciously arose from her seat, and with closed eyes, deliberately walked towards me, in the opposite part of the parlor. On approaching she offered me her arm, which I, of course, accepted, curiously awaiting results. The other arm she offered to some one seemingly on the opposite side. On resuming her former seat, she began to sing, and sang three couplets, repeating each couplet, and singing in a tone of voice entirely different from her own. We listened to this extraordinary and amusing phenomenon with no ordinary interest and surprise. When she finished I inquired respecting this influence. She replied (still unconscious, turning her face toward me and smiling), 'Your sisters.' Knowing that she was not aware I had sisters, as they

had passed away more than thirty years before, while residing in the West Indies, I again asked their names. She turned, smiled, and immediately said, 'Elizabeth and Catherine.' These were their names. I then observed, 'If my sisters be present, please allow her to repeat the couplets, as I would like to preserve them.' The young lady nodded assent, and immediately commenced and sang the following:

"The friends of thy youth have faded and gone,
And their names are engraved on the cold marble stone;
Their Spirits still linger around thy loved form,
To aid thee in danger and shield thee from harm.
The pure, the true-hearted, shall ne'er want a friend,
Tho' absent in form our Spirits still blend."

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

DALSTON.

At the last session of the Council of the D.A.E.S., it was resolved to hold a tea and public meeting in the rooms of the Association, and it has now been decided that the event shall take place on Tuesday, the 17th inst. The tickets will be one shilling each. After tea there will be a few speeches, interspersed with vocal and instrumental music. The meeting is to be held for the benefit of the funds, which are considerably in arrear to the treasurer. In consequence of great pressure of business upon Mr. J. Taft, the secretary, Mr. Morse has at his request undertaken to transact the duties of the secretaryship for a time. The Society's meetings are fairly well attended, and with the assistance of various medium friends, the interest of the members is well sustained.

GOSWELL HALL.

A meeting was held on Sunday morning last, in connection with the C.L.S.E.S., when a resolution was passed, "That the secretary write and forward to Mr. J. J. Morse a letter expressing the very best thanks of this Society for his kindness in contributing to the success of these meetings by himself defraying the cost of an advertisement in the front page of 'LIGHT' for the past six months; and that the same be continued at the expense of the Society." Mr. Greenwell submitted a card which had been issued by Mr. Morse and himself for distribution, in order to make the forthcoming series of lectures a success. On one side is information concerning the Society, and on the opposite are the subjects and dates of lectures for the next eight Sunday evenings, which ought to guarantee crowded houses. In the evening Mr. J. H. Johnson kindly occupied the platform, on very short notice, and at no little inconvenience to himself. The address he delivered was most appropriate as it was given on the first day of the New Year, and also on the day from which the new Society will commence its career. Mr. Johnson presented an interesting examination of Spiritualism in the past and present, the result of which, he contended, foreshadowed a bright and prosperous future. A hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer, which was suitably responded to, brought an interesting evening to a harmonious close. Friends are specially requested to make Mr. Morse's lectures widely known. The first will be given on Sunday next (see advertisement). There is now a harmonium in the hall and it would be of service to us if some kind friend would come and play; the committee will gladly pay travelling expenses.—**VERITAS.**

BELPER.

The Society here is now in as good a position as it has ever enjoyed. It has recently obtained a most suitable meeting-place, capable of accommodating quite 200 people, and the hall is well lighted and nicely seated. Mr. H. Welch is the secretary; and in respect to harmony and united good feeling, the friends cannot be excelled elsewhere. The recent visit of Mrs. Britten has been quite an event, productive of a large amount of good; while the services of Mr. J. C. Wright have for some time past contributed, in no small degree, to the progress of the cause.

On Sunday last Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, was in attendance as the speaker, and his guides delivered two very excellent addresses on subjects chosen by the audience. In the morning the topic was "Nature; Her Beauties and Mysteries;" and in the evening "The Mount of Transfiguration," was the matter chosen. Mr. W. P. Adshead presided at each meeting, and at the close of the evening lecture warmly eulogised the lectures as among the very best he had ever listened to. Spiritualism here is a power and influence which is recognised in the town as being for good; and a respectable hearing can always be obtained for its advocates.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—Last Sunday morning Mr. Wright, trance speaker, of Liverpool, addressed the friends at Weirs Court. The audience was a thin one. The lecture was principally upon the lessons taught by the death of the old, and the advent of the new year. In the evening Mr. Wright again occupied the platform, and discoursed to a good audience upon Spiritual, historical, and political topics. Mr. Swanson occupied the chair.—

