

The Spiritualist.

A RECORD OF THE PROGRESS OF THE SCIENCE AND ETHICS OF SPIRITUALISM.

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THE DIALECTICAL SOCIETY.

THE Dialectical Society was founded early in the year 1867 for "the philosophical treatment of all questions, especially those which lie at the root of the differences of opinion which divide mankind." The formation of such a society was felt to be desirable, because most bodies of a kindred nature exclude religious, political, and a few social subjects from consideration from fear of popular prejudices or other reasons. The founders resolved that in the discussions of the Dialectical Society sectarianism of every kind should be rigidly excluded; that all distinctions founded upon social condition, occupation, and the like should be disregarded; also, that the only recognised qualifications for membership should be an unstained character, and a genuine desire to promote the objects of the society. Another principle adopted was the most absolute freedom of debate, and it was agreed that no subject whatever should be excluded from consideration, except upon the ground of its triviality.

The founders of the Dialectical Society in their prospectus say:—"The London Dialectical Society will have effected much good, if, by its means, persons are made to feel that to profess a belief on a disputed question with regard to which they refuse to examine the evidence, is an act altogether unworthy of a rational being; and that the only method of arriving at truth is by submitting one's opinion to the test of unsparing and adverse criticism. Freedom of speech and thought are (not less than personal freedom), the natural birth-right of all mankind. To refrain from uttering opinions because they are unpopular betokens a certain amount of moral cowardice, engendered by long-continued persecution. To state fearlessly the truth, or what we believe to be the truth, even though it be held only by a few, is the act of all who consider the exercise of private judgment a right, and the extension of human knowledge a duty. But society generally has not yet reached such a stage of progress as to allow individuals to give expression to their honest and deliberate convictions, without inflicting upon them penalties more or less severe. The effect of this is to deter men from expressing opinions which might be corrected if erroneous or accepted if true. In the London Dialectical Society, however, not only will no person suffer obloquy on account of any opinion which he may entertain or express, but he will be encouraged to lay before his fellow-members the fullest exposition of his views.

Let us be mindful of the fact that throughout the whole history of the world the voice of authority has constantly opposed new truths; and, with an earnest desire both to learn and teach, let us zealously follow the practice of dialectics, unaffected by the praises of some, undeterred by the denunciations of others, but conscious of honesty and purity of motive, and desirous for the wisdom and happiness of man."

Here, then, was a society formed upon upright and pure principles, ready to receive truth with open arms, however unpopular that truth might be. When the radiant and powerful young science of Spiritualism gained a footing in these islands, ready to teach the dwellers therein that a telegraph can be established between themselves and the loved immortals whom the world calls "dead," where could it submit its claims to honest investigation? Not to theological leaders who have lost their ancient standing, and no longer hold the confidence of the nation as its best guides in matters appertaining to science, literature, or art. Among these leaders are many who are most deservedly loved and respected for their promotion of active deeds of charity, but beyond that there is too much fighting among theologians for dying creeds of words, for high salaries, for political power, and for landed property. Neither could the young science go to the natural and proper place for its reception—the Royal Society—for the Royal Society, with its high honours and its immense brain force, has become sufficiently corrupted by power to omit from consideration facts which are unpopular enough "not to be respectable." Of late years, also, it has shewn a bias towards exclusiveness, and towards the acquisition of political power, as well as towards the elucidation of scientific truth. Up to about two years ago the Royal Society might have said, with truth, that too little was publicly known of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism to make it reasonable to suppose that such phenomena deserved investigation.

This plea has long been untenable, notwithstanding which many years probably will yet unnecessarily elapse, before anything appears in the *Philosophical Transactions* about the wonderful facts of the occasional movement of solid objects without contact with human beings, or with any visible appliance competent to produce such an effect. The Royal Society is too dignified and respectable to investigate natural phenomena, if such phenomena have to be observed beneath the fire of popular ridicule. Cannot a man be found in its ranks who will make the Society irrevocably commit itself by rejecting a paper on "Certain remarkable Phenomena called Spiritual Manifestations?" The Royal Society is now in such a state that if Diogenes of old were to apply for admission into its ranks he would be told that he must first give up his tub, then gain plenty of very respectable associates, and, finally, have a moderate balance in the bank. Socrates would most certainly be snubbed by the Royal Society as a low street preacher. Let a peer of the realm, quite guiltless of a knowledge of science, and a meritorious man of science of more than average capacity, stand at the door of the Royal Society and knock, the former would most certainly be admitted to the rejection of the latter, and every member of the council knows this statement to be true.

