

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

We have heard much of Maya, the state of illusion, from Western writers on Oriental philosophy, and found it of interest, therefore, to read an article dealing with the subject by Lantu Sinha Gautam in 'The Kalpaka' (Tinnevely, South India), who tells us what we can well believe, that 'the brief statement of what is Maya will fill a big volume'—only it would hardly be a brief statement! The author of the article, however, contrives to put his meaning succinctly by describing Maya as 'a certain unknown force which prevents our seeing things in their real nature':—

We say 'I am happy; you are miserable.' 'I am a monarch, you are a beggar'; thus we think ourselves happy, unhappy, rich, poor, high, low, and so forth at different occasions. We say, 'This is mine; that is yours' . . . all these things we say and do under the influence of Maya. You may ask how to conquer Maya. Dear friend, it is very difficult, nay, well-nigh impossible to conquer Maya, but the best way is to get beyond Maya. If you have fallen into a fog, no amount of labour will drag you out of it unless you rise beyond it.

There is sound teaching in the last few sentences. We have been preaching the doctrine in 'LIGHT' lately, and are encouraged to meet with the same views in our Indian contemporary. And as regards 'Maya,' it appears to correspond curiously with what Andrew Jackson Davis terms the 'psychological state,' well known to all students of his works.

In connection with the article, 'The Great Calamity,' in 'LIGHT' of 27th ult., we are rather chided by a letter from Gibraltar. The writer—a Dean—takes exception to what he regards as an attack on Christianity in the article. But we were far from meaning anything of the kind, and our strictures were expressly directed against 'theology of the old type.' The statement that the disaster to the 'Titanic' was a judgment on the luxury of the age was not the verdict of Christianity, but it certainly was the verdict of a few old-fashioned religionists whose views jarred sorely on the feelings of some of those who were bereaved by the terrible catastrophe.

It is a painful subject, and we hesitate to recur to it, but we would not be misunderstood. The attitude of 'LIGHT' towards Christianity has been abundantly shown in our recognition of the purity of its source, the greatness of its ideals and its association with the very core of our faith. The twelfth chapter of Corinthians has been called the Charter of our movement, and we are never forgetful of the fact. Our correspondent points out that not a single Christian newspaper of repute would dissent from

the views we expressed (when quoting Mr. Andrew Carnegie) regarding the real origin of the great catastrophe. We can well believe it; but it is occasionally necessary to speak plainly in regard to newspapers of 'the baser sort' and of the old, crude ideas of Deity that still linger in some quarters of the religious world. And that is all we sought to do in the article to which our correspondent refers.

In 'Cheiro's' Memoirs' (William Rider and Son, 7s. 6d. net) we have the reminiscences of an occultist whose study of the hand and its bearing on individual destiny brought him into contact with many of the most famous personages of the time, notably the late King, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Russell of Killowen, Mark Twain, Mr. H. M. Stanley and Mr. W. T. Stead. The book abounds in anecdotes and racy touches of description, and there are some twenty-two illustrations, mainly portraits of the persons referred to, or of their hands showing the lines by which 'Cheiro' delineated the past and future events of their lives.

It is all very curious and interesting. We noted the remark of the late King (then Prince of Wales) concerning 'Cheiro' as 'the man who will not let me live past sixty-nine,' and Mark Twain's characteristic testimonial, "'Cheiro" has exposed my character to me with humiliating accuracy. I ought not to confess this accuracy; still, I am moved to do it.' Out of his interview with 'Cheiro' came the story of 'Pudd'n Head Wilson' which revolves around the idea of finger marks as evidences of identity. 'Cheiro's' 'Occult Science [of Numbers]' appears to have been employed in some of his predictions.

'My Psychic Recollections,' by Mrs. Mary Davies (published for the author by Eveleigh Nash, 2s. 6d. net), is an instructive contribution to the ever-increasing literature of the movement. Lord Rossmore contributes a brief introduction testifying to the remarkable clairvoyant and psychometrical powers of the authoress, and care is taken to authenticate with names and addresses some of the records of phenomena which the book contains. Mrs. Davies recounts many experiences of remarkable interest; in fact the volume clearly illustrates the nature and uses of psychical phenomena in relation to the needs of everyday life. Here, as elsewhere, are accounts of people gaining comfort and encouragement after bereavements and troubles, people arrested on the downward path by the interposition of friends in the Unseen, people cured of diseases. On the question of use there are many witnesses to testify for us.

We found no little interest in Mrs. Davies's practical comments; she is careful that her narratives shall not suffer for want of exposition. In the chapter entitled 'Outside Testimony' she writes:—

No one but a practising medium can form any adequate conception of the interest taken in psychic subjects by almost

every class of society. Only those who realise that the true nature of man is spiritual can overcome the terrors of the unknown, and one of the greatest services which mediums render to their generation is the evidence they give to inquirers concerning a Spirit World.

There is, of course, in these matters 'a sea below the sea'—a large body of thoughtful people deeply interested and in some cases perfectly convinced, but who, for one reason or another, remain mute even when the subject is discussed in their presence. The 'terrors of the unknown' in some of these cases are replaced by the terrors of the known—a too keen realisation of the penalties of subscribing to what is regarded as an unpopular faith, although those who are bold enough to speak out find to their pleasure and surprise that it is not half so unpopular as might be supposed. And in this connection it may be said that Mrs. Davies has taken a practical means of making the subject popular, for the work is issued at a price to bring it within reach of narrow purses, and we trust this policy will be justified by the results.

It was rough but there was a certain kernel of truth in it when the old Hebrew poet wrote, 'The fool hath said in his heart, "There is no God."' In like manner one might say, 'The unreceptive is without the sense of an immortal soul.' Upon a sheet of unprepared paper, the camera can project no picture. For the picture, the paper must be made sensitive, and, for a vision of life to come, there must be sensitiveness of soul. That a man is without this vision should beget in him humility, instead of arrogance. And yet how often it breeds arrogance and a sense of superiority! It is pitiable. A man might just as well be proud of the fact that he is colour blind, or congratulate himself that he is superior to the vulgar belief in musical sounds.

Mr. Gladstone somewhere spoke of 'the moral murder of stifling conscience and conviction.' Perhaps 'moral suicide' would have been a better thought; for is it not suicide to kill conscience and conviction? The one essential thing for a human being is to grow a conscience by fidelity to convictions. Custom, the good opinion of the world, convenience, even friendships and social success should all be made subservient to that. Thousands would agree to that, as almost a commonplace who, in relation, say, to religion, or to Spiritualism, are simply society's victims. They dare not consort with 'heretics,' and they will not look at our evidence. They *do* commit moral suicide.

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REDHILL.—A subscriber to 'LIGHT,' who resides at Redhill, would be pleased to communicate with others in the neighbourhood who are interested in psychical subjects. Letters may be addressed to 'W. H.,' c.o. 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C.

THE SOUL AS DISCOVERER IN SPIRITUAL REALITY: A STUDY OF TWO SCIENTISTS.

BY THE REV. T. RHONDDA WILLIAMS.

An Address delivered on Thursday, May 9th, to the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East, Mr. Henry Withall, vice-president, in the chair.

(Continued from page 236.)

Whenever Darwin was challenged to express his views on religion he always came back upon the difficulty of the existence of evil. That is the old problem. To the merely intellectual man it remains a problem. But there is a religious experience in which that problem disappears. Even to the intellect it need not be so great a problem as it is often made out, because it is impossible to find any evil that is *all* evil. And the moment your evil is in any way minister to good, then the problem of an absolute contradiction is gone. It is true that a partial contradiction still remains for the intellect, but in the true religious experience that also disappears. Darwin's belief in God was made untenable by the sight of suffering, but Paul's was not, and Jesus on the cross commends his spirit to the Father. Why is this? Is it because Jesus and Paul were less intelligent and more superstitious than Darwin? Not so, but rather because they were in contact with Reality through the whole of being. They trusted the larger soul to find the larger Fact. They had both suffered greatly themselves, but to Jesus in Gethsemane the most real thing in the universe was the will of the Father, and Paul gloried in tribulation and declared of his blessed Christ that 'Of him and through him and unto him are all things.'

Darwin's theories of the struggle for existence and natural selection do not stand for anything like the scientific adequacy that they once did. But that is a question which is not within my subject to-night. There was enough in his discoveries to shatter some old forms of belief, but there was nothing in them to disturb the essence of religious faith. The book on 'The Origin of Species' ought scarcely to have been called by that name, for it does not deal with origin, it deals with modifications and variations, but it assumes the existence of original species. Darwin spoke of these as 'created,' but he afterwards regretted using the word, and he substituted the word 'appeared.' What he meant, of course, was that he had no explanation whatever as to how the first species came into existence. He held that all species, since the original ones, had come into existence by an accumulation of insensible variations. So that the book only deals with the genesis of many species, not with the *origin* of the first species. Yet it was the word 'origin' that frightened the religious world, though the content of the book that traces many forms back to a few is no more upsetting than the belief that all varieties of men came from an original pair. The origin of all in the mind of the Eternal is just as possible a belief to-day as it ever was, even if Darwin's theory held.

A kernel of truth, however, was enshrined in the religious protest against Darwinism. The instinct of the theologian was right, though his methods were often horrid. Canon Lilley says that every soul is an original creation, that man is not *spirit* if he is only a link even in a chain of spiritual causation. And surely if evolution generally is creative the same must be pre-eminently true of the coming of the soul.

Then again, it must be remembered that in Darwinism no adequate attention is paid to the spiritual life of man, nor to his spiritual history. There is no deep and profound study of the human soul in it. In fact, there is more significance for true religion in the simple piety of the most ignorant people than in the whole of Darwinian science. Many a poor woman, who has never learnt a line of science, could speak words of far more real weight on the subject of religion than could Darwin. Again and again has it been true that the deepest things of God are revealed to simple souls. Learning need be no detriment, it should be a great help; but learning alone does not bring the light. That knowledge of God which

is Life Eternal cannot be got through scientific text-books. It can be got without them. In the school of experience men learn Christ and come to the Fountain of Life. The soul will find its own certainty, and will ask for no proof, and weigh no evidence. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' You must not depend upon trigonometry nor upon astronomy for showing you the glory of the heavens; they will help, if you have in you the power to appreciate that glory. You may be a very clever botanist and yet fail to get at the soul of the flowers, because you do not love them. The divine reality of the world reveals itself to the heart that opens in sympathy with it; for the soul that thirsts for the living God there shall be a fountain of living water. The more learning the better, the more science the better, but the greatest of all treasures is still within the reach of the unlearned and the simple. (Applause.)