On Monday evening, Mr. J. C. Wright again occupied the platform of this Society, when he addressed a fairly good audience on a variety of subjects propounded by the meeting. It was principally an evening of questions and answers. Amongst the subjects introduced were the following: "Evil and Lying Spirits;" "The Nature of God;" "The Nature of the Devil," and "Jesus Christ," which were ably treated by the speaker, and elicited some applause. Mr. Rowe occupied the chair. A coffee supper was announced to take place afterwards, to be followed by some little musical diversion. About 50 sat down to supper, but it was noticed that very few officers of the Society were present; indeed, neither president, vice-president, nor secretary was to be seen. In the absence of the leaders the best was made of matters, but subsequently it was found that no arrangements had been made respecting the promised entertainment and therefore the majority departed for home. A few, however, determined to overcome all difficulties, gathered round the platform and electing Mr. Pickup to the chair, entertained each other as best they could; had it not been for the exertions of Mr. Pickup the affair would have collapsed altogether.—I am sorry Mr. Blackburn, of Manchester, has allowed himself to be led into his statement in the *Herald* of last week, inasmuch as he could not conclude that there existed anywhere "an enemy" intent upon "smashing" anything, unless he had been so instructed by some prejudiced or interested person. My statement in "LIGHT," which he refers to, contained nothing but what actually transpired. As to the "smashing of séances" the simple truth is that without a moment's notice, either to members, medium, or strangers, the séances were suspended by the deputation who waited upon Miss Wood because she would not accede to their terms. As to the very generous offers spoken of, Miss Wood says she is ever grateful, and if the Society concede the reasonable terms stipulated by her, she is prepared to sit at once in the said or any other cabinet.

GATESHEAD.—On Sunday evening last, at the meeting place of our Gateshead friends, we had the pleasure of listening to a good address by a young medium belonging to Conssett. Mr. Joseph Nicholson has for some time been doing excellent work in his native district as a physical medium, and from report has shewn some remarkable powers in that direction. On Sunday evening the audience received his discourse with considerable enthusiasm. Mr. J. G. Grey concluded the meeting with an inspirational poem upon "Good and Evil," and another upon "A Happy New Year." Mr. Burton occupied the chair. At the conclusion of the lecture a large meeting of the members was held to consider the resignation by Mr. H. Burton of his office as President of the Society. Mr. Burton explained that as the executive of the N.S.E.S. had expelled him from membership, and believing the same expulsion might reflect upon the Gateshead society, he begged to place his resignation in the hands of the members. After several expressions of indignation, it was proposed by Mr. Routledge that "Mr. Burton be requested to withdraw his resignation, and that the members express their full and unabated confidence in him as President of the Society." Mr. Pickering made an amendment to the effect that as the members of this Society continued to have unlimited confidence in Mr. Burton as President of their Society, the action of the Newcastle Society was a matter of indifference to them. The motion was carried with enthusiasm.

DUDLEY.—A report has reached me that on Saturday evening last, at a materialistic séance at the above place, the form was seized and found to be that of the medium. Without pronouncing an opinion, in the absence of full information, I may state that some short time ago I sat with the particular gentleman, and being close to the cabinet I could, with others, distinctly hear the laboured breathing of the medium while the form was at least three yards from the cabinet; and I also heard knocks from the inside of the cabinet in answer to questions put by the sitters while the form stood motionless in our presence.—**NORTHUMBRIA.**

PLYMOUTH.

Spiritualism enjoys in this town a somewhat unique position, being represented by a regularly organised church, presided over by the Rev. C. Ware, and carrying on its operations side by side with other religious bodies, without being itself a sect. Mr. Ware was for six years a minister of one of the Methodist bodies, but was suspended from that position in January in last year, on account of his avowed belief in Spiritualism. He now preaches the full truth of Spiritualism to a separate congregation, meeting at Richmond Hall, where services are held every Sunday morning and evening, and where circles are held for devotion, and development of mediumship, during the week. The subject of Spiritualism has attracted great attention in the town and neighbourhood during the past year, partly through the establishment of this public movement, but chiefly through discussion of the subject at different times in the local Press. The cause is at present in a very flourishing condition; comprising a large society and numerous private circles, combined with the general meetings held at the meeting-room. The following particulars of meetings held during the last week of the Old Year and on the first Sunday of the New Year will afford a good view of the status of the movement here at the present time.

