Light:

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

"Light! More Light!"—*Goethe.*

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

The Religio-Philosophical Journal devotes much space to the correspondence that has taken place respecting the conditions under which public séances are held. It reproduces several of the letters which have appeared in these columns, and devotes two leaders to a philosophical and temperate discussion of the questions at issue. The *Journal* has gone through all this before it reached us. All our new departures and developments come to us from America. The first wave that touched our shores came from the West, and it has been so ever since. It is safe, indeed, to predict that the condition of Spiritualism in America at a given date will be reproduced in its main features, making allowance for necessary differentiations, among us a year or two later. How this may be accounted for I do not profess to tell. It may be that the invisible directors of this great movement find their best and most impressible material in the more nervous and sensitive dweller in the West, and that there the battle is fought which invariably gives new truth its foothold. Thence, it may be, it finds its way to our coarser senses and less mercurial temperaments. Be this as it may, America remains what I called it ten years ago, the Judæa of Spiritualism.

It is five years since the *Journal* began a vigorous attempt to educate the public on the subject of dark séances and cabinets, and it is a little longer since I found myself compelled to arrive at the conclusion that, chiefly in consequence of these methods of investigation, Spiritualism was not only becoming a byword among men, but was being discredited by the pranks of an order of Spirit that was rapidly becoming dominant in the public movement. It was passing, in my opinion, into the power of a distinctly lower order of Spirit than had previously manifested its presence in our circles. I do not say that these were "evil." I have learned to call nothing "common or unclean" that may be used for educational purposes, and such purpose has, I am fully sure, been served by these beings, *when the lesson they can teach has been rightly learned.* But the fact remains that the lesson has not been usually apprehended, and across these past five years the reviewer, whose eyes are open, can read the lesson of woe written broad and large. The effort at purgation in England has been tardily made, but here at least it is "better late than never."

"Promiscuous public circles are an abomination: they are moral pest-generators, where both the medium and sitters are liable to become, and in too many cases *are*, thoroughly demoralized." That is the indictment of the *Journal.* It is said by some that no attempt should be made to interfere with any conditions of investigation: that darkness is favourable to the production of certain phenomena, and should therefore be employed. I may rejoin for myself that I desire to interfere with no man. I know that darkness is favourable to the production of some phenomena, and these not always of the most desirable nature. It is not the darkness (as the *Journal* points out) that is objectionable *per se*: it is because of the cloak that it affords for deception, because of the facilities it gives for erroneous and faulty observation, and because of the Spirits that it invites to play their delusive and mischievous pranks. It is not desired to interfere with the sacred liberty that is the birthright of us all, and which most of us so grossly misuse. But if I see a child playing over a cesspool, I do not interfere unwarrantably when I say to the mother, "My good woman, if you do not take that child away it is extremely likely to catch typhoid fever." That is all.

The *Journal of Science*, in reviewing, with its usual candid impartiality, the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," takes occasion to combat the hostility with which any attempt to extend the domain of knowledge in the direction of the Spiritual and psychical is received. Such a writer as that unconsciously comic gentleman in the *Pall Mall Gazette* might profitably study this advice:—

"We may perhaps here usefully attempt to settle when an inquiry may be safely and justly refused as waste of time, and when it should be undertaken. Suppose a man who has scarcely mastered the elements of arithmetic, and who is totally ignorant of the higher mathematics, comes forward to point out errors in the astronomical calculations of Leverrier; suppose another, in the teeth of a vast and ever-increasing mass of evidence, tells us that the earth is flat, and that phosphorus is soluble in water as such; suppose that a third, without any systematic knowledge of biology, without any original observations or experiments, undertakes to overturn what is commonly called 'Darwinism,' we are not bound to undertake any formal refutation of the errors. Before they could understand our arguments they would be compelled to acquire knowledge which they at present do not possess. But, on the other hand, if a man habitually truthful, sober-minded, and having no personal interest in the matter, lays before us some novel fact which he has observed, we have no right to refuse him a hearing because no such facts have been registered before. To take a very simple instance: it has been held, on the foundation of general experience, that none of the many species of lizards known to Science were capable of inflicting a venomous bite. Latterly, however, a species of lizard has been discovered in Mexico which possesses true grooved teeth and poison-glands, and whose bite proves deadly to small animals within a few minutes. Hence the inductive conclusion that 'no animals having legs can instil poison by biting' has been set aside as founded on too narrow a basis. In like manner a wider experience may compel us to reconsider other inductions, and hence we should never dismiss the records of facts on the mere ground of their unexpected nature."

The *Leisure Hour*, which once employed Mr. Irving Bishop to write some sorry stuff about Spiritualism, now allows a writer to advertise him as a thought-reader, "the son of a landed proprietor in New York (!) and godson of the celebrated Washington Irving," as if these latter statements, if ever so accurate, had anything to do with the matter. This psychically curious son of a landed proprietor has, it seems, succeeded at the Deanery, Southampton, in reading Sir J. Lubbock's mind so far as to give with approximate correctness the number of a £5 note. This he did with only momentary contact, and practically without any possibility of direction by muscular movements, or by any unconscious indication. Dr. W. B. Carpenter, in an undated letter, propounds his satisfaction with Mr. Bishop's "remarkable power of thought-reading"—a satisfaction, he unkindly adds, shared by "a number of the professors of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities." Those professors, I should fancy, are indeed acquainted with Mr. Bishop's "remarkable powers," which extend far beyond mere thought-reading. Probably he is an ordinary medium (if one may venture to apply such an epithet as "ordinary" to such a person). If he exercised his powers as other mediums do, he would be roundly abused by the Carpenters and Lubbocks. But, as he goes about abusing Spiritualism, he is patted on the back by these eminent seekers after truth, to whom that precious possession is valuable only in proportion as it squares with their preconceived opinions.

The theory propounded by the writer to account for these sympathetic impressions is that all bodies are in a state of

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molecular movement or agitation, and that such movements are communicated to other bodies near them by something in what seems to us the vacant air around them. Two brains, being bodies in molecular agitation, become sympathetic when the thoughts of one are vividly conceived, and so conveyed to the other. Just in the same way one harp may be made to sound in harmony with another. This theory of mutual influence or sympathetic impression, as I prefer to call it, the editor disposes of summarily, as being "wholly inadequate" and waits for "one much simpler and more probable."

One of the third-rate "society journals" that lives, as its fellows do, on any kind of gossip that it can rake up, has been enriching its columns with a story about Spiritualism. A story it is, but in what exact sense of that ambiguous word, I cannot say. Probably we shall be safe if we do not attach any very precise value to what appears in such dubious company. At any rate, here is the tale, as it is told, for what it is worth. It occurred, it would seem, to the inventive mind of one Mr. Joseph Cartwright, who was about (as the society scribe might have said, and missed a point by not saying) "to hold an hour's communion with the dead," to enliven that intercourse by a practical joke on the living. So, he says, with modest pride in his original device, "I burnt one end of a wine cork, enclosed it in an empty lucifer match-box case, and deposited it in the left hand pocket of my coat." I don't know what a "lucifer match-box case" may be, but perhaps it is the society-journal equivalent for a match-box. "Irresistible," invited to investigate this recondite mystery, was obliging enough to do so. The delighted joker says, "I felt his hand dive down to the bottom of my pocket—a deep one—and extract the box with the burnt cork." Not this only, but first one lady, and then another, remarked that her face was being rubbed with something soft, and then all in turn were so treated. "The result of this was that when the light was turned on, we all found our faces pretty well tattooed." I should not have used that term for the process; but then I should not have provided any burnt cork, or other clown's property, for what I regard as a serious business. What conclusion are we desired to draw from this recital, if it be true? We are not told, but I will venture to draw two. The first is that buffoonery such as this is idiotic and reprehensible. The second is that no chance should be given for its display, such as is provided by total darkness. In the light Mr. Cartwright would have been harmless.

M.A. (Oxon.)

A HAUNTED CHAMBER.

Some years ago I was sent for to treat by mesmerism a baronet who resided in Hampshire. I attended him during three weeks. On the day of my departure he said, "Should you come again, I shall change your quarters, and put you into another room;" to which I answered, "Why should you do so, as I am very comfortable where I am?" A few weeks afterwards I went to attend him again, and I found the servant had instructions to take my luggage to a room in another part of the house. It was a small room, with small panes to the window; and a large four-post bedstead. Altogether the room appeared gloomy. I could not sleep the first night, nor the second; on the third night, as soon as I was in bed, I saw at the foot of the bed the face of a small and very ugly man, dancing about and making grimaces. I turned away, but presently I looked again, and there he was still. He appeared a small dwarf, and very ugly. I felt so frightened that I closed my eyes, and did not look or move any more. In the morning I asked the housekeeper if she would put me in my old room again. "O yes, sir," she answered, "I knew, I knew." Next morning my patient asked me how I slept in my new quarters. I told him that I had returned to my first. "What!" said he, "you have shifted without telling me? I had you put into that other room for an experiment." "What experiment?" I asked. "I wanted to know how you, a strong mesmerist, would sleep in a room that is reputed to have been haunted for a century, and no one has slept in it for many years. It was said that the room was haunted *by a dwarf*."

Adolphe Didier.

10, Berkeley-gardens, Kensington.

Mrs. Hardinge-Britten's Lecture Appointments.—Halifax: Sunday, November 12th, and Monday, November 13th. Bradford: Sunday, November 19th. Sowerby Bridge: Sunday, November 26th.—Address, The Limes, Humphrey-street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

MR. RODEN NOEL "ON SOME THEOSOPHIC DOCTRINES."

To the Editor of "Light."

Sir,—I am waiting for the completion of Mr. Noel's attack before attempting a reply which, unless the concluding part is more unanswerable than those already published, I believe I shall be able to offer to it. In the meanwhile, however, I will ask you to let me at once call attention to what I cannot but regard as a very strange and prejudicial misjudgment in a note to the second part of the criticism. Controversy on the main questions (which I shall endeavour accurately to define) would be much embarrassed by the necessity for verbal explanations. If, however, Mr. Noel really thinks that the doctrines in question affirm the limitation of consciousness to this brain-life, pray let him say so. I am sure that he intends to deal fairly with these expositions; but to base that contention expressly on such passages as the following, taken out of their context, and even then not quite completely, is not to do so. I give the first with Mr. Noel's italics and notes of interjection. "*The spirit*, of course, for all its comparative ethereality and incorporeality, *a space occupying and material entity*, is borne about by magnetic currents, swayed here and there like dead leaves!!!" "Surely," says Mr. Noel thereupon, "the writer is a very decided, one might say very gross materialist." Now he has omitted the important words after "spirit": "sunk in its *post-mortem* trance," in the original; important, because it was the very object of the writer to shew that in the particular case under consideration (an apparition described by Mr. Terry) it was *not* a conscious, intentional visit by the true spirit, but that this being in the first stage after death had not yet emerged from its astral integument, with which it was therefore for the moment identified, and so spoken of. How any one can have read these "Fragments" with common care, and then stumbling on such a passage as the above, can have supposed the writer to mean that the true spiritual Ego is "borne about by magnetic currents, and swayed here and there like dead leaves," is to me incomprehensible. On the other hand that sentence is strictly applicable to what, when quitted by the Ego, the writer calls the "shell," and which, even before that, would be subject to just the same laws, the control of the Ego being in abeyance during the "*post-mortem* trance." It is called "the spirit" in this place merely to distinguish it from the empty shell, as I submit should have been perfectly apparent from the context.

