

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

Edited by **DAVID GOW**

No. 2571. Vol. L.

[Registered as a Newspaper] Saturday April 19, 1930.

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Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

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No. 2571. VOL. L.

[Registered as SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 1930. a Newspaper.]

PRICE FOURPENCE

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

As we have said on previous occasions the terms Reincarnation and Pre-existence are often confused, but while reincarnation carries the idea of pre-existence, pre-existence does not necessarily imply some previous incarnate experience. The question then arises—if we lived before our birth, in what form did we live? Wordsworth is often quoted in the lines in which he speaks of our coming from God, and "trailing clouds of glory" as we come. Philosophically, it would seem that not until incarnate in matter did the Universal Spirit, as expressed in each of us, attain self-consciousness—that is to say, consciousness of a personal self. But as the Mystic knows, there is a larger and higher self and only a portion of it is incarnated. That personal self had probably no previous existence as such. Indeed, the purpose of the Universe, according to some authorities, is to individuate Spirit in the form of these personal selves. But we are never likely to reach any final conclusion on the matter, infinitely diverse being the Universe in its manifestations. But whatever the truth may be, we may rest assured that it is a beautiful and happy one. For some of us it is enough simply to be, without perplexing ourselves over much as to how we came to be and what we may hereafter become.

* * * * *

In a well-reasoned article, forming part of a series, "On Survival", in a Sunday journal, the Marquis of Tavistock testifies to his belief that there is a life beyond the grave. Amongst the grounds for this belief he refers to the nature of the mind, observing that the only "ending" of a thing, so far as our knowledge of it extends, is that which comes about by a dissolution of its parts. That the mind, as expressed in personality, has no parts is shown, he considers, by its ability to form a judgment on two different ideas, "a feat which would be impossible if each idea were contained in a different compartment". Doubtless the mind is something independent of the material order, although interacting with matter in the case of incarnate beings like ourselves. Sir Oliver Lodge has gone very deeply into the question in his writings. Still, there is an immense amount of knowledge yet to be gained on this subject of body and mind. We sometimes use the terms

"soul" and "mind" interchangeably—a usage which has some classical authority, and the idea that the body is formed by the soul (or mind), once a poetic idea, as expressed by Edmund Spenser and afterwards by Schiller, is now accepted by advanced science. It is the theme of Dr. Géley's volume, *From the Unconscious to the Conscious*. But it seems clear enough that there is a Universal Mind which, operating through the human consciousness, builds up not only the body of flesh but the etheric body in which the soul carries on the business of life in the hereafter. So closely is it allied with the mind that the term "mind-body" has been used of it. But there is still much that is mysterious to us in its operations, although as we proceed "veil after veil is drawn aside".

* * * * *

Reference has already been made in LIGHT to the story of his other-world experiences, related in the *American Magazine* last year, by Mr. William Dudley Pelley, well-known in the United States as author and journalist. As already mentioned, Mr. Pelley's article has been reproduced by him in a pamphlet, *Seven Minutes in Eternity* (the title of the original story), with some additional matter dealing with his career and his experiences after what he calls his "hyper-dimensional visitation". We hope to see the pamphlet, which is published in New York, accessible on this side of the Atlantic. Meantime, we may refer to the significance of the statement he makes, that after the publication of his article (which he wrote under protest, fearing that he might be classed as an "occult freak"), he received a vast number of letters, in which the writers spoke of having had similar experiences. Mr. Pelley remarks:—

Going completely out of the body is a common experience amongst persons of all races, creeds, and strata of society. Only I caused a sensation by saying so in the leading article of a periodical having ten millions of readers. And, in view of the fact that the great majority of those who, from time to time, so enter other planes of being, report similar sights and experiences, it is not difficult to accept the thesis that here is a field which Science may well look over to its profit.

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Mr. R. A. Bush, 8, Mostyn Road, Merton Park, S.W.19, will gladly acknowledge in LIGHT further donations to this Testimonial, which it is hoped will receive the generous support of all friends.

WHAT IS LIFE?

BY GEO. LINDSAY JOHNSON, M.D., F.R.C.S.

A great deal of confusion has arisen over the precise nature and definition of "Life". Many of our clergy and Ministers of Religion consider that life is identical with the blood. They derive this idea from Genesis, Chap. ix, verse 4, in which it speaks of "the blood which is the life thereof", thereby implying that it is the blood which gives life to the individual. Now the blood has only three main functions: Firstly, to carry oxygen to the tissues by means of the red blood corpuscles; secondly, to convey the necessary nourishment to every tissue and living cell in the body; and, lastly, by means of the white corpuscles (leucocytes) which exist in the blood, to fight, and if possible destroy, all foreign organisms which have gained access to the body by any means. These white cells are the soldiers of the organism, and they fight to their death to overcome the enemy. They are intensely brave, and their slain bodies, amounting to many millions, are known to everybody as *pus*, or matter. But the blood has nothing whatsoever to do with the life of the organism. There is no blood in any plant, nor can any be found in any of the lowest class of organisms, and yet they all have life. But I can prove that the blood has nothing to do with life in another way. I used to attend the lectures of the late Prof. Kuehne, the celebrated Professor of Physiology at Heidelberg, and he, on several occasions, performed the following experiment. He took a frog, and drained its body of every drop of its blood, and in order to remove the last traces of blood, he washed the vessels out with a syringe filled with a weak solution of salt in water, until no colour remained in the escaping fluid. The frog remained to all appearances dead, without any sign of life. If dropped into water, it floated like a log. If placed on its back, it remained in that position without the slightest sign of animation. After a little time, the Professor took a large quantity of a $\frac{3}{4}\%$ salt solution in water, and injected it into the abdomen, and also into the veins of the animal; after about half an hour the frog began to show signs of movement, and after another thirty minutes the frog commenced feebly to croak; after another short interval, the little fellow jumped about as if there were nothing the matter with him! The reason why this experiment would fail in a human being or any Mammal, and not in a frog, is that in the latter animal, the heart continues beating for about eighteen hours after removal, if certain precautions are taken, whereas in Man the heart stops directly the amount of blood ceases to become oxygenated, or falls below a certain amount.

I myself saw a young man, who was undergoing an operation under an anæsthetic, when suddenly the heart ceased to beat, and, in spite of all the approved methods of resuscitation for nearly half an hour, the young man showed no signs of life; he was about to be given up as dead, when the doctor as a last resource opened up the chest wall, and seizing the heart with his hand commenced alternately to squeeze and relax it. After a short time, under this treatment, the heart began to pulsate, and the young man was

restored to life. I closely inspected the wound which the doctor had made in the chest, and questioned the patient afterwards. He said the agony he went through on coming to again, was the most fearful pain he ever experienced. I, myself, have experienced all the symptoms of drowning. When at school a boy held my legs as I was diving under a partition, so that I was incapable of rising to the surface, and when I could no longer hold my breath, I let go, and all the water rushed into my lungs, and I lost consciousness. By applying Sylvester's method for twenty minutes, the operator ultimately brought me round again to consciousness. But for all intents and purposes I was practically dead before that. It is commonly believed that all the events of one's life pass rapidly in review before one's mind, but nothing of the sort occurred to me. I had an agonised feeling the moment I let the water rush into my lungs, but this only lasted for about two seconds, nor did I suffer any discomfort later. In fact death by drowning is, except for the momentary choking sensation, by no means disagreeable, and quite painless, in fact, it is just like going off under an anæsthetic.

We ask again: "What is life?" Take an egg or a seed. Is it alive? It may, or may not be. In the case of a seed, the simplest way to find out, is to plant it in a suitable soil, and see if it grows, but as Mr. Baines has conclusively shown and demonstrated to the writer, a very delicate galvanometer will infallibly tell you whether a seed or an egg is alive by the direction of the current—i.e., from the small end of the egg to the broad end, or, in the case of a seed, from the cotyledon end to the root end, or the reverse.