In thus criticising the faults of the Royal Society, its virtues are most freely admitted. Although it is as yet too low spiritually to rise much above the fashionable vices of the age, intellectually it is without a rival as a public body, and the researches of its members have been of enormous practical value to the world.

There is no necessity to call attention to other learned corporations in London, none of which were ready to open their doors for the reception of the science which will in time throw a bridge across the wide and deep chasm of the grave, and establish communication with the shining hosts on the other side. The Anthropological and Ethnological Societies ought to do so, but the council of the former has sacrificed its historical reputation in this respect, and the latter has made no sign, whatever its president may have done.

So the young giant, who in twenty years has wrought such wondrous changes in American thought, found no scientific body of men in England acting upon sufficiently pure principles to consent to examine his credentials, except the little and almost unknown Dialectical Society, which, verily, has "received an angel unawares." And the young visitor will put the alleged principles of the men composing the society to the severest of tests, for great will be the popular abuse if they do not bend more or less to the worthless opinions of the millions who have not investigated the subject. Some little evidence that they feel an improper pressure upon them is visible in the fact, that in all the accounts which have been published of the manifestations seen by their sub-committees, the names of the Society's witnesses have not been given. If the very eminent legal practitioner, who, on behalf of the Dialectical Society, saw a chair rise in the air, without contact with anything, and then fall on the top of a table, had permitted his name to be published along with his statement, what a noise there would have been among the lawyers! This remarkable withholding of the names of official witnesses of interesting facts, is a suppression which perhaps has never before been paralleled in the investigations of any scientific body, thereby proving that there is something very exceptional in this case, and that the inquirers feel themselves to be working under great pressure. Whatever the Dialectical Society may say or do their decision will have no influence whatever over the established phenomena of nature, in the shape of Spiritual manifestations, and the chief action of their report will be to test their steadfastness to their own principles, and to determine whether they as men are made of true steel. Should their report attempt to demolish the facts of Spiritualism they will be flinging a moral boomerang, which cannot possibly annihilate the laws of nature, but which will return after the lapse of a certain time, and make short work with the reputations of the throwers who did not act up to their professed principles. As yet, however, we know of no evidence that the investigators will not draw fair conclusions from the evidence which they have so patiently collected.

THE WEIGHT OF AUTHORITY.

OUR friends of the *Spiritual Magazine* a few months ago inserted an article on theological subjects, which gave rise to "the Bible-Spiritualism Controversy," in these columns, and to a controversy of a less friendly description in *Human Nature*. The article which thus gave rise to so much work for the printers, laid much stress upon the value of the teachings of Tertullian, who is one of the "church fathers."

Uneducated people, who have not the power of thinking for themselves, are easily kept down by the authority of great names. When they have to be depressed for theological purposes, the names of living celebrities are not usually chosen wherewith to perform the crushing operations, because the lives of such persons are open to some extent to accurate observation, and awkward facts are liable to crop up, to prove that they are but ordinary mortals. Hence designing leaders of the populace speak much of the "perfection of antiquity," that is to say, of the perfection of men who lived when we Britons were very little above the level of savages. The ignorant person thus taught, attaches an ideal image to the great name which is thrust upon him, and the imaginary personage he conjures up of course differs much from the real individual.

Hence, when the name of one of the "church fathers" is used to create a superstitious reverence in the minds of the unthinking, it is useful sometimes to convey matter-of-fact prosaic ideas, of what the men really were. In the article in the *Spiritual Magazine*, Tertullian was the venerable individual selected to close the mouths of those who wished to reason on the subject, we will therefore let Tertullian speak for himself, to prove his own character.

Tertullian advised his followers not to go to theatres or other public spectacles, and comforted them for not doing so on the plea that hereafter they would have a more joyous entertainment than any upon earth, for they would then see their fellow countrymen writhing in the torments of hell. "What," he exclaimed, "shall be the magnitude of the scene? How shall I wonder? How shall I laugh? How shall I rejoice? How shall I triumph when I behold so many and such illustrious kings, who were said to have mounted into heaven, groaning with Jupiter their god in the lowest darkness of hell! Then shall the soldiers who had persecuted the name of Christ, burn in more cruel fire than any they had kindled for the saints. . . . Then shall the tragedians pour forth in their own misfortune more piteous cries than those with which they had made the theatre to resound, while the comedian's powers shall be better seen as he becomes more flexible by the heat. Then shall the driver of the circus stand forth to view, all blushing in his flaming chariot, and the gladiators pierced, not by spears, but by darts of fire. . . . Compared with such spectacles, with such subjects of triumph as these, what can prætor or consul, quæstor or pontiff, afford? And even now faith can bring them near, imagination can depict them as present."*

Tertullian also wrote that the Almighty would never pardon an actor, for actors try to "add a cubit to their stature" by wearing high-heeled boots, in express defiance of the teachings of the New Testament.