"Thought, memory, and will are the energies of the brain." "Has Buchner or Moleschott ever said anything more crassly materialistic?" asks Mr. Noel. And I ask in reply, Has the writer in the *Theosophist* ever said, as Buchner and Moleschott have maintained, that these energies are of the *brain alone?* Has the conscious spiritual Ego after bodily death a brain? and is not the whole of this teaching designed to shew what are the conditions of the individual future life of consciousness and thought? But in this paragraph the writer is referring to adepts and mediums—people living this bodily life, and acting through and by its organs. My idealism is as sensitive as Mr. Noel's, but really I can bear without flinching the enunciation of a physiological truism.

Now it is quite competent to Mr. Noel to shew, if he can, that the theosophical teachers are no philosophers, and do not understand the tendencies of their own doctrines. But it is quite another thing to impute *intentional* inculcation of materialism to writers who avow altogether different principles. In the two instances above referred to there can be no question at all of unconscious inconsistency. Either the author of the "Fragments," when he says "of course," what he (for the moment, and for a special purpose) calls "the spirit," is material, deliberately means to say that there is nothing else in the universe than matter, or Mr. Noel has simply misunderstood him. And when he says that thought, &c., are energies of the brain, he either *means* this in the sense of Buchner and Moleschott, and denies any conscious disembodied life whatever, or again Mr. Noel has mistaken him. I leave it to Mr. Noel himself to say which of these alternatives he thinks most probable.

I must also protest against the questions at issue being prejudiced by random quotations from the columns of the *Theosophist*, in which many different writers are allowed to deliver themselves without any authorisation from the acknowledged leaders of the Theosophic Society.

C. C. M.

Mr. J. J. Morse's Appointments.—London: Sunday, November 12th. Cardiff: Sunday, November 19th. London: Sunday, November 26th.—For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.

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ON SOME THEOSOPHIC DOCTRINES.

"BUDDHISM."

By the Hon. Roden Noel.

(*Continued from page* 492.)

III.

It should be distinctly understood that Buddhism (and the editors of the *Theosophist* are Buddhists) not only refuses to recognise that human individuality, upon which I have insisted as a great central truth, but expressly regards such recognition as a deadly heresy, as the illusion of illusions, one of the four Upadanas, which are the cause of birth, decay, death, sorrow, pain, and despair. Two well-known words, Mr. Rhys-Davids tells us, have been invented to stigmatise it. In the Brahmajala Sutta, Gautama, after shewing how the unfounded belief in the eternal existence of God arose, goes on to refute the heresy of the Brahmans concerning the eternal existence of the soul. He teaches that the soul will have neither a conscious, nor an unconscious existence after death—will have none at all. Man consists, on the contrary, of five *skandhas*, or aggregates, *material qualities*, *sensations*, *abstract ideas*, *tendencies of mind*, and *mental powers*. Now, here we have again what I may term the sand-grains-in-one-bag, or loose-beads-on-one-string psychology, against which, as I have endeavoured to shew, all introspective consciousness implacably declares itself. If the sense of individuality be an illusion, and a deadly heresy, it is, at all events, a heresy and illusion which stands at the very foundation of all possible self-consistent, and reasonable philosophy—nay, of any thought and experience whatsoever– a postulate pre-supposed even in the very verbal denial of its reality. No doubt we have had the same sort of suicidal pseudo-philosophy in Europe. Hume and the French Materialists are parents of it with us, and following them came Comte, Mill, and the physiological scientists of to-day. But, assimilating the great thinkers of Germany, our best and latest English thinkers have entirely repudiated such doctrine. I need cite only Stirling, Green, Caird, Wallace, and Hinton.

I will, however, briefly state why I am unable to receive this Buddhist teaching that a man is not an individual, an Ego, a person, a self, but consists of five skandhas, or aggregates, with interminable subdivisions. (1) This is not a logical, philosophical analysis at all, as anyone who takes the trouble to examine the enumeration of the skandhas and their subdivisions may decide at once. For even the five principles overlap, include, and repeat one another, and far more is this true of their details; it is a higgledy-piggledy collection, a catalogue made apparently at random, without guiding principle. (2) And were this otherwise, the principles are not rightly named *aggregates*, because, since they involve one another in their very essence and idea, they cannot exist apart, and therefore they can neither be aggregated, collected together, nor divorced. Thus the material properties (including space and time) are placed *side by side with* sensations and abstract ideas, though *out of* sensations and abstract ideas the former can have no existence. Again, abstract ideas and sensations can only be logically, but not actually, severed from tendencies of mind, and mental powers. (3) The qualities are wrongly pigeon-holed—thus thought is called a material property, though it is also called a tendency, pertaining to No. 4, and classed by itself a third time as Skandha No. 5. It is distinctly laid down in the Pitakas that all the skandhas are functions of the living body, produced by contact with external objects; that as the body is ever changing, man changes with it; and that, when the body disintegrates, the man disintegrates also. Now I have already shewn what indeed (to the shallow Western mind) needs little shewing, that thought, sensation, the sense of self, are so little functions of the living body, that the living body and the external world are, on the contrary, *their* products, *their* resultant. (4) But here we have another glaring inconsistency; for we are expressly taught (see "Isis Unveiled," for instance) that *Upadana*, grasping *trishna*, thirst, produce not only *Karma*, but will, and that will develops force, while the latter generates matter, or an object having form. That will generates (apparent) force and matter I also believe; but then how reconcile this statement with the doctrine that, contrariwise, will, desire, and thought are *the products* of vital force, organism, and the external world? Can anything act before it is? (5) *Individuality* is placed under Skandha 4. Though we were assured that this "illusion of illusions" and "deadly heresy" was the curious result of the *aggregation of* four principles, and that it *was not one of them*, yet here it appears as one of them, or rather as part of one of them.

In the *Milinda Prashnaya* (a Sinhalese translation of a very ancient Pali work), that there may be no possible mistake as to the real meaning of Buddhist doctrine on the head of selfhood or personality, we have the following illustration used and ascribed to Buddha himself:—

"As the various parts of a chariot form, when united, the chariot, so the five skandhas, when united in one body, form a being, a living existence."

Between the illustrations of a chariot, and a pudding-stone there is not, perhaps, much to choose, except for beauty. In both cases, at least, the parts are mechanically juxtaposed; and of such heterogeneous parts, we are assured, is a man made up! The Western mind dissents. When I perceive I also judge, and remember; when I remember I recall my judgment and perception; when I reason my perception, memory, and judgment are involved; when I love that is also true; when I act from a sense of duty it is equally true; when I imagine, and when I desire or will, my other faculties likewise are in exercise; if I ever attain to insight, to perfect knowledge, it can only be when the very essence and substance of all my faculties shall be perfectly fused, and raised to their own highest power, being now lame and mutilated, and not themselves, just in so far as they are mutually separated in their action*: and then how *can* thought, love, will, imagination, be "united in one (physical) body"? Why, they all go roaming over the illimitable universe! They are infinite. As to *Karma*, I would observe, though I will speak further about it presently, that, while it does not really provide a future life for the individual, it might be popularly supposed to do so, and therefore involves a rather mischievous equivoke, has an ambiguous signification. Hence we find Buddhists speaking and thinking as if *Karma* did provide a personal future for each, which certainly it does not.†

But, as I have argued, I fear *ad nauseam*, individuality is, in fact, *pre-supposed* in all these skandhas, and their constituent details, to constitute, and give them reality. And therefore the sense of it cannot be an illusion generated by their aggregation, since without it they would not exist to be aggregated. Without willer, feeler, thinker, there is none of them possible.

Hence all this is to us utterly unphilosophical. I do not, of course, deny that there is embryonic consciousness in the case of our own infancy, in the case of the inferior animals, *possibly* in plants, and in some "elementals"; but to my mind it appears that, since even the very simplest conceivable sensation involves *discriminated* feeling, there is necessarily behind it an implicit, though not necessarily an explicit Ego, [which is not known *explicitly* save as correlate of a non-Ego, or resisting Power]; there is necessarily a comparing, contrasting, judging, conscious unit, which is the germ of self; but the Self into which this will ultimately develope is *necessarily in being to form* the germinating self according to its own idea. According to Hinton, the organic is a limitation of the inorganic; the latter being the most truly vital and spiritual. But Hinton is not indubitably right in this contention, because there may be other species of the organic, of which occult lore may inform us, even in the apparently inorganic world. If, however, there be embryonic consciousness, as I admit, I also allow that there is a universal consciousness, wherein the self becomes as implicit as it was in the embryonic. Still it must always be there as the principle of individualizing, or personal, discrimination, without which there is neither consciousness, nor action, nor love possible.

Therefore, to the pretensions of Eastern philosophy to exclusive knowledge, and philosophical acumen in these lofty regions of metaphysics I cannot assent. We are told by Mr. Sinnet that "Isis Unveiled" is the work rather of the Himalayan Brothers than of Madame Blavatsky, who was chiefly the organ of their inspiration. Now, if that be so, though "Isis" is undoubtedly a very remarkable book, for reasons given in these articles, and for others, I should conclude that the Brothers were certainly not the equals in metaphysical acumen of some of our Western thinkers, for instance of Plato, Aristotle, Leibnitz, Spinoza, Berkeley, Behmen, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, or James Hinton. But it is evidently the fact that their Hindu votaries regard them with no less veneration than we are accustomed to pay to

* We shall have the carbon still, but in the form of diamond.

† And among all these re-incarnations, with no memory of each other, even before you go out altogether, what provision is there for the fulfilment of love, for meeting again the beloved, who are a very integral part of ourselves? But perhaps that may be deemed a frivolous question, far beneath the dignity of occult philosophy, and only worthy of some poor benighted Spiritualist. Christ's teaching is less pretentious and detailed, but it is more satisfying, and Divinely-Human.