A great many attempts at defining life have been made at various times. Herbert Spencer defines Life as: "The continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations," and then he adds: "And when we so define it, we discover that the physical and the psychic life are equally comprehended by the definition." But from what I have just said in reply to the question, "What is life?", one must ask, "To which kind of life do you refer—the potential, or the kinetic form?" If the former, then Spencer's definition breaks down at once, and the correct definition would be: "Potential life has no properties by which we can recognise it, except by ascertaining in which direction the current flows, and by the fact that it has the power of passing from the passive or potential form to the active or kinetic variety." What then is the definition of kinetic life?

Now before we can make our definition understood by all, we must first examine a few of the properties of life. In the first place all life, as we recognise it in the physical world, can only work through what is known as protoplasm. This consists of a highly complex assemblage of atoms, which are made up of the four elements, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon, together with small quantities of other elements such as sulphur, phosphorus, iron, chlorine, sodium, and potassium, but only the first three are essential components of protoplasm. This is a white viscous, jelly-like substance like albumen or white-of-egg, about three-fourths of which consists of water. Physiologists call protoplasm the physical basis of life.

Now organic life, in its kinetic form, possesses two essential properties: firstly, the power of assimilation (that is the power of converting ingested food

into living protoplasm), and, secondly, the power to excrete, or throw off, all superfluous or waste materials. There are many other properties which are usually found in living beings, but life as defined by us can exist without them. We refer to irritability, reproduction and growth as among the most obvious. Bearing these facts in mind, I think we may perhaps define kinetic life as follows:—

Kinetic Life, as seen on the physical plane, is that immaterial and unknown directing, guiding, and constructing power, which, for want of a better expression, we may call the visible manifestation of the soul, which, pervading an organised protoplasm-holding body, enables it, by a ceaseless flow of internal changes, to adjust itself to its environment through its power of adaptation, to overcome inertia, and resist decay.*

The writer has long contemplated the various definitions of Life, and he has adopted this one of his, as having fewer objections than any other he has come across. It will be noticed that I specify a ceaseless internal flow of changes, for the moment that flow ceases altogether, life apparently disappears, or, at any rate, becomes imperceptible. But further investigation has shown me that something more is required for life to become extinct and irrecoverable in the organism. This I will discuss in my next article.

(Copyright.)

(To be continued.)

A CHURCHYARD PHANTASM.

Mr. E. A. S. Hayward sends us the following translation of a case recorded in the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, of February 22nd, 1930.

A singular incident has occurred in the country district, near Fratti di Salerno, where a thousand-year-old burial ground has been brought to light during excavations carried out by the Department of Antiquities and Monuments. This burial ground covers an area of 350 square metres and consists of fifty tombs in which have been discovered amphora and Corinthian pottery.

An old countryman has his home in the district. For some days the old man has had his slumbers disturbed by the apparition of a spectral figure which approached his bed and stretched its arms over him as if to carry him away. The other night the strange phantasm spoke these words, which were distinctly heard by the old countryman: "I am buried in front of your house. Take me out of the tomb."

In the morning the old man went to Professor Marzullo, who was directing the excavations, and after telling him of the nocturnal apparition, begged him to extend his operations before his house.

As soon as the digging had been finished, to the great amazement of those present, there came to light a coffin containing a skeleton in almost perfect preservation.

The incident has caused a deep impression in the district, and the thousand-year-old tomb has since been the object of uninterrupted pilgrimage.

* I have called it a power, and not energy, because the phenomena it exerts show that it must be of a different kind or order from the physical energy which is perceived everywhere around us on this plane. It certainly cannot be changed into any of the natural forces such as electricity, heat, light, or gravity, and yet it can exert immense force quite apart from the physical body. This, Sir William Crookes has abundantly demonstrated in the case of Home the Medium, and also in the case of Katie King through the Medium Miss Florrie Cook. It is one of the subjects which urgently require careful investigation. This has, to some extent, been done by the late Dr. Geley, and later by Dr. Eugene Osty.

"BE YE PERFECT."

A MEDITATION.

We talk of a counsel of perfection as something beyond our reach, idealistic perhaps but at least semi-impossible. Yet the very counsel here given carries with it the implication of possibility. The difference lies in the point of view: we speak from the standard of three-score-and-ten short years, but the truer vision takes into account many lives and æons of time. From the shorter point of view, perfection is a will-o'-the-wisp; from the lengthier it must needs follow as the logical end of continued progress.

"Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect", and thus, lest we should spend our time for progress in restless argument as to the special points of perfection (as is the manner of dialectics and debate), we are given a specific model—the Father in heaven, whose Exemplar to us is the Christ. His is the path that we must follow if we would take the road to perfection. There be many other roads, and by-paths innumerable, joyous and delusive, feet-snaring and wit-bewildering, but they lead not to Perfection. The road to that is narrow, and few tread it.

"Does the road wind uphill all the way?" "Yes, to the very end." The downward path is the easy route to Avernus, and many travel that way befuddled, arm-in-arm, singing strange songs.

But with here a friend and there a lover, a few choose the uphill road. They have but scanty fare and few possessions, but the love in their hearts lightens the road, and ever and anon their vision is enchanted with the glory of the opening prospect. Their ears gain stray chaunts of gossamer music, their hearts thrill with tender thoughts that have no words. The barriers betwixt them are down, and heaven itself has no barriers to those who love. So they draw nearer the one to the other, and to the love of God which welcomes and draws them on.

And ever the star shines there before them, the star of perfection; far away, maybe, but it is their beckoning guide.

"Be ye perfect . . ."

H. ERNEST HUNT.

PSYCHIC MESSAGES AND THEIR CRITICS.

W. T. G., an American correspondent, sends us a protest against the hypercritical spirit in which psychic messages are not infrequently received. He writes us concerning some communications of a rather remarkable character received by him through a Medium who, although widely-read, has not the literary skill which would enable him to edit the writings he receives. We cordially agree with W. T. G.'s opinion when he says:—

It seems to me a blot on finished writers and the intelligentsia generally that they force what we believe to be spirit communicators to transmit their messages through the less qualified writers of English, by ignoring the subject altogether. It seems to me that hypercriticism of the diction of genuine messages is in the same class as a fastidious attention to the fly-specks in a good picture. Our communicators assert that they impress images on the mind of the sensitive, and they cannot always control the word-translation of these. It seems to me that the message itself is the important thing, and if a split infinitive does not alter the meaning of a message, the communication itself should not be brushed aside on that account,

THE BRITISH COLLEGE BANQUET.

The Fifth Annual Dinner of the British College, held on April 3rd, was a most successful affair. Some hundred and fifty people were assembled at the Café Royal, and those present included the Countess Clonmel, Lady Currie, Lady Greenwood, Lady Palmer, Lady Shackleton, Sir Lawrence Jones, Bart., Sir John and Lady Foster Fraser, General Cummins and a large array of others whose names are associated with social, literary, scientific, political and psychic activities. After the excellent repast, Mrs. Champion de Crespigny, who presided, proposed the health of The King, and then read messages of regret from those unavoidably absent, including Sir Richard Gregory, the Rev. Gordon Lang, Baron and Baroness van Amerongen, and Sir Arthur and Lady Conan Doyle. Sir Arthur's message of goodwill, with its encouraging promise of being present at the next dinner, was received with applause.

In welcoming the assembly, Mrs. de Crespigny said she desired to say a few words about the work of the College. Its function was principally the investigation of phenomena along careful, sympathetic lines, with a view to arriving at an understanding of the laws that lay behind them. This work was carried on in the scientific rather than in the religious spirit. Her own view was that the dark seance was becoming almost played out; she observed that some investigators were content with obtaining the same phenomena over and over again. One could not be content with that. One needed higher ideals—the desire to learn the laws of those planes that lay behind and beyond the material world. Then it might be possible to understand the true inwardness of spiritual manifestations.