Monday's Circle.—Mr. Taylor, under control, gave clairvoyant pictures, &c.

Tuesday's Circle.—Conversational and instructive addresses delivered through Mr. Paynter, trance medium, when an old friend gave very interesting particulars of his experiences and change of views in passing from earth into Spirit-life. Great power was also manifested at this circle through Mr. Davis, who is developing as a materialising medium.

Wednesday's Circle was an exceedingly good meeting. Mr. Taylor delivered encouraging addresses, and Mr. Key spoke under control for the first time. This latter friend is likely to make a trance speaker of a high order.

Thursday's Circle.—Both Mr. Key and Mr. Williams spoke under control.

Friday's Circle.—An exceedingly enjoyable home circle; addresses and loving communications from relatives were given through Mr. Crocker and Mr. Brooks, trance and materialising mediums.

Saturday's Circle.—Mr. Williams and Mr. Key both spoke under control.

Sunday.—After a discourse by the writer on "Spiritual Effort and its Varied Results," a powerful discourse was delivered to a large audience, by the guides of Mr. J. Husson.

It will be seen from the above that seven trance mediums spoke at the various circles here mentioned, during the week. Thus the movement has acquired a considerable momentum and carries the promise of best results for the future.

In addition to the above a circle is being held at the house of Mr. Pine for materialisation of Spirits, and Spirit friends are already manifesting themselves in a very tangible manner.

OMEGA.

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By M.A. (Oxon.)

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really the mass of jugglery and imposture that it suits some people to say that it is, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one, that you may see how sêances should be conducted, and of what nature the ordinary phenomena are.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on your own experiences gained in your own family circle, or amongst your own personal friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, of whom half, or at least two, should be of negative, passive temperament, and preferably of the female sex. The remainder may be of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance by fresh visitors, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. It is not important that the hands of each sitter should touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

It is important that attention should not be too fixedly concentrated on the expected manifestations. To this end engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear.

Avoid anxiety and fidgetiness of all kinds. If you have a medium in your number results will follow in due time, and you cannot hasten though you may impede them. Patience is essential; and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such trial you still fail, break up the circle and form a fresh one. You will probably be able to guess at the reason of your failure, and can eliminate the inharmonious elements and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful sêance.

If results are obtained, the first indication usually is a cool breeze passing over the hands, accompanied by involuntary twitching of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their objective reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

Table-tilting is more common than rapping. If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are

sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held *over* but not in contact with its surface. Do not, however, try any such experiment until the movement has become thoroughly assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one person take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

If you are satisfied that a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, request that directions may be given as to the order you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs at first, ascribe it to the difficulty that undoubtedly exists in directing the table movements at first with exactitude. Patience will eliminate the source of error, if there be a real desire on the part of the communicating Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence that is separate from that of any person present in the circle, you will have gained a great step.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and as they become thoroughly established, ask that they may be made on the table, floor, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means. Avoid, however, any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. If the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests with the sitters to a very great extent to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous, and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods or by means of form-manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded discontinue the sitting at once. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. It will be found that increased light will check noisy and unpleasant manifestations.

Lastly—Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning Spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your Reason. Do not enter into a very serious and solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Endeavour to be animated by a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. C.—Mr. Morse's "Controls" will answer your questions if you will send them to the secretary of the B.N.A.S., 38, Great Russell-street, in time for the next meeting. But why not attend personally? You would certainly be greatly interested.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON, Goswell Hall—Sundays during January and February: GLASGOW, March 8; STAMFORD, March 12; NOTTINGHAM, March 19; CARDIFF, March 26. For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.—[*Adet.*]

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN'S WORK.—Mrs. Hardinge Britten has promised to lecture on the Sundays of the ensuing months as follows. Any friends in places adjacent desiring week evening lectures, can apply to The Limes, Humphrey-street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester:—Sunday, January 8, 1882, Manchester; 15, Bingley; 22, also 23 and 24, Bradford; 29, Macclesfield. Sunday, February 5, Blackburn; 12, 13, and 14, Newcastle; 19, Liverpool; 26, Sowerby Bridge. Sundays of March and April, Manchester.—[*Adet.*]