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Christ Himself. See the protest evoked by the letter of "H. X." in the October number of the *Theosophist*. Their religious feelings on this head are entitled to the utmost respect; but, of course, we cannot be expected to share them. We can only judge of the Brothers through the long and learned philosophical works they have dictated, by the very surprising, not to say alarming thaumaturgic powers they evidently possess, and by the respect, almost amounting to worship, they have manifestly been able to inspire in their fellow countrymen. But when their recluse and ascetic lives are appealed to, it must be remembered that we Protestants are not at all sure whether the highest *spiritual* wisdom is not attainable rather by Christ's mode of eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, and going about among them with a heart full of universal sympathy, than by John the Baptist's, of living in the wilderness upon locusts and wild honey. That the East, however, which "let the legions thunder by, then plunged in thought again," can teach us much wisdom, and impart to us momentous knowledge, for all our boasted civilisation, fussy, superficial, grasping, and sordid, full of horrible contrasts, shams, conventions, unsatisfying respectabilities, hollow negations, and grotesque, soul-destroying creeds, beneath which heave and smoulder all the dormant hells, full of infernals, I well believe. And this new communion of Eastern with Western ideas interests me greatly; it cannot fail of ultimate profit. I would only protest against a too gaping admiration, and a too hasty disposition to swallow wholesale all that may come to us with tremendous pretensions, even though attested by prodigies, from that ancient continent, whence we already derive, through Aryan brethren, so much of inestimable value, but whence, assuredly, all that issues is not quintessential gold. It was said also, with truth, of a region nearer home, that it was "a land of many Cants with a C, but only one Kant with a K." But whether to us Nazarene and European dogs much more precious wisdom will be "vouchsafed," if we prove ourselves unworthy of it by free criticism, must be a point extremely doubtful to one who reads the native letters evoked by the (certainly unreasonable) remonstrance of "H.X.," who had been accepted as a Chela, or disciple, by the Brothers (see the October number of the *Theosophist*).* The rapier-point of contempt never penetrated more palpably through the sheath of self-suppression. But this spirit on either side should be discouraged. The genius and temperaments of our races differ; yet let them honour, and learn from one another. Our branch of the Aryan family has sterling qualities that our brethren lack, and they own many admirable gifts, of which we have too little; but the close, intellectual intercourse of nations must be for mutual profit.

I have a final word, however, to say on the doctrine of *Karma*, and the question closely allied to it, that of a future life.

Karma is supposed to provide for the satisfaction of our moral instincts, for our aspirations after just compensation, and redress of wrong, though Buddhism admits of no future life. The individualising force of *Karma*—desire for more life, and more satisfaction—according to the merits and demerits of the defunct individual—creates a new one in his place; that is the form the doctrine of transmigration took in Gautama's system. But how does that fulfil our sense of justice? The great puzzle with us is how it can be just to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children. And this system but gratuitously doubles the enigmas provided by the terrible fact of heredity. The sins of a man, it appears, are visited not only on his children, but also on a new-born individual, whom he has fatally created by his *Karma*, and who is, of course, in no sense himself, simply because there never was any self to identify, either during this life, or after it. It is not, and cannot be pretended that the new-born (illusory) individual is the *same* as the deceased; therefore, the prosperous sinner is never punished after this life, nor the persecuted good man compensated. That is all done vicariously; and yet we have loud outcries from these teachers (very justifiable, as I think) against *our* popular version of the Christian Atonement by substitute! How to reconcile this teaching of Gautama with what we have had recently put forward as Buddhism in the expositions of Occultism, which I have discussed, I do not at all know, but at any rate Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky profess Buddhism. If there were self-identification on the part of a deceased person, at once, or later, with the re-incarnate individual, that would be a different matter; then he must have been the same all through his births and deaths, though not always able to recognise himself as the same. For some favoured individuals Occultists tell us there will be such self-recognition in the end, *though, of course, not permanently*; but how they reconcile this teaching with the teaching of Gautama, I do not understand—though, indeed, Gautama is said to have remembered his former incarnations—but how he can have done so, if his own teaching be true, it seems impossible to explain. For he was, *ex-hypothesi*, not the same.*

And even if we grant, with some schools, that *Nirvana* means tranquil, impersonal bliss, remember that Gautama has got beyond this condition, having reached *Parinirvana*, which unquestionably does mean extinction, annihilation; and this is the consummation, both devoutly to be wished, and ultimately to be attained by the Arahat, or saint, who is aware that sorrow always attends consciousness. It, therefore, seems, to the shallow Western mind, a mere farce to talk of "losing, or gaining one's immortality," when all the time immortality is a sheer impossibility, and even if it were possible, a thing utterly undesirable, the very longing for which, as parent of all sin, suffering, and illusion, is to be laboriously suppressed. This Pessimism has commended itself to a few eccentric minds in Germany, to the great poet Leopardi in Italy, and is not, indeed, without echoes among ourselves, in our own darker moods. But Pessimism it is: let there be no sailing under false colours. Even if you elect the absorption theory of Brahmanism, remember there can be no immortality for *us*, only for Being with a big B: and how far may that concern us? But consciousness without individuality is an impossible figment of imagination. There must be subject and object. The stupid, the weak, and the wicked, moreover, will be put out rather sooner than the rest. But then, revive all the old difficulties that confronted us in Materialism: nay, Materialism is alive in the Spiritualist camp, only under a subtle disguise. What provision, then, for strict justice, and vindication of the righteous cause? What satisfaction for love? What fulfilment for aspirations after the ideal in so many baffled bosoms? Ah! the wreck and ruin of a million abortions, and germs full of promise, destined never to bear fruit! There is no Father, and conscious Substance of our own selves, Source and Begetter of all good, Vindicator, Helper, and present, living Saviour of man, wrestling with the Powers of Darkness, of still more helpless creatures below men, of all animated nature groaning and travailing in pain together. For that love and life are but a vain, unintelligible, interrupting episode in the reign of Absolute Darkness is not a solution of the mystery that commends itself to most of us, either morally or philosophically. To me it seems but a lame and impotent conclusion indeed. I hold strongly that the moral, affectional, intuitional elements in our nature are even more entitled to be heard on this subject than those which belong to the senses and understanding. But without God, and personal immortality, conscience and our deepest affections are paralysed, flouted, and put to shame. Yet Madame Balvatsky has told us that she believes in no God, personal or impersonal. I must add that nothing could seem, to some of us, more repulsive than the character ascribed in recent essays of the *Theosophist* to seekers after abnormal magical power, and the elixir of life. Cold, inhuman, unscrupulous, and unserviceable pursuit of personal dominion, could not have been depicted more crudely, and with less disguise. *Mejnour* did not, in them, appear attractive. At any rate, let not Eastern Theosophy pretend to give us more spiritual, substantial, and consolatory views of human nature and destiny than our own European Agnosticism can give; for not only does it represent immortality as an evil dream, but even unselfish sympathy and service, according to its doctrine, are to be first embraced, and then ultimately discarded, only for the sake of a yet more transcendent *summum bonum*, which is the blind alley, dead wall, and *reductio ad absurdum* of a godless annihilation! Virtue needs, indeed, no wage, but the wage of "going on;" yet if she know herself to be but a gleam of lightning in the long night of eternity, how shall she feel herself of much higher value than all perishable things beside? Still the moral teaching of Buddhism is undoubtedly very high; humility, self-repression, and universal charity are inculcated; our duty to the lower animals being nobly insisted on; the character of Sakya-Muni is, moreover, magnificent, though his intellectual system be unsatisfactory. And ethics, as Matthew Arnold tells us, are three-fourths of life. But of such a spirit we find perhaps little in modern occultist teachings; though I confess that Koot Hoomi's own utterances to Mr. Sinnett appear to breathe a higher tone, one more in harmony with His spirit, "who carries the lambs in His bosom, and gently leads those that are with young." So are the ethics of Positivism noble; but neither of these systems satisfies heart and reason both, as does the Christianity of Jesus Christ.

* Without initiation, moreover, these mysteries, we are expressly told, *cannot* be revealed: there must be long preparatory discipline.

As a rule, it is not pretended that we do, or shall remember our innumerable former incarnations. But out of potential self-indentification there is no identity. Now in an immense proportion of instances, we are told, men are annihilated after progressive degradation in various lives. In such cases, they never do, and never will indentify themselves with their past. Therefore they are not the same. For, though Locke is wrong in making our identity consist in temporal, present memory of what we have been, if he had made it consist in the eternal, intentional self-identification of our true and perfect selves, he would have been irrefragably right. Here then there is properly no future life at all—except, indeed, for the *shells*, who, though the kernel of their true selves be gone, yet *can* remember their own earth-life! It would seem that they must be making some extraordinary mistake! But their mistake soon ends, for they are fast vanishing into nonentity. So much for the *Ruach*, of which Dr. Kingsford speaks ("LIGHT" March 18th, 1882). And even the Spiritual Ego having identified itself with former lives, proceeds to lose its individuality, therefore its power of self-identification. Where then is *its* future life? It becomes Spirit-Being, Not Being. So we were as well off with the old Buddhism, that gave us no soul, as with the new Buddhism, that gives us two. But it seems that in a remote future the spiritual Ego is to do the remembering. So sometimes this function belongs to one Ego in us, and sometimes to another! It is a queer philosophy to a plain man, an ingenious curiosity of speculation, remote as possible from the solid ground of inner and outer experience. One hopes that at least these two Egos when divorced, will keep within calling distance of one another, or it will be very inconvenient for both. Nay, but one of them is to be extinguished long before the other!

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IS MATERIALISATION A FACT?

Some parts of Mrs. Showers's interesting letter are a little puzzling. "I am thankful," she says, "to 'S. W.' for giving me the opportunity of stating openly that Spiritualists are gone rather too far in assuming, in my opinion, that the fact of materialisation has as yet been scientifically established. A very superficial survey [too superficial, I fear] will unveil the fact that, though much was asserted, nothing was ever scientifically proven." Such an opinion, pronounced by a lady of so much reading and experience on the subject, cannot but be startling to some of us. But she proceeds: "For my part, *but for that which I have witnessed in my own family*, I would still be of the opinion I have expressed to Mr. Serjeant Cox in 1874, and which, *fortunately for me now*, he was good enough to publish in the *Medium* and *Spiritualist*—viz., that the so-called materialised form is but the medium entranced." (The italics in each case are mine.)

But it is difficult to understand how the publication of such an opinion can be *fortunate for her now*, when, as she clearly implies, what she has witnessed in her own family tends to contradict it. But whatever happened to her, one thing is certain, namely, that Spiritualistic records supply an abundance of educated and trustworthy witnesses to the fact that, with different mediums and on various occasions, one or more materialised forms have been seen side by side with the medium, under test conditions. Also, that equally credible witnesses have seen the figure take the form from a mist on the floor, and, after speaking to and moving about among the sitters, dissolve or dematerialise before the eyes of all. I might refer also to Archdeacon Colley's account, solemnly attested by himself, of what he witnessed more than once with Dr. Monck, without any cabinet.

With these facts before us, what can we think of Mrs. Showers's curiously worded opinions? But once more she proceeds: "The admission, however, that a *genuine materialisation* has now and then taken place [surely one is enough to prove the fact] does not justify the acceptance of *all the theories* that are, fortunately, being debated, and which are *so palpably evil* that it is earnestly to be hoped they are only temporarily tolerated in the midst of the search for good, involving, *as they do*, either the advancement or the debasement of Spiritualism." But if all these theories are *palpably evil*, how comes their discussion to be a *fortunate* thing; and, still more hard to understand, how can they involve the advancement, as well as the debasement, of Spiritualism?

But Mrs. Showers not only seems hostile to materialisation, she declares her disbelief that "our dead appear at séances, or give substantial proofs of their existence." And yet, strange to say, she "has reason to believe that such proofs have been obtained"! But if not, where is the proof of immortality? What becomes of the happiness, so warmly dwelt upon, of realising communion with our loved ones gone before? What, in a word, is the *raison d'être* of Spiritualism?