It was a discovery of this kind that Professor Romanes made. Romanes was born in Canada in 1848, and brought up in the orthodox Christian creed. When he was twenty-five years of age, and a Cambridge scholar, he wrote a prize essay on 'Christian prayer considered in relation to the belief that the Almighty governs the world by general laws,' which was published the following year, with an appendix on 'The Physical Efficacy of Prayer.' In this treatise the belief in a personal God and in the reality of Revelation is assumed, and it is maintained that prayer may be efficacious even in obtaining physical goods. The publication appeared in 1874. And yet in 1876 Romanes had written his book entitled 'A Candid Examination of Theism' whose conclusion was Atheism. His passage, therefore, we must note, from Orthodoxy to Atheism was amazingly rapid. Romanes held a very high place among modern biologists, and of his great learning and rare skill there is no second opinion. He had, of course, been a student of Darwinism, but he had studied with an independent mind. He became, and remained, a thorough believer in evolution, but he seems to have been pained by the fact that so many evolutionists do not think for themselves, for he compliments Mr. Henslow on being 'one of the few' who did. His 'Candid Examination of Theism' was published anonymously. In that book he brought up all the arguments for the existence of God, subjected them to scientific judgment and found them all wanting. All possible arguments in favour of Theism had utterly and hopelessly collapsed. As for the phenomena of Nature, they are so well accounted for by the scientific doctrine of the persistence of force and the indestructibility of matter that it is quite superfluous to hold to existence of mind in Nature.

It is most touching and pathetic to read of his own feelings in drawing and accepting his sceptical conclusions. It was with no light heart he parted with his traditional beliefs, but, as he himself says, with 'the utmost sorrow.' Nothing could have induced him to publish his conclusions but the conviction that it was every man's duty to give the world what he believed to be the truth. He said he knew 'the disastrous tendency' of such work, 'in the ruination of individual happiness.' He knew how it had already ruined his own. He says:

I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God, the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness; and although from henceforth the precept 'to work while it is day' will but gain an intensified force from the intensified meaning of the words that 'the night cometh when no man can work,' yet when at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it—at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible.

I only wish that all who become, or think they become, sceptics had the same fine seriousness. But what does this sorrow at parting with the old creed mean? It means that Romanes had not quite parted with it. His rejection of it was merely intellectual, but it still had a hold on his soul. At the tribunal of scientific reason he had pronounced against all the arguments for God, and, treating that dialectic as the highest test of truth, he proceeded to clear out the old beliefs; but they were tied to him by strings which arguments somehow could not sever, and so, when he insisted on pushing them out,

he felt they were drawing out his heart after them. When he thought they were gone, he had a sense of desolation and misery. And yet he was quite certain that his new position was impregnable. He sets it forth with the utmost confidence, and is sure that his book will do more to settle the minds of most readers than all the rest of the literature upon the subject. And there is no doubt that that book is one of the most powerful on the side of agnosticism ever written. Thousands of people to-day would be wretchedly upset if they read it; they would feel that their God and their religion were without any foundation, and that it is only because they are so ignorant they can hold any beliefs at all. Now, after that, it is certainly striking to find that Professor Romanes changed his position. And everyone who has read his 'Examination of Theism' ought to read his 'Thoughts on Religion,' edited by Bishop Gore, and published after the author's death. Romanes died in 1894 and left these 'Notes' to Canon Gore, because he said 'he would understand.' They are fragmentary and incomplete; they are also, in some places, obscure, and I should find them at several points to me personally unsatisfactory. But the change is remarkable.

Bishop Gore says he does not know when the reaction of Romanes began. In 1878, in a letter to Darwin, he recognised that the intellect was not big enough for the task. The change is discernible in 1885, seven years after the publication of the book we have noticed. In a lecture of that date he refuses to infer with W. R. Clifford that 'Universal Being is mindless,' and to give a negative answer to the question, 'Is there knowledge with the Most High?' He infers rather with Bruno, 'that it is in the medium of mind and in the medium of knowledge we live and move and have our being.'

He finds also at this time no radical opposition in the new thought 'to more venerable ways of thinking,' and says that 'if a little knowledge of physiology, and a little knowledge of psychology, dispose men to atheism, a deeper knowledge of both, and, still more, a deeper thought upon their relations one to another, will lead men back to some form of religion, which, if it be more vague, may also be more worthy than that of earlier days.'

Here it is evident that Romanes was journeying away from his 'universe without God.' And from this point the spiritual pilgrimage was continued towards faith. His last work was entitled 'A Candid Examination of Religion.' This, he tells us, is the result of 'maturer thought' and the 'ripening experience of life.' He admits now that in the first book he did not 'sufficiently appreciate the immense importance of human nature in any inquiry touching Theism.' Since then he had seriously studied anthropology, including the science of comparative religion, psychology, and metaphysics, and the result was that he saw that the most important part of Nature is human nature from which to investigate Theism. So he had given a second place to what ought to have received the most thorough examination.

Before we speak of the attitude of Romanes towards Christianity in particular, let us see where he is in regard to religion in general. What made an immense difference to him is this—that he clearly saw that in considering the question of Theism he must take the religious instincts and intuitions of mankind into account. This vast volume of evidence he had left practically unnoticed in the first book. He had examined Nature with great care; he had expounded the doctrine of natural causation, the persistence of force, and the indestructibility of matter; he had overthrown Paley and his colleagues with great skill; but he had never properly faced the questions: How comes it that man turns to God, that so generally there is the craving and the cry for Him? And how is it that so many millions of all nations and lands assert His existence, and believe themselves to be having commune with Deity, if there be no objective reality? Are all these instincts and intuitions and beliefs lies? If so, the lies have it; they command life as nothing else does. Here was a vast body of phenomena which must at least be fairly examined and weighed. From his early premises, Romanes still thinks his sceptical conclusions valid, but the premises, he sees, were not adequate to the facts. He must make them so, and when he does, the conclusions are very different. Though he does not claim to have any religious

certainly of his own through intuition, he recognises that the reasoning intellect, the faculty that searches for and finds scientific proof, is not the only faculty which man employs to find truth. Even in everyday life, if you want to find truth as to character or beauty, you must employ faith, trust, taste, and other powers, as well as the reasoning faculty. It is the whole man, not the intellect only, that ascertains truth. The clear recognition of this set Romanes on a new field of investigation.

(To be continued.)

SPIRITUALIST 'MAY MEETINGS.'

On Thursday, the 16th inst., the London Union of Spiritualists held their annual 'Rally' in the very heart of the City, at the South Place Institute, Finsbury, E.C. The meetings were very successful, and were characterised by the customary earnestness and enthusiasm which have made these gatherings so attractive and helpful during the past ten years.

In the morning, after the opening exercises, the president of the Union, Mr. G. Tayler Gwinn, explained that Mrs. Despard, who had agreed to speak, afterwards found, to her regret, that an engagement for an extended mission in Ireland would make it impossible for her to be present. The chairman then announced that they had found an efficient substitute in Mr. Percy R. Street, and of that fact the audience was not left in any doubt, for Mr. Street proceeded at once to deliver a very effective and appropriate address on 'The Highways and Byways of Spiritualism.' It fairly bristled with 'points'—not a few of them being sharp and telling—one might almost say cutting—but they were driven home so pleasantly that no one seemed hurt. We shall give a full report of Mr. Street's address in 'LIGHT' next week. A few questions and some confirmatory remarks by different speakers brought the meeting to a close.

The afternoon meeting was presided over by Mr. Percy Scholey, of Croydon, and the time was devoted to the giving of clairvoyant descriptions by Mrs. Mary Davies and Mrs. Alice Jamrach. The chairman bespoke for the mediums the sympathy and kind thoughts of the audience (which was a large one), and at the close, as a very large proportion of the descriptions given had been fully recognised, he claimed that the existence of the faculty of clairvoyance had been clearly demonstrated. The recognition of the spirits described by the seers in many of the more striking cases evoked bursts of hearty applause. Both Mrs. Davies and Mrs. Jamrach testified to having seen Mr. Stead.

In the evening the use of the term 'mass meeting' was justified, for the large hall was filled in all parts. There were visitors from many provincial towns, and some from far-away South Africa. After an earnest invocation by Mr. Scholey, the chairman (Mr. Tayler Gwinn) gave all present, in the name of the Union, a most cordial welcome, and said that he trusted that, as a result of their coming together, they would all gather strength for the coming year. Spiritualism, as he understood it, was in the forefront of all movements that made for purity, truth, and righteousness, and, as a consequence, for love in its highest and divinest aspects.

MR. HORACE LEAF quoted the question which has been asked of all new phases of thought throughout the ages, and particularly of religious movements, *viz.*: 'What is the use of it?' Spiritualism, he said, had not escaped that question, and the average Spiritualist should have no difficulty in replying to it. Spiritualism meant to us a fuller, freer conception of life. It extended our view beyond the precincts of this life. It compelled us to ask what were the things which should qualify us for the life to come? It meant more than that. It bore us up in the hour of our greatest weakness, and enabled us to see in depression and failure only passing things. That was Spiritualism as it applied particularly to the individual. If we studied the history of Spiritualism we saw reason to believe that it had come in accordance with the law of evolution and to meet a certain religious development which could only find satisfaction in the revelation which Spiritualism afforded. About a century and a half ago a great wave of genius passed over this country and left behind it a power which Nature evidently meant to be a comfort and blessing to humanity, but, like all great powers, ignorantly used it brought misery. He meant

