LIGHT, OCTOBER 1, 1942

LIGHT

A JOURNAL OF SPIRITUALISM: PSYCHICAL, OCCULT AND MYSTICAL RESEARCH

FOUNDED IN 1881

No. 3220. VOL. LXII. (Registered as THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1942 a Newspaper) PRICE THREEPENCE

SURVIVAL: THE GATEWAY TO IMMORTALITY

By GEORGE H. LETHEM
(*Editor of* "LIGHT," 1931-41)

IN a lecture delivered so long ago as 1931, Dr. W. Temple—then Archbishop of York, now Archbishop of Canterbury—said: "It is not easy to estimate the place which the idea of Immortality holds in the actual religion of the English people; certainly it is nothing like so prominent as it has been in most previous ages of Christian history." Were he to lecture on the same subject now, he would have to record that the fading process has been continued at an accelerating rate, and that to-day even a profession of belief in Immortality is confined to a very small proportion of the people.

Two main causes have been operating to bring about this result. The first is the spread of the materialistic belief—based on what are erroneously supposed to be scientific grounds—that there is for Man no survival of conscious personality beyond physical death and therefore no possibility of Immortality; the second is the failure of the Christian Churches to combat this teaching by using the abundant evidence of human survival provided by Spiritualism.

Yet, as a legacy from the bygone age of faith, the idea of survival, as a possibility, lingers in the minds alike of doubters inside the Churches and unbelievers outside, and it can be awakened when a direct challenge is made either to reason or affection.

Take the case of Robert Blatchford. As he explains in his interesting book, *More Things in Heaven and Earth*, he had been, through most of his thinking life, "a convinced materialist, even a militant materialist," believing and teaching that the personality of man is bound up in the structure of the brain, and that, when the brain dies, the man dies and his personality ceases to exist. Those who can remember Mr. Blatchford's early writings will agree that this is not an overstatement of his position. Yet, he records that, when his wife died, he found it impossible to believe that *she* had ceased to exist.

"I found to my surprise," he writes (pp. 70/1) "that I did not believe she was dead. I could not feel that she was dead, that she had ceased to be. I could only believe that, though her body had ceased to live, *she* was alive. My daughters, who had shared my materialistic convictions, shared my new belief. They felt that the sweet and vital personality of their little mother had survived. This was not because of the great love which bound them together. It was not because of their deep sorrow in their loss. It was like the sudden flaming up of a new light. As I tried to express it to myself at the time: 'My position is illogical. I find it almost impossible to believe in human survival of death and quite impossible to believe my wife is dead.'"

The result of this challenge to his reason and his affection was that Mr. Blatchford read up the evidence for survival, the extent and completeness of which astonished him, and then he made personal investigations which left him convinced that his wife had spoken to him and that therefore she must be alive beyond death. The psychic facts dispelled his materialistic belief in extinction of personality.

HOPE NOT ENOUGH

At the other extreme, a Methodist minister who had proclaimed "the hope of Immortality" for years, lost his wife and found that a mere "hope" was insufficient to give him an assured belief in her survival. He wrote to the Rev. Leslie Weatherhead, asking if he could anywhere find assurance that his wife had really survived death and that he would meet her again. His inquiry was not about Immortality but about Survival. Mr. Weatherhead published the letter in a weekly journal for which he wrote, and gave the inquirer an answer which may have started him on the path to certainty.

There have been many Agnostics who have been convinced by the psychic evidence—including Sir W. Crookes, Dr. Russel Wallace, Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle—who began their investigations believing they could show it to be based on fraud or illusion. As Dr. Wallace said: "The facts beat me."

But it is the people in Church and Chapel—or people who, although they may have ceased to attend Church or Chapel are still affected subconsciously by the teaching they received there—who are most likely, under the stress of bereavement, to turn towards Spiritualism, calling longingly, as the Methodist Minister called, for knowledge regarding the lot of the loved ones taken from them by death, in the home or in battle.

These people often find themselves not only plunged into doubt as to the possibility of personal life after death, but confused by the contradictory doctrines of the Churches and sects regarding what happens after death, and yet afraid that Spiritualism will ask them to believe something antagonistic to Christian teaching.

They will be helped and encouraged to inquire if it is made clear to them that the primary function of Spiritualism is not to proclaim religious beliefs, but to offer authenticated evidence of facts regarding man and his destiny which can be used as guides to belief.

That the teachings of the Churches are confusing, there can be no doubt. In the lecture already referred to ("The Idea of Immortality in Relation to Religion and Ethics"), Dr. Temple speaks of "the mediæval scheme" still presented by the Roman Catholic Church, by which "universal immortality is assumed." In this scheme, "for those who are beyond pardon, there is Hell; for those who are pardonable, Purgatory; for

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those whose pardon is accomplished, Paradise; and alongside these, for the unawakened soul, Limbo."