A PUZZLED READER.

I infer from the letter of "S. W." in a recent number of "LIGHT," that he is not a believer in what are termed "materialisations"; were he, he could, I think, hardly write as he does.

I so entirely sympathise with many of the remarks in his letter (having at one time occupied a position closely resembling his own) that I venture to put before him the following from my own experience. After attending many séances, and witnessing many materialisations, I remained entirely unconvinced—was persuaded that in some way I had been imposed upon. No arguments, no theories, none of the experience of others influenced me in the least; when one evening, without any "test conditions," with every possibility of fraud—for doors and windows were left unlocked and unfastened and the medium free—I saw in fair lamp-light, through the mediumship of Dr. Monck, a medium whom I thoroughly distrusted—a form imperfectly materialise itself. With the medium in sufficient light for me to see every movement—without cabinet or curtain—a most delicate substance, as of cloud or vapour (no "muslin;" shall we ever hear the last of "muslin"!) came out from his side, and gradually a form grew, then became confused in the cloud and vapour again, then grew again, and so on, until the medium appeared unable to stand any longer and was taken to a seat apparently exhausted, and the "materialisation" was at an end. Having been convinced, beyond all doubt, that I had witnessed a phenomenon of an abnormal nature, I became so far a believer.

I am quite aware that in one sense it is useless to describe all this. "S. W." will not believe until his time comes; but he surely will be able to see that a person having arrived at the conclusion that materialisation is a fact, *must* write, and speak, and think differently to one who has not arrived at that conclusion. "Masks," "muslin," "beards," &c., &c., avail nothing—"imposture" avails nothing—ridicule avails nothing. A different set of conditions, so to speak, have entered into one's experience, one's life, and although one may *appear* to defend dishonesty it is only that one feels "there are more things in Heaven and on earth than have hitherto been dreamed of in our philosophy," and one does not draw such hard and fast lines. Should the day arrive in which "S. W." finds himself in my present position, he will see how impossible it is that such men as Mr. Wallace should write according to his standard, or he should write after theirs. Has not every cause its "hysterical" or over-earnest, together with its stony-hearted or comparatively valueless, supporters, and is it not well that these learn from each other the virtue of that middle course in which Truth is so often found?—Yours truly, S. A. B.

PRESENCE AT A DISTANCE.

The following letter has been addressed to the editor of the *Spectator*:—

SIR,—*Apropos* of your review of the book entitled "Ghostly Visitors," and of the correspondence which appeared in the *Spectator* a few weeks ago, I beg to narrate the following incident, which, though not more remarkable than many such stories, has within the last few days come under my own notice, and admits, therefore, of ready corroboration:—

I have been visiting a sick man, who, though very ill, still lives, and about a week ago he told me the following fact, which had taken place two days previously

He had one sister, living at some little distance in the same town, but who was old and infirm. On the Monday morning, he had sent to his sister's house to tell her of his serious illness; and in the after-part of that day the sister, taking a dose of lotion in mistake for her medicine, was poisoned, and died about half-past five o'clock in the afternoon. The brother and his wife were in total ignorance of what was taking place at the sister's house, but between five and six o'clock that evening the old man, lying upon his bed, saw distinctly, advancing between the bed and the window, a tall, dark form, which he involuntarily took for his sister; and knowing that she was too infirm to walk to his house, grew alarmed, and, to use his own words, "began to pray hard." The figure moved silently up to the bedside, and seemed about to lay its hand upon his head, in the manner in which his sister (who was many years his senior) used to do when he was a lad, and then slowly vanished. He then saw another figure, the form of a man with a book in his hand, standing by the window, who said, in a distinct voice, which the patient declared to be as loud and clear as that in which I had spoken to him, "There is sad trouble to-night!" and then disappeared.

The old man lay quiet until his wife came upstairs, when he told her his story. She tried to make light of it, and told her husband he was "dondering." But next morning brought the news of the sister's death, which had happened between five and six the previous evening.

The old man who narrated this story has been ill and *blind* for nearly twenty years, and though he is of a temperament which would, perhaps, be especially open to such visitations, yet for his veracity, and that of his wife, I can confidently vouch. They are sincere, simple people, and even told this story with comparatively little wonder, and certainly with no consciousness of the strange chapter in human experience they had opened.—I am, Sir, &c., P. W. DARNTON.

Wigan, October 30th.

THE public Press reports a singular incident connected with the finding of the body of Joseph Wood, aged ten years, who was recently drowned in a brook, near Fencehouses, Durham. Constant efforts with drags, and by an expert diver, had failed to recover the body, when a young man named Thomas Ovington stated that he had dreamed that it was to be found in a deep pool three quarters of a mile from where the accident occurred. The search party proceeded thither, and at the spot indicated Ovington recovered the body.

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TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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

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A PERPLEXED INQUIRER.

I am one of very many who are now greatly disturbed, perplexed, and doubtful regarding the truth of Spiritualism as it was at one time accepted and believed in by them. It was a very great blessing to me for more than twenty-four years until my faith had been much shaken by Re-Incarnation, Occultism, and other wild speculations, and I often have felt disposed to abandon all interest in the subject, although I must confess that I have a lingering desire to adhere to it, as the only method of knowing that there is a future life. I was once so very credulous as to believe all the plausible falsehoods told me by Spirits, many of them apparently very truthful. I will give you one.

Two young men in whom I was interested went to America. Nothing had been heard of them for a long time. My Spirit friends, however, told me all about them: one had been killed by Indians in the Far West; the survivor went with a Robert Gordon to Australia, where both were very prosperous. Gordon, I was informed, was a native of a town in the north of Scotland, and I was favoured with his father's address and occupation. I wrote to him, and my letter was returned—"not known." I then applied to a bank agent on whom I could rely, but with the same result. About seven months afterwards one of the young men wrote that they were both well, and it was ascertained that they had not left America, and had never heard of Robert Gordon. Four families whom I had induced to become Spiritualists were so disgusted with this imposition, as well as others, that they renounced Spiritualism as the work of the devil, and are its most bitter opponents. It appears to me that very little reliance can be placed on the truth of Spirit messengers; but, notwithstanding the deceit practised upon us, we know that there is a life beyond the grave, but where it is, what it is, and, indeed, of almost everything relating to it, we are in the most profound ignorance.

Robert Dale Owen informs us, in the "Debateable Land," page 123, of the fourteen leading principles on which intelligent Spiritualists unite, and that we enter the next state in every respect unchanged and our identity preserved. The principles referred to appear reasonable, and they have the merit of being given in plain, intelligible language, so that anyone can understand them. I have read the review of Fechner's book in "LIGHT," but regret that I am unable to comprehend it, and some who have read the book are equally bewildered. Fechner says: "The highest Spirits, living as they are, not in a single person, but each living and acting in more than one, are a spiritual link between those persons, &c." Does not that ignore identity in the future state? A great benefit would be conferred on many readers of "LIGHT" if the opinions of Professor Fechner were given in concise and intelligible paragraphs, so as to enable us to know in what respect the teachings of the "advanced Spiritualists" differ from those of the "old school," represented by Howitt, Judge Edmonds, Owen, &c. It is deeply to be regretted that there is so much mysticism in some lately published books and papers upon Spiritualism, for they make obscurity more obscure. INQUIRER.

C. A. S. DISCUSSION MEETINGS.—At the Discussion Meeting to be held at 38, Great Russell-street, on Monday, the 20th inst., Mr. Thos. Shorter will introduce the question, "Is it desirable that Spiritualists should encourage Professional Mediumship for Physical Manifestations?"

THE LYTTELTON GHOST.

Considering that this famous narrative, reproduced in the last number of "LIGHT," from a work by Hugh Miller, certainly justified Dr. Johnson's remark that it was the most extraordinary incident of his time, it would seem desirable, as it fades into the past, to maintain our hold upon the facts actually recorded, and marshal them as they occurred.

Correct in its general details, Miller's narrative omits some circumstances—and slightly changes others—which, given at length and accurately, would have contributed greatly both to the interest and authentication of this curious story.

It so happens that I am able to supply a form of evidence as to this event (now a century old) which may be new to those who have felt interest in its verification.

Readers are perhaps aware that the narrative supplies a double apparition—that a friend of Lord Lyttelton's, Mr. Miles Peter Andrews, while on a visit to some friends, the Pigous, in Herts, had a vision of Lord Lyttelton, at the moment of the latter's death, thirty miles off, at Epsom.

My mother, who died at an advanced age twenty years since, was the daughter of Sir George Prescott, of Theobald's Park, Herts, where M. P. Andrews was a frequent guest, and she could remember hearing from his lips the account of his vision, which, a little anticipating the order of narrative, may be given first.

"It was a few minutes before twelve," he said, "and I had not yet composed myself to sleep, when Lord Lyttelton, dressed in his yellow reading-gown, thrust himself between the curtains, and said distinctly, but in a mournful tone, 'Ah, Andrews, it's all over!'

"'Oh!' replied I, quickly, 'are *you* there, you dog?' and, remembering his partiality for practical jokes, and determined to be even with him, sprang from my bed, rushed to the door, locked it, and held the key, calling to the butler, whose voice I could hear, to ask when Lord Lyttelton had arrived. The butler denied that any such arrival had occurred.

"'Nonsense!' I said. 'Why, here he *is*—safe under lock and key!'

"We opened a large press—the only other door in the room—and found no one!"

Such was Andrews' account; and I may add, parenthetically, that during his visits at Theobald's, no one stirred till midnight. It was five minutes before that hour that Lord Lyttelton's ghost had appeared to him, and, though fifteen years had elapsed, he had never shaken himself free from certain nervous emotions, which made him prefer to pass that never-to-be-forgotten moment in company.

And now to our chief story.

It was about the year 1775, that Lord Lyttelton, while resident at Hagley Park, became acquainted with a family living a short distance off, at Clent, and consisting of the father, mother, son, and four daughters, of whom the eldest was married to a Mr. Cameron.

On the death of the father, in June, 1778, the intimacy increased, and the gay and agreeable lord was finally established in the good graces of his "Clentiles"—as he called them—to whom, on New Year's Day, 1779—the last he was destined to see—he addressed an epistle, burlesqueing with more wit than propriety the language of apostolic writings, and entitled the "first chapter of St. Thomas's Epistle to the Clentiles."

This production was specious and sophistical, and it is to be feared that the unsuspicious mother played but too well into the hands of the crafty writer, by reading it to her children, and encouraging the visits of the pretended moralist, until at length, to the amazement of all who knew Lord Lyttelton's real character, the young ladies were actually seen residing at Hagley Park.

The mother's eyes were now open, but too late. She had lost her parental control, and when, in September of this fatal year, 1779, Miss Christian Amphlett accompanied Lord Lyttelton to Ireland—an Irish lady being of the party—the consciousness of her own indiscretion threw the unhappy lady into an illness from which she never recovered.

In November the party returned from Ireland, and, being met by the other two sisters, who had remained at Hagley Park, all went together to reside at Lord Lyttelton's town mansion, in Hill-street, Berkeley-square. Here, on the night of *Thursday, November 26th*, occurred the famous vision, which, however it be connected with the event it foretold, rests, as we shall see, on evidence too strong to admit of rational question.