the power of machinery. Deep discontent arose, and men began to doubt the existence of the Deity and of their own spiritual natures. But this was not an unalloyed evil, for it called into play the critical faculty. Men began to ask the reason for the faith demanded of them. They became dissatisfied with the Church, and their dissatisfaction was now expressing itself in a gradual exodus from places of worship. People found that the Church did not take its place on the side which might be expected from followers of the lowly Nazarene. At this most critical period Charles Darwin in 1859 published his epoch-making work, 'The Origin of Species.' This gave direction to a state of mind already existing and caused a wave of scientific thought to pass over the nation. People questioned the Church in vain for proofs of its assertions. Eleven years before the appearance of Darwin's book there occurred the Rochester knockings, which contained the very answer that people were demanding. Did it not seem as if there were some wiser power at work than mere men and spirits? The movement spread rapidly throughout America; it swept across the Atlantic Ocean to France and England. It was seen that these psychic powers belonged exclusively to no race, but to all mankind. The fact was established that there were intelligences outside of the physical; it was left for reason to decide who these intelligences were, and reason decided that they were discarnate men and women, and in numerous instances the departed friends of the sitters. So rapidly grew the movement that it appealed to the attention of Science. The scientists of the day first said that Spiritualism was a delusion. Mr. (now Sir) William Crookes undertook to investigate it scientifically. He was a sceptic, and believed that under his examination Spiritualism and its claims would disappear, but he was pleasantly disappointed. After close investigation he issued his report in favour of Spiritualism, and then we had an excellent example of scientific humour. Biassed by their preconceived ideas, the scientists declared that Mr. Crookes was not the highly qualified man they had supposed him to be, and refused to accept his report. Sir William had not seen fit to alter his conclusion, and now he no longer stood alone. A galaxy of the finest thinkers of the day, after careful investigation, had arrived at the same conclusion. Notwithstanding this, our movement was outwardly a small one, but we must not judge of a movement by the outside. In many homes people were enjoying spirit communion without letting the outside world know. If we believed there was anything in Spiritualism for mankind we must learn the meaning of the proverb, 'Union is strength,' and do something to bind together the struggling branches of our organisation. We must reconsider our attitude towards the development of psychic gifts. And then there was the important question: Has Spiritualism a part to play in the social life of this and other countries? Men were no longer content to have a religion which existed merely in faith or intellectualism. It must exist in the public life. Spiritualism seemed specially qualified to do this. If it could show a man that this world was but a passing phase it would lead him to ask: What are the qualities which shall best qualify me for the life to come? The answer was, 'Good character.' What was good character? That a man should live for his neighbour and for the good of mankind. We ought not to wait till bye and bye for the kingdom which Spiritualism could help to establish in this world. It was our duty to strive to bring it about as quickly as possible. (Applause.)

MR. PERCY R. STREET said Spiritualists were often accused of 'other-worldliness,' but man had an instinctive yearning to know all he could concerning the future life. For the existence of that life we had the threefold argument of probability, of intuition, and of evidence. In considering the argument of probability, he cited the fact that in all races and tribes, however crude their religious notions, there existed some idea of a life after death, and that the belief in spirit communion had been persistent throughout the ages. If there were no future state then our present life would appear to be absolutely useless—a cruel enigma. Moreover, our conception of the Deity as an infinite expression of fatherhood demanded a future life as our heritage. But even primeval man, who had no such conception of God, had left behind him some traces of a belief in a future state. How was this? The answer was 'spiritual intuition.' If there was a life for the spirit, the spirit knew its destiny. In other ages intuition was probably more to the front than it was to-day. We welcomed the philosophy of Bergson in bringing it back to us. Still we demanded proof. If we adduced the opinion of the saints and seers of antiquity, it might be objected that they made mistakes in other directions and might have done so in this. But Spiritualists claimed that they had left the realm of speculation behind them and were in the realm of knowledge based on firmly grounded evidence. That evidence was brought home so tangibly and was so widespread that doubt was no longer possible. And once we admitted the fact of communion between the two states of life, the door was opened

to endless possibilities—possibilities whose value we failed as yet to realise. It meant not only communion with our personal friends, necessary and precious though that was; it meant communion with *all* who had gone before—with all the great and noble of all ages. Directly we admitted this communion we were introduced to a greater world, a sphere of wider knowledge. Our philosophy had, too, a moral influence, for, if we knew exactly what the laws of life were and our relationship to the world beyond, we could not continue in the wrong path unless we were fools. Each individual Spiritualist must live the truth of his Spiritualism. Spiritualism meant brotherhood, and brotherhood meant, first and last, justice one to another. It meant that if a man claimed for himself equality, freedom, and the right to live, then, if he was a true Spiritualist, he must grant these to other people. The philosophy of the future state was also a philosophy of gladness. If once we had positive evidence of that future, then, in the darkest hour, we should know that angels were near to minister to us, and in the hardest struggle we should be able to see the golden gleam of the minarets of the city beyond. The darkness would pass and we should emerge from the struggle stronger, better, and holier than when we entered it. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN said he had now to introduce a practical matter. Years ago a good man and true went to gaol, and as a result the sad lives of many of our sisters were made a little brighter. To-day a struggle was going on on behalf of the poor white slaves. The Bill to check the white slave traffic was being blocked in Parliament. It was a most diabolical thing that the passage of this measure should be hindered. If anything was to be done it must be done at once. He called upon Mr. STREET to move a resolution which, on being passed, should be sent to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, and the member in charge of the Bill.

MR. STREET then moved: 'That this mass meeting of Spiritualists views with apprehension the possibility of failure on the part of the Government to assist the introduction into the House of Commons of the Bill to check the white slave traffic, and further amend the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and desires to urge upon the Government the necessity of assisting the passage of the measure through the House.'

In speaking to the resolution, MR. STREET said that last year he esteemed it an honour to stand on that platform with Mr. Stead, and he felt it a double honour to stand with him again. A great many people were ignorant of this terrible traffic, but it was none the less real. It ought to be made so perilous that those who conducted it would go in fear of their lives. The women affected by it were just as likely to be our sisters as anybody else's. If our Spiritualism meant anything, they were our sisters in a very real sense, and it was a crying shame that a so-called Christian country allowed this hateful traffic to go on, and when a measure was proposed to put it down, allowed that measure to be 'blocked.' He hoped all present would bombard their members of Parliament till they did something in the matter.

MR. E. W. WALLIS seconded the resolution. He said that if we had had women in the House of Commons the question would soon have been settled. Our Spiritualism taught us self-culture, self-respect, and self-control, and if those three principles were everywhere carried into effect there would be no white slaves. The majority of the offenders were more to be pitied than blamed. The very customs of society, our diet and mode of living, the erotic novels and plays, all tended to inflame passion rather than to subdue it. He honoured Mr. Stead for the valiant fight he made, and urged that they ought to press that resolution as a memorial to him, and especially on behalf of the men as well as the women, the boys as well as the girls; on behalf of those who were too weak to control themselves and of those who were too poor to keep from selling themselves, for the effects would be felt by them both in this life and the next. The future life depended on this life, and he could conceive of no deeper hell than the unquiet consciences of those who practised this vice. We were hearing much talk about degeneracy. Here was the main cause of it. Every effort should be made to induce members of Parliament to bring pressure to bear on the Government to make the Bill a Government measure.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

MR. D. J. DAVIS's racy speech, with its mingled humour and earnestness, delighted the audience. He said that at the time of Mr. Stead's trial he was an officer of the Salvation Army, and he could testify that there was no religious organisation that stood by him as the Salvation Army did, from the Chief of the Staff downward. He himself was ordered from Ipswich to London, and on more than one night was asked to walk the streets of London in order to observe and get the evidence necessary to help Mr. Stead. The next proudest moment in his life was when he organised a demonstration in Ipswich when Mr. Stead came out of

prison. He wished to refer to two recent utterances of Mr. Stead. The first was his expression of surprise that the programme of the new religious movement in America, for which he had been asked to speak, contained no statement as to the future life. The other was his emphatic declaration, 'I know,' when asked by a fellow passenger on board the 'Titanic' whether he thought there was anything in Spiritualism. The reluctance to refer to the future life which Mr. Stead had noticed was a marked feature in the pulpit to-day. He (Mr. Davis) was associated with a number of young men who were in training to be ministers, and one of them admitted to him that it was not popular now, as it was at one time, to preach about the hereafter. The reason for this could only be that it was not safe to say much about it. The evolution in the intelligence of the ordinary boy and girl was making it dangerous for any teacher or speaker to make statements that he was not prepared to substantiate. That fact afforded the Spiritualist his opportunity. He was ready to say 'I know,' and to give his own experience. If every minister and every deacon of a church would investigate he would learn that there was no need to fear to mention the hereafter. While in a sense we were not all mediums, he believed that God was so universal in His love that He would withhold knowledge from no man, and that every man had sufficient natural psychic gifts to make it possible for him to have enough evidence in his soul to know that the grave did not end all. Mr. Davis illustrated his points by narrating some striking incidents and experiences, and concluded by expressing the hope that every one of his hearers might be able to say, on passing out of the physical body—no matter in what outward circumstances, whether of poverty or comfort—'I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith.' (Applause.)

Before the meeting concluded the chairman announced that the day's collections amounted to £13 18s. 6d., and thanked all who had assisted to make the meetings successful.

The organist was Miss M. G. Gwinn and the soloist was Madame Violet Charlton. The congregational singing was hearty and effective, and Madame Charlton's fine voice and sympathetic rendering of her solos contributed largely to the harmony and good feeling which prevailed. By their successful clairvoyant descriptions the lady mediums not only afforded evidence of supernormal faculties, but, if the 'recognitions' count for anything, of the presence and identity of spirit people. The speaking throughout the day was of a high order. Mr. Percy Street added to his growing reputation; Mr. Horace Leaf proved that he is certainly 'a coming man' in the movement. He is young, earnest, thoughtful, and has a pleasant voice and manner. Mr., or, to give him his title in West Ham, Alderman, Davis once more demonstrated his power to speak effectively, to hold his hearers, and to arouse their enthusiasm, while Mr. Tayler Gwinn again showed his ability to manage a large meeting.

LOVE AND LIFE.

Of the contents of the April 'Theosophist,' we like best Philip Oylar's thoughts on 'Love and Life.' Here are a few of them:—

Go often to the hill-tops. From there you will see the mist in the valley of your mind.

Perfect communion is not by words, but by feeling. Feeling is, and always will be, the universal language; and only by that do we understand one another, whether we speak or not.

To command by will is no better than to command by wealth or whips or muscles. We all need to live by love, and in love, not fear.

When we cease to see anything new in our friends, we begin, alas! to look for new ones. But the fault is as much ours as theirs. If our vision were greater we should find the oldest friendship as new as every dawn, as miraculous as the eternal march of the stars.

Do I not know the beauty of your lover by what you are yourself?

Love is all-seeing; 'tis we who are blind.

If you live for the perfecting of yourself, you live for all others.