Expressing disagreement with this scheme—which is adopted very fully by Anglo-Catholics and in part by other sections of the Christian Church—Dr. Temple asks: "How can there be Paradise for any while there is Hell, conceived as unending torment, for some? Each supposedly damned soul was born into the world as a mother's child, and Paradise cannot be Paradise for her if her child is in such a hell." Many others in the Churches—ministers and laymen—take a view similar to that of Dr. Temple and express themselves often in language even more pungent than his.

Dr. TEMPLE'S VIEWS

Dr. Temple makes it clear that he has views of his own. He says that "the authentic Christian doctrine of the future life" is that Man is not naturally immortal but that "God offers Immortality to man, not universally but conditionally." In this he is at variance with the orthodox doctrine of all the Churches, as generally understood. Indeed, he seems to contradict himself, for he writes that "as it is hardly conceivable that any human being descends altogether to the level of the animal during this mortal life, it is to be presumed that every personality survives bodily death."

As to the nature of the future life, Dr. Temple protests that "it is not to a mere survival of death that we are called, while we remain very much what we were before; it is to a resurrection to a new order of being of which the chief characteristic is fellowship with God."

Against this view may be quoted the famous saying of the ex-Bishop of London, Dr. Winnington Ingram, that death does not change the real man, who, five minutes after death, is the same in every respect that he was five minutes before death; from which it follows that he is not resurrected to "a new order of life," but that he continues the life he had been living on earth, with the same character, the same failings, and the same mental and moral outlook he had developed before leaving the physical body.

To these contradictions as between Churches and individual Christians might be added many others. There are Christians who teach emphatically that there can be no conscious life between the death of the physical body and its resurrection; and there are others who, with equal emphasis, proclaim that the dead are more alive than the living, that they are often beside those they love, and that they throng to Church services on special occasions, such as the Armistice services held before the outbreak of the present war.

These are doctrines proclaimed by Churches and by Christian teachers, and, as they contradict each other, they cannot all be correct.

It is one of the great commendations of Spiritualism that it provides facts regarding human survival by which these and other beliefs may be tested and a selection made by which the enquirer's demand for rational assurance may be satisfied.

THIS DAY

It should be of special interest to Christian enquirers to observe that the facts vouched for by Spiritualism agree with those clearly indicated by Jesus when He said to the crucified thief: "*This day* shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Paradise, as scholars tell us, meant to the Jews not Heaven but the upper and more pleasant part of the spirit world (Hades). That Jesus and the thief should both go there—as doubtless they did go—*that day* indicated continuance of personal life for good and bad alike, without waiting for the resurrection of the physical body and without any prolonged sleep in the grave or elsewhere.

It was not, according to the Gospel story, until the third day that Jesus appeared to His friends and disciples; but His words indicate clearly that, even on the day of His death, He and the thief were consciously alive in the spirit world, from which He afterwards came to give assurance of the reality of survival.

For Jesus and for the thief, death and resurrection were simultaneous—resurrection being the rising of the spiritual body from the physical body; and as the modernly-ascertained facts show, it is so with all men. Spiritualism proves this and proclaims it, but it is not a doctrine peculiar to Spiritualism.

For example, in *An Outline of Christian Theology*, by the Rev. Dr. W. N. Clarke, it is stated (p. 458): "Resurrection takes place at death and consists in the rising of the man from death to life in another realm of life. The spirit does not rise thither alone, but whatever organism is needed for its use in that other life the spirit receives; so that the man, complete in all that personality requires, stands up alive beyond the great change that we call death, having in the same hour died and risen again."

That is a summary of what present-day psychic evidence proves, and it should enable any Christian enquirer to decide which of the teachings of his Church he can accept and which he must reject. It is not a question of accepting new doctrines—it is a question of selecting the Christian teachings that correspond with the facts established by patient research and vouched for by men of first-class mental powers and high scientific attainments, as well as by thousands of less prominent but fully competent investigators.

Of Immortality, or what lies in the far distant ages of eternity, Spiritualism does not pretend to speak with any degree of certainty—except that the prospects of progress are infinite. The point on which Spiritualism insists is that there can be no reasonable "hope of Immortality" unless Survival can be shown to be a fact, and that, therefore, the proofs of Survival are of prime importance as a basis for assured Christian belief.

From an address delivered in the Philosophical Hall, Leeds, at a meeting arranged by the Leeds Psychic Research Society, on Saturday, September 26th.

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AN UNANSWERED QUESTION

Review by H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY

What Lies Beyond? By A. M. Kaulback. London: Rider and Co. N.D. 7s. 6d.

MRS. KAULBACK certainly left no avenues unexplored in her psychic researches. The number of Mediums she tested is bewildering. She must, one imagines, have got herself "talked about" on the Other Side. Then she herself developed psychic aptitudes—became an automatist.