Another of the church fathers—St. Chrysostom—declared a woman to be "a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill."

MR. HOME'S READINGS.—The public readings at the Hanover-square Rooms, which have been just given by Mr. D. D. Home, have passed off very successfully, and greatly pleased the listeners present. The slight weakness of voice at one time noticed by Mr. Home's friends, has passed away. Among the journals which at different times have spoken in high terms of Mr. Home's readings are *The Morning Post*, *The Court Journal*, *the Daily Telegraph*, *Illustrated London News*, *Morning Advertiser*, and *the Era*. The *Era*, a journal conducted by experienced theatrical critics says: "The strong feeling displayed in the reading of Tennyson's poem of the 'Grandmother,' the dramatic ability and impressive delivery of Edgar Poe's 'Raven,' would be quite sufficient to place Mr. Home in the foremost rank of public speakers." Last Thursday night, as will be seen in a report upon page 68, Mr. Home gave some readings at Dr. Newton's reception *soirée* much to the pleasure of the listeners. He is about to give some more readings at the Hanover-square Rooms.

* Tertullian, *De Spectac.*, cap. xxx.

Reports of Meetings.

ST. JOHN'S ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

INSPIRATIONAL LECTURE ON THE USES OF SPIRITUALISM.

On Thursday, April 21st, Mr. J. J. Morse, trance medium, delivered a lecture "under influence" before the St. John's Association of Spiritualists, St. John's Hall, Corporation-row, Clerkenwell. Mr. C. W. Pearce presided, and made a few introductory remarks.

Mr. MORSE then passed into the trance state, and under the controlling influence of his guardian spirit, Tien Sien Tie, was made to deliver the lecture, of which the following is a summary. The controlling spirit said that in bringing the subject of the uses of Spiritualism before the notice of those present it would be well to remember that man is dual in his composition; that he has within his body an active mind, which often wanders away from the beaten tracks of thought, wanders on into the dim future, trying to gather fragrant flowers or truths from the plains beyond. History discloses that the true strength of any nation depends upon the free expression of individual thought, but reason should always govern thought. History also shows that everything out of the beaten track is at first condemned, and then looked upon as a delusion and a snare, more especially if it deals with the religious nature of man. Man should not however be treated with sops, but be permitted to think freely; he is too often held down with bands forged and fettered by his fellow man, yet all the time the world talks of brotherly love.

Spiritualism brings before the mind of the thinking man certain occult phenomena, of which he had previously been ignorant. To the religionist it brings support of his belief in a future existence, and it brings knowledge to those who study the ills of body and mind. It sweeps away many of the errors of past ages, and substitutes facts for fallacies. A great deal is said in the religious world about "revelation," and if we ask how this revelation came, we are told to rest, and not to be too presumptuous, but Spiritualism brings us face to face with the facts of past ages. There are many diseases quite beyond the grasp of the medical profession, but the clairvoyant or spiritual medium, takes the hand of the patient, and traces the disease back to its source; when the whole thing is thus spread out before the spirits, they can prescribe either to cure or to relieve the pain. In all this there is instruction, and where knowledge is gained there must be elevation.

When the religionist, bowed down with grief and unnumbered sins, sees death approaching, he fears him, for he fears to leave his wife and children, and he has a confused misconception of a future life. But Spiritualism abolishes this fear, and by its phenomena shows its one great use—namely, the power of proving that there is an existence beyond the grave. He who examines the phenomena and analyses their teachings, finds plenty of confusion and contradictions, but at last the truth becomes clear to him, and he proclaims the truth that man lives beyond the grave, and that the Great Father is truly a being of love. There is use and elevation there.

Some spirits are clever at science and inventions, and by the aid of mediums now and then assist some branch of manufacture. Here is something done that helps man—something done with a good intention—not always, perhaps, the best that could have been done; but still there is a use, and a service.