Every ideal will some day be realised.

The greater our love, the more beauty do we see.

Love is the one true gift. We can give what we are. We have nothing else to give.

Till you love all, you cannot love one to the full.

If you have no sense of humour, have nothing to do with children.

If the universe is a riddle, we are all solutions of it.

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THE MESSAGE OF OCCULTISM.

A notice of 'Cheiro's Memoirs' appears in another portion of this issue, and we only refer to it here because, in studying the book on its philosophical side, we came across the following suggestive passage:—

One thing is certain—the occult side of life is the real life that like a thread of gold binds all together. It is the soul life of things that are and that will be. It finds its expression in shapes and forms and lines, writes its history in people, uses nations as the servants of its purpose, and from the veriest atom to the greatest none can escape the destiny of being part of the purpose of life, whatever that purpose may be.

The tendency to quarrel over names is notorious, and in some quarters the term 'Occultism' has acquired a quite sinister significance. There is a great deal to be said for Mysticism, we have been told, but Occultism is to be shunned as something unhallowed and mysterious. Everything, of course, turns on what meaning is attached to the term 'Occultism.' All Magic is not Black Magic any more than all science is vivisection. True, there is a suggestion of darkness and shadow about the term 'Occult,' but seeds germinate in the dark and many sweet things grow in shadowed places. Many subjects that were accepted or dismissed without reflection in earlier days are now brought up for review and criticism. It is an age of introspection and analysis. We seek to define our conceptions of the world and to rationalise our ideas. We are no longer to be frightened by bogies of the mind. The horrors and mysteries are dragged out, dissected and assigned to their proper place in the scheme of things. Even the horrors and mysteries have their meaning and purpose. Nothing is outside the purview of Nature and of Providence. There are black and malefic things, true, but their horrors are largely borrowed from fear and ignorance. Many a timid pilgrim has been turned from the path by the sight of a fearsome phantom of which he has carried lurid accounts to his friends. Then some audacious observer has approached the 'bogle' and has wondered that a hollow turnip with a lantern inside could have created such a panic. That detector of the real nature of the imaginary spectre may be said to represent, in some degree, the Occultist, who goes fearlessly into the darkness and 'plucks out the heart of the mystery.' But the Occultist sometimes finds a real ghost. Truly, but he does more—he finds that the real ghost is a human being with all the virtues and frailties of humanity, and not a vampire, a fiend, a goblin or even a fairy! He lets light into the

dark places; he opens up new spheres of thought and action while the craven folk on whose behalf he is working stand by croaking of danger and disaster as well as their chattering teeth will allow them. Witchcraft and diabolism and sorcery—terrible names, indeed, and yet they are at work all the time in the everyday world of business and pleasure. Wiles and lures, the domination of the weaker mind by the strong and unscrupulous, the cunningly-baited commercial or social snare, the hypnotism of the flaming and insistent advertisement—they are all part of the intricate machinery of daily life. Take them in another aspect, trick them out with a little mystery and ritual of the abracadabra variety, and how fearsome they become! And here is where the irony of the matter appears—it is the function of the true Occultist not to perpetuate these things but to expose them. He is the revealer, not the obscurer. He explores the secret places that they may be secret no longer. He may work in the darkness but he does not belong to it. Those who malign and deride him are the true Occultists—in their own evil sense of the word. Swayed by fear and prejudice they would have the dark places left in their darkness.

But the Occultist has a larger mission, and it is well indicated in the passage we quote above. He is the Seer. He traces the pattern of life and finds it to be a marvel of symmetry and design. Everywhere he discovers the 'golden thread' of Divinity, and the revelation of Infinite Love. Under all are the Everlasting arms. Not all is intelligible, but he has a magical phrase at hand which dispels the doubt even if it cannot resolve the mystery—'God understands.'

Who more than the Mystics and the Occultists have realised the truth of Emerson's great saying that 'the whole world is an omen and sign'? They have wrought out the matter in doctrines of 'Correspondences,' and everywhere have traced the seal and signature of Divinity. For ages they have had to discourse in mysteries things too great for expression in the general speech and thought of their time, but the years have brought an advance not only in intellectual achievement, but in the freedom, activity and aspiration of the soul. Self-realisation is one of the great goals of existence, and the thought of the time, thrown back upon itself by a growing consciousness of the limitations of the purely external life, has become introspective, and so by a process of action and reaction man begins to know himself, and to see that the things of the outer world are but shadows of interior realities. The revelation comes in many ways, from the crudest of objective phenomena to high illuminations. And more and more, as the prepared minds of Occultist and Seer study and record the myriad expressions of the Universal Soul, are the underlying unities worked out. Through the clamorous voices, the hurry and the press of new thoughts and new discoveries, sounds the note of unity—the golden thread emerges that binds all things together—the 'unrevealed light' of the great Prism begins to manifest.

The message of Occultism, then, is an inspiring call towards the heights. The day of the ascetic and the recluse is over. No need to forsake the world to achieve peace and true self-possession. The soul carries everywhere with it its true home and abiding place, its powers may make all the rough places smooth and its light illumine the darkest ways, for in its fulness of expression lies its true road of advance. 'All parts a way for the progress of souls,' said Walt Whitman, and as we pass forward, the problems disappear, the shadows fall behind us, we lose only the things that vex and hinder, but the real and the true abide with us, for these are all that matter.

SPIRITUALISM AS SOCIAL SAVIOUR:

A. J. DAVIS, THE REFORMER.

By E. WAKE COOK.

It is but just to the Editor of 'LIGHT' to say that he asked me to write these articles some time ago. They were announced three weeks ago, and were in his hands before the outbreak of the controversy on Industrial reconstruction; and it was only the exigencies of space which prevented 'LIGHT' leading the way in this as in so many other matters.

I.

The world's thinkers play 'Hamlet' without the Prince so long as they ignore the facts and the philosophy of Modern Spiritualism. Its facts bear on all vital controversies, and its philosophy illumines all. The question of an after-life determines all ethical and personal, temporal and eternal, values; and to try to settle it without the evidence of Spiritualism and psychical research is as futile as to treat cosmical questions while ignoring modern science. But while Spiritualism is ignored in name, its thought is permeating and transforming all the later views on religious questions. Still it will come as a surprise to many to hear that it is full of light and leading on those social and industrial questions which are filling all minds, and shaking civilisation to its foundations. The world is in travail, and the question is nervously asked as to whether they are birth pangs or death throes? While there is an energetic war against war in its old form, it is changing its shape; it threatens to be constant, and is being brought to our very doors; starvation, or the threat of it, is to be the weapon; and it is not the hardy fighters sustained by the warrior's joy of battle who are to suffer most, it is the women and children and the poorest of the poor who are to be the piteous victims. All this is to overturn the old order and to bring in the new. But this might all have been effected with no suffering or conflict by listening to the Father of Modern Spiritualism.

The works of Dr. Andrew Jackson Davis touch human interests at all points; but it is only in his first great work, the grandest Bible ever given to humanity, 'The Principles of Nature: Her Divine Revelations,' that he treats directly the question of social reconstruction and the industrial problems which are always with us. The first two sections of that great work have always appealed to me and won my whole-hearted admiration and assent; but the application, 'A Voice to Mankind,' seemed to me too flowery, rhetorical and fanciful. But during the last few years events have opened my eyes, and it seems as fully inspired as the other parts. Had the world listened to his voice, and carried out his ideas, we should have been saved from years, perhaps centuries, of devastating strife. When the 'Revelations' were given, Davis had just emerged from his teens, the air was full of the ideas of Saint-Simon,* Fourier, and Robert Owen when he had become a Socialist. Davis speaks of the source of his inspiration being his access, while in hypnotic trance, to the 'Thought Sphere' of the next plane of existence. And it is manifest that he was in touch with the best thought of all time; he was also conscious of the thoughts that were about to be born into the world. Davis was seer, prophet, and poet, writing in the form of prose with a philosopher's pen. But the poet breaks through and decks prosaic themes with the flowers of speech.

Nothing is more surprising than the sureness with which that mere boy selected from the glowing mass of ideas the absolutely right ones. This proves him fully inspired, or the most consummate genius of all time. The way he avoided the pitfalls into which reformers plunge will be shown; but to do this I must touch on the current theories of social and industrial reform; just those burning questions which evoke party passion. In this, should I run counter to any reader's pet ideas, I alone must be held responsible. 'LIGHT' is always 'on the side of the angels'; that is its only party prepossession.

Davis begins with an exhaustive analysis of the conditions and the institutions of his time; and finds them corrupting and

demoralising to the last degree. Men's interests and duties are in conflict, thus offering the strongest inducements for dishonesty and other evils. The wage system is condemned, as the worker is interested in getting as much as he can, and doing as little as possible for it. He is apt to restrict the output; and it is only by chance that he is interested in the work itself. He should be given a direct interest in his work, and in the whole business. The mechanics are at first injured by new inventions; hence the riots and the destruction of the new machines which so often occurred before men saw that machines ultimately increased employment. In a rightly constructed State every new invention would be hailed as a blessing—not in disguise. Owing to the vicious conditions the lawyers are now pecuniarily interested in multiplying quarrels and litigation; the doctors are in like manner interested in the spread of disease, as the prevalence of good health would be financial disaster for them. The position of the clergy and the parsons Davis finds peculiarly corrupting. The necessity of sustaining each his own particular sect produces prejudice, hatred and all uncharitableness. They are interested in opposing nearly all new truth, fearing that it may undermine their old errors. So their efforts promote sectional prejudices and divisions. In all cases Davis does full justice to the noble way in which so many of the members of all professions rise superior to their pecuniary interests and do their duty to their people in spite of monetary loss. At the same time he would so reorganise these institutions as to make men's interests and their duties agree, and so remove the temptations to dishonesty. This is the absolutely right principle, and it might be used as the test of any institution, or social or industrial arrangement. If the worker's interests do not agree with his employer's, the arrangement is faulty to that extent; and the worker is immorally placed. So the unity of interests should be the root principle in all social reconstruction.