After fortuitous scribbles and circles, "hours were spent in laboriously shaping letters, like a child learning to write. Pot hooks and hangers, straight lines and curves, all were practised and perfected, until, little by little, they became easier to manage. Even after this training some days were completely blank, without the least movement of the pencil."

Mrs. Kaulback's husband (H.A.K.), her brother Frank, and later, Uvani and Abdul Latif (known as the controls of other Mediums) were able to communicate through her hand, but much of the evidence concerning the doings of her sons in the East was conveyed as pictures. All four had spoken or written during sittings with Eileen Garrett, some of them at the time when Mrs. Garrett was worried by theories of secondary personalities to account for her trance communications.

The greater part of this volume is occupied by details of these pictures of the author's two sons during six years in India, Tibet and the Sudan, with, set beside them, the actors' recollections of the incidents described. This, of course, allows a considerable time for lapse of memory; but the events are of the clear cut sort which could be easily remembered.

THE TIME FACTOR

What is most interesting about them, to an outsider, is the uncertainty in their dating. Some were shown while they were happening or immediately after, but they might be days, weeks, or even months late, as though they had been kept in a sort of psychic cold storage. On the other hand, they might be shown weeks, once even sixteen months, before they happened.

Occasionally Mrs. Kaulback objected that her son could not have reached the point at which he was reported; indeed, in one case, he did not arrive there till twenty-two days later.

Readers of LIGHT may remember that similar curious jugglings with time attended the Wilkins-Sherman telepathic tests. Mr. Harold Sherman saw things that were about to happen to Sir Hubert Wilkins, a thousand and more miles away. Saw also things which Sir Hubert had in his mind, but which never materialised. That indisputable and apparently inexplicable mystery of time does not seem to interest science, since it implicates a dimension which is not included in the text books. It does also seem difficult to fit it into an exposition of free-will. If a jealous wife clairvoyantly saw her husband in a compromising situation a fortnight before there was a possibility of its entering into his head, would she regard as an exoneration such an apparent filching of his free-will?

There is another problem which this book brings forward. Mrs. Kaulback obtained for some years accurate accounts of the adventures of her two sons many thousand miles away, with prevision for some of them, through the mediation of her husband, her brother, and of the two controls whom she had temporarily annexed.

Harold Sherman obtained exactly similar results, including prevision, without any assistance from the Other Side. The only difference being that Mr. Sherman was aware, from the shock to his solar plexus, when he became immersed in another dimension of time.

The question naturally arises: Was a different method used in these two cases to produce similar results, or was Mrs. Kaulback obtaining telepathically what she attributed to other sources?

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One other point. Mrs. Kaulback wins one's admiration for the zeal with which she tested evidence before admitting conviction; but the title of her book stimulates expectations which are not fulfilled. *What Lies Beyond?* But there is no reply to it; we do not reach the Beyond. Does it not seem a terrible waste of opportunity to have used these four spirits, two of them of an exalted stature, to record in advance, for instance, such trifles as an accident at a football match, where even the chief actor concerned was no more than a spectator? This is not, as it claims to be, "an exploration into the world of the spirit"; would it were! It is an exploration by spirits in this world of to-day and to-morrow.

SIDELIGHTS

IN THE NEWS

EVERY now and again the correspondence columns of one or another suburban or provincial newspaper become a battleground for local protagonists and antagonists of Spiritualism. If any such evidence were needed this fact would, in itself, show the widespread and *live* interest existing in our subject.

Lately the *Barnet Press* has been giving considerable space to a discussion arising out of an attack on Spiritualism by one of its correspondents. The old charges of fraud, insanity, etc., were made, only to offer vulnerable points for the counter-attacks of the better informed. The Rev. William J. Piggott, for instance, who has been for many years the Free Church chaplain of two London mental hospitals, declares that in all his experience he has never found one patient sent to either place as a result of Spiritualism. He also writes: "The Hebrew and Christian scriptures are saturated with Spiritualism, spirit-warnings, spirit-guidings, and spirit-teachings."

In an adjoining column of the same issue, Maurice Barbanell, Editor of *Psychic News*, turns a "witness for the prosecution" against the accuser. The latter, after having claimed that the S.P.R. asserted that 98 per cent. of Spiritualistic phenomena were fraudulent, amends this by saying the statement was made by Hereward Carrington. Mr. Barbanell quotes a declaration by Carrington: "I think that not only is the Spiritualistic hypothesis justified as a working theory, but it is, in fact, the only one capable of rationally explaining the facts."

AN EVIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Another Barnet resident gives a remarkable account of his first séance, at which he was absolutely convinced that his father survived and was communicating with him. An incident from a more recent séance is worth quoting as related by this correspondent.