THE REV. C. DRAYTON THOMAS, in proposing the toast of the Guests, expressed his admiration for the character and attainment of Sir Lawrence Jones, and referred to Miss Stead as a worthy successor of her father, whose work she was carrying on in the W. T. Stead Borderland Library, the successor to "Julia's Bureau". When, lately, he had been permitted to look through a powerful microscope, owned by a friend of his, Mr. Thomas had reflected on the case of a race of people with microscopic eyes. They would live in a world of interest and beauty, but not in the world we know. Yet we ourselves, with our larger vision, were very limited. There were many things outside the range of our five senses. Referring to cases of spontaneous supernormal phenomena recorded through all the ages he suggested that these were given to mankind as hints that he should study the laws involved in these things. Since the Hydesville manifestations this study had been taken up in the form of what he might call facilitated phenomena. He held that these in their totality gave us a demonstration of human survival of death which should be immensely helpful to the Churches. As a Christian Minister he was proud to be able to say that we could now change faith in survival for actual proof, leaving faith free for further flights.

SIR LAWRENCE JONES, in acknowledging the toasts, said he felt there was a wave of sympathy amongst them. When walking in a street, near his house, recently he had noticed a chalk line marking what an inscription described as "No Man's Land". He thought "No Man's Land" was not a bad description of the realm they were all engaged in considering, and a common interest in which had drawn them together. It behoved them, as wise men and women, thoroughly to explore that unknown country. He had been interested in psychical research for forty years, and he remembered that when he was a young man psychical researchers were described as a com-

pany of people in a dark room hunting for a black cat that was not there! But they had persisted and found that (to pursue the parable) the black cat is certainly there sometimes, if not all the time. Sir Lawrence then alluded to a story told by Mr. G. R. S. Mead concerning a friend of his who had a vivid dream in which he was in Heaven amongst the celestial hosts. In order to fix in his mind some description of his experiences he wrote down a few words while half-awake. When he awoke in the morning he found he had written: "Those I met were clothed in flannelette!" It had been suggested that there is an unseen censor to prevent our bringing back accurate memories of our experiences in the higher worlds.

MISS ESTELLE STEAD said that she felt both honoured and gratified to be with them. She well remembered the beginnings of the British College when she received a visit from Mr. and Mrs. J. H. McKenzie with their proposal that a College should be founded. In responding for the Guests, she would like to refer to the guests unseen who were doubtless with them that evening participating in their pleasure. She felt sure that Mr. McKenzie was present on such an occasion, and she knew that her father was there.

MR. E. A. RADFORD, in an interesting and vigorous speech, proposed the toast of the British College. He referred to the comfort and joy he had gained from his experiences which, though not numerous, were of a most convincing kind.

MRS. HEWAT MCKENZIE, in responding for the College, said it was just ten years since that institution was founded. They were years well worth living in. Referring to the ancient civilisations, whose remains were being explored to-day—as in the case of Greece and Egypt—she said that in the traces of a fine culture that existed in that remote past a knowledge of the Unseen World was clearly visible. That knowledge had largely died out, but to-day it was being revived, and they believed that there was in it a priceless truth to be made known to the world.

MR. H. AUSTEN HALL, a member of the Council of the College, referred with high appreciation to the work of Mrs. McKenzie, who was shortly relinquishing her office of Hon. Principal. They would all greatly miss her presence, her fine qualities of administration and her shrewd judgment of men and things.

MR. SHAW DESMOND, in the course of a long and eloquent speech, said he had been trying to gauge the atmosphere of the gathering. It had begun by being rather cold but had gradually warmed up. Students of psychical matters knew that the near approach of visitors from the unseen world to their gatherings produced at first a sensation of coldness, and he noted this as significant. He believed that Spiritualism in its largest sense was something more than Spiritualism. Religion like Spiritualism had been segregated as a thing apart. What they were both concerned with was something beyond—it was Life. He thought the sooner they got away from the purely physical manifestations of Spiritualism the better. By gaining more knowledge of the higher laws and forces they would be able to check the scientist's psychical researches.

MAJOR MOWBRAY gave, as on a previous occasion, a graphic account of his photographic experiments and the astonishing results gained. Speaking of the apports witnessed by him and a circle of sitters with a Medium at Newbiggin, he said these were nearly always obtainable. On one occasion they had had twenty-two in half an hour.

The party then dispersed after an animated and memorable evening.

THE Ealing Spiritualist Church has requested the Circulation Manager of LIGHT to send a copy of the journal every week to the Central Library, Ealing. Will other Spiritualist Churches and Societies please note.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(The Editor does not necessarily identify himself with the opinions expressed by Correspondents)

THE W. H. EVANS TESTIMONIAL.

Sir,—The subscribers to the above Fund have usually written to me such hearty appreciation of the work of Mr. Evans and his personal character that I feel there must be very many others who hold the same sentiment, but being unable to afford substantial contributions are diffident in sending small sums. May I suggest through your columns that those societies who appreciate Mr. Evans's work should take up a "retiring collection" for him after the Sunday evening (or other evening) meeting?—Yours, etc.,

R. A. BUSH.

8, Mostyn Road,
Merton Park, S.W.19.

[Contributions to this Fund should be sent direct to Mr. Bush.—Ed.]

MRS. ANNIE JOHNSON.

Sir,—Would you kindly spare a small space in your next issue of LIGHT for my wife, Mrs. Annie Johnson. She is lying very ill at the Chelsea Hospital for Women after a very serious operation. I thought it would meet the eye of friends and inquirers and explain the reason why she has not been doing her public work for the last three months.—Yours, etc.,

G. JOHNSON.

"Ingleside," 88, Valley Road,
Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

"A PROBLEM OF RE-IMBODIMENT."

Sir,—The letter (LIGHT, March 22nd) in which Miss Marjorie Marrian refers to a question I asked in a previous issue is interesting, and I agree with the substance of it. I do not believe in re-incarnation any more than she does. When I wrote before, it was that the whole theory seemed to me so much like the case of the mountains being in travail. We have to understand that from an unknown period a personality—a spirit—has made a succession of dips into this world and on each occasion it obviously had two fresh parents. This was to work out its "Karma" and approach nearer to such a state of perfection as would enable it at last to stray in the spiritual world for good. Think of the number of parent pairs who had to toil and spend anxious hours (and also, of course, many happy ones) and of the vicissitudes of life generally to get this particular spirit one step further on the road to Nirvana! Then when this interesting spirit—still unfit—comes here for another experience all remembrance of those parents fades and is for ever lost. This has gone on for interminable ages and a man might well ask whether he is good enough for so much love and devotion, and whether this debonaire forgetfulness of the strife is quite "the thing". If he has half a dozen brothers and sisters they are all separate spirits related to him *pro tem* by a physical link, and his parents and all his forefathers were in the same case, and hundreds of those parents are long since back in the world. The mind staggers at the thought of this crazy, broken kaleidoscope of relationships. All this to avoid the perfectly reasonable assumption that life comes to the infant; that this infant will run its earthly course and then emerge from flesh as a spirit, and that it will no more come back to earth than would a butterfly to chrysalis, larva and egg.—Yours, etc.,

E. HARVEY.

Bromboro', Cheshire.

THE WAY OF REASON.