Although he does not, so far as I can remember, mention the motto of the French Revolution, he would substitute for 'Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality': Liberty, Fraternity, and Unity. He accepts just as much equality as is possible or desirable. He would give all equality to begin with; all should start fair, and then they should be free to gravitate to the positions for which they are best fitted, right up through the scale to president, king, or emperor. But he would always pay by results; a man should receive the right reward adjusted to the amount and the quality of his work. In this the young seer, with unerring insight, would adapt his institutions to human nature as it is, and not to what it might become after ages of steady improvement. In this he was far ahead of the reformers of our time. Mr. Bernard Shaw, and others, after years of strenuous advocacy of Socialism, now admit that it might do some good, but that the only real hope is in producing a new kind of human being, the 'Superman,' dreamed of by Nietzsche; the Superman to be produced on the principles of the stud-farm applied to humanity! Other reformers advocate equality of remuneration for all labour. This simply would not work; would tend to bring all down to the level of the lowest, besides creating endless discontent in the better workers, who would be deprived of a strong incentive to do their best. In other respects equality would bring humanity to a standstill, and would produce a dead-levelism, the equality of death. All the charm and variety which make life worth living would be gone, and the last condition of man would be worse than the first.

Davis avoids all these blunders; he would harness all the driving forces of human nature, place all in harmonious and helpful co-operation, and educe the best results for the individual and for the community. He would do all by associated effort. The principle of association is a very profound one in his hands. It is the association of complementary qualities, as of man and woman in the 'Harmonial' marriage. But this principle rules throughout Nature, complementary elements and atoms uniting in all compounds, right down to the elementary clusters which unite to form the first molecules. Thus he brings scientific principles to bear in every phase of his plans for social reconstruction. With profound yet poetic insight he takes music as the principle for creating the new social and industrial world. This was one of the points which made me think his schemes fanciful; but I now see that he had hit on

* It is noteworthy that Count Saint-Simon, the founder of French Socialism, was inspired to his work by his ancestor, Charlemagne, appearing to him in a dream—quite a Spiritualistic manifestation!

the highest principle of creation, as well as the highest symbol of the harmony he would educe from human discords. The moment he touches music the poet shines forth. 'Music,' he says in 'The Great Harmonia,' 'is an element in the ocean-essence-life of the universe, a fixed law of mind and matter, a superlatively perfect principle, which, in all substance and animation, only waits to be righteously touched and awakened. How even yet it sleeps and dreams in all Nature. . . Music, a fluid life or love-principle pregnant with inspirational fire.' In a later work, 'Views of Our Heavenly Home,' he says: 'We have presented the grand system of the universe as constructed upon the principles of pure music, and as an instrumental organ for the expression of eternal harmony. . . Mathematics are at the base of all system and order in music; and music, in its full and perfect expression, is a revelation of the whole system of Nature.'

Thus is the poet also the prophet; as it was recently shown at a lecture before the Alliance, reported in 'LIGHT,' that free-lying particles on a membrane vibrating in unison with notes of music, group themselves into organic, fern-like, and floral forms. So there is profound scientific truth in the idea that the universe is constructed by music, or on musical principles, and that the 'Music of the Spheres' is a fact; and as Shakespeare says:—

Look, how the floor of Heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins:
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Thus music is the true symbol of the perfect social and industrial order. There is no levelling down, in search of 'equality,' of the soprano to the level of the bass, and no stultifying the bass by trying to raise it to the heights of the treble; all the differing voices take their own part, each sustaining and enriching all the others, thus producing the living chord, the desired harmony.

In my next article will be shown the simple means this boy-sage, Davis, advocates for beginning this high task, with no political agitation or friction. The means he preached sixty-five years ago are just those which have of late turned Denmark from a poor country into a rich one, and which have already done more for the real welfare of Ireland than a century of fierce political agitation too often shadowed by crime.

(To be continued).

THE BRITISH SPIRITUALISTS' LYCEUM UNION.

As the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union aims to secure the intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual development of children, on the lines of Andrew Jackson Davis' vision of children in the Summerland, it may be said to stand in the same relation to Spiritualist churches as the Sunday School Unions do to the churches and chapels of other religious communities. How far-reaching is its influence may be judged from the fact that there are over two hundred Lyceums in England and Scotland, attended by from ten to twenty thousand children, and that Lyceums in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia are federated with the Union. A Publishing Department caters for the special needs of the movement, and supplies members of the Union at specially cheap rates. An official organ, 'The Lyceum Banner' (monthly, price 1d.), was founded by Mr. J. J. Morse in 1890, and transferred to the Lyceum Union as a free gift in 1902. As its distinctive badge the Union uses the portrait of Dr. A. J. Davis, large numbers of which have been sold. The country is mapped out into districts, and District Visitors render all the assistance possible in helping societies to start and maintain Lyceums.

At the twenty-third Annual Conference, held at Nelson, Lancashire, on the 11th and 12th inst., one hundred and fifty delegates and officials were present. On the Sunday morning Miss Edith Hindle, a little girl of about eight years of age, charmingly rendered an ode of welcome, specially composed by Mr. T. W. Bateman. Button-hole flowers were then gracefully presented to each officer and member of the Executive. The pretty incident afforded a happy relief to the high tension of feeling evoked by a heavy agenda.

The president, Mr. Robert A. Owen, of Liverpool, was supported by Mrs. Nurse, of Rochdale, vice-president; Mr. Councillor John Venables, treasurer (Mayor of Walsall); Mr. Alfred Kitson the general secretary, and the members of the Executive.

During the two days several important matters were considered, and it was decided that the Union should be affiliated with the National Peace Council. This will give an impetus to the Peace Brigade movement which has been inaugurated in the Lyceums, its object being to instil into the minds and hearts of Lyceumists the principle of arbitration, in place of the resort to armaments, as a means of settling international disputes.

In view of the growth of the Union as a publishing and trading concern, and of the fact that the late John Ainsworth, of Blackpool, had bequeathed £500 towards founding a Lyceum Home, the conference wisely decided to instruct the Executive Council to take the necessary steps to legalise the Union, and thus enable it to receive bequests or legacies to help sustain it in its good work.

It was resolved that an 'Officers' Edition' of 'The Lyceum Manual' should be compiled, containing all the necessary information of the Lyceum system, both theoretical and practical, for the assistance and guidance of Lyceum workers.

The President, in his address, which was well received, commented on the deficit of £62 in the general fund (or a net deficit on the year's work of £26 10s.), and said that the Executive Council's visit to London last July would account for a portion of the loss, but he thought that the moral and spiritual stimulus given to the London Lyceum workers would in future prove that it was money well spent. He also said that the Good Friday celebration, at Manchester, of the sixty-fourth anniversary of Modern Spiritualism was an unqualified success. He had been informed that at previous meetings the child had been in the background, but on that occasion the child was in the front rank. Miss Margaret McMillan, he was pleased to note, heartily concurred with the Spiritualists, who were practical in all things. 'Those who strive to understand the unseen,' she said, 'are those alone who conquer.' She specially referred to child life and the need for care and education on proper lines, the true meaning of education being to educe, to call forth, not to cram. Dealing with school clinics, Miss McMillan congratulated the Spiritualist Lyceums on the fact that they recognised the value of physical education, and provided for it by their system of marching and calisthenics. To illustrate the psychological effect of a beautiful environment, and of sleeping in the open air, on a child transferred from a slum to the healthy surroundings of a clinic, she told her hearers of a little girl who would not say prayers, but instead sang continually. The child's voice was heard early and late, as she tripped hither and thither in an exuberance of youthful health such as she had never previously experienced. When asked why she sang and would not pray, her reply was significant: 'In the dark room I pray; here in the light I sing!'

Mr. E. A. Keeling, of Liverpool, read an interesting paper on 'Lyceums, their Aims and Functions in relation to Spiritualism,' which was ably discussed by the delegates.

Mr. R. Latham, of Burnley, was elected president for the ensuing year, and Mr. R. A. Owen, vice-president. Mr. J. Venables (Mayor of Walsall) was re-elected treasurer unopposed. Mr. Keeling and Miss Alice Hesp, of Leeds, were elected members of the Executive.

The mass meeting in the evening was well attended. Miss Hesp delivered her maiden speech and Mr. Keeling made a strong appeal to Spiritualists to live their Spiritualism every day of the week. Mrs. Greenwood emphasised the fact that whereas in the early days Lyceumists were ridiculed for having marching and calisthenics on the Sunday, many Sunday Schools were now adopting the practice. The President reminded the meeting that on January 25th 1913, it would be fifty years since A. J. Davis revealed his vision and inaugurated the Lyceum system in Dodsworth Hall, Broadway, New York. With this appropriate reminiscence Mr. Owen feelingly inducted his successor, the President-elect, Mr. Latham, into the Presidential chair.

Congratulations were exchanged, and after a few more speeches, including a characteristic address by Mr. W. Johnson, the proceedings closed.

FUNERAL.—On Thursday afternoon, the 16th inst., in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends, the mortal form of Mr. Chaplin, late of 72, Askew-road, Shepherd's Bush, was interred at Hammersmith Cemetery, the funeral services at the house and at the cemetery being conducted by Mr. E. W. Wallis. Many beautiful wreaths, sent by relatives and friends, betokened the love and esteem in which the deceased veteran was held by all who had associated with him.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

A valued correspondent writes: 'I often think we Spiritualists are apt to overlook the grief of the one who passes on. Soon after losing my sister-in-law I was distinctly conscious of her presence when sitting in a circle, and the message she seemed to impress me with was: "You grieve for the loss of *one* loved one, but you still have the others with you; I grieve for the loss of *all* my loved ones." I think this must often be the case with those who have not been preceded into spirit life by anyone very near and dear to them.'

The Spiritualists' International Congress, which is to be held at Liverpool on July 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, under the auspices of the Spiritualists' National Union, bids fair to be a noteworthy success. The opening meeting, on the 6th, at which the delegates and representatives from abroad will be welcomed, will be held in Daulby Hall, Daulby-street, as will also the meetings on the 8th and 9th. The Sunday gatherings will take place in Hope Hall, Hope-street. An extensive programme has been arranged. As the expenses incurred in connection with this important Congress will necessarily be large, it is earnestly hoped that all Spiritualists who are interested in the progress of the movement and in the promotion of amity between the nations of the earth will assist the promoters with liberal contributions to the expenses fund. Donations will be thankfully received by the secretary, Mr. Hanson G. Hey, of 30, Glen-terrace, Clover Hill, Halifax, of whom full particulars of the proceedings can be obtained on application.

