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PROGRESS!

MODERN CHURCH LEADER ACCEPTS PSYCHICAL EXPLANATION OF RESURRECTION STORY

By M. A. ST. CLAIR STOBART

CHRISTIANITY has been presented by the Churches under two main
aspects: (a) the Miraculous, (b) the Moral.

The birth, works, resurrection, post-crucifixion appearances, and so-called
ascension, the whole life and death story of Jesus, has been expounded as
being of a unique and miraculous nature, and His teaching as having introduced
the code of morality which is known as Christian. But the miraculous inter-
pretation of the Gospel story is being discarded to-day; and, unless some
other interpretation is available, the story will lose its ancient hold, the Bible,
in which it appears, will be dis-
credited, and the Churches' teaching
undermined.

With regard to the Moral aspect,
many people to-day seem to have
imagined that Christian morals were
so firmly established as to have
become part and parcel of our
European human nature and that
they are now independent of the
authoritative backing provided by
the Originator of the Christian
religion. But the recent outbreak
of Hitlerism is a refutation of this
fallacy. In the Hitlerian code,
every Christian virtue—love, mercy,
sympathy, compassion, justice, truth,
honesty, sincerity, etc.—is exchanged
for its opposite, and we are wit-
nessing an eruption of hatred,
cruelty, vindictiveness, lies, slander,
tyranny, oppression, etc., unequalled
in history.

Not only, therefore, in its Miracu-
lous, but also in its Moral aspect, Christianity is being disrupted.

It is however with the Miraculous, rather than with the Moral aspect of the
religion taught by the Churches, that I would now deal.

Until recent years, it would have been considered irreligious and profane
to have doubted that unique miracle was the *modus operandi* of all those
episodes in the Bible which deal with other-world communication and pheno-
mena. To-day, however, three interpretations of those episodes are available
for those who still wish to remain within the Christian fold. The interpreta-
tions are: (a) Traditionalism, (b) Symbolic Narrative, (c) Psychic Science.

Between these three interpretations the battle for Christianity is set.
Traditionalists still cling limpet-like to the rock from which the tide of life
has receded, leaving them high and dry. They still insist on miracle and
uniqueness as essential features of their teaching.

From Monday to Saturday, men and women are faced with the grimmest
realities of all time—realities which stir heart, mind and soul to search for the



MRS. M. A. ST. CLAIR STOBART

Why and Wherefore of Life and Death; whilst on Sundays these men and women are asked to listen to stories about talking asses, floating axes, man-eating whales, ascent of fiery chariots to heaven and the like. They are asked to believe that, though these miracles could not happen to-day, they did happen in a golden age restricted to the favoured heroes of the Bible.

Is it a wonder that the Traditionalist interpretation of Bible stories is no longer acceptable to a large number of would-be Christian people? And, if it were the only interpretation available, belief in Christianity, the Bible and the religion taught by the Churches would be restricted to the Dodos of the Age, and the collapse of the Churches and the religion which they teach would be inevitable.

But, God be thanked, within the Church there has arisen a nucleus of more enlightened ecclesiastics who have freed themselves from the shackles of unique miracle. They have boldly discarded, as essential to the Christian religion, belief in miracle and what they call the eschatological elements in the Bible.

Now—though from our point of view, it is all to the good that the Modern Churchman has thrown over belief in the miraculous interpretation of those episodes in the Bible which deal with the spirit world—the Modern Churchman has hitherto been content to substitute for the unsatisfactory explanation of miracle that of *Symbolic Narrative*. The most vital episodes in the life-story of Jesus, and the early Church, are assumed to have been recorded not as veridical episodes but as narratives symbolic of some moral or spiritual lesson: the great story of Pentecost for instance, which the Churches have regarded as the inspirational origin of their organization.

Students of Psychic Science can well understand that the wonderful exhibition of spirit-power of which we read in Acts II, coming in fulfilment of the promise of the Master, should have served as a tremendous inspiration to the expectant disciples. Indeed, it is legitimate to wonder if a Christian Church would ever have materialized had this great seance failed. But Modern Churchmen have whittled away all that gives

the story value. In the Report of the "Commission on Christian Doctrine in the Church of England," issued after deliberations which lasted for 15 years, the whole story is regarded as *symbolic*. We are told that the outward *symbols* of wind and fire, as related in the narrative, have their value as *symbolizing* the coming of the spirit.

And we are told that the story of "St. Peter's proclamation of the Christian Gospel in the power of the spirit, on the first day of Pentecost, to a cosmopolitan multitude of pilgrims, stands in the forefront of the Book of the Acts as the *symbol* of the universality of the Christian message, and of the Church's mission to all mankind, of whatever kindred and tribe and tongue."

But if, on that Pentecostal day, there *was* no wind, and there *was* no fire, and there *was* no speaking with tongues—where, when and how, do these elements come in, even as symbols? Was the whole story invented by the author of that chapter?

THE EVENTS OF PENTECOST

The Report tells us "that the events of the first Christian Day of Pentecost are set forth in the Acts as marking historically the decisive beginning of the Church's life in this its specific character as the spirit-enabled body." But if none of these events were real, but only symbolic and introduced by the author of the Book of the Acts as symbolic, then there was no inspirational outpouring of spirit-power and there were no events to serve as symbolic. And the would-be seeker of an inspirational initiation for the history of the Christian Church is led to the discouraging thought that perhaps, after all, there was no inspiration; and, since all seeming facts were only in the nature of symbolic narrative, the Church of to-day is itself perhaps only symbolic—symbolic of a house built not upon the rock of divine inspiration, but on the elusive sands of "symbolic narrative." And so on, with all the events of other-worldly nature recorded in the New Testament and the Bible generally. Those vivid Bible stories become mummies from which the life has fled.