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Lord Lyttelton's bell was heard to ring with unusual violence, and his valet, hastily obeying the summons, found him looking strangely disturbed. He said he had been awakened by something resembling a fluttering white bird. Having, with some difficulty, driven this object away, he had been still more startled by the appearance of a figure in long white drapery, a woman of stately presence—the image (as he subsequently averred) of the mother of his young guests.

"Prepare to die, my lord," said the apparition. "You will be quickly called."

"How soon?" was the eager question that leaped to his lips. "In three years?"

"Three *years!*" was the stern rejoinder. "Within three *days*, you will be in the state of the departed."

The figure vanished.

This incident made a deep impression on Lord Lyttelton's hitherto careless mind. Making no secret of what had occurred, he related it not only to the party in his house, but to many friends, among others to Lords Sandys and Westcote. The latter, who was his uncle, and himself the next representative of the house, made light of the matter, and advised him to devote his thoughts, preferably, to a speech he intended to make in Parliament in the ensuing week.

Lord Sandys said: "My dear fellow, if you believe this extraordinary thing, and would have *us* do so, be persuaded to make some change in your intended doings. Give up by all means the silly frolic you told us of—going, I mean, next Sunday, to Epsom. Perhaps, however, it is only one of your fine devices to make us plain folks wonder and stare. So, drink a cup of chocolate, and change the subject."

The "frolic" referred to was a projected visit to Woodcote—or as it came to be more recently called, Pit Place—Lord Lyttelton's country seat at Epsom, said to have been won by him of Lord Foley at play. A not very select party (of whom Mr. M. P. Andrews had refused to make one) were to have accompanied their host to Epsom on the Saturday, and, in fact, did so.

Now listen to Madame Piozzi.

"On Saturday" (the Saturday on which the party went to Epsom, as proposed), "a lady from Wales dropped in, and told us she had been at Drury Lane last night. 'How were you entertained?' said I. 'Very strangely indeed,' was the reply, 'Not with the play, though, for I scarce know what they acted, but with the discourse of a Captain Ascough, or Askew, who averred that a friend of his, the profligate Lord Lyttelton, had certainly seen a Spirit, who has warned him that he is to die within the next three days. And I have thought of nothing else ever since.'"

No further accounts reached London till the Monday morning succeeding the date of Madame Piozzi's note, when the return of the scared party of guests from Epsom brought the first tidings of their entertainer's death.

Let us see what had passed with them.

According to the sworn testimony of Williams, Lord Lyttelton's valet, whose story never varied in the slightest degree, and was confirmed in every particular by Captain Ascough, the party had arrived from London in the highest spirits, and, being joined by other young people of the country, prolonged their merriment till past eleven.

Soon after that hour, Lord Lyttelton, looking at his watch, remarked:—

"Well, now I *must* leave you, agreeable as you are. I have to prepare my speech for Wednesday, and have actually brought some books with me!"

"But the ghost! The ghost!" exclaimed some one, laughing.

"Oh, don't you see that we have bilked the ——" (a coarse expression), returned Lord Lyttelton. (Another of the party affirmed that he had said "jockeyed the ghost.")

He escaped from them, ran up to his chamber—one of the smaller ones, still shewn at Pit Place as the "carved" bedroom, from the carved oaken facing to the doors. His valet placed the reading-lamp, and brought his master his yellow gown.

Then Lord Lyttelton said, "Make up my five grains of rhubarb and peppermint-water, and leave me. But did you remember to bring rolls enough from London?"

"I brought none, my lord, for I found a baker here who makes them as your lordship likes."

He was stirring the medicine as he spoke.

"What's that you are using? A toothpick? You lazy devil, go fetch a spoon."

Williams had hardly left the room when a loud noise recalled him. His master had fallen sideways across the table, bringing it, books, lamp, and all, to the ground. Williams raised him.

"Speak to me, my dear lord! Speak!"

The dying man gasped, and strove to speak, but "Oh, Williams!" were the only articulate words—and these were his last.

Williams, his watch in his hand, flew down to the revellers below.

"Not twelve yet"—(it wanted five minutes) "and dead! dead!"

It remains to be added that, from circumstances never explained, tidings of the death of their mother, on the Thursday night preceding, only met the young ladies on their arrival in London on that dismal Monday.

It has been sought to account for this singular end by the suggestion that Lord Lyttelton had contemplated self-destruction. A hundred circumstances negative this view. Of a genial, easy temperament, immersed in the excitement of politics, a successful gambler and turfite, and in a position of great prosperity, Lord Lyttelton could have little inducement, at the age of thirty-six, to terminate a life which, to a man of his feelings and principles, left nothing to desire.

HENRY SPICER.

DIRECT WRITING.

As many of our friends are aware, one of the most interesting features of Mrs. Everitt's mediumship some years ago, was the phenomenon of "direct writing," that is, of writing produced without mortal contact. Mr. and Mrs. Everitt possess a large number of sheets of paper on which written messages have thus been given, some of them forming a connected series of lengthy communications on the truthfulness of the Christian religion. Owing to several causes, including irregularity in the holding of séances, and changes in the composition of the circle, this phase of Mrs. Everitt's mediumship had entirely disappeared, except that a brief message has very occasionally been obtained, of a few words only. At a séance, however, held at my residence during the present week with Mrs. Everitt, an indication was given that a return of this very interesting form of manifestation may be confidently hoped for. We were holding one of our customary family sittings in the dark, and were speculating on the prospect of a pleasant and profitable conversation with some of our Spirit friends, when our attention was caught by a once familiar sound, which we recognised as the production of a long written communication. The sound was like that of a succession of very rapid ticks with the point of a pencil on a piece of paper held in the air, and when the paper and pencil fell upon the table a match was lighted, and the following message was found written in a small neat hand:—

DEAR FRIENDS,—Our Spirit band are very happy to meet you again, and will do the best they can. Under the circumstances, we fear it will not be practicable to go any length with a subject; the conditions in your state are so different, you see. In the Spirit-world we are able to express more fully the purposes of the mind and the ideas of the thoughts than can possibly be done by articulate sounds or expressions of the voice; for we express our meaning by slight motions of the lips, or corresponding changes of the countenance. Our thoughts shine from our faces and eyes, the face corresponding to affection, the eyes to light. Hence we cannot express in our countenance what we do not feel in our heart, nor in any case play the hypocrite. You will perhaps say, "How delightful if that were so with us in our present state;" but, my friends, remember you are now as to your externals in your probationary state; you must work out your life in that, so as to fit you for a higher and holier state when your term here is ended. You must fit yourselves for the inner life, and you may and can enjoy that inner or Spiritual life to a very great extent. In this way you commune with us, and we help and assist you a great deal; your life on the other side, as you call it, is rendered more real to you, and you can feel that there is a surrounding influence, and as you lay hold on that so you gain help and knowledge. Good night; God bless you all. ANNIE BLOWER.

I have only to add that this communication, consisting of 280 words, was written, as nearly as we could estimate, in the brief space of ten or twelve seconds! It was produced on a piece of my own headed note-paper, and I have it still. Annie Blower, by whom the message was given, was once Mrs. Everitt's Sunday-school teacher. E. D. R.

A meeting of the Council of the C. A. S. will be held at 38, Great Russell-street, on Tuesday next, at 6.30 p.m.

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"THE PERFECT WAY" AND ITS CRITICS.

No. II

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In the number of "LIGHT" following that which contained Dr. Wyld's last letter on the above subject,—viz., on page 466, October 21st, there is a passage which strikingly exhibits the unsoundness of the position assumed by some of our critics in regard to the historical Jesus and the design of the Gospels. The passage in question consists in a list of parallelisms between the lives ascribed to Buddha, Christna, and Jesus, and might have been enlarged, as is pointed out in the opening pages of "The Perfect Way" by the addition of the names of Osiris, Mithras, Heracles, Bacchus, Zoroaster, and other portraitures of the Man Regenerate. And it needs, surely, but an intelligent and unprejudiced examination of these manifold parallelisms to convince the student that the various expressions implying a Divine nature and mission, on which the conventional theology of the Christian Church bases its estimate of Jesus, are simply the stock formulæ whereby the mystical writers of all times and places have been wont to depict that which they regarded as the supreme object of culture and end of experience, namely, the perfectionment, through suffering, of the typical Man Regenerate; the entire process of the building up of the Christ within the human kingdom. And the very name by which the spiritual and solar hero of the Four Evangels is designated,—Christ Jesus—is in itself an indication that it is a universal name. Not the name of any *one* individual, or even of any fleshly personage, but the name by which in the language of Heaven all pure and perfected Spirits are called—the Anointed of God, the everlasting "Yes" or "*Jesous*," who alone have eternal life.

For us the Four Gospels depict the ever-recurring acts of the soul in all ages, her flight from Matter and Illusion, her recognition of the Divine, her reception of illumination, her painful sufferings and passion on the earth-plane, her final triumph and ascension into purer spheres. They are thus, not the record of any one man's actual life, the facts of which, as they stand, are necessarily open to serious dispute and contradiction, but they are a spiritual drama or mystery, setting forth the manifestation of the Son of God *in man;* the Immanuel, or God within us. And we declare that this mystic and wholly spiritual "God's spell" has been wrested from its true and original meaning by an ignorant or designing priesthood, which *in its inveterate desire to provide the people with a material and human god, palpable to sense, and extraneous to themselves*, has persistently misapplied to the fleshly personage, titles, acts and achievements belonging only to the kingdom of the Invisible and Spiritual. And thus the corrupted Church has committed idolatry as gross as that of falling down and worshipping an image in place of the Lord God.

But we are willing to go so far with Dr. Wyld as to admit that, inasmuch as it is probable all the mystical histories of various times and countries may each have centred round some special representative, it is likely that the Christian Gospels may, in great measure, have taken shape and spirit from the life and teachings of some fitting model, chosen to exemplify the spiritual possibilities of the human race. We affirm only that what immediately and vitally concerns *us* and our salvation are not the acts or the sufferings of this individual, or of any individual soever, *but the living of that life ourselves*, the suffering of that Cross and Passion in ourselves, the "rising again from the dead and ascending into Heaven" of our own interior regenerate Ego.

So that if it should at any time be proved—what we nowise assert or wish to believe—that the historical Jesus never existed at all, and that everything related about Him is a pure, absolute myth, we should sustain no shock, lose no hold on our faith, and retain our position inviolate. And, far from lacking in reverence or gratitude to any one of the many "Captains of Salvation" who have been "made perfect through suffering," we indeed shew our regard for these by rescuing the foremost of their number from the category of impossible monstrosities, and reinstating him in that proper humanity which he must have loved so dearly and laboured so painfully and successfully to exalt by shewing what it has in it to be.