'The Daily Chronicle' says: 'M. Jean Finot, the well-known editor of "La Revue," will shortly publish a volume of reminiscences of Mr. William T. Stead. The two writers were close friends for many years. In regard to Mr. Stead's Spiritualistic experiments, M. Finot says he obtained some astounding results. On one occasion [in 1903] the medium [Mrs. Burchell] predicted the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga of Serbia in the presence of a number of witnesses. Mr. Stead was so convinced of the veracity of the prediction that he went to the Servian Minister in London and finally induced him to send warning to his Sovereign. The warning was not heeded, and several months afterwards the terrible Belgrade tragedy was enacted, with details absolutely identical with those described by Mr. Stead's medium.' The details were published in 'LIGHT' at the time of the tragedy.

According to 'The Sunday Record-Herald' of Chicago, U.S.A., Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond has received a lengthy message from Mr. W. T. Stead, in which it is claimed that 'a warning word written by my son through my own hand, made it known to me that the ship would go down just as soon as it struck the berg. I was ready. Many were "over there" first, at hand to receive me.' . . . 'After the first roar, rush of waters—a great surging, suffocating sense—I awoke as one awakening from a horrible dream. My son was the first to meet me.' Referring to others, the message says: 'Those who had been thrust out in unpreparedness, unwilling, in the realm of spirits, had to be comforted. We must help them. The great rallying cry is ever to help others. No life goes out into the higher world that some one or more is not there at hand to meet and greet that one.' . . . 'I am not dead, and my interest and work will still be for the welfare of humanity. "Nor birth, nor life, nor death can change or mar the soul on ministry of good intent."

We have received the May issue of 'Brotherhood,' the organ of 'The Alpha Union.' It is edited by J. Bruce Wallace, M.A., and is 'designed to help, through truer thought, the healthy reconstruction of souls and bodies, and the peaceful evolution of a juster and happier social order.' A worthy object truly, and we wish our contemporary abundant success in its efforts to win 'freedom through truth.' The Editor, after referring to the tragedy of the 'Titanic,' asks, 'Have we realised the number of fatal accidents occurring in the course of a single year in the mines, on the railway, in the workshops and factories, &c.?' and says that if they are added together it will be found that this annual death-roll is more than twice that of the 'Titanic'; for 'in the ordinary course of their bread-winning, year after year, thousands thus meet their death.' It is necessary that we should realise, more vividly than we ordinarily do, 'how immense a sacrifice of human life, how heavy a price in blood and tears, our present industrial system, our present civilisation exacts from the poorer brethren, whose poverty leaves them little opportunity of choice as regards the conditions under which they work.' Mr. Wake Cook's articles (see p. 247) at least suggest methods whereby a better state of things might be inaugurated.

The May issue of 'The Review of Reviews' is a 'W. T. Stead Memorial Number.' It contains a very fine portrait of Mr. Stead, which is truly 'a speaking likeness.' Anyone who wishes to know his life-story, and to gain some idea of the influence he wielded and the esteem in which he was held, should, if possible, obtain a copy of this month's 'Review,' for in it, as the present editor, Mr. Alfred Stead, says, 'the world pays its tribute.'

The word 'coming' usually implies nearness. We have been reminded of this fact by being asked whether in our announcement on page 236 relative to the holding in Paris of the Second International Congress of Experimental Psychology, we did not, in stating that it was fixed for 'the coming Easter Vacation,' mean 'the coming Whitsuntide.' No, we admit a blunder, but not that! Our slip was in translating 'prochaine' as 'coming,' instead of as 'next.' The Congress will be held in Easter, 1913.

Summer schools seem to be the order of the day. Particulars have reached us respecting the fourth International Summer School, which is to be held at Torquay on August 3rd to 17th, under the direction of Mr. D. N. Dunlop, Oakley House, Bloomsbury-street, London, W.C., of whom full particulars can be obtained. The object of the school is to promote unity in religion, philosophy, and science, and its expression in all branches of social service. It is hoped 'to make the school representative of every movement which has for its object the unfolding of a fuller, richer, and nobler human life.'

The 'Observer,' on May 12th, published an account of the assassination in the lobby of the House of Commons on May 11th, 1812, of the then Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, but, as the 'Daily Chronicle' pointed out on the 13th, failed to mention the well-known fact that in a dream, nine days before the event, John Williams, of Scorrie House, Cornwall, saw the incident enacted. This dream occurred three times during the night of May 2nd, 1812, and in it every circumstance of the tragedy was reproduced, even to the clothing worn by the murderer and his victim. Williams was so alarmed that he wanted to proceed to London to warn Perceval, but was dissuaded by his friends, who feared that he might only expose himself to ridicule.

We congratulate Messrs. Methuen on their enterprise in issuing, at the price of 1s. net, a neat little cloth-covered edition of Sir Oliver Lodge's important work, 'Man and the Universe: A Study of the influence of the advance in Scientific Knowledge upon our Understanding of Christianity.' The publishers' object in so doing is, we understand, to popularise the book and increase its usefulness by reaching the mass of readers who are unable to afford the more expensive edition. The work consists of the substance, extended and revised, of a series of articles previously contributed by Sir Oliver to the 'Hibbert Journal' and the 'Contemporary Review.' It was originally published in 1908 and was reviewed at considerable length in 'LIGHT' for November 7th of that year, when we said: 'We can only hope that this book will be studied from cover to cover, and its teachings taken profoundly to heart by students of science and professors of religion—and pondered by Spiritualists, whose faith is amply justified by its conclusions.' Copies can be had from the Office of 'LIGHT.'

We have been favoured with a condensed report of an Address delivered by a control through Mr. W. E. Long on 'Disasters and the Dead,' but owing to pressure on our space we can do no more than give the main points advanced. The speaker said that even the most lonely earth-dweller is linked in with a band of souls who are in constant touch with earth life. This communication of soul with soul is recognised by the mind to some extent, but it is not until the spiritual consciousness is evolved that one becomes alive to the realities of life. Those who pass out suddenly while functioning towards earth are not ready to express themselves on the spiritual plane. At first they think and speak as in a dream, they may feel solitary and helpless although they are surrounded. Theirs is not a normal state, and sensitives may receive thoughts and feelings from them which are not transmitted intentionally, but sympathetically. No soul is left without care and attention, but, preoccupied with earthly ties, the new comer into spirit life does not realise that he, or she, is ministered unto by loved ones; but there is no mind so distant or estranged as to be incapable of receiving comfort and assurance from the loving prayers of those who send out their thoughts towards them. As the soul opens to the heavens, so the heavens open to the soul, and when earth dwellers, by spiritual endeavour, let their light shine, the angels know and rejoice.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

W. T. Stead's Signed Message through the Camera.

SIR,—On May 6th, as I was sitting with my friends at Crewe for psychic photography, we received a signed message from Mr. W. T. Stead through the camera. My own plates were used, and the whole of the handling of the plates, developing, &c., was performed by myself. There was thus no opportunity for the substitution of plates or for faking a message or otherwise tampering with the plates used (even if that had been attempted, which it was not, as the friends sitting in circle are as honest in their intention and desire as myself).

I may mention that we sit to offer the spirit friends every opportunity to guide us, by their advice, how we may best obtain with their help messages or portraits. Even medical prescriptions have thus been given, the names of drugs, with the weight of each drug, being shown in a proper manner. Such prescriptions have been presented at the chemist's and the medicine supplied. In all such cases the patient has derived much benefit by taking the medicine. I refer to this only to show my readers that we have confidence in our spirit friends, and they reciprocate it. So far, I have never sat for a psychic photograph, with or without the use of the camera, without obtaining good results.

On September 21st, 1911, I called by appointment at Mr. W. T. Stead's office to show him my album of psychic photographs, my wife being with me during the interview. Mr. Stead took great interest in the photographs and thanked us for calling. He expressed his sense of the 'great value which psychic photography gave to Spiritualism,' and said that as I had been so successful he hoped I would 'follow it up.' As we were separating he took my hand in his and said, 'Do go on with the good work you have in hand, and will you kindly keep me posted?' I thanked him and promised that I would keep him posted.

My next visit to Crewe was on October 16th, 1911, when two plates were exposed through the camera, with me as the sitter. On one plate appeared two psychic forms, and on the other a message. The letters are around me on a white ground, in an irregular form; also they are positive (so that the ordinary laws of photography were set aside; as a positive and negative, my portrait, appeared on one plate). The message is to the point, and to those concerned clearly shows that the spirit friends have regard for those who assist them in these demonstrations. It was as follows: 'Tell A. cura ut valeas and we will help him, also great care is required in things generally. Do this and all shall be well. Let there also be perfect unity.' As none of us are Latin scholars we had to look up what 'cura ut valeas' meant, and found that it could be translated to read 'take care that you keep strong,' or 'well.' The advice was appropriate to A.'s then condition.

Knowing Mr. Stead to be a very busy man, and seeing in the daily papers what was passing about that time, I did not forward to him copies from the negatives referred to above, and, owing to causes not under my control, my visits to Crewe had to be suspended until the present month. When the news of the sad calamity and loss of Mr. W. T. Stead appeared in the newspapers, my wife said, 'You promised to keep Mr. Stead posted, but now it is too late.' I felt very sad at the loss of so many lives, and at the thought that among the victims should be Mr. Stead, a champion of all that was good and true, and in reply to my wife I said, 'Possibly he will comprehend why I did not write to him and send him copies as I promised, but he will perhaps try to keep me posted.'

For my visit on the 6th inst. I put, as is my usual practice, the sensitive plates—Rapid Brand—in my pocket, so that they could become magnetised, and carried them about with me for several days. The package was placed on the table at Crewe. Ten minutes or so were spent in singing, and after a few words of prayer a 'control' manifested. He told us to use the camera and to give a *long exposure* to one plate and a very short one to the other. As is my method, and by willing consent of my friends, the lens, camera, and slide were examined and found in order and clean. I adjourned to the temporary dark-room, put the two plates in the slide, and carried the slide to the room where the exposures were made. The first plate had fifteen seconds' exposure and the second one-twenty-fifth of a second's exposure, so that the difference in the exposure was three hundred and seventy-five times greater for No. 1 than for No. 2 plate.

Pyro. soda tabloids were used. I mixed the developer, and used the same developer, undiluted, for both the plates. No. 2

gives a good negative, and does not show under exposure. That being so, No. 1 should have flashed up and gone past any reasonable use, but as that was not so, some control over the actinic power during the exposure would appear to have taken place.