But this advance from (a) Traditionalism to (b) Symbolic Narrative is proving to be, as we had hoped, the transition stage—the springboard for the final plunge to the interpretation by (c) Psychic Science, and there is to-day heartening evidence that, within at least one section of the Church, and as we know, amongst a large number of individual clergy of all denominations, both the miraculous and the symbolic explanations are giving place to that suggested by laws of Psychic Science.

The first definite proof to hand of this progression has been given in the July number of the *Modern Churchman's Magazine*, edited by the Revd. H. D. A. Major, D.D., F.S.A. In this issue there is an article entitled, "Did Jesus die on the Cross?" The article is written by the Editor, and he is the Principal of Ripon Hall, near Oxford, a "Theological College to provide a training on modern lines for those seeking Holy Orders in any Diocese of the Anglican Communion."

In this article, Dr. Major is dealing with some difficulties which had been brought forward, in the June issue, by Sir Francis Fremantle, M.D., M.P., concerning the Post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus, and Dr. Major expresses the following view as to the nature of the appearances. He says: "We find in the New Testament, conclusive evidence that Jesus held personal intercourse with His disciples after His death on the Cross." And Dr. Major judges that "the evidence for its being on the physical plane is less weighty than the evidence of its being on the *psychical* plane."

Dr. Major says: "There are a number of passages in the New Testament . . . which point to the Post-Resurrection experiences of the disciples as being not physical, but psychical. . . . We are justified in concluding that the body in which Jesus appeared was a

(Continued in next column)

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ANCIENT WAR PREDICTIONS

PREDICTIONS of "the Bavarian Shepherd" are quoted in an article by Rene Johannet in the *Journal of the American S.P.R.* for July, with the comment that they "are always trustworthy," and that "they have been known for about a century."

This shepherd (a "simple herdsman who died in 1806") predicted the rise of Prussia, the defeat of France in 1870, the expansion of the Second Reich, the war of 1914, and the German debacle."

He then (says the writer of the article) proceeded to describe "the betrayal of religion by the Nazis, whose name and existence, however, escape him," and the prophecy concluded with an announcement of a new German defeat: "Germany will be submerged by an army of Red men coming from the East."

On this M. Johannet comments: "Actually in terms of the present conflict nothing seems more unlikely than this prediction. The only way of interpreting it is by supposing the eventual right-about-face of the U.S.S.R., their betrayal of Hitler and the hurling of the Russian hordes against Germany."

As bearing on the predictions, M. Johannet says: "There has been a saying current in recent years in Central Europe: 'It won't be a good thing to be a Jew in 1939, a soldier in 1940 or a German in 1941.'"

THE WAR OF THE EAGLES

The "Shepherd's" prophecy that "Red" Russia will fight against Germany recalls a prediction said to have been made in the year 1600 by a monk named Johannes, which was published recently by the *Sunday Express*.

Johannes speaks of "Antichrist" as "a son of Luther"; and in his writings England is represented by the Leopard (the original emblem), France by the

Cock, Russia by the White Eagle, and Germany (the land of Luther) by the Black Eagle.

"Near the year 2000," the prediction says, "the Antichrist will appear; his army will surpass in numbers anything before imagined; there will be Christians among his hordes and among the defenders of the Lamb will be Mohammedans and savage tribes."

"The Black Eagle will throw himself on the Cock, which will lose many of its feathers, but will strike heroically with its spur; it would soon be annihilated were it not for the help of the Leopard and its claws."

"The Black Eagle, which will issue from the Land of Luther (Germany) will surprise the Cock by another side and will invade one half of the land of the Cock."

"The White Eagle (Russia) which will come from the North, will surprise the Black Eagle and will completely invade the land of the Antichrist from one end to the other."

"The Black Eagle will be forced to leave the Cock to fight the White Eagle and the Cock will pursue the Black Eagle into the land of Antichrist to help the White Eagle."

"The battles waged until then will be small in comparison to those that will take place in the Land of Luther."

"The Antichrist will lose his crown and will die demented and alone. His empire will be divided into 22 states, but none will have a royal house, an army or vassals."

These are the sections of the Johannes prophecy relating to the war of the Black and White Eagles (Germany and Russia), and it is at least a striking coincidence that the monk Johannes in 1600 and the Bavarian Shepherd 200 years later should make predictions so similar.

(Continued from previous column)

spiritual body, such as we may suppose St. Paul had in mind in 2 Cor. iv, 16, v. 4, where he refers to the spiritual body, or house, which is from Heaven, in which he himself hopes to dwell when he has departed this life."

Now comes the climax of this interesting expression of belief. "If this conclusion," adds Dr. Major, "be historically sound, then it may be claimed that the Resurrection of Jesus was no more and no less miraculous than well-attested cases preserved in the records of *Psychical Research*."

"And," adds Dr. Major, "if Sir Francis Fremantle can accept this presentation of the case as valid, he will recognize that here is a belief in the Resurrection which liberates him who holds it from both materialistic and miraculous views of that event, and which really has more to be said for it than a theory of the Resurrection which assumes that Jesus never died upon the cross, and that His Resurrection was merely a physical resurrection."

Could any of us students of Psychic Science have put any plainer the interpretation we have been urging the Churches to accept?

The Modern Churchman, the advance guard of the Church, has thus travelled from the interpretation of Miracle and Traditionalism, through that of Symbolic Narrative, to the interpretation held by students of Psychic Science. And those of us who have been hoping and working for this solution of one of the Church's great difficulties, can now humbly say, "Nunc Dimittis." For we believe that the restoration of the Resurrection story, with its illustration of man's survival of physical death, together with all the other-world stories in the Bible, to the position it and they occupied in the minds of those who witnessed those events, will effect that reformation in the teaching of the Churches which will bring them into conformity with modern requirements, and save Christianity, and possibly Civilization from collapse.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE JOHANNES PROPHECY

The *Sunday Express* (August 11th) says that in investigating the origin of this Johannes prophecy it was discovered that it was first published in recent years in 1914 by the Paris newspaper *Figaro*. The prophecy was then edited by M. Josephin Peladan. He had translated it into French from a Latin document found among papers left by his father, M. Adrien Peladan, a religious writer and collector of prophecies, who died in 1890. M. Peladan's father had received the manuscript from a Premonstratensian monk of St. Michel de Trigolet, near Tarascon, south of France, who had been given it by an aged priest, the Abbe Donat, of Beaucaire.