These are days of torrential movement. We are witnessing the break-up of an old stage of civilisation and the dim and difficult beginnings of a new social order. Much of the present activity of thought centres about the question of a life after death, for on the answer to that question hangs the solution of many problems. Some years ago we recorded some impressions regarding the course we had set ourselves to keep in busy and troublous days, and we may repeat them here:—

In such a surge and welter of views and opinions, such an onrush of varied activities, it is not always easy to preserve one's composure, and, amid a multitude of by-ways, side-turnings and "short-cuts", to keep steadily to the high road. It is indeed difficult at times to resist the lure of the romantic by-way, the attraction of the "short-cut", or the high adventure promised by some new and unfamiliar path. We see throngs passing to each of them, but we keep to the highway. It is sometimes rather bleak and unattractive; it is "heavy going" occasionally, but it is plain and straight, and we have an abiding conviction that those who leave it will have in the end to return.

The "unnatural", the "preternatural", the "supernatural", have no attractions for us. We study the supernormal and the abnormal, but retain our belief that the normal life is the truest one, and that the natural world and the natural life are our main concern. We observe the coming into the world of a myriad things betokening the powers of the human spirit, but these are clearly not to be pursued as ends in themselves, but only as a means of raising our lives to a higher level. The dead come back and give us many tokens of their continued life and love. But they are living their true lives elsewhere, and we are not to be deceived into supposing that they have returned in any permanent way to participate once more in a world which is no longer their natural habitat.

From their abodes in the higher life those whose work it is can still guide, instruct, inspire and direct those of us who on earth are akin to them. But they themselves have finally put off the earth and the ways of earth, and have no longer any part or lot in it.

This is a thing that some of the old Spiritualists, having a deep insight into these matters, fully realised. Some of the newer Spiritualists do not seem yet to have mastered the lesson. It is quite natural and pardonable in the circumstances. The amazing psychic phenomena which are being witnessed and recorded to-day may well give the impression that a new Heaven and a new earth is at our very doors, and that the dead have "come back" in a sense more literal than is actually the case.

Let us keep to the high road. Our way leads naturally to theirs and to them. Their way is forward, and if they come back it is but for a "flying visit", to give us tokens of their continued existence, and then to return again to their own world which is not this world.

So, like Walt Whitman, we take to the open road, feeling that all the confusions of counsel and the conflict of opinion will in time pass away and that the present ferment simply indicates the awakening—sometimes in a spasmodic fashion—of the spiritual senses of the race whereby it will be able at last to see its own way and take it without fear or perplexity.

LIGHT.

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ADVERTISEMENTS—For rates, apply The Advertisement Manager, LIGHT, 16, Queensberry Place, South Kensington, London, S.W.7. (Phone: Kensington 3758.) Telegrams: "Survival, London."

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EASTER.

This is the greatest festival of the Christian Church. It bears witness year by year to an event which has been epoch-making in history of mankind. This is true not only for Christian believers but for all impartial students of history.

A few years ago a learned Jewish Rabbi published a book, under the title *Jesus of Nazareth*, by Joseph Klausner (translated from the Hebrew by H. Danby) in which he pointed out that the New Testament is full of indications of detailed knowledge of Jewish customs and ideas; at the same time he criticises and rejects passages which, *in his opinion*, are unlikely to be true to fact. When he reaches the narratives of the Resurrection he is evidently at a loss to explain them; he recognises with admirable candour that they relate to a real experience, that something must have occurred which was adequate to convince the disciples that their Master was alive after the crucifixion. He justly remarks that a great religion cannot rest on a mere lie or illusion. Dr. Klausner's book deserves to be studied and, not least, on account of this conclusion stated towards the end of the volume.

The disciples were changed by the experience they had at Eastertide, and they were so absolutely sure that they had seen and talked with their Master after He had died that they joyfully proclaimed to all who would listen: "Jesus; and the Resurrection." In measure as the Church of Christ has done the same, in that degree has it been a channel of more abundant life to mankind. Not, of course, when the proclamation has been by words only. The only effective witness to the Fact which Eastertide commemorates is a living witness. "What makes it possible for men to believe in God is the evidence of lives that are rooted deeply in the unseen world, 'whose loves in higher loves endure'. Nothing is going to convince the world of the truth of Christianity, except Christ-like lives."* That is why "Jesus: and the Resurrection" must be proclaimed together.

Manifestation after death is not a unique experience: taken alone it cannot suffice, as the basis of a world-wide Religion, neither can the ideal life of the Son of Man suffice alone for this. If the disciples had not been convinced of His risen life and continued presence among them, admiration for His ideal life would not have sufficed, without this assurance, to carry them through life and death as effective missionaries of the Christian Religion.

* *The New Christian Adventure*. By J. H. Oldham (2, Eaton Gate, S.W. Price 3d. Well worth reading.).

When their message has failed and been fruitless this has been due to the fact that it has not been faithfully given or has not been really assimilated; that the significance of the Character and Ideal of Jesus, and the fact of the Resurrection, have been submerged under a mass of misinterpretations, human passions, and semi-pagan superstition; and the nominal acceptance of a creed has been substituted for living experience of, and communion with, a Divine Life. In spite of all the distortions which have perverted the message, however, no intelligent student of history can fail to recognise that the event of Eastertide was an epoch-making one, and that even on the exterior plane mankind has reaped a rich harvest from it. If all the serviceable results of the Christian Faith were eliminated from the world how profound would be the loss, in health, education, art and fellowship! The services to Humanity, which owe their origin to belief in "Jesus and the Resurrection", are of inestimable value; but they are only a portion of a deeper service known experimentally to those who have striven to bear the cross and live the Christ life. Sir Wilfred Grenville in his little book, *What Christ means to me*,** has borne straightforward testimony to the dynamic power of this faith in his own life and work.

In his last book Mr. Stanley De Brath writes: "The victory over death, signalled by the appearances, was the central fact in apostolic teaching . . . the basis in fact and in reason for conversion to a new mode of life." "All history shows that the message of Christ is the only possible solution."† This book may prove to be the most important of his many literary works. Its aim is to show that every act in the European Drama is under definite evolutionary Law, that to conform to that law is to ensure permanency and peace; to oppose it, however unconsciously, is to ensure our fall, misery and destruction.

His wide grasp of history and psychic phenomena, combined with clear vision and a highly-developed faculty for synthesis, have resulted in a work which should appeal to students, whether they specialise in history, or science, or psychical research; it should, also, very specially appeal to those whose interest in all world developments is the outcome of profound belief in God's Guiding Purpose; and who believe, as he does, that the culminating manifestation of that Purpose, as far as Humanity has yet been able to perceive it, is in "the Message of Christ", that in that message the evolutionary Law finds its fulfilment, and the world problems their solution.

H. A. DALLAS.

THE GOAL OF EVOLUTION.

In a book on Evolution, written by Joseph le Conte and published in 1895, the following passage occurs; it is appropriate to the article on "The Significance of Easter" on this page.

In evolution a goal is not only a completion of one stage, but also the beginning of another and higher stage—on a higher plane of life with new and higher capacities and powers unimaginable from any lower plane. Let me illustrate: As man is the ideal—the goal and completion of animal evolution, and yet is he also a birth into a higher plane of life—the spiritual; so the Christ, the ideal Man, may be only the goal and completion of human evolution, and yet is He also a birth into a new and higher plane—the Divine. (*Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*. p. 362.)

** Hodder & Stoughton. (2s. 6d. net.)

† *The Drama of Europe*. (Stockwell. pp. 85, 219.)

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SIDELIGHTS.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in the current *Sufi Quarterly* has an article of great value entitled "Science and God" in which the author sets down in clear and telling phrases the general attitude of the scientific mind towards the conception of deity. Says Sir Oliver, "I have to look at the universe from the point of view of science and must admit that science does not use the term God, but, on the contrary, continually tries to restrain itself from attending to final causes and purposes which are beyond its scope. It has nevertheless taught us some things very important theologically, which I may summarise thus:—First, that we live in a realm of law and order. That every atom obeys the forces acting upon it with absolute precision. That there is no rebellion or caprice in organic nature."