The following message appears on both plates: 'Dear Mr. Walker,—I will try to keep you posted.—W. T. STEAD.' On No. 1 plate the message is positive, and not very clear on the print, but easy to read on the negative. On No. 2 plate it is negative, and comes out on the print clear and readable.

What could be more to the point than this message, in response to my words spoken to my wife, as before stated, in our home on the day we read of the 'Titanic' disaster?

To those unacquainted, and who prefer to theorise rather than investigate, the idea 'thought photography' occurs quite naturally; but I am informed by one who for years was in close touch with him, that the 'handwriting perfectly resembles Mr. Stead's.' That being so, as we who sat for the psychic photos were not cognisant of the character of his handwriting, thought transference from us to the sensitive plates does not fit. I thank Mr. Stead for his message, and hope for more.—Yours, &c.,

W. WALKER.

Buxton, May 16th, 1912.

An Unexpected Talk with Mr. Stead and Mrs. Britten.

SIR,—I send you the following statement of facts under serious apprehension as to how your readers will receive it; but a few days' consideration and discussion of the unexpected occurrence have decided me to present it, as there are one or two items which those intimately acquainted with Mr. Stead may be able to understand. His coming to such old friends as Mr. Robertson and Mr. Coates was to be looked for, but communicating with such a person as myself, of whom, more than likely, he had never even heard, is surely surprising. Of the authenticity of the messages, as messages, I have no doubt; the mediums through whom they came are above suspicion. The one feasible solution, outside that of genuineness, is that of imposture from the other side, and that theory I can hardly admit. All came so easily, simply, and naturally, especially the interesting interjection by his companion, that spirit fraud seems out of the question; and yet, of course, the truth seems so amazing, and my household so favoured, that even now I am loth to be dogmatic.

On Thursday evening, May 9th, about 8.15, I was so strongly impressed to have a sitting for table messages that I called my wife and daughter, who are both good mediums, to my room, where we seated ourselves round a table about twenty-four inches in diameter. Presently it moved, and several unimportant communications were spelled out. By and by a weird sort of influence affected the patient trio, and, personally, I was prepared for almost anything. It took all my strength of will to resist passing under control, and I was pleased that I succeeded. About 8.40 I distinctly saw a figure pass behind my wife, which I recognised, from portraits, as that of Mr. Stead. He had his hands behind his back, his head was erect, and his eyes looked sometimes straight ahead, at others into mine. Astounded, although quite sure of the identity, as presented to my vision, I asked if he could communicate through the table, to which he replied in the affirmative. I did not refer to him by name, but addressed him simply as 'friend.' I have no power whatever as a table medium, so that my hands had nothing to do with the movements.

In response to my question: 'Will you tell me your name?' the answer came, 'Yes, Stead.' The raps were very loud, and most deliberate, and surprised my wife.

The following conversation then ensued:—

'Will you tell me the name of one of your most famous publications?'—'Borderland' (very distinctly). 'Tell me the name of the spirit who gave you many valuable communications.'—'Julia.' (This was given in gentle raps, as if the name were a precious one to utter.) 'Tell me, by raps, the year of your unjust imprisonment.'—'1878.' (I think this is wrong.) 'Have you anything to tell me?'—'Yes, Stead still lives.' 'What do you mean by that?'—'Stead *lives* as you know it.' (By this time the conditions were heavenly, if it is not a sin to use the term here.)

Up to this point it might be within the range of possibility that either my wife or daughter knew all the foregoing; consequently I changed my mode of questioning, but the issues were the same.

'Were you in this room earlier in the evening?'—'Yes.' 'Did you see anyone?'—'Yes, you, alone.' 'What was I doing?'—'Reading, part of the time.' 'Tell me anything I was reading?'—'About myself.' 'Why wrote it?'—'Myself.' 'But you could not do so, and you dead?'—'I did.' 'How?'—'Through a hand.' 'Whose?'—'J. R.' (James Robertson).

At this point the raps sounded less decisive and the movements became slower, so I asked: 'Have you any message to

give that I can send to someone as a further proof of your identity?'—'Yes. William Gon.' 'Do you wish me to write to a person named "William Gon"?'—'No, William is gone.' 'Ah, now, I understand,' I said, 'Mr. Stead has gone and you have taken his place. Is that so?'—'Yes.' 'Who are you, then?' Then came a great surprise, greater even than the first. A sweetness, a calm, a holiness, define it as you will, filled the room, as, with measured movement, the name, 'Emma Hardinge Britten,' was spelled out. We were electrified, and it was a full minute before I was able to continue the conversation. At length I asked: 'What brought you here?'—'With William.' 'Ah, I see. You came with Mr. Stead, did you?' I further inquired.—'Yes.' 'Did you know him well in life?'—'Yes.' (If any reader can determine this point as to whether the acquaintanceship of these two gifted souls was so close as to warrant the use of the Christian name of the one by the other, it would be most interesting.) 'Have you anything to tell me now you are here?'—'Yes.' Then followed a little dialogue between us which does not concern the public, but which fully convinced me that either the spirit of the noble medium or some impostor who knew her and her family and myself was present; the latter is to me unthinkable.

Perhaps, had I not been so pressing with my questions regarding identity, we might have received some valuable token of our visitor's persisting faculties; but as I am still sceptical when in touch with 'strangers,' I like to have some reasonable grounds to tread before appending my seal of acceptance. All the same, it was a two-hours' treat I would gladly share in once more if permitted.—Yours, &c.,

JAMES LAWRENCE.

An Appreciation of Mr. Stead from South Africa.

SIR,—Mr. and Mrs. Nordica, mediums of the Johannesburg Mission of Spiritualism, wish to tender to you and all other workers our deepest sympathy for the great loss of our dear friend and brother, the late W. T. Stead. We wish to express with all Spiritualists our appreciation of him as the greatest worker of his day in the cause of truth—one who fought down calumny and antagonism, and spread abroad, by his marvellous writings, the truth of life after death. He, being dead, yet speaks, and though among the risen ones, his work and influence will still be used to carry still further his message to humanity.

Let us then emulate his example, his life of sacrifice, and prove by our works that his labour has not been in vain.

With deepest sympathy,—Fraternally yours,

H. AND M. NORDICA.

Johannesburg.

A Predictive Vision.

SIR,—With reference to the transition of Mr. Vincent Turvey, the following rather curious experience may interest your readers:—

On March 19th last I wrote to a daughter of mine who has the psychometric faculty, and sent her one of Mr. Turvey's letters to me, as she had asked me for some letters, or 'articles' worn by different persons, to 'keep her hand in.' On the 20th she posted me back a few lines to say that instead of psychometrising, she had visualised, and had seen spelt out: 'Poor Turvey. Ah, me!' (then) *an hour-glass*; (then) *a man seated at a table*. She could not see his face, but he was reading or writing. In front of him was a huge *black-edged envelope marked 'Turvey'*; then, a moment later, that all vanished and she saw a coffin. She made a note of it in her diary.

When I saw her a few days later I told her he was quite well, and that I had heard from him. She merely shrugged her shoulders, and we dismissed the subject. A little time later, Mr. Turvey, for whom I was copying some MSS., wrote and told me he was in great trouble. His wife was, he feared, at the point of death, and therefore he could not continue his 'writings' till later on. My daughter, to whom I mentioned this, remarked: 'Perhaps the envelope had to do with his wife. I am certain it means one of the family. I never knew the black-edged envelope foretell falsely when it bore a name.' And sure enough, alas! a few weeks later came the sad news of Mr. Turvey's passing. It was a great shock to me. On May 4th I returned home from a walk, and was on my way upstairs to fetch a batch of papers he had sent me to copy, with permission to make any suggestions that might occur to me while doing so. Before I reached my own room, my servant handed me a black-edged envelope. It was from Mrs. Turvey, informing me that her husband had 'passed away' at 2 a.m. on the previous day.

My daughter and I have both received communications from him since he left. One is a 'message' given to my daughter

for me, that is undoubtedly his *in style* and even in *handwriting*. My first communication from him ran: 'Here I find a most elementary state of affairs'; but two days later the communication was much longer, and just in his style—half-humorous, but very much in earnest. He had promised before he left to pay me a visit in his astral body—he fixed hour and day—and he has told my daughter, 'Tell your mother I will keep my promise.' So it is quite possible I may see him some day, even here.—Yours, &c.,

BEATRICE B. CONNOR.

A Veridical Dream.

SIR,—The account of 'two veridical dreams' which your correspondent, 'C. C. B.,' gives on page 131 of 'LIGHT' for March 16th, tempts me to relate my own experience of dreams. In the course of my life I have had many messages of warning and tidings of joy through dreams. Below I give one dream of the former class, which occurred on the night of February 27th last.

I dreamed that I was seated with my wife conversing with her on some subject, while our child was playing close by. Suddenly I missed the child, and on turning and looking back, I saw him hanging on a round iron bar, which projected across a dried-up well, and looking at me pitifully. Somehow I knew that the depth of the well was about one hundred feet, that the child was exerting all his strength to maintain his hold of the bar, and that when he let go, which he might do at any moment, it would mean instant death. I was quite helpless to run to the spot and save him, and in this state of distress I awoke. For some time I lay thinking over the details of the dream, trying to solve its meaning.

In the morning I narrated it to my wife, adding that I felt that our boy would pass through some accident or sickness, but would be spared to us.

On March 1st the lad suddenly fell sick with fever and cold; in a few days his neck was painful, and two large swellings appeared, the pressure of which was choking his wind-pipe; in this state he continued in pain and fever up to the 18th; but, thank God, he has since recovered and is now quite well and playful.

Such experiences of our Father's care, and of the guardianship of His ministering spirits, help our natures to expand, and to become rich in grace, by the exercising of our various spiritual gifts.—Yours, &c.,

GEO. A. T. MONIE.

Hope Hall Estate,
Mazagon, Bombay.

Materialisation.

SIR,—In reply to 'Investigator' (p. 227), may I say that I shall be pleased to organise a private circle of from six to seven spiritually-minded sitters who would agree to sit regularly, and with a view to developing this phase of mediumship. Anyone in London who possesses the 'force' peculiar to this 'phase' might write, and thus bring us into communication with one another.—Yours, &c.,

A.

[Letters for 'A.' can be addressed c.o. 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.]

Confirmation Desired.