Spiritualism reveals to us that we are self-dependent, that we must work out our future for ourselves, and that we should not waste time by trying to hammer our own opinions into other people's heads. Whatever exists is noble, and spiritual phenomena being entities should be studied, and can be known. Every subject requires conformity to certain conditions before it can be known; and spiritual things are no exception to this rule. If the external man be subdued, the spiritual state can be entered, and as the spiritual state is around us, it is not necessary to leave the body to gather knowledge about it; but a power like this must be worked for, just the same as any other. This state may be induced, yet at first the liberated mind will fail to impress its ideas on its outer consciousness, but at last it will make its outer consciousness aware of what it sees and understands. As man has a double consciousness there is nothing unreasonable in supposing that this can be accomplished. Those who listen to a clairvoyant should not believe everything he says, because there may be conditions unknown to the hearers, causing him to say certain things in his own light, or by hereditary bias. Even the ordinary manifestations are affected by the condition of the medium and of the people about him.

The student of nature finds much to delight him in the phenomena, and his heart therefore opens to the Giver of all good. The clairvoyant gives him a vast knowledge of the earth and its inhabitants,* and proves how everything is continually growing, from the hard granite rock, to the walking machine called "man," thus unfolding the law of progressive development. He finds out also that he has more or less power to relieve pain. This is no new thing, it was known to the ancient Egyptians, and is still well-known among eastern nations, but for the present purpose it may be considered to be a new power, enabling the operator, who is sometimes assisted by invisible friends, to effect great and marvellous cures. In this there is a use, great and good.

One branch of the science of Spiritualism, namely mesmerism, shows how one man can affect others in his company, and produce marvellous results. Is it wonderful when one man can thus influence another, that many run into errors or so-called sins? The negative mind is drawn on by the positive mind, and at last gets lost in dissipation. Then the world gives its verdict, from which there is no appeal. But those who understand the science will view this aspect leniently, will view it quietly and gently, will see extenuating circumstances, thus teaching another lesson of brotherly love. There is a use in this.

Spiritualism is preeminently a science—the science of the study of man. It shows the relations of a brother to his brother man and to the world which he inhabits; but to develop this science, years of patient toil will be required. It will give man a knowledge of the invisible world, and of the divisions of society in the spirit land. It will reveal to him his duties as a rational intelligent being, it will aid in his work of toning down this seething world, and in subduing error and dogmatism. Surely there is a use in all this? Here is study for the scientist, for the materialist, for the religionist, and even for the listless who considers it a bore to live. It shows us that there is a natural religion, but that religion by itself is a poor rope to trust to, it is only one strand of a good rope. Religion without knowledge is dogmatism, and the one must support the other. Spiritualism

throws away the mystery hitherto hanging over religious teaching, it impresses the mind with kindly feelings and noble thoughts, and a thing which has such power must be useful. The power must also come from a good source, for "by their fruits ye shall know them."

There are men who seeing so much misery and suffering in the world, say "Why does God permit it?" and then they drift away from all religion, although they had better cling still to that feeble strand than to none at all. They never ask why the evil is there, they do not see that the things which men call "evil" have a relative use tending to the general good. But he who knows the causes of an effect has the key in his hand. Many sensitive media have the power of pointing out the origin of certain evils, to the benefit of those who hear and use the knowledge given, instead of going away and forgetting it. The sensitives who give these truths to the world have their trials, many sink under them like the gentle Nazarene, and cry "*Eli, eli, lama sabaethani.*" The gentle Nazarene was a man born before His time. He saw the causes of wrong but had not the power to apply the remedy. Another man may be born who may have greater power of execution, for in the coming time the power of love and sterling merit shall rule the world, and have dominion over class and caste. Here is another use.

The business of life and the duties of home should not occupy the time of men and women, to the utter exclusion of that which belongs to the inner nature, for the man within governs the man without. If the man within goes wrong, the man without must go wrong, and discord will prevail. Spiritualism teaches man many of the laws of his inner nature.

What is the tendency of all these uses? Is it to produce power? Is it to make tyrants? No; its tendency is to improve the mind, to clear away thoughts which press upon the minds of men, and to let the pure sun of reason shine with full lustre. This must tend to give all minds knowledge and wisdom. The man who has the power of healing must be inspired with love and kindness. The tendency of Spiritualism with the religionist is to increase his sense of religion, to make it strong and durable, and to add new fuel to the sacred fire within, for it shows how kind the Great Source has been to humanity, to permit the veil to be raised, to let men see beyond the tomb, and to let them speak to the loved ones who have gone before. His reason then takes the hand of his religion, and pale-eyed charity comes along the road. He sees how grand are the laws which govern religion, and how ignorant he had previously been—how he should ever act so as to preserve the sacredness of life on both sides of the silent river. Thus will his reverence be increased for the Great Creator.