Religion can never depend for its facts and its hopes on historical data. These, in the very nature of things, are always questionable, and become more and more difficult to verify as the transit of centuries removes us from the epoch to which alone they are related. The real events of religion are not of this world; its kingdom is interior; its acts are all spiritual an essential. We "must be born again" into another sphere, upon another plane, converted from the material to the immaterial, before we can apprehend heavenly things. No one knows this better than Dr. Wyld himself; yet at times he chooses to write as though, with the mass of uneducated and superstitious Churchmen of the day, he accepted on the *material* plane the miraculous history of the Gospels, and trusted to the "mystery of the holy Incarnation," "agony and bloody sweat," of the man, Jesus of Nazareth, to save his soul and to endow him with life eternal!

It is against this idolatry that we uncompromisingly contend. The Gospels—and all similar books in all religions—present us, we maintain, with a *picture*, a guide, a demonstration of eternal and universal processes, illustrated by the history—partially true, but in great part gathered from other previous histories—of one, who, by successive re-births, had attained so high a grade as to constitute him our Elder Brother in a special sense, and to make him worthy of our deepest homage and tender affection. All this—but no more. Even he was not perfect, as the Gospels themselves witness. For one who could pray, "*Not My will, but* Thine be done!" was plainly not yet in entire union with God. And so it needs must be, for when that perfect union is accomplished, there remains no passion, no cross, no burial to be endured. All re-births are ended, and the spirit is for ever freed from matter. There could not, therefore, by the very nature of things, be any *perfect* man upon the earth-plane; because, so soon as perfection is attained, this plane is necessarily incapable of retaining the purified spirit. Wherefore to adore a human being with the adoration due to God, or to look to any human being, whether in the past or in the present, for our own redemption by means of any sacrifice he could make of his own body—this is at once idolatry and blasphemy; the first because it places an earthly creature in the place of God; the second, because it directly militates against that immutable principle of justice which is the essential centre-point of Divinity.

Apart from this question of *historical* religion, there is not a word in Dr. Wyld's last letter which we cannot thoroughly endorse. It is so strange to us that he should think otherwise that we cannot avoid giving expression to a lingering suspicion that he *has not read our book*,—especially the chapters on the "Atonement" and the "Redemption," and Appendix V. For surely, in such case, he could not have accused us—as by implication, at least, he has more than once done—of an attempt to create a "new Gospel," differing from that of "Jesus Christ."

To pass to a letter headed, "The Teachings of the Perfect Way," contained in your issue of October 28th, we can but say that the allegation of your Bristol correspondent, that we affirm "the annihilation of the greater portion of the human race," fills us with amazement. "Few shall be saved from that fate," he says, as if citing from our writing. No such passage can we find in the book, unless he refers to the quotation given on one of its pages from the Gospel; to wit, "The way is straight, and the gate narrow that lead unto life, and few they are who find it." (p. 165.) Your correspondent must know well whose words are these; but, if their meaning perplex him, it is only because he does not understand them aright. They indeed are few who in any single generation attain to Nirvana. Only a small number of our race, in any given epoch, achieves the perfection necessary to final beatitude. But the fate of no human soul is pronounced after a single life-time. They who fail—and who fail again and again, even as the Scripture tells us, until seventy times seven—may be purified by successive re-births, and may thus surely fulfil at last the conditions of salvation, however long and painful may be the schooling required. So far, indeed, from teaching any such doctrine as that ascribed to us in your correspondent's letter, we have distinctly and repeatedly insisted that only the *persistently evil*, those who all their "seventy times seven" of existences, habitually rebel against the Divine Will, and so lose the human spirit within them, sink at last into "outer darkness" and extinction.

As for our divergency from Swedenborg in respect to the relations of Matter and Spirit, we are not concerned to rebut this statement. And if, indeed, Swedenborg has maintained the proposition cited, we are only too glad to differ, so monstrous to us appears the notion of *two* original self-subsisting entities, and no single universal elemental essence, of and from which all things are, and to which all can revert. But, may it not be that your correspondent has failed correctly to apprehend Sweden-

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borg's meaning, precisely as he has failed, so singularly, to apprehend ours on another point? We trust so, for we have great respect for Swedenborg, though not unaware of his limitations.

To conclude with a reply to the Hon. R. Noel's objection to our statement respecting the compound constitution of man, we think his difficulty is due to his not having taken into account the various gradations into which the central-essential Ego differentiates its consciousness, according as it subsists in the outer or the inner spheres of the individual system. Thus, while all consciousness is, originally, that of the Spirit, each separate element, body, astral soul, and *anima divina*, possesses a consciousness of its own, suited to its character and needs, making each of these, in a sense, a distinct personality, and enabling them each to subsist apart from the others, though, in the case of the body, for a short time only. Body, soul and spirit are thus, not precisely one, but they "*agree* in one," as declared in the hermetic formula cited on page 18. And when severed, each represents and retains, so long as it survives, the functions exercised and the characteristics presented by it when in combination, so inveterate is the principle of personality in the substance of existence. Should our critic ask for some handy illustration of the mystical truths just indicated, we would remind him of the natural order known as the articulated animals, of which every segment possesses an independent life of its own, and if separated from the body of which it forms part, continues to exist and even to reproduce itself for a period more or less long. This rough comparison may serve to convince him that at least the idea he finds so much difficulty in accepting is neither monstrous nor without parallel in Nature. The subject is, however, too intricate and lengthy to be adequately discussed here. All that we have advanced respecting it has been, for us, amply verified by our own independent experience. And if Mr. Noel will carefully examine certain passages in our second Appendix, "Concerning the Hereafter," and compare them, not with any preconceived opinions, but with any actual experiences he may have, he will, we are confident, be sooner or later at one with us.

Since writing the above we have read, in the current number of "LIGHT," two letters, one of which, like that from Bristol, fills us with amazement, and the other with a sentiment akin to indignation. It is now beyond doubt that several of our would-be critics have *not read*—perhaps have not even seen—the book they are so eager to decry!

"R.J.S." misquotes in representing us as saying that Paul was only or always "in the astral," and, therefore, altogether unworthy of heed. What we have said is that "Paul, whose teaching and character are in many respects of the noblest, was not uniformly enlightened, but oscillated between the astral and the celestial, mixing error and truth accordingly." This he himself, by implication, admits when he says that he sometimes wrote "as a man," or even "as a fool," and that at others he only *thought* he had the sanction of the Divine Spirit for his assertions. Had Paul but acted on his own advice in regard to the necessity of "discerning spirits," and expunged before dissemination all that he wrote from the lower level, he would certainly not have left it in the power of "R.J.S." to cite him as an authority on behalf of the inevitable brutalities of the slaughter-house or the revolting and inhuman practice of corpse-eating. As it is, the very fact that Paul found it necessary to interfere in this matter between two differing schools of the Church, proves that the conviction and practice in regard to flesh-eating were far from uniform among professing Christians, and that no inconsiderable number of them refrained on principle from bloody meats. And, if we listen to tradition, and study such historical memoranda as we possess on the subject, we shall find that Paul himself was the innovator, and that the general habits and teaching of the early Church were Nazarene or Essenian, and therefore vegetarian. Jesus the Nazarene must certainly have been an abstainer from flesh and strong drink, and even the statements in regard to His custom of eating fish are, as one of us has elsewhere demonstrated, not literally, but mystically intended. James, the "brother" of Jesus, and one of his most familiar associates, is universally reputed to have been a vegetarian, and so also was an innumerable company of the early saints, both men and women. The stricter devotional Orders of the Catholic Church, like those of all other divine Mysteries, have always abstained from flesh; and, Paul notwithstanding, this unbloody and innocent diet has from the beginning been regarded by all Adepts as constituting "the excellent—or perfect—way." Certain it is, that the prophecy of Isaias—"They shall not hurt nor slay in all My holy mountain"—will never be realised by those who persist in destroying and devouring like beasts of carnage. How shall we hasten the restoration of Paradise by continuing the manners of the Fall? If we truly and earnestly desire to regain the Golden Age, and to become citizens of Heaven, we must begin by adopting the new life, and by returning to natural and human modes of sustenance. The eating of blood, and the habit of slaughter, are *part of the Fall*, and came with it. We, of the new Life, desire to return to Eden. And, as a first step thither, we abandon that horrible and degrading custom which has so long assimilated our race to that of the lowest types of bestial existence; we reject the offal which delights the wolf and the swine, and turn instead to the pure sun-created fruits and grains, unbloody gifts of fragrant trees and fields, *for which alone the anatomy of man is fitted*. We cannot err in following the indications—nay, the commands,—of nature, for these are the surest words of God.

"R. J. S." seems to argue that the superiority of certain races is due to their habit of flesh-eating. As well might he assert it to be due to their not less universal habit of dram-drinking. Both habits are equally abuses and drawbacks, and have doubtless withheld these very races from the higher and interior civilisation they have hitherto invariably and significantly failed to reach. For there can be no true and perfect civilisation without sympathy and solidarity between all the children of God's family, and without the recognition of the fact which must be the basis of that solidarity,—that the same Spirit breathes in all, that the same Destiny is over all, and that the same Immortality is the heritage of all, no matter on what round of the ladder each individual soul, at any given time, may stand. To kill, to devour, or to torture any sentient fellow-being for a selfish end, is a breach of the law of solidarity, and there is but a question of degree between the murder of an ox and that of a man. (Isa. lxvi., 3.)

In the insinuation that we claim to give "higher teachings than those of Jesus Christ," "R. J. S." simply repeats Dr. Wyld's curious misapprehension already amply exposed. For, as we have said, far from making any such claim, our whole endeavour has been to interpret those very teachings in the Spirit of Christ, and to restore their meaning perverted by superstition and ignorance.

Against the use of wine *we* have said nothing; on this subject we leave "R. J. S." to make peace between Paul and the Nazarenes, to whose number Jesus, John the Baptist, and many a saint and hero of the Old Testament, belonged.

With regard to the letter signed "The Author of 'Life Beyond the Grave,'" as his quarrel is really not with us or with "The Perfect Way" at all, but with the writer who has misled him by imputing to the book a statement not contained in it and wholly foreign to its doctrine—we leave it to him to make the amend due, and forbear further remark save only to express a hope that for the future critics will save their time and ours, as well as valuable space, by *reading the book* before they criticise it, and by *quoting it correctly* when they have read it. If these simple rules had been followed, probably no controversy would have arisen on the subject. How far the author of the last letter referred to is from having even a remote conception of the nature of the book he is so ready to denounce, is shewn by the fact that he seems to regard its teachings as the product of table-rapping.

In answer to the desire expressed for a "proof" of our doctrine, in the shape of "miracles," we would point to Lecture 1, pars. 24-5, in exposition of the fallacy underlying such a thought. Spiritual truths cannot be demonstrated by physical phenomena. According to the Gospels, few of those who witnessed the miracles of Jesus were persuaded by them to accept his doctrine. And of the events described as miracles, the chief are but parables relating to the Mysteries, and thus recorded in order to insure their concealment from the uninitiate. Moreover, physical miracles can be performed by agents other than divine, and as they are also liable to be simulated they involve more than one element of uncertainty.

The only really satisfactory "miracles" are those which are intellectual, solving problems of man's nature and history hitherto regarded as inscrutable, and reconciling difficulties, the failure of the orthodox Church to interpret which, has been long a prolific source of unbelief. Such miracles as these, at least, cannot be simulated, nor can they proceed from intelligences other than divine in their origin.