"Recently, a Robert Baxter returned to me, informing me that I was not keeping his wife's grave in order. This man, some years previously, paid to me £15 (in my position as cashier to a Northern council, for whom I was working) in perpetuity, for the upkeep of this particular grave. Having left this authority, of course I could do nothing, and told Baxter so, to which the amazing reply came, 'Well, write and tell John Williams,' who, to my knowledge, was a member of the town council, and of the particular committee who would deal with such complaints."

SPIRITUALISM IN HALIFAX

The *Halifax Daily Courier* gives a long report of a talk on "The Scientific Investigation of Spiritualism," given to members of the Halifax Round Table, by Mr. G. B. Newport, a former school headmaster.

We are particularly delighted by a statement he quotes from Dr. C. E. M. Joad: ". . . we may further suppose that either God permits us to know the facts of immortality or withholds the knowledge." We have heard that Dr. Joad is something of an equestrian; he has certainly learned the art of backing a horse "both ways." The star of the Brains Trust was surely a little dimmed when he wrote this—or was he "twinkling"?

Light

All editorial communications should be addressed: "The Secretary, Editorial Committee of LIGHT, 16 *Queensberry Place, South Kensington, London, S.W.7." 'Phone: Kensington* 3292-3.

Subscription Rates (including postage) — 12 months 15s. 2d.; 6 months, 7s. 7d.; or from Newsagent, 3d. weekly.

SPIRITUALISM: A WAY OF LIFE

TO those of us who remember Eileen Garrett as a first-rate Medium for mental phenomena, it requires some adjustment of ideas to accept her in her new vocation as Editor-in-chief of a progressive American magazine; and yet, with the September issue, her publication, *Tomorrow*, enters the second year of its existence. Mrs. Garrett is not an avowed Spiritualist, and has taken a rather detached, scientific view of her mediumship, but her latest editorial contains a special message which is not without its significance to any who claim the title of Spiritualist. Writing on the theme of "Living History," she says:—

> "When the trade routes of the world are being changed, and the sword rather than the pen fashions history, it is often suggested by the too sensitive that they cannot serve the community. Each one, be he musician or mechanist, *has in himself the personal will and desire in whose breath is the way of growth.* From the simple motivation of the spirit, great deeds are born, and culture and peace spread their wings over the earth, causing the barbarian shadows to recede. It is just that we be wrathful at the process that has forced us into sorrow; but let us remember well that had we treasured *enough* the things for which we now have to fight, contention and dispute would not have been forced upon us."

What are these things which, it is suggested, we did not treasure *enough*? We are fighting, so we claim, for freedom; freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, freedom of worship; freedom to say "yes" or "no," freedom to change an authority which says "no" to our "yes." We are fighting for a way of life which we hold to be good, and for the freedom to make it better. Are these the things we did not treasure enough? Or is it true that we treasured them enough to fight for, to the death if need be, but not enough to save us from the need for fighting?

Hitler? Hitler is a name for later history books. He is, at the moment, a focus-point, a malignant symptom of a disease in the world-body spiritual, manifesting in the physical; and that disease is materialism. There is the arch-enemy of mankind's salvation. We gird at the scientists for their materialism, but it is not that we have to fear. They are, some of them at any rate, rapidly dissolving their own materialism into the mists of the Unknown; their atom, the last bulwark of solidity, they are resolving into a symbol—and behind the symbol lies the Spirit.

The materialism we have to fight—and conquer, is the tradition of a standard of values based on *material* benefits. Men have built up an elaborate civilisation, the motivation behind which has been profit, or what they call profit, forgetting the words of the Man who said: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And who should be foremost in such a battle but those who claim the name which is the antithesis of materialism? It is not an easy battle, for the materialist standard is deeply ingrained even where it is not flagrant. Materialism is an adversary with more "quislings" than Hitler ever dreamed of. Spiritualism, to be a force potent for good, must not only be taught, it must be *lived*. In the

(*Continued at foot of next column*)

THIS WEEK'S STORY.

BENJA'S BRICK TEST

THE following story is an instance of a discarnate spirit communicating information which he alone knew, and which was verified. It was first published in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* for January 31st, 1891, and is cited in Myers' *Human Personality*, vol. ii, p. 182.

The facts were given by Mrs. Finney, the sister of the communicating spirit, who died about 1866, and was known as "Cousin Benja." Prior to his decease, he and his sister and mother had discussed the possibility of spirit-return; and, with a view to deciding the matter, he marked with ink, in the presence of his sister, a fragment of brick and then broke it in two. One piece he gave to his sister to keep and the other he said he would hide, and that, after he died, he would, if possible, communicate and disclose the hiding place. He also left a sealed letter, the contents of which he proposed similarly to disclose.

When he died his sister and mother sat for a few months ineffectually, but later developed mediumship sufficient to get communications by table tilts and the alphabet.