* * * * *

Continuing, Sir Oliver says, "The main point is that the laws of physics and chemistry, the very laws which we have ascertained to be in operation on this planet earth, are found to be equally valid throughout the whole extent of space. . . . The revelation of science is that, that which occurs here in the physical universe, occurs everywhere: that the laws are the same. . . . If there be a God Who understands and is responsible for everything. . . . His power and influence extend to the remotest confines of space, from eternity to eternity, and that in that majestic and one reality, however little we may as yet apprehend its nature, we and every part of the material, aye and of the mental and spiritual universe, too, live and move and have our being."

* * * * *

In an authoritative article on "The Present Position in Psychical Research," in the current issue of *Psychic Science*, Mr. J. Arthur Hill says, "Regarding survival and communication as justified by the facts, I am interested in further evidence as strengthening the case. But there is another important aspect. Further evidence may throw some light on the process. This is one of the things that we very much want. Until we know more of the process, we are dependent on unknown conditions, and have to take what comes. When we know more of the process, we shall be able more and more to supply the right conditions and therefore get results with greater certainty. The investigation will then become more scientific in the laboratory sense. Consequently in new evidence I am mainly on the look out for indications of process."

* * * * *

In the course of a review of Mr. R. A. Bush's latest book, *Jesus Christ at Work*, a writer in the *Christian World* of April 3rd appears surprised at the "marked absence of the trivialities and absurdities which so often characterise supposed messages." This review, in a paper devoted largely to Church affairs, is, surprisingly, very favourable, and concludes thus: "In the preface, he [the author] warns the amateur off the field, insisting that an experienced Spiritualist should always be consulted, and then only in a mood of great seriousness and aspiration. Whatever be the source of these communications, a point on which, in the present stage it is difficult finally to pronounce, the messages here recorded are uniformly wholesome and inspiring, while the tone of the book throughout is deserving of nothing but praise."

THE EDITOR has gone abroad for a few weeks' holiday. Personal letters will be forwarded if desired.

THE VISIONS OF "M.A. (OXON)".

The following extracts are taken from a pamphlet: *Visions*, by "M. A. (Oxon)" (now out of print) and are supplementary to those which appeared in *LIGHT*, March 1st.

September 5th, 1877.

Pursuing the same plan as before I found myself, in spirit, with the Angel and a number of other spirits, with whom I was conducted, as it seemed, far away into space. I was told that the company was for protection, or for the furnishing of magnetic support to me, as I was going into the "Spheres of Desolation", the "Land of Darkness". We passed rapidly over a tract of country not unlike that which obtains in the iron district, only more lonely and bare. The soil seemed barren, and was covered over with refuse—just as those places near an iron furnace are heaped with slag and rubbish. From it arose a noisome stench. I could detect no sign of life, nor could I fancy anything living there.

Our path took us further and further away from life, until we came to a place where I could hear a distant rumbling as of the ocean, and I saw an entrance to a sort of cavern, round which more rubbish was piled. We descended into this aperture, which was choked with filth, and from out of which a mephitic vapour ascended. After going through many tortuous passages, we came to a vaulted cave in which glowed a fire, and from which issued sulphurous smoke. There was a forge in it, and the floor was piled with half-formed engines of destruction. I could hardly breathe, and was refreshed by some passes made over my head by one of the attendant spirits. I then saw X.Y.Z., grimy and filthy, naked to the waist, round which a few rags were gathered. [X.Y.Z. was a young man of great ability, but of unbridled temper. He lived in chronic disagreement with his family, and finally took to furious drinking, and killed himself thereby at an early age. . . . He used very violent language habitually.]

His hair was matted with dirt, his face and body begrimed, and streaked here and there with blood and perspiration. He was savagely welding some material, that did not look like metal, on his anvil, and was cursing with much vehemence. He was not at once aware of our presence, and when he was he saluted the Angel with a volley of execrations. I need not detail the conversation with him. He did not see me until we were about to leave, and he then grinned savagely, and said: "Ah! . . . you! You know now where that fire came from that burned you!" [At one of the seances I had described him as sitting near me, and had put out my hand in his direction. He had suddenly touched me, and the result was a blister on my hand.] We turned to leave, and his mocking laugh rang in our ears as we went. I wished to question, but was told to refrain till I had resumed the bodily state.

Emerging again into the air above ground, we passed rapidly away, and I was conscious of a dreamy feeling as when one dozes in a carriage: a sense of motion combined with repose. I cannot tell how long this continued.

When I was fully conscious again I saw a very different scene before me. I was looking at a town, large and thickly peopled apparently, for I saw many spirits hurrying to and fro in the streets. But the oddest things surrounded me. Everything was unfinished. There was a most pretentious palace with no roof, and, on close inspection, built of mere gimcrack material, the walls set with sham diamonds; looking-glasses everywhere, and walls half-hung with tawdry tinsel. The very streets were unfinished, and had mirrors here and there, and toilet appurtenances at the corner of the streets, and outside of the houses. I saw many stop and look at themselves, and give a twist to the moustache or a more jaunty set to

YOUR NEWSAGENT CAN SUPPLY "LIGHT" WEEKLY

the hat. I saw no women, all men and boys.

While I wondered at this I found myself going up the steps and through the hall into one of the houses. It had the same unfinished air, the same tinsel magnificence, the same cold, cheerless appearance. We looked into a room on the ground-floor and found nothing but combs and brushes and broken mirrors, and fearful clothes of loud patterns, all heaped together in confusion. We passed on upstairs, and there, surrounded by mirrors I saw A.B. [A young man known to me, of extreme personal vanity, who was always dressing and undressing: a person of a very unbalanced mind, which finally gave way altogether, and he took his life by stabbing himself. As he fell he struck his head against some object and made a deep scar over the left eye.]

He was clothed in most extraordinary raiment, of loudest pattern, and most inharmonious colours, shaped according to our ultra-fashionable pattern. His hair was reeking of strong-scented grease, and he was industriously trying to disguise the scar over his eye with rouge and pearl-powder. It had been made at his death, and it disfigured his face. He turned to greet me, but with an air of great pre-occupation. He did not listen to what I said, but interrupted me at once with some foolish question as to the cut of his coat. He brought a mirror to show me the beautiful way in which he had parted his hair (as if I wanted a mirror to see that!). He evidently thought mirrors the great thing in his life. He made disparaging remarks about the personal appearance of those with me, who now had assumed the natural appearance of men; and he kept throwing about some very fade-smelling scent, which was very nasty. Now and then he seemed to have gleams of sense; and then he hastily covered his face and body with his hands, as though to hide them from our gaze. But the gleams soon passed, and he turned again to his mirrors and pomatum. He was vigorously brushing his back hair when we left him.

[After returning to the body S.M. was told to eat, and cleanse the body with cold water. Explanations were later given by writing.]

QUESTION: "What do the scenes mean?"

REPLY: "In the first journey you were taken in spirit to the Sphere of Desolation. It is inhabited by those wretched ones who have sunk in sensuality to a state typified to you by fiery torment. They dwell in a desolate and barren land where no life is, because such is their spiritual state. The spirit whom you went to visit had debauched himself with fiery drink, and had occupied himself in dragging down others to his own level, to their ruin and misery. Hence, in his spiritual state he is grimy and blood-stained to your eye, occupied in forging abortive instruments of destruction in the midst of a stifling and noisome atmosphere. His language is cursing and bitterness, and his punishment is to see designs that are full of promise marred and broken by clumsiness of execution. This is the outcome of his life, genius wrecked by debauchery. The stench was the analogue of his spiritual thoughts. The metal that he was welding was an amalgam which, in his exceeding cleverness, he had made to supersede all others, and he knows not that it is rotten and can never be welded. So again in his life. He would not walk in the path of duty, nor do his allotted work, but would find out new ways for himself, and then rush to drink because they came to nought. He is now leading a life which strikes you as horrible; not so him. To him it is strenuous exertion which he vainly thinks profitable. He will not see till the efforts of the Ministers have availed to stir in him some spiritual life. This has been done more than once, but he has always relapsed. . . . Leave him to those who are wiser than you.