The prophecy has since been translated into almost every European language, and has been accepted as genuine by hundreds of thousands.

Its authenticity has, however (says the *Sunday Express*) been the subject of discussion. Father Herbert Thurston, S.J., the Jesuit authority on ancient prophecies, who died last year, pointed out that no one could produce any reference to the prophecy or its author earlier than the publication in *Figaro*. Father Thurston said that he himself had searched through many volumes of prophetic literature without finding a reference to Brother Johannes.

"DIVINE INTERVENTION"

One of our London readers (Mrs. C. Williams) sends us an extract from a letter written by her nephew—a young barrister turned soldier—for whose safety prayer had been made and who "came from Dunkirk without a scratch." He wrote:—

"I want to thank you and your friends so much for the prayers. The same sort of thing happened at Dunkirk (Divine intervention) as in the 1914 war apparently, for the wind suddenly changed and drove smoke from the burning oil dumps right across the B.E.F. and hid them from the enemy."

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF JACK WEBBER

Review by H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY

JACK WEBBER was born of Devon parents in South Wales in 1907, and, from the age of fourteen, worked for fifteen years in a coal mine. When twenty-one, to please the girl to whom he was engaged, he attended her family circle, though regarding Spiritualism as "bunk," and sleeping, from sheer boredom, through the sitting.

However, his interest, later on, was roused by the accuracy of the messages received, and, after two years, when the circle had been reorganised for control work, he began to fall into a trance-like sleep.

Development was by no means easy, and it was some time before he could be convinced of his own share in the phenomena, and until quite recently was afraid of them, since they began before he had gone into trance. Later he was able to hear and speak to his controls before losing consciousness.

Strong healing powers came to him in those early days through a young Egyptian, and, when using his hands for massage, thick oil would ooze from his palms; and he used to be taken in a half-dazed condition to gather herbs in the marsh-lands for the cure of various complaints.

This work, which proved too exhausting, had to be given up when he came into his full physical powers.

It is probable that these had by no means reached their climax at the time of his death in March of this year, for there seemed to be little beyond their compass—the direct and independent voice, convincing messages from the Other Side, levitation of himself and heavy furniture, the playing of locked instruments, materialisations and de-materialisations, and the passing of matter through matter in the form of apports.

PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP

It was, of course, from its rarity, the physical mediumship which attracted most attention, though that is a form disliked by many people, and it was indeed, occasionally, somewhat crudely rendered by Jack Webber's controls.

It is true that floating the medium in his chair over the heads of the circle offers no proof of survival. What it does offer is a proof of our ignorance, and a challenge which must be accepted by materialistic philosophy.

Till its problem can be solved in a fashion agreeable to science, it must remain to mock the completeness to which Science pretends.

Here is a force; invisible, immaterial, which can resist the united efforts of half-a-dozen men, crush up a stout Windsor chair as though it were made of paper, and Science does not know, and apparently does not care to know, the first thing about it. Why? Because such a Force cannot be incorporated into any of the text-books which propound, to the satisfaction of Science, the "Laws of Nature."

Hitherto Science has been able to ignore exhibitions of this Force, attributing accounts of it to delusions, hypnotic or hallucinatory, or, in the last, ridiculous, resort, to fraud.

But Science, itself, has furnished us with a reply to that in the shape of infra-red photography.

It seemed a grave misfortune that, with Jack Webber's departure, we could no longer say: "If you don't believe us, come and see for yourselves!" But the sashalite bulb and the infra-red filter has provided a record more reliable than memory and the human eye, and the photographs in Mr. Harry Edward's volume* supply irrefutable evidence of reputed impossibilities.

Those responsible for the Medium have, very wisely, welcomed the widest publicity. Any enquirer with a suitable camera has been allowed to use it, in addition to the number officially employed. Representatives

**The Mediumship of Jack Webber*, by Harry Edwards. London. Rider and Co., 1940. 12/6.

of the Press and of other organisations have brought their own equipment; and articles written for national newspapers by distinguished journalists add a convincing feature to Mr. Edward's volume, and should protect him from the usual insinuations as to the Medium's bad faith.

LEVITATIONS

One of Jack Webber's most instructive feats was divesting himself of the coat into which he had been sewn, while tied into his chair, with a hand held on either side by a member of the circle; and, after the coat had been tossed into the middle of the circle, Webber was again inside it in a matter of seconds.

That is, of course, a common acrobatic feat on the stage, but apart from the speed at which it was performed, photographs, illustrating the operation of the process, even show the back of the coat in front of the body while the sleeves were still roped to his arms, an impossible entanglement, while the coat was in one piece.

No restriction was made as to the roping used, and though it looks remarkably inefficient, as illustrated in most of the photographs, I can guarantee that the nautical knots, with which on one occasion I confined him, would merely have tightened under a strain.

But the roping was really of less importance than the control of the hands, and anyone who had endured the grip of Webber's hand in trance was conscious of it hours afterward.

The levitations I witnessed were of the Medium himself, still roped in his chair, and of a small heavy table which, pressed for room, pushed its way upward against me till clear above my head, the Medium being still roped and held, and any approach to the table impossible. Webber had never been in the room before the sitting began, and was unacquainted with the furniture.

We know, of course, that the power to levitate can be learnt by a prolonged psycho-physical training, and also apparently, as recorded of the Saints, by some sort of spiritual aeration: but that is a personal possession, and, as an elevating process, could scarcely be applied to inanimate objects.