It is possible that some of the extravagant charges so

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gratuitously made against us by various "critics" may have been devised with the view of testing our patience. If this be indeed the case, the ordeal has surely been severe enough, and may be regarded as complete. It is incomprehensible to us why a book so plainly, clearly, and lucidly written as "The Perfect Way,"—a book differing so entirely from the mass of mystic literature, by its freedom from obscure and ambiguous expressions—should be, in good faith, so persistently misunderstood and mis-quoted.

THE WRITERS—NOT THE "*AUTHORS*"— OF
"THE PERFECT WAY, *or* THE FINDING OF CHRIST."*

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have not the slighest intention of defending the authors of "The Perfect Way" against the strictures now being passed upon their work; they are perfectly capable of taking care of themselves; I should be inclined to feel uneasiness for their critics rather than for them. My object in addressing you is to express my surprise at the conclusions drawn from the teachings of the book by some who profess to have studied it.

Unfortunately my copy is not now in my possession, having been for the last six months in circulation amongst friends, so that I cannot refer to the passage which one correspondent declares teaches "the annihilation of the greater portion of the human race." The impression left upon my mind is certainly *not* that which Mr. Tommy appears to have received.

Mr. Tommy has *surprised* me, but the author of "Life Beyond the Grave" has *alarmed* me. He oracularly declares that "No man has the right to unsettle the minds of others by starting vague and baseless theories for which he can give no proof."

Now, I must confess that when I read "Life Beyond the Grave," my mind was for the time unsettled by many of the theories contained therein, and for very many persons there can be no proof that the theories advanced are not "vague and baseless." That unsettling I do not care for so much, as I have a right to pay the penalty for my own temerity; but that which troubles me now so much is, that if I had only known in time of the truth of the dictum laid down by your correspondent I might have been prevented from incurring the responsibility of unsettling the minds of other persons—for I admit that I incautiously circulated that book amongst people whose minds have also been unsettled thereby.

It might be urged as a slight objection to your correspondent's criticism that he admits that he has not read the book. Of course this will not have weight with any but prejudiced minds, yet still it is rather difficult to hold the balance evenly if you do not shake yourself free from pre-conceived opinions.

"Josh Billings" relates in "His Book" how he was once told that "lager beer was *not* intoxicatin';" this idea was unfortunately fixed upon his mind *before* he studied for himself, but it was very touching to find how loyal he remained to the idea with which he had been impressed in spite of the many tumbles and knocks which he experienced during the process of his investigation. Even at last, when after spending five or six hours in walking from the "Store" to his own home, a distance of about thirty yards, it was suggested to him that the difficulty had arisen from his consumption of lager beer, he triumphantly replied that it could not possibly be so, for John Smith had told him that "lager beer was *not* intoxicatin'." It was beautiful but not philosophic.

May I entreat the author of "Life Beyond the Grave" not to fall into Josh Billings' mistake, but to try the effect of "The Perfect Way" for himself before his judgment is warped by another person's opinion concerning it?—Yours faithfully,

EDMOND W. WADE.

The following paragraph is going the round of the Press:—"It is stated that Captain Middleton, Lord Berehaven, and Mr. Henry Buller have offered the proprietor of No. 50, Berkeley-square, a large sum of money on condition that he will allow them to occupy that house for six months. It is the celebrated haunted house, and has now remained unoccupied for years, owing to the terrible fate of the last occupants, one of whom was found dead and the other mad on the morrow of the first day of occupancy. The offer of the three gentlemen has been refused. The house in question may be known by the old-fashioned white linen blinds drawn down behind the drawing-room windows."

*Several of your correspondents mistake the title of our book, and call it "The Perfec Way *to* the Finding of Christ."

LIGHT SUSTENTATION FUND.

We had hoped ere this to be in a position to make some definite announcement as to our plans and intentions for the coming year. We trust that the generosity of our friends will enable us to do so next week. We are ready to give our own services, with no other reward than that which comes of the satisfaction of performing a good and useful work; and we earnestly hope that our efforts will be cheerfully seconded by all who value "LIGHT" and can afford to contribute towards its sustentation. It would be a sad pity if, now that we are so near to the attainment of our purpose, it had after all to be abandoned. More than three-fourths of what is required has already been subscribed; and we respectfully invite our friends to supply the deficiency without delay.

Remittances should be sent to Mr. Edward T. Bennett, 4, New Bridge-street, Ludgate-circus, E.C.

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C. C. Pearson	1	1	0
Mrs. Arundale	1	1	0
Madame de Steiger	1	0	0
"A Friend"	1	0	0
Mrs. Woodd	1	0	0
H. George Hellier	1	0	0
Mrs. A. J. Penny	1	0	0
J. Bowring Sloman	1	0	0
Mrs. Lawson Ford	1	0	0
Miss Isabella O. Ford	0	10	0
E. W. Wade	0	10	0
E. Adams, Cardiff	0	5	6
Mrs. Heckford	0	5	0

Mr. Labouchere is not convinced by the reports which come to him from Manchester, where Mr. Irving Bishop has recently been performing, that "Thought-reading" without contact is one of that gentleman's accomplishments. "Manchester," he says, "is a rich town. Let those who believe in Mr. Bishop subscribe £100. We will then test the matter. If Mr. Bishop—with two guesses for each number—can correctly state the numbers on a bank-note which I will insert in an envelope, they shall have £1,000 to do what they like with; if he fails, then I will transfer the £100 into my pocket."

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"INSPIRATION."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Suffer a final word to your correspondent "Trident." Granting the fact that a clairvoyant can see the Guardian Angel of a person actually inspiring him with words, or more correctly, probably, with thoughts, it still remains to be known what, precisely, is the nature of such angel and its relation to its "client," before it can be decided whether the source of the inspiration is extraneous or interior to the latter. Now on this point "The Perfect Way" speaks explicitly, with a clearness and fulness which leave nothing to be desired. And it declares the proper Guardian Angel, or "genius," of a person, to be no extraneous Spirit, but a function of that person's own system, whose business it is to act as a connecting link of communication between him and his own Divine, informing Spirit—a moon, as it were, to reflect the sun to the planet man, each (spiritualised) person having such "sun" and "moon" in himself, the human system being complex. Than this account of the guardian genius, as given at the conclusion of Lecture III., I know nothing more exquisite or satisfactory in the whole range of mystical literature, and am convinced that it needs but due experience to enable any one to recognise its accuracy.

"Trident" still fails to gather my meaning in regard to the attainment of knowledge through the operation of a "past self." It is not in such phantom that the knowledge in question mainly resides, but in the re-embodied soul itself of the man, which, under the reflective influence of one of such phantoms—always present in his system—is able to regain the memory of the experiences appertaining to the particular incarnation represented by it. It is, of course, possible to hold intercourse with Spirits other than one's own; but this is not "inspiration," but conversation only. And no such Spirit, however friendly and assiduous, is in the true sense a "Guardian Angel." Inspiration, in the highest sense, comes only from the central Spirit, or "God," of the man, either directly or through his "genius." And since all that is done by what is called *Influx*, is to illuminate—not to inform—the soul of the recipient, the knowledge obtained under such illumination depends upon the quantity and quality of the experiences already possessed by such soul. Where this is young and inexperienced, the lamp of the Spirit can but light up a comparatively empty chamber. Hence the absolute necessity of experience to the soul's progress; and hence, also, the absolute necessity of a multiplicity of re-births on the material plane, in order to obtain the experiences of which alone come maturity and final emancipation from matter.

This word "maturity" is really the key to your correspondent's position. His remarks on Re-incarnation and "The Perfect Way," as well as his tone generally, unmistakably indicate him as being still in that youthful stage of existence wherein, while he has attained to the consciousness of the outer spheres of man's fourfold nature, the material and the astral, he has still to develope that of his celestial part. This part alone it is which undergoes re-incarnation, and only when the consciousness of this part is attained does the individual find in himself the proofs of his previous existences. Consisting, as do these proofs, in personal memories, they are incapable of communication to others, since no one can transfer his memory to another. So that the only way to obtain the desired verification of the great doctrine at issue, is by so living, in thought and deed, as to hasten the time when between his inner and outer man shall be such closeness of intercommunion as will enable his Spirit to "bring all things to remembrance."

Let your correspondent, then, take courage, and brace himself for the passage of the track which still divides him from the "Promised Land" of his own celestial region, and I shall yet have to congratulate him on an amended view of "The Perfect Way," and its (at present to him) "imaginative *dicta*" and "fanciful inferences." Nay, I do not despair of seeing him regarding it, with me, as constituting by its very nature an absolute demonstration of the great doctrine which to him now is so preposterous, the doctrine of the transmigration and re-incarnation of the soul, and of its power while yet in the body to recover and communicate its past experiences. For it is only in virtue of such a faculty that I for one can at all comprehend the recovery of the knowledge contained in it.—Yours, &c.,

CANTAB.

E. W. WALLIS'S APPOINTMENTS.—CARDIFF: November 12th FALMOUTH: November 19th.

ANOTHER NUT FOR THE MATERIALIST.

About twenty years ago, as near I can recollect, a man of the name of Anthony Satchell carried on the business of a hatter in Fenchurch-street. His house was burnt down, and his poor wife was charred to a cinder. He could never afterwards pass near a burning house without trembling from head to foot. In due time his house was re-built, and he continued his business. One day a friend of mine and of his, now living, called upon him, when Satchell remarked, "You won't see me here much longer. I am sure to be killed soon in a railway accident. I have had some extraordinary dreams warning me of my approaching fate." My friend endeavoured to cheer him by ridiculing the "folly" of allowing such "morbid apprehensions" to influence his mind; but all in vain—the consolation was thrown away. A few days after this remarkable conversation, Satchell was killed in an accident on the Eastern Counties line. In consequence of a severe frost the switches did not act properly, the engine ran off the rails, and Satchell was crushed and scalded to death instantaneously through no fault of his. His fears did not in any way contribute to the occurrence of the catastrophe.

NEWTON CROSLAND.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

C. A. S. CONVERSAZIONE.

The series of autumn and winter meetings at the rooms of the Central Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, was opened by a conversazione on Monday evening, when there was a large attendance of members and friends, the company including Miss Arundale, Mr., Mrs., and Miss Allan, Mr. Chas. Alexander, Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Bennett, Mr. Harry Bastian, Mr. and Mrs. F. Barrett, Miss Miriam Blyton, Mrs. Cottelle, Mrs. and Miss Cook, Mrs. Coombes, Mr. and Miss Cornes, Mrs. J. F. Collingwood, Mrs. and Miss Everitt, Mr. Frank Everitt, Mrs. Godfrey Evans, Mr. W. Eglinton, Mrs. FitzGerald, Mr. and Mrs. Desmond FitzGerald, Miss Godfrey, Mr. J. N. Greenwell, Mrs. S. Heckford, Miss Houghton, Miss Hunt, Miss Harries, Mrs. E. M. James, Miss Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Kreuger, the Misses Long, the Misses Lister, Mr. R. W. Lishman, Miss Major, Miss Mole, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Morse, Mr. Thos. Maitland, Mrs. Nichols, Dr. Nichols, Miss Orrock, Mr. C. Pearson and Mrs. Pearson, Mr. R. and Mrs. Pearce, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers and Mrs. Rogers, the Misses Rogers, Mr. D. Rogers, Mr. F. Rogers, Mr. and Miss Shorter, Mrs. Schweitzer, Mr. and Miss F. J. Thomas, Mr. E. A. Tietkens, Mr. Towns, Miss Withall, Mr. H. Withall, Mr. and Miss Wade, &c., &c.