"We turn to your other friend. In the scene you saw you will discover the analogue of his life. For what was it? Vanity, all vanity. Hence he lives in the city of vanity where all is vain and frivolous, empty and unsatisfying. The houses and buildings

are unfinished, for the vain ones have no care for anything but themselves, and so they cannot concentrate attention so as to complete anything. They are tawdry and full of base shams, because the vain ones live in the external, and cannot discern between the gold and its imitation. The mirrors that lie everywhere are, to the vain ones, the ornament they most desire, for they show them their own exterior. The essences and pomades and brushes and the like are the necessities of life, for the vain ones live in vain attempts to deck themselves with what they imagine will trick out their fancied charms; though, as you saw, they succeed only in covering themselves with that which is noisome and ridiculous. The spirit whom you visited spent his life in vanity, and it has eaten into his soul. For now the spirit-body that he has, and which he thinks so much of, is scarred over with blains, full of corruption and disease, which it is his great and constant care to disguise with varied plasters and appliances. Had you been able to see beneath those clothes, which he delights in, you would have seen a mass of sores, the noisomeness of which he vainly attempts to cover by sprinkling about the scent which you so disliked. All the vain ones dislike and disparage each other, and are purely selfish. They require to deck themselves as you need food. Hence their streets are furnished with means of so doing as yours are with shops and drinking fountains. There are no women in their city, for the vain ones would fear that their finery would be eclipsed."

THE DISCOVERY OF THE SELF.

By L. MARGERY BAZETT.

I suppose that no period has approached so nearly to this discovery as the present time. Modern psychology, in particular, has given profound attention to this question. If, in the past, our search has been too often superficial, to-day psychology is showing that a cursory observation is wholly inadequate.

The great discovery has been that the Self is, and always has been, infinitely greater than our poor conception of it; it is not confined within the world of the senses. Walt Whitman exclaimed, "I do not think that seventy years is the time of man or woman, nor that years will ever stop the existence of me or anyone." He saw the Self as it is—eternal, yet functioning within the limits of its terrestrial span. He would fain draw us away from that constant "staring into the mirror of the isolated, lonely self", and would direct us to that unity of all life, of which each self is only a part. He was able to feel this unity of the whole, and "to feel it with the same unerring certainty with which we feel conscious of the isolated self."

The mystic, the artist, the spiritual adventurer, have all set out upon the search; but have they found the Self—the real man?

To-day the psychic or sensitive is following in their rear, the man of yet other vision. All, alike, must turn away from the world of sense, knowing full well that the existence of the Self is "never wrapped heavily in the voluminous folds of this life's garment."

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the hat. I saw no women, all men and boys.

While I wondered at this I found myself going up the steps and through the hall into one of the houses. It had the same unfinished air, the same tinsel magnificence, the same cold, cheerless appearance. We looked into a room on the ground-floor and found nothing but combs and brushes and broken mirrors, and fearful clothes of loud patterns, all heaped together in confusion. We passed on upstairs, and there, surrounded by mirrors I saw A.B. [A young man known to me, of extreme personal vanity, who was always dressing and undressing: a person of a very unbalanced mind, which finally gave way altogether, and he took his life by stabbing himself. As he fell he struck his head against some object and made a deep scar over the left eye.]

He was clothed in most extraordinary raiment, of loudest pattern, and most inharmonious colours, shaped according to our ultra-fashionable pattern. His hair was reeking of strong-scented grease, and he was industriously trying to disguise the scar over his eye with rouge and pearl-powder. It had been made at his death, and it disfigured his face. He turned to greet me, but with an air of great pre-occupation. He did not listen to what I said, but interrupted me at once with some foolish question as to the cut of his coat. He brought a mirror to show me the beautiful way in which he had parted his hair (as if I wanted a mirror to see that!). He evidently thought mirrors the great thing in his life. He made disparaging remarks about the personal appearance of those with me, who now had assumed the natural appearance of men; and he kept throwing about some very fade-smelling scent, which was very nasty. Now and then he seemed to have gleams of sense; and then he hastily covered his face and body with his hands, as though to hide them from our gaze. But the gleams soon passed, and he turned again to his mirrors and pomatum. He was vigorously brushing his back hair when we left him.

[After returning to the body S.M. was told to eat, and cleanse the body with cold water. Explanations were later given by writing.]

QUESTION: "What do the scenes mean?"

REPLY: "In the first journey you were taken in spirit to the Sphere of Desolation. It is inhabited by those wretched ones who have sunk in sensuality to a state typified to you by fiery torment. They dwell in a desolate and barren land where no life is, because such is their spiritual state. The spirit whom you went to visit had debauched himself with fiery drink, and had occupied himself in dragging down others to his own level, to their ruin and misery. Hence, in his spiritual state he is grimy and blood-stained to your eye, occupied in forging abortive instruments of destruction in the midst of a stifling and noisome atmosphere. His language is cursing and bitterness, and his punishment is to see designs that are full of promise marred and broken by clumsiness of execution. This is the outcome of his life, genius wrecked by debauchery. The stench was the analogue of his spiritual thoughts. The metal that he was welding was an amalgam which, in his exceeding cleverness, he had made to supersede all others, and he knows not that it is rotten and can never be welded. So again in his life. He would not walk in the path of duty, nor do his allotted work, but would find out new ways for himself, and then rush to drink because they came to nought. He is now leading a life which strikes you as horrible; not so him. To him it is strenuous exertion which he vainly thinks profitable. He will not see till the efforts of the Ministers have availed to stir in him some spiritual life. This has been done more than once, but he has always relapsed. . . . Leave him to those who are wiser than you.

"We turn to your other friend. In the scene you saw you will discover the analogue of his life. For what was it? Vanity, all vanity. Hence he lives in the city of vanity where all is vain and frivolous, empty and unsatisfying. The houses and buildings

are unfinished, for the vain ones have no care for anything but themselves, and so they cannot concentrate attention so as to complete anything. They are tawdry and full of base shams, because the vain ones live in the external, and cannot discern between the gold and its imitation. The mirrors that lie everywhere are, to the vain ones, the ornament they most desire, for they show them their own exterior. The essences and pomades and brushes and the like are the necessities of life, for the vain ones live in vain attempts to deck themselves with what they imagine will trick out their fancied charms; though, as you saw, they succeed only in covering themselves with that which is noisome and ridiculous. The spirit whom you visited spent his life in vanity, and it has eaten into his soul. For now the spirit-body that he has, and which he thinks so much of, is scarred over with blains, full of corruption and disease, which it is his great and constant care to disguise with varied plasters and appliances. Had you been able to see beneath those clothes, which he delights in, you would have seen a mass of sores, the noisomeness of which he vainly attempts to cover by sprinkling about the scent which you so disliked. All the vain ones dislike and disparage each other, and are purely selfish. They require to deck themselves as you need food. Hence their streets are furnished with means of so doing as yours are with shops and drinking fountains. There are no women in their city, for the vain ones would fear that their finery would be eclipsed."

THE DISCOVERY OF THE SELF.

By L. MARGERY BAZETT.

I suppose that no period has approached so nearly to this discovery as the present time. Modern psychology, in particular, has given profound attention to this question. If, in the past, our search has been too often superficial, to-day psychology is showing that a cursory observation is wholly inadequate.