No photographs are given of the Medium in the air, but his feet have been felt travelling over the heads of the sitters, he has left marks of his progress on the ceiling of the room, and he and his chair have been deposited many feet away from their original position.

Once, indeed, when *Daily Mirror* photographers were trying for an infra-red shot of the Medium in the air, the wrong light was switched on, and the Medium was seen by all, turning a somersault in the air in slow motion, to arrive with his head on the floor and the chair upside-down above him; a mistake which left him unconscious for twenty minutes.

There was bitter opposition to Isaac Newton's deduction of "gravity" from the fall of an apple; another Newton is surely due to tell us, from the flight of a Medium, what gravitation isn't.

Seeing that "full-form" materialisations have been seen and questioned by competent observers with Jack Webber, it is regrettable that only an ectoplasmic hand, and that not too convincing, appears to have been photographed.

There may be difficulties of which one does not know, but a surface, warm with the colour of life, supported by a firm internal structure, should offer, one would think, no more serious obstacles than the Medium's astral head, which appeared by accident.

Once, indeed, his physical head, hands and arms were seen to have vanished, and the sitters, including his wife, were in no little alarm, being able to look down into the black void where his neck had been; and, on a subsequent evening, the Rev. Maurice Elliott and Mr. Byerley were able to pass their hands up his empty

(Continued at foot of next column)

WHAT OUR READERS ARE SAYING

"THE TERRIBLE CRYSTAL"

SIR,—I have read Mr. C. R. Cammell's article upon my book *The Terrible Crystal*, in your issue of July 25th last, with great interest. Of his warm and, I fear, over-generous appreciation it is not for me to speak save with gratitude and a sense of insufficiency. But he has added to his kindly encomiums judgments upon Kierkegaard, and the philosophy which he conceives my book to propound, which I do not feel justified in permitting to pass by default. I, therefore, ask the courtesy of your space for a brief reply.

Mr. Cammell roundly asserts that Kierkegaard was the "apostle of Masochism—of self-torture." That there was an element of self-torture in his temperament and teaching I have noted in my book (p. 12); he believed that a full Christianity involved self-mortification; it is a belief which, it can hardly be denied, was also held and taught by Christ and St. Paul.

But between self-mortification and a masochistic self-torture there is a deep difference—the difference between beatification and pathological degeneration, between heaven and hell. The one is that sane, surgical tragedy which we behold in the agony of Christ: there is no pathological delight to be found in Gethsemane or on Calvary. The other contains a sadistic element which is not without a perverted pleasure and smells of the pit. It would seem, indeed, to be one of the chief titles of Christ to divinity that where, with the most saintly of his disciples, self-mortification sometimes descends to this pathological hell of masochism, with Him it is untainted by this devil's delight.

But to admit that, in this respect, Kierkegaard, like St. Paul, at times fell short of that conquest of tragedy which was their Master's triumph, is a very different judgment to that which, with Mr. Cammell, sees in masochism all his philosophy. It is, I confidently contend, impossible to combine a thorough and dispassionate study of his life and thought with such a judgment. The irrefutable joy and gentleness to which he attained and I have noted in my essay (pp. 43, f.) are, in themselves, sufficient refutation of such a stricture.

Mr. Cammell continues to stigmatize my own reading of a "catastrophic Christianity," in the same drastic fashion, as a "philosophy of Despair." In both judgments I suggest that he has confounded the acceptance of the fact of tragedy with a repudiation of its fruits in the glory of the risen, the new, life. My contention,

(Continued from previous column)

coat sleeves, which were refilled with solid flesh an instant later.

That, of course, far from being exceptional, is what may be expected, as the result of ectoplasmic depletion.

Mme. d'Esperance, though not in trance, was terrified more than once to find that the lower part of her body had disappeared, and it is obvious that, where a Medium loses from a third to a half of his normal weight, as shown by the scales, that some part of his bulk must be missing.

A more unusual feature was the long period of unconsciousness from which the Medium occasionally suffered at the close of a sitting; Black Cloud, the chief Control, explaining that he had to leave the body to permit the return of the Medium's astral body. No explanation appears to have been given of the blows that were rained so mercilessly by the trumpet on the Medium's head.

Jack Webber re-appeared the day after his passing, and made his presence known to three Mediums who were unaware that he was not still on earth.

"His family and friends," Mr. Edwards tells us, "have naturally asked why, with all Jack's protective influences, attendant healers, and spirit helpers, he should have been taken away so quickly." If an answer is ever given we should all be glad to hear it.

and I believe it to be that of all essential Christianity and of Kierkegaard, is that the new life is only to be found beyond the death of self and the full acceptance of the tragedy of human life, that the "Grand Secret" and the "Red Rose" are to be sought, not within but beyond "humanism." For the one tragedy is fact to be faced and overcome through the grace of God; for the other it is illusion which the enlightened Self can dissipate by its own wisdom. Christianity thus conceived is not a "philosophy of Despair," but a faith and a way of life which confront, accept and surpass despair.

M. CHANING-PEARCE.

THE WALLS OF JERICO

Sir,—In your issue of August 1st, Capt. Q. Craufurd suggests that the explosion of naphtha brought down the banks of the Jordan and also associates this liquid with the fall of the Walls of Jericho. Surely, Capt. Craufurd ought to know that the mystery connected with these events was cleared up ten years ago; they were due to earthquake shocks. For example, the great earthquake which shook Palestine in 1927 caused the Jordan banks at El Damiah to collapse and dammed the flow of the river for 22 hours.

The excavations at Jericho, conducted by Professor Garstang with my collaboration, established the fact that the Walls of the City fell through another earthquake.

(SIR) CHARLES MARSTON.