Mortals, I never yet knew a man or woman who in the inner heart believed in utter annihilation, because such belief does not naturally exist. When the cares and troubles of life are laid aside for a time, and all is hushed, the spirit wanders into the dim unknown, but the flesh will not hear the still small voice within, and it becomes confused. The man then feels "Well, I don't want to think about it," and then he dismisses the subject, though he wishes that he could believe the spiritual manifestations in the sacred volume. But when the modern manifestations came under his own scrutiny he stands upon the shore free from doubt and from the waves of difficulty; he knows that he lives for ever, and he thanks God for it.

No subject will produce a favourable impression upon him who thinks it is a bore to live. Spiritualists should never condemn this brother, who pays no attention to anything beyond himself. Endeavour to improve and to till the land which has lain fallow so long, plant in his soul some germs of reason, stir up his stagnant mind to action, let him know that he will have a reckoning to pay, not to a bar of justice, but to one of the sternest judges of all—his own conscience. Conscience will smite him hard when he has to look back upon such a life.

The existence you are now enjoying, with all its beauties, with all its glories, is but the commencement of the course which you will have to run. Here you can draw within yourselves that which will assist you in future ages, by spreading happiness, by gaining knowledge, and by spreading good around you. This is the school where the infant is trained. Woe to the infant if he neglect his schoolhouse! He must suffer, and he alone. Do not condemn a brother hastily, but have charity and brotherly love. Spiritualism instructs and lifts the mind; it tends to draw the man onwards and upwards to that source from which we all come. We always feel ourselves drawn to it, but never near enough to comprehend that which is above the scope of our own intelligence. Try to lead useful lives, for such a course will draw down blessings from friends in the higher life, who see you both in the rum shop and upon the rostrum. Many of you would not offend your earthly friends, and because you cannot see them, why should you offend them when they are gone? Farewell.

Mr. Morse having sat too often for manifestations for some time previously, the spiritual control during the delivery of this lecture was much weaker than usual.

SPIRITUALISM IN STRATFORD.

On Sunday afternoon, May 1st, a public meeting was held in the Working Men's Hall, Stratford, Essex, to consider the subject of Spiritualism and its teachings. The Rev. T. Crow, Unitarian minister, presided.

Mr. Collier, of Forest-gate, had undertaken to be present to answer any questions which might be put about Spiritualism, he having lectured there on the subject on several previous occasions; but he was unable to attend the meeting now under notice, because of severe inflammation of the right arm. Consequently, at the invitation of the President, Mr. Bassett consented to take the place of Mr. Collier. A variety of questions of a more or less elementary nature having been put,

Mr. BASSETT said that before answering them he should like to make a few introductory remarks. Two years ago he had taken part in a similar discussion to the present one, and then he did not believe in the truth of Spiritualism, although for some years previously he had been acquainted with the phenomena. Two years ago he had publicly stated that he should like to give believers in it six months in a lunatic asylum, so he should not be at all surprised if many of those listening to him, were now wishing him the same fate. After five years of thorough investigation he became a believer. After much inquiry his difficulty had been "Why cannot I get these phenomena alone, by myself?" He put this question at a spirit circle, and he was told that he could get them by himself if he became a medium. He then asked, "Am I a medium?" and the spirits said "No." "Oh, then," he thought, "it's no use pursuing the subject further," but then he remembered that his wife was with him at the *séance*, so he asked, "Is Mrs. Bassett a medium?" The reply was, "Yes." Accordingly they went home and sat for manifesta-