Benja then came and told them the hiding place of the piece of brick. He said: "You will find that piece of brick in the cabinet under the tomahawk." The cabinet had not been opened since his death, and, on unlocking it they found, on the lowest shelf, below a tomahawk, a large triton shell. The aperture was neatly closed with a piece of gummed paper; and within it was found, well pushed in, the piece of marked brick, wrapped up in folds of soft paper so as to fit tightly. It corresponded with the piece in the possession of the sister.

Benja also disclosed the contents of the sealed letter. It contained only seven words: "Julia, do right and be happy. Benja."—Quoted from *The Facts of Psychic Science and Philosophy*, p. 145, by A. Campbell Holms.

THE ROSE

AN emblematic flow'r
Its name a word of power.
For fully to discern
The meaning of a rose
Would reach from heaven to earth,
From earth to heaven.
Rose that can tell and spell
Strange meanings and all other flowers excel.

DAVID GOW.

(*Continued from previous column*)

séance room we find our truth and our consolation; in the lecture room, on the public platform and in the pages of our literature, both periodical and permanent, we spread the knowledge we have gained; but it is in our lives that the true value of our philosophy and all that it implies should be reflected. This means that, while playing our part in this brief earthly drama, we should be ever conscious of our spiritual nature and our spiritual destiny. It means that, being spirit, we are one with Spirit, and so should have no thought of gain for self which must be by the loss of some other self. In finer words than these is this thought expressed by F. W. H. Myers in *The Implicit Promise of Immortality*:

> One way I know; forget, forswear, disdain
> Thine own best hopes, thine utmost loss and gain,
> Till when at last thou scarce rememberest now
> If on the earth be such a man as thou,
> Nor hast one thought of self-surrender—no,
> For self is none remaining to forgo—
> If ever, then shall strong persuasion fall
> That in thy giving thou hast gained thine all,
> Given the poor present, gained the boundless scope,
> And kept thee virgin for the further hope.

EVER NIGH.—II.

WHEN?

By ALAN HOWGRAVE-GRAHAM

WE know so little, and we understand even so much less, of the real nature and conditions of that other-world life, that positive assertions should usually be avoided concerning any aspect of it, not excepting the one under consideration. If, therefore, I believe myself to have attained to something approaching certainty as to certain general principles which seem to attach to this question, it is with the reservation just implied in mind, and I can but commend a like caution in attitude to others. Still, on the main fact implied by these words "*Ever Nigh*," I can say confidently that they need have no more doubt than I have.

The experiences upon which these tentatively reached conclusions are based were not, I suppose, altogether exceptional in themselves. Truly the circumstances which led up to them are most likely almost unique, but those are not for these columns. There is, however, one aspect of these conclusions which it is possible, not to say a duty, to state with entire candour. This is that they were arrived at, or rather their provisional acceptance was compelled, in the teeth of strongly held contrary preconceptions. So strongly held that but a few years ago, in these very columns of LIGHT itself, I insisted that, as I honestly believed and had stoutly maintained for nearly twenty years, though Survival and Communication themselves had been established, it was not safe to accept anything else as proved, or even as provable, which the Spiritualist believes and asserts. I took that back about some other matters three years ago, and I do it again about this one now. Facts have simply compelled the abandoning of that position, and admission that several of the teachings, beliefs, what you please, of Spiritualism, even though not always entirely acceptable *au pied de la lettre*, are at any rate broadly correct, and, roughly speaking, represent facts. And I venture to predict that psychical researchers, as such, will, if open-minded, find themselves, as time goes on, more and more in that position.

ATTITUDE OF APPROACH

It is not, therefore, by one calling himself a Spiritualist that these conclusions have been reached, and that the data upon which they are founded have been purposely sought and collected for some time past. It is by one who, however modestly, seeks to study mediumistic phenomena, and their implications, no matter to what conclusions, congenial or the reverse, they may lead, remaining entirely agnostic the while from what is commonly called the "religious" point of view. This by no means implies cold indifference towards those implications, nor any attempt to deny the personal significance which they have come to possess. It is perfectly feasible for a fully detached and objective attitude, as completely disjoined from desire and from sentiment as it is from theology, when *seeking* the truth, to co-exist with full appreciation of its spiritual and other importance when discovered; indeed, the latter is fortified and intensified by the very fact itself of the former; such amount of reliable information as is attained, thus hall-marked by caution and an analytical approach, is valued accordingly.

The particular subject now in question, namely, knowledge on the part of excarnate spirits of our daily doings, is a case in point, and there is no longer any room in my mind for doubt that it is a literal fact, and that it can and does take place with some amount of ease and frequency—given, that is, certain conditions.