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great part of the moral law, and remove from humanity the shoddy garments of false values.

But I (the fragmentary self) have no idea where or what the whole Self is; "I am like someone looking in a dark room for what isn't there."

If I cast a glance backward to the past, I see there merely a reflection of the Self, as it appears, distorted by the imperfections of that mirror; yet this very habit of mind forces me to glance back yet again, and the past presents another picture which is framed and hung upon its walls. It is one that has long hung there, and millions have gazed upon it. Surely, it should disclose the secret.

And as we stand before it, its conception of self-attainment through abnegation, selflessness, self-sacrifice—these all stand out in a high light. Some thinkers of to-day claim that the unselfishness which is worth having is service by a great, a dominant, self—and where do we find such? Certainly not amongst those poor imitations whose self-abnegation is their own spiritual destruction.

Concerning such, we feel that they have encumbered themselves with the unrealities and the unessentials of life, lacking that force of personality which must break through the bonds of artificiality, and strive towards that "incorruptibility of the self which is the perfection of life."

We are such "fractional beings", and must bide our time till we attain to "that unknown greatness which seems to await the future of man". "I want to be myself," exclaimed Tolstoi, "to prolong myself into infinity of time." At times, the sensitive sees the man, the self, as he would be; as he is linked to that greater consciousness of which all are parts.

When he is in touch with those who have passed from this world, he feels and experiences some of the many degrees of consciousness which meet in us all; he can perceive that deeper, more expansive self that is invisible to the eye. He is attracted to those rare souls who, like Shelley, "live always on that strange dividing-line where spirit meets flesh"; and he has the power to recognise those who hear repeatedly the call of the other world. He knows that man is born "not of the flesh, but of the Spirit"; and it is in that realm that the true Self has its home.

PRIMROSE TIME.

When sunbeams are tangled in meshes of rain,
And thorns' green spangles are shining wet,
While the weathercock turns on the golden vane,
April comes like a young coquette;
'Neath her spells and glammers we may forget
The troubles that came with the snow and rime,
The south wind flows like a rivulet
And the world grows young in the primrose time.

The woods are free of the snow's last stain,
Green clusters garnish the ash-boles' jet,
As, lightly sweeping across the plain,
April comes like a young coquette,
Or leans from a cloud's white parapet,
To watch the land in its vernal prime,
Where the signet of youth on all is set,
For the world grows young in the primrose time.

The snowdrop and crocus begin to wane;
The brookside ripples the sedges fret;
With a wistful smile, or a proud disdain,
April comes like a fair coquette,
With young bright leaves in a filmy net,
The ivy-vines up the church tower climb,
But of Time's devouring they fear no threat,
For the world grows young in the primrose time.

Envoi.

Man, with the worries of life beset,
Take thou this thought as an amulet;
Let it ring in thine ears like an elfin chime
How the world grows young in the primrose time.

—From *Four Miles From Any Town*,
by DAVID GOW.

RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

It is said that the followers of Bahaism now number more than 3,000,000, and there is a large contingent in England, for the faith unites people of all creeds. Some of its adherents are described as having a "passion for martyrdom". Certainly thousands of Bahaists in Persia have suffered death for their religion, and I know no higher proof of religious devotion, even though it has been said that it is often harder to live for one's faith than to die for it! It may be objected that the willingness to die for one's religion does not prove the truth of it, but it certainly proves the truth of the martyr!

* * * * *

I suppose that one of the revelations of the future, or perhaps I should say one of the *realisations* of the future, will be how relatively small a part of the human soul is expressed in the material world. In this consideration we may find the solution of many problems, spiritual, psychical and physical. It may clear up for us the real meaning of reincarnation, and justify the vision of the poet who traced the confusion and misery of life to the attitude of the common man who, when his interests are opposed to those of another man argues "I am I and he is he," not realising that the interests of one are identical with the interests of all. But this is a lesson yet to be learned and "this imperfect world" is doubtless designed to teach it.

* * * * *

Looking back through our old volumes I am struck by the fact that many unintelligent comments were sent to *LIGHT* that would never be sent to-day, because the advance of education and liberal thinking has made them impossible. I hardly think, for instance, that the sudden death of a prominent Rationalist or Materialist would (as in earlier days) lead to any Spiritualist observing that it was a judgment on such people! Probably it was bigotry rather than mere stupidity that led to such comments in the past. To-day, the average Spiritualist would remember that people have died while praying, that clergymen have died in the pulpit, and refrain from offering superstitious theories. I cannot resist, at this point, referring once more to the remark of the village atheist, as depicted by *Punch*, who, when sitting in the village tavern, hears of the sudden death of the verger at the neighbouring church, and observes solemnly: "Ah, that's what comes o' pew-opening!"

* * * * *

Miss Lind-af-Hageby has expressed the view that science does its best to perpetuate war. If for science we read *scientists* she is undoubtedly correct. There is always the human face under these masks of "Science" and "Theology". Occasionally it is a beautiful face, but more often it is ill-favoured and malignant. Scientists are "making poison gas more and more deadly." That would seem to carry with it some guarantee against war. But who can tell? We well remember that the last great war came upon us at a time when it was regarded as something too horrible and destructive ever to happen. It was against the common interest and welfare—but it happened none the less, and we are all more or less sick and sorry as a consequence. I sometimes think that if another war comes, vastly more destructive, the victors (if there are any victors!) will have such an appalling and colossal mess to clear up that they will be inclined to wish that they had been the victims instead! I think it was the Duke of Wellington who said that "nothing except a battle lost can be half so melancholy as a battle won". To-day that is truer than ever.

D. G.

SPIRIT CONTROL OR "TRANCE PERSONALITY"?

When the celebrated Medium Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond was eleven years of age, and was asked to write an essay on composition, she took her slate and pencil into an arbour in the garden, intending first to write her essay on her slate, and then copy on paper. In a little while she took the slate to her mother, explaining that she had fallen asleep and somebody had been writing on the slate. The writing began: "My dear sister", and was from a sister of Cora's mother who had passed over in childhood.

A few days later, while she was seated at the feet of her mother, sleep again overtook the child, and the mother, thinking the little one had fainted, applied restoratives. Noticing, however, a trembling movement of the hand, she placed the slate and pencil in Cora's hand, which immediately began to write. In this manner several messages were written, signed by different members of the family in the spirit world, each of them testifying to their existence in the world invisible.

Neighbours became interested, and called to ask questions, and themselves get communications. Some months later Cora was controlled by a spirit purporting to be a German physician, who for four years, at a certain time each day, controlled her to diagnose disease and prescribe for it. Cora had no knowledge of any other language than English, but under control sometimes spoke German. All this was training for her mission as a public speaker. This began in her fifteenth year, but when she was only twelve the child was engaged giving lectures for a half hour to an hour or longer, on ethics, science, philosophy and theology, in a scholarly manner, the subject being sometimes chosen by her guides but frequently by the audiences to whom she spoke.

Professor J. J. Mapes, a scientist of New York City went to Buffalo in 1854 to attend some of the child's lectures. Asked to name a subject for one of these, he answered in two words: "Primary Rocks". After the lecture, Professor Mapes was called upon to speak, and said: "I am a college-educated man, and have been all my life an investigator of scientific subjects and associated with scientific men, but I stand this afternoon dumb before this young girl." Better it is to be dumb in such a case than to bray about trance-personality—of which no evidence whatever appeared.

Two years later, backed by Judge Edmunds, Horace Greeley, Professor Mapes, Professor Hare of Philadelphia, with other distinguished people, Cora lectured in the largest halls and theatres of New York. N. P. Willis, poet and litterateur, in the *Home Journal*, of which he was editor, describes her as "a delicate featured blonde of seventeen, with flaxen ringlets falling over her shoulders, movements deliberate and self-possessed, voice calm and deep, eyes and fingers in no way nervous. . . . The tone and manner were of an absolute sincerity of devoutness which compelled respect; and before she closed I was prepared to believe that a male spirit was speaking through her lips or that the relative position of the sexes is not the same as in the days of St. Paul."