SIR,—On p. 404 of 'The History of American Spiritualism,' by Mrs. Emma Hardinge, it is narrated that 'Spirits say that the earth is receding from the sun, the cause being that the attractions are growing weaker in that direction and stronger in the opposite.' Where can I get the full account of this spirit utterance, with more detail than above? Are there any scientific facts as yet discovered that confirm this statement, or otherwise?—Yours, &c.,

J. W. MACDONALD.

15, Camden-street, North Shields.

A First Experience.

SIR,—At a meeting of a few friends at Mr. A. Bailey's, at Beckenham, Miss Ridge being the medium, I, who attended for the first time, was astonished and grateful beyond measure when the medium addressed me, for I at once recognised the language and voice of my wife who passed over twenty years ago. It is difficult to express the feelings that are aroused when one recognises that loved ones are still near. To actually know they live and love as of yore is a blessed experience.—Yours, &c.,

C. A. W. HUBBARD,

How 'Light' Helps Its Readers.

SIR,—Whilst I am writing on other matters I would just like to say how much I appreciate our paper, 'LIGHT.' I have taken it for over seventeen years. In its columns I have ever got help and comfort and guidance—in fact, it has really been an educator. I often bless the writers and the speakers at the London Spiritualist Alliance, and only regret I cannot be present.—Yours, &c.,
E. SWANSTON.

'Answered Prayers.'

SIR,—Your correspondent, 'F. R. B.' (page 239), has not, I think, read my little pamphlet entitled, 'Are Prayers Answered?' from which you quoted in your editorial comments of May 4th, concerning the lady who received £20 for the rent of her coffee-room, or he would have seen that the story was given as an example of the recognition of simple trust in God, and not for the purpose of proving that the lady in question had attained to some special 'standard of righteousness.'

The view I have taken is that natural (and spiritual) laws are never set aside in favour of individuals, though the results of some particular natural law may be modified by the action of a higher and spiritual law, but that prayers are answered (when the thing asked for can be wisely given) in harmony with universal laws, and that these answers are brought about by the agency of good spirits who are the messengers of God.

Our friend 'F. R. B.' makes a number of sweeping statements which would require proof before they could be taken as a basis of argument. Cases must be considered individually and strictly on their own merits. Reading the life of George Müller, I have felt that he must have been a man of great inner spiritual development. With thousands of orphan children under his care, it is easy to realise how large and willing a band of helpers must have gathered around him. These would doubtless lend their aid, impressing charitably-disposed persons to send money to the orphanage, as it was required. But had not George Müller been himself a man of prayer and of child-like faith in God, his work could not have prospered as it did, because his life would have lacked that central principle of all truly spiritual power.—Yours, &c.,
HECTOR WAYLEN.

SIR,—Being singularly fortunate in this respect—certainly not on account of my worthiness—perhaps my opinion may be valuable to someone seeking light and guidance. One deemed worthy, as the world counts righteousness, is not necessarily 'God's good man.' Consequently the first consideration is the divine status of the praying individual, and the second the right attitude of the suppliant. Perhaps it is the unselfish prayer that scores. He who prays in earnestness, sincerity, and faith, 'Father, not my will, but Thine, be done,' is in harmony with the Divine.

Doubtless the truest prayers are those of aspiration, thanksgiving, and appreciation.—Yours, &c.,
E. P. PRENTICE.

OPENING OF A SPIRITUALIST CHURCH AT CASTLEFORD.

When the standard of Spiritualism was first reared in Castleford some twelve years ago, it was thundered at from orthodox pulpits and savagely attacked in the public press, but it was never lowered. A bold front was maintained by a small band of earnest workers, who, with the help of God and His angels, have succeeded in erecting a commodious church which is a credit to the movement and those connected with it. On Saturday last a large number of sympathisers, including visitors from neighbouring towns, assembled at the outer door of the new church. The choir and friends joined warmly in a hymn, Mrs. Steir, of York, offered an invocation, and then the president of the society, Mr. H. H. Broadbent, handed an ornamental key to Mr. J. Venables (Mayor of Walsall), who unlocked the door, spoke a few words of congratulation and declared the building to be open and devoted to the service of God and humanity. The church had been tastefully decorated, and nearly two hundred and fifty persons sat down to tea. A crowded and enthusiastic public meeting followed, Mr. Broadbent presiding, at which an efficient glee party rendered acceptable service, as also did the society's choir. Able addresses were delivered by Mrs. Steir, Mr. R. Yates, and Mr. J. Venables. Mr. Hayward, president of the Yorkshire Union of Spiritualists, attended. Great credit is due to the hard-working members, especially the ladies, for their long and patient labours; the help and guidance of the spirit friends must also be gratefully acknowledged. There is still a burden of £200 on the building.—[COMMUNICATED.]

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Several communications intended for this issue are unavoidably held over until next week.

SOCIETY WORK ON SUNDAY, MAY 19th, &c.

Prospective Notices, not exceeding twenty-four words, may be added to reports if accompanied by stamps to the value of sixpence.

MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION—*Shearn's Restaurant, 231, Tottenham Court-road, W.*—Mr. J. J. Morse delivered an uplifting and instructive address on 'Spiritualism in Relation to some of the Problems of Human Life.' Mrs. Leigh Hunt sang a solo very sweetly.—*15, Mortimer-street, W.*—On the 13th inst. Mrs. Cannock gave remarkably successful clairvoyant descriptions and helpful messages. On Saturday, the 18th inst., an enjoyable evening was spent with Mr. J. J. Morse's control, 'The Strolling Player.' Mr. W. T. Cooper presided at all these meetings. Sunday next, see advt. on front page.—D. N.

BRIXTON.—*84, STOCKWELL PARK-ROAD.*—Morning and evening, Mr. Underwood gave addresses. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., Mr. Underwood; at 3 p.m., Lyceum; 7 p.m., Madame Beaumont. Whit Monday, at 7, social gathering, admission 6d.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—*73, BECKLOW-ROAD, W.*—Mr. Burton gave an interesting address. Good after-circle. Sunday next, at 10.45 a.m., public circle; at 6.45 p.m., Mrs. Webster. Thursday, at 8, Mrs. Podmore. Friday, at 8, members' circle.—J. L.

BRIGHTON.—**MANCHESTER-STREET (OPPOSITE AQUARIUM).**—Mr. W. H. Shaddick's carefully thought-out addresses were well received. Sunday next, at 11.15 and 7, Rev. Wm. Garwood, M.A. Tuesday, at 8 p.m., and Wednesday, at 3, Mrs. Clarke, clairvoyance. Thursday, at 8, members' circle.—H. J. E.

STRATFORD.—**WORKMAN'S HALL, 27, ROMFORD-ROAD, E.**—Mr. J. Gambriel Nicholson's address on 'Nearer, my God, to Thee' was much appreciated. Mr. Geo. F. Tilby presided. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. P. Scholey, address and clairvoyance.

BRIGHTON.—**HOVE OLD TOWN HALL, 1, BRUNSWICK-STREET WEST.**—Mrs. Jamrach gave excellent addresses and clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., public circle; 7 p.m., Mrs. G. C. Curry. June 2nd, Mr. Horace Leaf; also 3rd, at 8 p.m.; 1s. each sitter.—A. C.

HACKNEY.—*240A, AMHURST-ROAD, N.*—Mrs. Podmore gave an address and clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Alice Jamrach, address and clairvoyant descriptions. Tuesday, at 8.30, astrology class. Wednesday, at 8, Mrs. Sutton's circle.—N. R.

BRIXTON.—*8, MAYALL-ROAD.*—Miss Chapin gave an address and clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Mary Neville, address and psychometry; 3 p.m., Lyceum. Circles: Monday, at 7.30 p.m., ladies'. Tuesday, at 8.15, members'. Thursday, at 8.15, public.—G. T. W.

CROYDON.—**ELMWOOD HALL, ELMWOOD-ROAD, BROAD-GREEN.**—Mr. Dudley Wright's lecture on 'Spiritualism and its Influence on Modern Thought' was much appreciated. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Mary Gordon, address, followed by clairvoyant descriptions.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—**SURREY MASONIC HALL.**—Morning: Miss Ridge dealt with 'The Relative Aspects of Truth,' and gave clairvoyant descriptions. Evening: Mr. Brown spoke on 'Faith.' Sunday next, Mr. W. E. Long, at 11 a.m., personal messages and vision; at 6.30 p.m., 'Douglas,' on 'Voices at Pentecost.'

SEVEN KINGS, ILFORD.—*45, THE PROMENADE.*—Miss M. Ridge gave an address on 'What is Truth?' and clairvoyant descriptions. 14th, Mrs. Pitter's interesting address on 'Dreams' was well discussed. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Podmore. Tuesday, at 8 p.m., Mrs. A. Jamrach. June 2nd, Mr. R. Boddington.—C. E. S.

HOLLOWAY.—**PARKHURST HALL, 32, PARKHURST-ROAD.**—Morning, experiences by members and friends. Evening, Mr. R. Boddington gave an able address on 'Spiritualism: What does it Mean?' 15th, Mrs. Mary Davies gave clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., Mr. Rolfe; at 7 p.m., Mr. E. M. Sturgess. Wednesday, Mrs. Alice Jamrach. June 2nd, Mr. D. J. Davis. Lyceum every Sunday at 3.—J. F.

PECKHAM.—**LAUSANNE HALL, LAUSANNE-ROAD.**—Morning, automatic writing and clairvoyant descriptions by Mr. Abethell; evening, address on 'The Unfoldment of the Inner Nature,' by Mrs. Webster, followed by good clairvoyance. Sunday next, morning, Mr. G. Brown, automatic writings; evening, Miss Earle. Tuesdays, at 8.15, healing. Thursdays, 8.15, circle. Friday, 8, choir, musical friends welcome.—A. C. S.

STRATFORD.—**IDMISTON-ROAD, FOREST-LANE.**—Morning, Mrs. Neville gave an address on 'Love'; evening, Mrs. Hayward spoke on 'The Borderland,' and gave clairvoyant descriptions. Mr. Cattnach sang a solo. 16th, Mr. J. Wrench, address and psychometry. Sunday next, at 11.30 a.m., Mr. Willmot, on 'Spiritualism and Jesus'; at 7 p.m., public circle. 30th, Mrs. Webster. June 2nd, Mrs. Neville will name three children.—A. T. C.