To say this, however, is by no means to imply an idea to which a certain type of Spiritualist seems regrettably prone, namely, that entrance on the discarnate state of existence transforms any however commonplace individual into a superior being suddenly endowed with almost archangelic omniscience, to whom no event, past, present or future, is unknown, and whose every utterance through however crude a Medium is something almost semi-divine. It is a digression, but worth remarking here, that many Spiritualists do not seem to have grasped one lamentably evident fact. This is that in certain kinds of spiritualistic assemblies, Mediums of a sort are constantly being exploited by a class of communicators who are genuine enough, very likely, as excarnates, but are personally just commonplace bores, whose vanity is probably tickled by being allowed to show off by posing as apostolic teachers without their having the slenderest qualifications to be such. These irrepressibles are encouraged to pour out tedious, pointless, long-winded exhortations, consisting of a string of pious, but painfully obvious platitudes, to an audience which would not have listened to them for five minutes when they were alive, but is foolish enough to gape at them as heaven-sent prophets now they are dead. They do a great deal of harm, for nothing more devastatingly alienates the man in the street whose first psychical experience is of this kind; he says, naturally, however illogically, "If they talk this fatuous sort of rubbish, how can they be real spirits?"

Nor does it mean—heaven forbid—that we have no individual privacy of thought or action, fortunately for all concerned.

> "Do we indeed desire the dead
> Should still be near us at our side?
> Is there no baseness we would hide?
> No inner vileness that we dread?
>
> "Shall he for whose applause I strove,
> I had such reverence for his blame,
> See with clear eye some hidden shame,
> And I be lessened in his love?"

GENERAL LAWS

This brings us to the first, and one of the most important of the general laws which seem to be governing this question. This is that certain kinds of thoughts attract, and certain kinds repel, the excarnate, or at any rate keep them at a distance. "What kind of thoughts?" That depends on what kind of excarnate: the answer is in general terms that those thoughts with which he is in sympathy, those in harmony with his own ideas, feelings, tastes, are those that on the whole attract him, while those foreign to his nature, or distasteful to him, fail to attract him, or repel him. In a state of being where it is evident that Thought is the machinery itself of existence, perhaps the very substance of it, this is no more than natural and expectable.

The second apparent law is that an excarnate individual is, as a rule, immediately and acutely aware of the general nature of thoughts of the incarnate about him; at any rate if there is any sort of tie between him and them, and that such thoughts affect him favourably or unfavourably, and pleasantly or otherwise, according to their nature; further, that they are capable of exercising a quite powerful influence in his life.

The third law seems to be that the mental state of an incarnate at a given moment importantly affects the closeness or otherwise of an excarnate's possible contact with him. There are various inhibitive or obstructive emotions, such as anger, grief, fear, hatred, ill-temper, self-absorption; all these tend to create barriers which shut out all but those to whom they are congenial; so do flippant incredulity, trivial curiosity, and fear or dislike of the idea, in seeking communication. The converses of these things, on the other hand, tend to break barriers down. Tennyson makes pregnant observations on the subject in *In Memoriam*, xciv.

CONDITIONS NECESSARY

Such, it would seem, are the more general conditions governing a sensing of the general character of the affairs of the living by the "dead," as distinguished from a close perception of their exact nature. This latter, however, is a different matter; when it is a

question of something like a detailed perception of actual doings, other factors seem to be involved.

To begin with, such knowledge of this kind as an excarnate obtains is not always, I think, acquired at once, nor without some practice.

Next, its acquisition and utilisation are, in any case, dependent on certain conditions. The first of these is, naturally, that there must be a very close contact indeed between the two souls concerned—the incarnate one and the excarnate one. Now this contact may arise out of various circumstances. It probably most usually originates in a deep ante-mortem affection between the two. At any rate it is unlikely without a present strong desire for the contact on the part of both, together with a definite, purposeful, and intelligent "reaching-out" by both with the express object of bringing it about. It may, however, be the fruit of a strong "affinity." This last is a very obscure factor indeed; it is seldom much understood, I think, on "that side," and one might venture to say never so on this side. Affinity is probably governed by laws of which we apprehend next to nothing. It does not depend on blood-relationship, though something of the kind seems to be not uncommon between identical twins. It is not created by the marriage tie, nor by the parental-filial tie. No doubt the most happy and successful marriages are often due to "affinities" which happened in their physical life to be of opposite sexes having thus found one another, but it is not in itself a matter of sex, or of anything else physical; in such case it is without doubt the affinity which has brought about the marriage, and not the other way about. It has, indeed, been stated to me "from that side" that every soul has its one affinity, and if it meets not that one in earth life, it meets it sooner or later in the after life. There even seems to be ground for supposing that such an exclusive affinity may have a basis in an ante-natal, but *not* necessarily incarnate pre-existence, though the reincarnationist would no doubt have his own explanation for it. Poets are apt to stumble, by inspiration or otherwise, on esoteric truths hidden from the common man, and Wordsworth may have been expressing a deep truth, an actual fact in Nature, when he said:—

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar;
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home.