SPIRITUALISM THROUGHOUT THE AGES

Sir,—Referring to the report in your issue of August 1st of the address by Mrs. St. Clair Stobart (herself a "Torchbearer," perhaps more than she realises!), may I suggest that the difficulties with which we now have to contend in the forms of materialism, atheism and despair (Mrs. Stobart's last sentence), might be regarded by us, not as rocks upon which we fear to founder, but rather as grinding stones in God's Plan, from the operations of which, in time, will emerge a refined, purified, and stronger Spiritualism?

NELLIE I. SHAW.

GOD DOES CARE

Sir,—In reply to the very interesting article which appeared in your issue of August 1st, "Does God Care?" by Mr. Evans, I would like to say that *God must have cared*—so much so that when He created Nature He made at the same time laws operate which were necessary for the welfare and well-being of mankind, and not Mankind only; adding to these such good influences as Nobleness of Soul, Love, Charity, Compassion, Unselfishness, etc., not leaving out the great element of Fear; fear of pain, fear of illness, fear of discomfort and death, so that, by these very means, we should avoid pitfalls which would lead us to acute pain and misery, such as War. I would like to stress here and now that by creating such forces, *God proved He did care*.

Man, however, has perverted these influences by envy, vanity, greed and rapacity; and, by fostering such feelings, *man himself, and not God*, allows these sufferings. It is but natural that they take their course, same as everything else in Nature, which always operates according to the influences of its surroundings, good or bad; these, then, are the consequences.

It is then further asked "Does God exist?" This is a matter of interpretation. If we think of God as a glorified Being, it is a misunderstanding; but if we look around us and notice the good and beautiful things in Nature, we must look for the *Great Mind behind it all*, and, as such, God does exist—it is a Spirit which, when everything is quite still and calm, is almost felt, and which brings about the spiritual uplifting which stands for peace and serene contentment. Yes, as such, God does exist; and what is more, by making certain laws operate He showed us *He did care*, but we ignored these, and "As you sow, you reap." MARCELLE HEUDS.

Light

All communications for the EDITOR should be addressed: "The Editor of Light, 16 Queensberry Place, South Kensington, London, S.W.7." 'Phone Kensington 3292-3.

EDITOR

- - - GEORGE H. LETHEM

AS WE SEE IT

ASLEEP—BUT CONSCIOUS AND ACTIVE

RECENTLY, we quoted the Bishop of Liverpool (Dr. A. A. David) as saying that "a Christian ought to be content with what the Gospel teaches about them that are fallen asleep," and should not seek the evidence of Survival which Spiritualism offers.

In a fuller extract from the Bishop's "warning" (published in the *Liverpool Diocesan Leaflet*), we learn, rather surprisingly, that his lordship believes that, though "fallen asleep," his friends who have "gone before" are not unconscious, as sleeping people usually are, but that, on the contrary, they are active and show all the signs of being wide awake.

"Personally," the Bishop writes, "I believe that God is using them in some service which concerns His will and our welfare. In that work they are growing 'into perfection.' They do know of our struggles and failures and sufferings, with sympathy but without grief, for in the eternal world our pains are seen as 'light afflictions,' compared with what God has prepared for them that are learning to love Him. I believe also that because death does not end our fellowship with them, we may, in our prayers, remember them where they are as we did when they were here."

With every word of this the sympathetic Spiritualist will readily agree; and, because he agrees, he must assume that the Bishop believes that his friends who "fell asleep" did not go on sleeping very long, but wakened on the Other Side ready for the work awaiting them. If he believes that, it is difficult to understand why he should think it wrong to try to find out something about what they are doing—especially as he does not deny that communication is possible.

Also, he might surely remember that, although faith in the Gospel story is sufficient for himself, there are many people, even in his own Church, whose faith is not so robust as his own, and who might quite easily be saved from doubt, or even unbelief, by the evidence which Spiritualism offers and to which he, as their Father in God, ought to be able to direct them.

The Bishop will, no doubt, recall that Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's, in his Frederic Myers Memorial Lecture last autumn, stated that there had been put before the Archbishop's Committee of Inquiry into Spiritualism (of which he was a member) "unexpected . . . evidence showing that a number of people had found confirmation of their Christian Faith in Psychical Research"—by which, of course, he meant the scientific side of Spiritualism.

SPIRITUALISM NOT ANTI-CHRISTIAN

If—as we believe to be the case—Dr. David has not only read the Rev. C. L. Tweedale's great book, *Man's Survival After Death*, but commended it to the study of his clergy, he must be aware that the essential facts and teachings of Spiritualism provide a solid basis for the essential teachings of Christianity—not for all the dogmas and doctrines of rival Churches and sects, but for the essentials. True—following the foolish example of certain clerics who persist in misrepresenting and denouncing Spiritualism—there are certain Spiritualists who proclaim loudly that Spiritualism and Christianity are irreconcilable, but these men (or women) speak without authority and for themselves only; their leadership is *not* either accepted or admitted by the great majority of Spiritualists, individually or collectively. When, many years ago, it was suggested to the Rev. William Stainton Moses (then Editor of *LIGHT*)

that Theosophists and Spiritualists should join as allies against Christianity, he wrote:

"Heaven preserve us! We want no ally against Christianity. We need rather a closer and more intimate alliance with a system which our philosophy could greatly illuminate and our facts abundantly illustrate. . . . Spiritualists are fully alive to the moral excellence of the Christian code; they reverence the pure life of the Christ. . . . No portion (of Spiritualists) worth a thought is disposed to seek an alliance against what they trust to see purified and purged of error, simplified and confirmed in its essential elements of Truth by the increasing spread of a pure, spiritual philosophy." (*More Spirit Teachings*, page 118).

REV. DR. MAJOR'S DISCOVERY

Mrs. St. Clair Stobart does well to draw attention (in this issue of *LIGHT*) to the admission made by the Rev. Dr. Major, Principal of Ripon College and Editor of the *Modern Churchman's Magazine*, that "it may be claimed that the Resurrection of Jesus was no more and no less miraculous than well-attested cases preserved in the records of Psychical Research," and that this view "liberates him who holds it from both materialistic and miraculous views of that event."