Cora Richmond visited England for the first time when she was thirty-two, and again five years later, lecturing in some of the principal towns, with equal brilliance. She was supposed to be a re-incarnationist, in the popular sense; but Densmore declares that this feature of her teaching was "based upon the hypothesis of pre-existence and embodiments—in contradistinction to the reincarnation theory as taught by Alan Kardec and later by the Theosophists—and affirms that the soul is uncreate, without beginning and without end." Reincarnation being a perennial

plant, with roots like those of the dandelion, this passage from Densmore's pages is commended to the reader's attention. It may be added that Densmore uses the term *soul* in the modern sense of *spirit*.

The following excerpts from Cora Richmond's autobiography are pertinent to the problem of Spirit Control:

From the very first of my control, that is, the writing on the slate in the arbour . . . to the present time, I have never been conscious of anything that transpired in the outward world during the time I was under control. This state or condition has not changed since I became a medium. I could not through my own knowledge state or testify in court that I had even spoken in public, even delivered an address or poem in my life. While passing under control, I do not experience any peculiar sensations or physical changes. Unconsciousness to physical surroundings and consciousness of spiritual presence are almost simultaneous. The added or larger consciousness of Spirit being accompanied by a seeming expansion of all the powers, and by great freedom of mind. . . . As soon as I became aware of these spirit presences and companions, they were as real to me as though in human form. . . . Not only did I see or perceive spirits every time I was entranced and the controls were using my organism to write or speak, but I was distinctly aware of being a separate consciousness, out of, or not acting upon or through my own body. I *went away*, to all intents and purposes, having only a sympathetic psychic contact with my organism. I visited people whom I knew and places with which I was familiar, also persons and localities I had never seen in my normal state; but my experiences were especially with those in spirit life. I was as one of them; my father, grandparents, relatives and friends, many of whom I had never seen in earth life, were my companions in those seasons of inner consciousness. . . . I have often noted that those of whom I had previously been thinking and concerning whom I was most anxious when in my outward state, were those whom I first visited in spirit (when entranced). Yet I have also been aware of having visited people still in earth form, and have afterwards recognised on being introduced for the first time outwardly, as those whom I had seen in spirit. There are others whom I have seen in vision, yet have never met in person, and whom when we do meet, here or hereafter, I shall know, I am sure. Nothing could better prove how spirit annihilates time and space; and may we not look forward to the time that my guides assure us is coming, when the written word, often so long delayed and so anxiously looked for, shall no longer be necessary?

The facts concerning Mrs. Richmond that are embodied in this article have been drawn from Emmet Densmore's Introduction to the *Arcana of Nature*. The reader is also referred to the *Life and Work of Cora L. V. Richmond*, by H. D. Barrett, 1895.

W. B. P.

OBITUARY: MRS. ANNIE BODDINGTON.

Spiritualism is to-day poorer by the loss of one of its veteran workers. Mrs. Boddington passed to the higher life on March 31st at 7.5 p.m. The body was cremated at Golders Green on Saturday, the Rev. Tyssul Davis officiating. Tributes were paid by Mr. Stewart, representing the Spiritualists' National Union and Mr. Maurice Barbanell, representing the London District Council. Mrs. Wesley Adams, Mrs. Snowden Hall, Miss Kohnlein, and others spoke of their grateful appreciation of Mrs. Boddington to whose life and work we hope to refer in a later issue.

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The College will be closed for the Easter Holidays
from 18th to 22nd April.

VOL. IX. No. 1

April, 1930

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The library will be closed from Thursday, April 17th till Monday, April 21st.

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Wednesday, April 23rd, 7.30 p.m. .. REV. GEORGE NASH
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Sunday, April 20th, 11 a.m. .. MR. R. DIMSDALE STOCKER
Sunday, April 20th, 6.30 p.m. .. MR. RICHARD A. BUSH
Wednesday, April 23rd, 7.30 p.m. Clairvoyance. .. MISS EVA CLARK



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Tuesday, April 22nd, at 7.30. Clairvoyance .. MRS. MEURIG MORRIS
Thursday, April 24th, at 7.30. Clairvoyance .. MR. E. SPENCER
Friday, April 25th, at 7.30. Clairvoyance

GROUP SEANCES.

Wednesday, April 23rd, at 3. .. MRS. WORTHINGTON
Thursday, April 24th, at 7.30. .. MR. VOUT PETERS

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Monday, April 21st, no Seance
Friday, April 25th, at 8. .. MRS. HENDERSON
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6.30 p.m.—Speaker, Rev. Dr. Lamond.

Clairvoyante: Mrs. Hirst.

April 27th, 11 a.m., Mr. Harold Carpenter.

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OBSERVATIONS

The Psychic faculties are very delicate, and subject to the influence of definite thoughts of the sitter.

A strong suspicion, without any justification, that the medium is dishonest, combined with a determination to find deception, would act adversely upon the medium who, in the supernormal state during the period of the sitting, is highly sensitive to suggestion.

It is to be observed that there is a close parallel between mediumistic states and those of ordinarily hypnotised subjects.

An open mind and complete passivity is necessary. Honest criticism in the inquirer is natural, but active criticism causing mental activity during the sitting should be avoided.

A critical analysis should be made after, but not during the sitting.

NON-SUCCESSFUL SITTINGS

It is unavoidable that some sittings will be failures for several reasons:

Sitter and medium may prove psychically unsuited to each other.

The psychic power fluctuates independently of the will and often of the knowledge of the medium. It is not like a telephonic message.

It should be understood that sitters sit at their own risk as to whether results are satisfactory or otherwise. If a medium be *conscious* of lack of power, no sitting will be held, and the fee will be refunded on application to the Secretary.

Value of Reading before Experimenting.

The Alliance strongly advises the enquirer first to undertake a preparatory course of reading, even if it be comparatively short. Communication between the two worlds probably operates naturally and frequently without conscious awareness on our part. Those communications of which we are intellectually and emotionally aware, depend upon the exercise of the psychic faculties, which are by no means simple.

The enquirer who becomes familiar to some extent with the nature and scope of mediumship is better able to appraise the results of a sitting than one who comes with preconceived notions, all of which may be influenced by mistaken ideas. The experimenter needs to be capable of sympathetic and intelligent response to what may be given him. He must use common-sense in this, as in all things; he must be content to accept and examine carefully in the light of his reason whatever is given to him. He will court failure if he demands particular results. It should be remembered that in every psychic experiment the initiative and constructive work is from the spirit world. The medium is in effect a passive recording instrument and the sitter an observer. The sitter should also endeavour to be passive and sympathetic, merely recording all impressions and statements. The critical analysis should be made after, not during a seance.

The extreme delicacy of the psychic states should never be overlooked. The mediumistic gift is subject to constant variations in power and sensitivity. A variety of factors go to make either good or bad conditions. The gift itself varies in power. The psychic state of a medium may harmonise with the psychic state of the sitter, or it may not. The experiment is influenced not only by the state of mind of the sitter at the time of the experiment, but by his general mental condition and character. As in ordinary human society, some people mix with their fellows more easily than others, so in psychic experiments some combinations are favourable and others unfavourable. Every sitting is thus in the nature of an experiment. The sincere enquirer with an open mind will receive experiences of a supernormal nature, and usually, when he has the co-operation of an interested spirit friend he will sooner or later obtain evidence of the identity of his friend.

Psychic experimentation naturally involves subtleties of a psychological nature, the variety of which can never be understood without some acquaintance with the whole range of psychic phenomena.

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