Brief notice may here be taken of a not uncommonly encountered belief that it is in a recondite way spiritually detrimental to an excarnate to be in close contact with his incarnate friends, and particularly to communicate with them through Mediums. To anyone who has chanced to have been disturbed by that suggestion, one can say 'Forget it'; nineteen times out of twenty there is no more in it than there is in the nonsensical clerical pretences that communication with the dead is unnatural, or impious, or diabolically contrived for our undoing. There may be individual cases, just here and there, especially of those long passed, in which the idea is not wholly without some element of truth, but generally speaking, the real fact is quite certainly the exact contrary. In any case the matter is one that can quite safely be left to the excarnate themselves; if and when it really is bad for them, be sure they will not do it.

Next week: HOW?

DR. JOAD MARCHES ON

DR. C. E. M. JOAD announced his return to God and Religion in an illuminating article published by the *Evening Standard* recently. For thirty years, he confessed, he had enjoyed the "Freedom and Gaiety" of Agnosticism, for whereas he had been unable to reconcile Pain and Evil with an all-loving Omnipotent Creator, it would seem that he found in material evolution a logical solution of life's problems. True, Pain and Evil remained, but he decided that they were merely a by-product of Poverty and bad education in childhood. Therefore, they could be cured by a mixture of Socialism and Psycho-analysis.

After thirty years Dr. Joad finds that he cannot believe this any more. Evil is too widespread and obtrusive, and he himself has been smitten by ill-health. Evil, he now thinks, is a Reality, endemic in the heart of man. Socialism and Psycho-analysis no longer suffice as cures; he needs an ally in the fight against Evil, and finding none other in the offing, he turns again to God.

In this progress, however, he encounters another difficulty. He has, so he declares, no experience of God; but the Mystics have, and although they "talk a language he cannot understand," he does not doubt their experiences. Despite his inability to see "any answer to the intellectual arguments," he has reached a conviction that what they say *may* be true, and that the arguments of the head may be outflanked by those of the heart.

A GLEAM OF LIGHT

Unfortunately, this process of intellectual reasoning had not lead Dr. Joad into the promised land of freedom and harmony. All it accomplished by August 25th was to cause him to "resume with dismay the burden his Agnosticism had set aside." Yet by September 13th a gleam of light seems to have broken through the gloomy outlook, for on that date he deals, in the *Sunday Dispatch*, with a question concerning Mr. Hore-Belisha's recent retreat with the Cistercians. "*Are such spells of silent meditation*," he is asked, "*good for man?*"

VALUE OF MEDITATION

"If you believe in God," he concludes, "the arguments for occasional retreat assume a new significance . . . A retreat is a device enabling you to hear Him; instead of doing the talking, we sit still for once and let Him talk to ourselves. If our spirit belongs to and derives from another world, we ought sometimes to attend to our other worldly connection."

With all this Spiritualists will agree, while hoping that Dr. Joad's break with Materialism will carry him farther towards a knowledge of God. That may prove difficult along his line of intellectual argument, but the demonstrable evidence of Survival and communication with our discarnate brethren would be of tremendous help to him, as to others similarly perplexed. For it is an essential step along the road to Harmony and "Freedom."

Mrs. ELIZABETH FORD

NEWS has reached us of the sudden passing, with no previous illness, of Mrs. Elizabeth Ford at her home in Chelsea. Mrs. Ford had been a member of the London Spiritualist Alliance for many years, and had at one period served on the Council. Psychic study had been of absorbing interest to her since the early days of the British College of Psychic Science, where she studied and gained experience of many aspects under the late Mr. Hewat McKenzie, who valued her friendship highly. Her knowledge of mediumship and of psychic development was profound, and her greatest contribution to the work came through this knowledge when she undertook to assist Mrs. Ruth Vaughan in her development, giving years of patient care to this, resulting in a gift to the Movement of a very fine sensitive.

Mrs. Ford was an able musician, and an accomplished woman in many ways, and her numerous friends are poorer for her sudden withdrawal from their midst. But the reality of a future life was to her an ever-present thought, and in the new life she will be happily at home.

L.S.A. NOTES AND COMMENTS

By MERCY PHILLIMORE

THE NARROWING OF THE GULF?

IN *The Times* of September 16th a letter to the Editor, signed by K. B. Drennan, of Bath, referred to a recent murder case tried at the Winchester Assizes, when by the use of an instrument called the electro-encephalograph, the accused was proved to be an epileptic.

It is claimed that this instrument records the minute electrical currents that occur in the brain. A Spiritualist might ask, do the minute electrical currents referred to actually occur in the brain, or may they not be evidence of that activity which proceeds from the soul, and which is but made operative through the brain of the physical body, upon the external world of matter?