Spiritualists have often pointed out that well-attested modern evidence—such as that provided by Sir William Crookes in his report on his psychic investigations—corroborate the Gospel stories of the Resurrection of Jesus to a remarkable degree and particularly those details in the stories over which those without psychic knowledge have always stumbled and quarrelled. Hitherto, the Church of England Modernists have shown a regrettable tendency to reject this modern evidence; but, now that Dr. Major has acknowledged its value and relevance, we may hope for reconsideration.

DANGEROUS DOCTRINES

There has been some talk as to the possibility of Spiritualist Mediums being used—consciously or unconsciously—for what is described as "fifth column propaganda," and we have before us a record of a self-proclaimed Spiritualist "leader" being fined, at Exeter, for giving away military information in the course of an address.

There are not likely to be many cases of this kind; but we hear of other so-called "leaders" proclaiming from Spiritualist platforms doctrines which have no basis in Spiritualism and which—if seized upon by the sensational Press, as they well might be—would bring discredit on the Movement in all its many sections and interfere with the great and important work of spreading knowledge of the psychic evidence of Survival. For a time, the Spiritualist movement in America was discredited because one "leader" associated it with "free love" theories. It is to be hoped that this misfortune will not befall Spiritualism in this country, and we suggest that, to this end, Societies—particularly in London—should recognise their responsibility for the use of their platforms.

MR. J. B. PRIESTLEY EXPLAINS

Many interpretations have been given of Mr. J. B. Priestley's play, "Johnson Over Jordan." Introducing a broadcast of the last act on Sunday evening, Mr. Priestley gave *his* explanation—and Spiritualists will be glad to know that, up to a point, it agrees with what they know of the conditions immediately following the final separation of the soul-body from the physical body. Mr. Priestley said the play was not about Death but about Life—for, after the change called Death, mind goes on working and memory continues, so that people and places and events can be recalled. The last act of the play gives Mr. Priestley's idea of the rather confused manner in which the surviving mind and memory of Johnson (who represents Everyman) might be expected to operate until he had time to take his bearings. Necessarily this means that Johnson's personality survived and that a new phase of his life began where the earth-phase had terminated—and that is part of the essential teaching of Spiritualism.

THE PSYCHIC THREAD

THE GHOST

OF all witnesses to the survival of the human personality after the fact of death, none can be compared for universality, antiquity or comprehensiveness, to the *Ghost*, or, to use the more explicit French term, the *revenant*. From time immemorial in every part of the earth men have believed in ghosts, have feared them (however unreasonably) and have recorded by word of mouth, and in course of time by writing, innumerable instances of the reappearance of the dead in their familiar physical forms. Religion itself, and the Christian Religion not excepted, depends largely on the fact of ghostly appearances for the establishment and confirmation of its fundamental Faith. In short, the importance of this phenomenon in the problem of survival is paramount. It cannot be stressed too often or too emphatically; it cannot be probed too deeply or examined too earnestly. The Ghost speaks the first word and the final word in the entire argument of immortality.

This being indubitably true, it is astonishing that the fact of the *revenant* should not be accepted by everyone as unquestionable and beyond disputation. The prime reason that this fact is not so accepted springs from the extraordinary ignorance of the vast majority of human beings concerning everything that lies immediately beyond the ken of their physical senses, and the consequent fear which arises from contact with the uncomprehended and, as it would seem, incomprehensible. This ignorance and fear is found equally among primitive races, who believe profoundly in ghosts, and the so-called civilised peoples who affect incredulity of their existence. Among the latter, the attitude of Madame du Deffand is very general. When asked whether she believed in ghosts, that celebrated lady replied: "No, but I am afraid of them." It is, indeed, a fact that to "see" or "hear" something, in the existence of which one resolutely refuses to believe, is a very terrible experience—quite as terrible as is the same phenomenon to the believing savage, whose fear arises from the erroneous conviction that all ghosts are, for one reason or another, malefic.

TESTIMONY OF GHOSTS

As testimony for survival, the *revenant* has the advantage over all others because no auxiliary is required to coax him back to earth—no Medium, no mechanical contrivance, no conjuration. Like the wind, he comes when he listeth, unbidden and usually undesired. He appears in his familiar likeness, frequently in his familiar surroundings, and those who are fortunate enough (or, in their own opinion, unfortunate enough) to meet him, are left with no shadow of a doubt as to his actuality: they *know* henceforth that the dead survive death, that there is no death. If everyone saw a ghost, there would be an end of material blindness, and the world would proceed unfettered by its degrading and obstructive disbelief in the immortality of the soul. Further, universal ghost-seeing would command exhaustive investigation, enquiry would disseminate knowledge, and knowledge dispel fear. Why, then, do not all people, or, at least, a still larger number of people, see ghosts? This question, among the learned in occult matters, is un-resolved, and "Who shall decide when doctors disagree?"

GHOST-SEERS

To those who would ask me for my own opinion in this tenebrous affair, I would hazard the suggestion that the seeing of ghosts depends largely on the presence of psychic emanations from the seer: such emanations being probably of an ectoplasmic nature. This would explain why some people see many ghosts, and other people in the same circumstances see no ghost; also why people, who never saw a ghost when alone, have been known to see one in the presence of another person,

though in every other circumstance of place and atmosphere the conditions remained unchanged. Briefly, such an one sees the ghost because its materialisation has been effected by the psychic emanations of his companion, who is a ghost-seer. I am further confirmed in this view by the curious sense of cold almost invariably remarked by ghost-seers, suggesting a sudden loss of temperature—a notable phenomenon which has been often recorded in the case of materialising Mediums at the moment of ectoplasmic discharges. Were ghost-seeing solely dependent on supernormal vision in the seer, that vision would not assist another person in his company to see the apparition. We are therefore forced to conclude that some kind of emanation from the seer is active.