During the evening appropriate addresses were given by Mr. Desmond FitzGerald and Mr. Morse, and the following programme of music and readings admirably sustained the interest of the audience:—March, "Tannhaüser," the Misses Long; song, "When in the early morn" (Gounod), Mr. E. A. Tietkens; song, "The Worker" (Gounod), Miss Long; song, "Vedro mentr' io sospiro" (Mozart), Mr. C. Alexander; song, "The Children of the City" (Adams), Miss Everitt; song, "Come into the garden, Maud," Mr. E. A. Tietkens; song, "The beating of my own heart," Miss Long; song, "True till death" (Scott Gatty), Mr. C. Alexander; vocal duet, "The moon has raised" (Benedict), Mr. E. A. Tietkens and Mr. C. Alexander; reading, "The Chemistry of Character" (Lizzie Doten), Miss Allan; song, "A Summer Shower," Miss Everitt; recitation, "The Enchanted Shirt," Mr. D. Rogers; song, "My Pretty Jane," Mr. E. A. Tietkens. Miss Withall kindly gave her very valuable services as accompanist.

QUEBEC HALL.

The platform of this hall was occupied on Sunday evening by Mr. Wilson, who gave an address on "Self-Respect," which he said was the true object of the "Violet Ribbon Army," an organisation which he is now forming by enlisting recruits who will wear the badge. He read a portion of the Sermon on the Mount, and explained the principles of his "science." Two gentlemen criticised his address, and Mr. Wilson having replied invited all interested to his further expositions on Monday evenings.

CROYDON.

On Wednesday evening last at the Free Christian Church, in the Wellesley-road, Croydon, the Rev. Mr. Selby read a paper on "Ghosts and Apparitions." The subject was well received by a large and highly respectable audience, and at the close of his paper the reader expressed his belief that there must be some truth in such matters. Discussion followed, and five or six speeches of the frivolous, trifling, and nonsensical character usual when such questions are debated, were given by members of the church; but all this was altered when it came to the turn of Mr. Enmore Jones and myself to address the meeting, as we gave strong evidence, persnal experience, and personal knowledge, backed in my case by offering to attest the facts by my oath

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The result was that the chairman publicly offered the use of the church to Mr. Enmore Jones to read a paper on Spiritualism, which I hope he will do, as I now know that some of the members are eager for information on the subject.

JOHN ROUSE.

CARDIFF.

On Sunday last the controls of Mr. J. J. Morse delivered two excellent lectures in this town, the subject of the morning, "Satan *versus* Science," being admirably treated. The controls pointed out very forcibly that "Satan" had really rendered very signal service to humanity, inasmuch as every new discovery or fresh departure from the beaten tracks of the past had been greeted only as so many indications of the machinations of the Evil One; and as each new discovery of science had lived down and survived the opprobrium with which its inception had been greeted, so had the lie been given emphatically to that spirit of intolerance born of superstition, which had again and again given the devil credit for their organisation. The evening lecture was on "Ancient Spiritualism," and was equally well treated. The controls traced back the history of Spiritualism from the present time of so-called "Modern" Spiritualism, noting various sects which at different periods had more or less of spiritual manifestation in their midst. Dwelling at some length upon the character of these manifestations in ancient days, they emphasized the fact that these evidences of spiritual presence and power have been identical all down along the ages to the present day, and that since the conditions necessary for their presentation in ages past are equally capable for their reproduction to-day, it follows naturally that the records of "ancient spiritual manifestations" must stand or fall by the experiences of to-day. Mr. E. W. Wallis will lecture here on Sunday, 12th inst. Subjects:—Morning, "An Hour's Communion with the Dead"; evening, "God and the Devil."

E.A.

EXETER.

At the circle on Monday evening of last week, there were twelve present. Some striking communications were given through the mediumship of Mr. H. A very interesting address was also delivered. There were many new inquirers at the hall on Sunday. At the morning circle a young man who was present for the first time was powerfully influenced, and gives promise of becoming a useful medium. We had a large congregation in the evening, the subject of discourse being "The Open Door, which no Man can Shut," based upon a message originally communicated from the spirit world through the Apostle John, and repeated from the same source through many channels to-day. Nearly forty persons remained to the private circle, and the Spirits were in communication with us through four mediums. The proceedings were very enjoyable and interesting.

OMEGA.

WORK OF THE COMING WEEK.

LONDON.

Sunday, November 12.—Central London Spiritual Evidence Society, Goswell Hall. 11.30 a.m., Conference. 7 p.m., Trance Address, Mr. J. J. Morse. (See advertisement.)

,, November 12.—Quebec Hall. 11.15 a.m., Séance. 7p.m., Lecture, Mr. MacDonnell. (See advertisement.)

Monday, November 13.—Quebec Hall. 8.30, Meeting.

Tuesday, November 14.—Central Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C. 6 p.m., Finance Meeting. 6.30 p.m., Council Meeting.

,, November 14.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m., Lecture, Mr. Wilson.

Wednesday, November 15.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 8 p.m., Members' Free Séance.

PROVINCES.

Public meetings are held every Sunday in Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Leeds, Bradford, Gateshead, Newcastle, Glasgow, Leicester, Nottingham, Belper, &c.. &c. See our list of Societies on advertisement page.

Societies advertising in "LIGHT" will have attention called to their advertisements, as above, without extra charge.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

N.N.—We agree with you in thinking that the worst is past, and that the future is "full of promise."

S.E.N.—We cannot answer your question. No doubt the facts will be reported to the Council Meeting of the C. A. S. on Tuesday next.

A.P.—Some of our friends have, like yourself, strongly recommended a reduction in the price of "LIGHT." The matter is having our careful consideration. You will know our decision very soon. It will probably be given in our next issue—if in the meantime we have had sufficient responses to our appeal on behalf of the Sustentation Fund.

TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

The following is a list of eminent persons who, after personal investigation, have satisfied themselves of the reality of some of the phenomena generally known as Psychical or Spiritualistic.

N.B.—An asterisk is prefixed to those who have exchanged belief for knowledge.

SCIENCE.—The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President R.A.S.; W. Crookes, Fellow and Gold Medallist of the Royal Society; C. Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, the eminent Naturalist; W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E., Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Dr. Lockhart Robertson; *Dr. J. Elliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; *Professor de Morgan, sometime President of the Mathematical Society of London; *Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., sometime Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; *Dr. Ashburner, *Mr. Rutter, *Dr. Herbert Mayo, F.R.S., &c., &c.

*Professor F. Zöllner, of Leipzig, author of "Transcendental Physics," &c.; Professors G. T. Fechner, Scheibner, and J. H. Fichte, of Leipzig; Professor W. E. Weber, of Göttingen; Professor Hoffman, of Würzburg; Professor Perty, of Berne; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of Petersburg; Professors Hare and Mapes, of U.S.A.; Dr. Robert Friese, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, Astronomer, &c., &c.

LITERATURE.—The Earl of Dunraven; T. A. Trollope; S. C. Hall; Gerald Massey; Captain R. Burton; Professor Cassal, LL.D.; *Lord Brougham; *Lord Lytton; *Lord Lyndhurst; *Archbishop Whately; *Dr. Robert Chambers, F.R.S.E.; *W. M. Thackeray; *Nassau Senior; *George Thompson; *W. Howitt; *Serjeant Cox; *Mrs. Browning, &c., &c.

Bishop Clarke, Rhode Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, U.S.A.; Professor W. Denton; Professor Alex. Wilder; Professor Hiram Corson; Professor George Bush; and twenty-four Judges and ex-Judges of the U.S. Courts; Victor Hugo; Baron and Baroness von Vay; *W. Lloyd Garrison, U.S.A.; *Hon. R. Dale Owen, U.S.A.; *Hon. J. W. Edmonds, U.S.A.; *Epes Sargent; *Baron du Potet; *Count A. de Gasparin; *Baron L. de Guldenstübbe, &c., &c.

SOCIAL POSITION.—H.I.H. Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; H.S.H. the Prince of Solms; H.S.H. Prince Albrecht of Solms; *H.S.H. Prince Emile of Sayn Wittgenstein; Hon. Alexander Aksakof, Imperial Councillor of Russia; the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Lisbon; M. Favre-Clavairoz, late Consul-General of France at Trieste; the late Emperors of *Russia and *France; Presidents *Thiers and *Lincoln, &c., &c.

Is it Conjuring?

It is sometimes confidently alleged that mediums are only clever conjurers, who easily deceive the simple-minded and unwary. But how, then, about the conjurers themselves, some of the most accomplished of whom have declared that the "manifestations" are utterly beyond the resources of their art?—

ROBERT HOUDIN, the great French conjurer, investigated the subject of clairvoyance with the sensitive, Alexis Didier. In the result he unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. See "Psychische Studien" for January, 1878, p. 43.

PROFESSOR JACOBS, writing to the editor of *Licht, Mehr Licht*, April 10th, 1881, in reference to phenomena which occurred in Paris through the Brothers Davenport, said:—"As a Prestidigitator of repute, and a sincere Spiritualist, *I affirm that the medianimic facts demonstrated by the two brothers were absolutely true*, and belonged to the *Spiritualistic* order of things in every respect. Messrs. Robin and Robert Houdin, when attempting to imitate these said facts, never presented to the public anything beyond an infantine and almost grotesque parody of the said phenomena, and it would be only ignorant and obstinate persons who could regard the questions seriously as set forth by these gentlemen. . . . Following the data of the learned chemist and natural philosopher, Mr. W. Crookes, of London, I am now in a position to prove plainly, and by purely scientific methods, the existence of a 'psychic force' in mesmerism and also 'the individuality of the spirit' in Spiritual manifestation."

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER, AT BERLIN.—I herreby declare it to be a rash action to give decisive judgment upon the objective medial performance of the American medium, Mr. Henry Slade, after only one sitting and the observations so made. After I had, at the wish of several highly esteemed gentlemen of rank and position, and also for my own interest, tested the physical mediumship of Mr. Slade, in a series of sittings by full daylight, as well as in the evening in his bedroom, I must, for the sake of truth, hereby certify that the phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, including the table, and that I have *not in the smallest degree* found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus; and that any explanation of the experiments which took place *under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining* by any reference to prestidigitation *is absolutely* impossible. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butlerof, in St. Petersburg; to search for the explanation of this phenomenal power, and to prove its reality. I declare, moreover, the published opinions of laymen as to the "How" of this subject to be premature, and, according to *my* view and experience, false and one-sided. This, my declaration, is signed and executed before a Notary and witnesses.—(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI, Berlin, December 6th, 1877.

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