There is a large body of thought in Spiritualism which affirms that all sensation and thought is rooted in the soul; that all sensation and thought are part of the functions of the soul, and that those functions find outward expression in the world of matter by means of the senses and the nervous system of the physical body.

It is relevant here to recall the remarkable work of Dr. and Mrs. Carl Wickland, of Los Angeles, published in their book entitled *Thirty Years among the Dead*.

The claim made in this book is that numerous cases of obsession were cured by means of " static electricity " assisted by the mediumship of Mrs. Wickland. The patients were subjected to this electrical treatment, and it is recorded that the obsessing spirit was thus dislodged from the patient and would sometimes control Mrs. Wickland. Dr. Wickland would then endeavour by words of kindness and advice to persuade the spirit to relieve the patient permanently of his unwanted presence.

The essential point of similarity between the electro-encephalograph and Dr. Wickland's " static electricity " is that disturbed mental states may be reached by apparatus which would appear to be sensitive to an element more refined than matter in its ordinary form.

POSSESSION

A belief in possession is one rather dear to the hearts of some of the enemies of Spiritualism. It is also readily accepted by many Spiritualists who tend to apply this diagnosis to people in mental distress of various kinds and degrees, and who would appear also to have some signs of psychic power. It is doubtful if true possession is often met with, possession meaning the disorderly possession of a human being by a discarnate spirit. It is probable that disturbances in the health of the physical body, allied to fixed and false ideas with a mere modicum of psychic power, more often account for the distressing cases sometimes met with. Such states are not due to a proper interest in Spiritualism; they are due to the existing tendencies of body and mind of the unfortunate sufferers, and only accentuated by an unwise pursuit of Spiritualism in forced development of hoped-for mediumship, or a too concentrated attention upon the subject. Extremes in all things are unwise.

FURTHER PROOF OF IDENTITY

Some little time ago Mrs. M. allowed a report of a sitting to appear in this column which related evidence of identity established through reference to clothes. Once again she has been the recipient of a similar message. Mrs. M. writes :—

> First I wish to apologise for my hasty conclusion over my sitting with Mrs. Bedford. (Mrs. M. reported that the sitting was fairly good, but that she did not receive any statement that struck her as being definitely conclusive of the presence of the desired communicator.) Again an interesting piece of evidence developed, at least I think so, but should like your opinion. Towards the end of the sitting I asked for some sign of the communicator, as I had had before. The Medium found it difficult at first, and then said: " You have an old coat of his, light colour, perhaps gabardine." (My husband had nothing of that sort.) " It has a coloured handkerchief in it." (I have given away all his coloured handkerchiefs.) As a last effort, she said: " You have a heavy wardrobe in your room and it is in the long drawer at the bottom." [I have no wardrobe.] On my saying that I found no single fact correct, she said: " Well, it is to do with a handkerchief, *coloured*, and it is a coat *you* have sometimes worn."
>
> Lying in bed I wondered if it could have been meant for a very heavy old-fashioned chest of drawers. So I got out and looked—nothing in bottom drawer, but in third from bottom, long drawer, there was my husband's bed jacket (the top part of a special suit used for going to baths at Aix, much like a pyjama jacket, in flannel, but with a hood.) It is apricot colour. The hood was rough so I had, some years ago, lined it with a blue and white spotted handkerchief.
>
> After my husband passed over, *I wore it* every night in bed for reading and often when cold slept in it.
>
> Other things that seemed unimportant—including a cousin I hardly knew, but have prayed for, as I knew help might be needed, came through. All these things and his name were repeated in almost exact words by Mr. Austin. This I find most interesting.
>
> If you think all this is at all useful, please publish it, again from Mrs. M. I am sorry I am so critical of my sittings but it means so much that I *must* follow only absolute truth and facts.
>
> On reflection Mrs. Bedford's sitting has brought me great comfort.

CORROBORATION BETWEEN MEDIUMS

Mrs. M's reference to the corroboration of some of these points through Mr. Austin's mediumship is, as she says, very interesting. I have found that Mrs. Bedford's mediumship lends itself rather specially to such corroboration. I have received several points through her mediumship exactly as they have been given me through Mrs. Nash and Mrs. Taylor. The three Mediums are daily working in this house, and I have been told by the Controls that they are well known to each other, and occasionally help each other in cases where the one may find difficulties which can be overcome by the others.

I must add a word in anticipation of obvious criticism. It would not be impossible for the Mediums to meet and give each other information about the various sitters, although names of sitters and other information are always withheld from the Mediums. I am quite convinced that such is not the case. People may believe this or not, but it is well to remember that all our relationships in life are based on mutual trust which is maintained or broken in the course of continued experience with each other. If we did not trust our Mediums they would not be working under our auspices.

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Trade Agents—Horace Marshall & Sons Ltd., Temple House, Tallis Street, London, E.C. 4