UNIMPEACHABLE EVIDENCE

The evidence for ghost-seeing is so overwhelming, both in quantity and quality, that nothing but positive refusal to credit a fact, which the distorted view-point of the materialist dreads to believe, can account for the loudly expressed, though timorous, incredulity of "the man in the street" and of the scientist-bogey man who dictates his opinions. The *revenant* is, in fact, one of the best testified phenomena in the world. For instance, far more Europeans have seen apparitions than have ever seen Asia, Africa, Australia or America; but whereas those who have not visited these continents do not fear to credit their existence, he who has hitherto eluded the presence of a spectre retains a rooted horror of admitting that a *rencontre* so disturbing to his material mentality is possible.

Ghost-stories figure in the pages of our gravest historians. The Lord Chancellor Clarendon, for instance, has elaborated in the first book of his *History of the Rebellion* every detail of the repeated appearance of the dead Sir George Villiers to forewarn his son, the great Duke of Buckingham, against the danger that menaced him and to which he was destined to fall a victim.

Another instance, often described as "the best authenticated ghost-story on record," is to be found in the *Memoirs of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester*. Wilberforce, then a Canon, was staying in a country house in Hampshire. He had always been "a very strong and emphatic disbeliever in ghosts." He describes his meeting in that house with a monk, whom he took to be a fellow-guest, for the family were Roman Catholics. Later that night, the monk reappeared to him in the library and Wilberforce had the courage to address him. The monk told him that he had been a former confessor to the family and that his spirit could not rest till certain "incriminating papers," which had been in his keeping, had been destroyed. He indicated the top of the book-case, and there Wilberforce found a bundle of ancient papers. These he burned in the presence of the monk.

These two events are of great importance, alike on account of the unimpeachable character of their narrators, and still more so, because they are representative of a type of ghost-story which defies the ingenious theories of Mr. Dunne. Neither he nor Professor Einstein is of any avail in these cases (and there are numberless instances of the same kind), because both Sir George Villiers and Bishop Wilberforce's monk not only appeared (and on several occasions), but spoke their minds, asserted their identities, explained the objects of their return to earthly conditions, and, having fulfilled their respective missions, disappeared and were seen no more.

No amount of juggling with "time," no "pictures on the aether" theories, can offer any destructive criticism to oppose the simple explanation of such phenomena, namely, the complete survival of human individuality after death, with all its personal characteristics, interests and affections unimpaired.

C. R. CAMMELL.

THE PREDICTIONS OF NOSTRADAMUS

Some parts of the writings of Michel Nostradamus (born 1503, died 1559) which seem to bear on current events (including the collapse of France and what may follow), have drawn attention anew to the predictions of that strange man—a Jew of Provence who became a Christian. The following article (written during August last year and held up for various reasons) gives an interesting glimpse of the nature and style of the prophecies.—EDITOR).

By HECTOR WAYLEN

THE application of a well-known quadrain from the Centuries of Nostradamus to the Fire of London, in 1666 A.D. was rejected as "obviously absurd" in an article by the Hon. Ralph Shirley (LIGHT, 17th August, 1939).

In considering this question we must recollect that Michel Nostradamus was a Roman Catholic, and that his inspirers in the world of spirits, who must have had remarkable powers of prevision, had probably been of that Communion in their earth-lives. His predictions are written from a strongly "Catholic" point of view. They are also written in a crabbed, cryptic form, disarranged in historical sequence, to hide the exact meaning from the crowd. The quadrain in question may be Englished:

The blood of the just One, at London, will cause wrong,

Burned by fire: from twenty, and three the sixes.

The Ancient Lady will fall from high place:

Of the same sect will many be slain.

It is asked: "Who is 'the just One'?" Well, this is a characterisation of Christ in the Book of Acts (iii., 14), and the "blood" of Jesus may well stand for all violence done to the innocent. The fires of Smithfield, the evils of the Civil War, the persecution of Quakers—London being the seat of government—must have brought about a great concentration of evil, on the psychic plane, in relation to that capital. Babylon, and many another city, has perished from its spiritual evils, and become a haunt for wild beasts. When George Fox entered Lichfield he sensed the "blood of the martyrs" which had been slain there, and cried out against it. All wars and persecutions come from the lack of Christianity among the people, and by Christianity I mean universal love in action.

George Fox, by the way, foresaw the Fire of London, as well as Lilly, and without any astrology. When in Lancaster jail, he had a vision of an angel "with a glittering sword drawn southward," and he had had an earlier vision of it, in heaps, in 1659.

As to the date, 1666, which is involved in the phrase "from twenty, and three the sixes." I suppose it means "[take] from twenty [for the first digit] and [add] three sixes"—and you will get it! The sum of the digits in the date, which in the symbolism of numbers is often taken as representing its potency, is nineteen, which taken from twenty leaves one. Add the sixes, and there it is.

And then as to the "Ancient Lady" identified with St. Paul's, built on the site of a temple of Diana. Even some Roman Catholic writers—Grillot de Givry, e.g., in his book about Lourdes—see, in the Virgin Mary, a symbol of the Primal Substance, in Creative Activity, and by all it will surely be admitted that she is representative of Intercession in the heavens. She is, indeed, the "Queen of Heaven," and, therefore, invested with her traditional blue robe. But in "Paganism"—and Augustine said that the Christian religion had reproduced what had previously existed in Paganism—Diana was representative of the same thing. "Queen and huntress chaste and fair;" and if an example of the continuation of a symbolism be needed we have one in the case of some ruins near Ephesus, said to be those of a house in which Mary, and John the Divine, lived after their departure from Palestine. It is true that there is a church on the Mount of Olives

in which a tomb, sacred to Mary, is shown; but there is also the legend of her death at Ephesus. Now, Catharine d'Emmerich had visions of Mary's life in this house, and she described the place, though she had never been there. When subsequent investigations were made it was found that underneath the ruins were relics of a shrine of Diana.

In the Church of the Lateran, at Rome, there are some pillars taken from a Roman temple. Such a fact symbolises the truth that not only were religious customs—Christmas, e.g.—taken over from Paganism into the Roman Church, but that influence which we may call "astral" reasserted itself when the Christian Church departed from the pure spirituality of its early days. After its adoption as a State religion it became a worldly power, and while maintaining certain truths, it incorporated much that emanated from the lower planes of spirit-existence, and not from the heavens.

Protestantism came, on its best side, as a protest against hierarchic usurpation of authority, materialism, and the relics of Paganism in so-called Christianity. On its evil side, there was ignorance of the inner meaning of symbols and customs which it sought to destroy, and angry passion which resulted in wars, and, when it got the chance, in persecution. If British rulers burnt many at the stake, Calvin burnt Servetus, and thousands of Quakers suffered from the bigotry of High Church prelates. On the Continent, the Thirty Years' War, and other wars, were fought for "religion."

Swedenborg taught that while the Harlot on the Beast, in the Apocalypse, signified the Roman Church, Protestantism was represented by the Great Dragon which drew down the stars of heaven with its tail. The tail is at one end of the body; the head at the other. The symbol meant that the materialism of Protestantism destroyed belief in the spiritual "stars"—in the angelic world and the powers thereof.

For Protestantism had its material limitations as well as Catholicism. As one reads the dreary controversies of the Reformation period it is clear that if there was priestcraft and cruelty on the one side, there was a good deal of ignorance and brutality on the other. The Reformers were not all saints, and their literalism was often very crude. Throwing over Purgatory and the Intercession of the saints, they dispatched everyone when they died either to heaven or to hell.

I am not writing to promote prayer to the saints, but to show what was behind the statement of Nostradamus when he said that "the Ancient Lady" fell from her high place. The prediction describes the fact that Protestantism had dethroned the Virgin Mary, whose spiritual position had once been represented by the church on the site of the temple of Diana.

The last line of the quadrain will refer to the first: "The same sect," meaning Protestants, slain through the religious bigotry, and the blind perversity and selfishness of man.

PROFESSOR RICHEL'S HESITATION

IT is a good thing (writes Dr. E. H. Worth) from time to time to re-read books written by able writers, whose opinion entitles them to consideration. I have lately re-read Professor Charles Richet's last book, *Our Sixth Sense*.

Dr. Richet, as most people know, was one of the leading Physiologists of his time, and his life's work was the study of the human body and the material universe. Time and again, in his two big works, does he stress the remark how painful it was to find evidence of happenings which were outside (so to speak) the material universe, and which could not be credited to the material and five earth-senses. Hence the title of this book. It would seem as if he was determined not to get away from the life that we think we know on this earth. Many great thinkers have one weakness,

(Continued at foot of next column)

MRS. HELEN HUGHES' INTRODUCTION
TO SPIRITUALISM

MRS. HELEN HUGHES, well-known to readers of LIGHT as a successful demonstrator of clairvoyant and clairaudent evidence for survival, tells in an interview with a representative of the *Durham Chronicle* (August 2nd) how her psychic gifts of clairvoyance and clairaudence puzzled her when they first developed and how their nature and importance were explained to her by an "old road-sweeper." She had been ill and was much concerned about "voices" she often heard.

"One morning, after having a very bad night," she said, "a knock came to my door and an old road sweeper asked me if I could warm his can. I was very poorly that morning, and although I was improving in health I was still dragging my legs and unable to walk very much. I explained that I was not well, but I asked him in and remarked that perhaps he could warm his can himself.

"On previous occasions when I had told people of things I had seen, I was looked upon as almost going insane. This old man looked at me, as I considered, suspiciously, and I thought to myself, 'Here is someone else who thinks I am going wrong.' He asked me sympathetically about my health, and I told him that I was being haunted by a woman and it was making me ill. To my surprise, he said, 'No, my dear, you are the richest woman in Dawdon. These people have not come to hurt you. You are using one more sense than the average person,' and he advised me to develop and encourage that sense.

"Second sight is what the world would call it, but we call it the sixth sense. This old man was psychic and belonged to a Spiritualist church in Sunderland and he advised me that when I got strong and able to do so, I should attend a Spiritualist church and I would find out for myself.

"This old man came frequently to talk to me and his conversation on spiritual matters helped me so much that it had a reflex action on my physical condition, and I improved so much that my husband was able to take me down to Sunderland occasionally to see a physician.

"On one of these occasions I met a lady friend who asked me to go with her to a Spiritualist church and, remembering the old man's words, I went with her. On entering the church I said to the lady who took me: 'I hope they won't speak to me,' and strange to say I was the only one the Medium spoke to. The Medium was so interested in the gift I had that she came down to the station with me and asked me to promise that if ever I saw anything or anyone from the Spirit world, to talk to them. This advice I carried out, with the result that I found myself capable of communicating with the other world and I founded in Seaham a Spiritualist Church. And in addition, I gradually regained my health."

Later, Mrs. Hughes took up the work of a public speaker and demonstrator, which has made her so well known.

(Continued from previous column)

and this was clearly his. In the Preface he writes: "I am anxious that all should understand, when reading this book, that it is written by a Professor of Physiology, one who is determined never to abandon the sacred and productive domain of experimental science."

The book is full of wonderful happenings, but one grows weary of the repetition of such remarks as the following: "From our point of view, however, this matters little, because in the various modalities of the cryptesthetic phenomenon the hypothesis of the sixth sense is absolutely necessary all the time."

One of his closing remarks was: "It cannot be denied that sometimes the spiritistic hypothesis is more convenient than any other, that it explains the facts more easily. I shall remain within the domain of experimentation."

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