tions by themselves, in a room free from springs and man-traps; night after night did they sit and get nothing, but at last faint raps were heard, which at first he put down to the cat. They continued their sittings, the raps grew louder, and at last the table began to move. Sometimes when they were not sitting for manifestations or thinking of Spiritualism, the table would move about with all the tea things on it, and this in broad daylight. Once, when it was moving and had nothing upon it, he asked, "Is any spirit present?" and the table turned upside down. (Laughter.) They might laugh, but it was true. He witnessed the phenomena for a long time in his own home, and at last became convinced that they were produced by spirits. He had known spirit hands and arms to be formed, and to touch himself, with nobody else present but his wife. It was true that the hands were formed in the darkness, but he knew that his wife did not produce the effects, because he held both her hands, and while he did so the spirit hands were passed over his face. He had also heard the spirits talking with audible voices, just as human beings still in the body talk to each other. Electricity could not produce hands and audible voices. He stated all these facts to show that he had not jumped to a conclusion on the matter all at once. Mr. Bassett then proceeded to answer the questions, some of which were put to elicit information, and some were framed on the supposition that Spiritualism is all imposture. While answering the questions the speaker said that in very many cases three of his senses had been influenced by the phenomena at the same time—namely, feeling, hearing, and seeing. In answer to the inquiry when the phenomena first appeared, he would reply—"To Adam and Eve in the garden of Paradise." He could hardly say whether the communications were good or bad, for it is a great question "What is good and what is bad?"—but he knew that good Christian spirits came and told him that they are now happy and reaping their reward, and others who were not Christians while upon earth, say that they are now not happy in consequence. There is no eternal punishment.

Mr. COCKETT said that he did not like the assumption that Spiritualism is an imposture, which had been implied in some of the questions put to Mr. Bassett. Their friend Mr. Collier was known to be an honest man, and to regard Spiritualism as such a serious thing, that he made it a subject of prayer, so he thought that to laugh at it was not right. And the statements made by Mr. Collier were of the utmost importance, for he said that he had direct knowledge that in the next world the destiny of man is eternal progression, and there is no eternal punishment. Mr. Collier had also stated, on the authority of Professor Hare, that in America about 25,000 hard-headed sceptics had become Spiritualists; he (Mr. Cockett) should like to know how far these statistics can be verified. He should like to ask what good to mankind is likely to be derived from Spiritualism? One of the banes of Spiritualism is that it seems to make men think so much about the far away spirit land and future life, to the forgetfulness of their present duties, and if this be the case, it will do no more good than the ordinary Trinitarian religion.

Mr. TAYLOR asked how Mr. Bassett knew that electricity did not produce the phenomena?

Mr. BASSETT said that Mr. C. F. Varley, who knew as much about electricity as anybody, had stated distinctly that the phenomena are not of an electrical character.

The PRESIDENT said that although objections had been made, he thought no day so fit as the Sabbath to discuss questions bearing upon religion, or upon the facts which underlie all our religious beliefs. Our great poet has spoken of "That bourne from which no traveller returns," and we all feel that it is an unknown land. If, then, Spiritualism can prove that there is communication with the unseen world, what a priceless boon it will be? He believed that Spiritualism could not make good its professions. While we may be troubled, and not know the nature of the laws which govern the real though strange phenomena of Spiritualism, we do know that they are not produced by existences in another world. It had been asked, "When did the phenomena first appear?" and he would reply that they were known as far back as prehistoric times; the Bible is full of them, and he thought that Spiritualism is making us understand certain things in the Bible, which otherwise would be inexplicable. In the Bible there is much about people who went into trances, and had communications from spirits, and after receiving these communications they went forth to assume authority over their fellow men. If Spiritualism were real, what ought it to have done? After existing, as it has done, for the last four or five thousand years in every country under heaven, if the communications had been real they would have given us a history of the world beyond the grave, of its constitutional government, and of the state of its society and laws. It would also have given us a history of the lives of our remarkable men after they reached the other side, and their present doings would form the subject of many of the telegrams coming from the other world. Yet they give us absolutely no information about that world. The men who have these manifestations get into a terrible jumble; they say what they have seen, and then get their ideas into a muddle. They are not clear-headed people, although there are some exceptions, for Robert Owen was a convert to Spiritualism before his death, and it made him believe in a future life. He never found that a belief in Spiritualism made a disbeliever any better. He knew a man who once did not believe in a future state, but who had since turned a Spiritualist, but he is no better Christian now; he never enters a church, and he has not joined himself to any of the religious bodies. He never saw anybody any the better for Spiritualism. He knew that every Spiritualist finds that the spirits teach his own ideas of what is right; a Calvinist, for instance, finds Calvinism in full bloom in the other life. All these things are reflections from the man's own brain, and—

Mr. BASSETT—You are wrong, sir. Allow me to contradict that.

The PRESIDENT—Well, it is so as far I can learn. He then continued that another fact was that the teachings do not agree with each other. He thought that the true explanation of much of this will be learnt when more is known about the human brain. Physicians know what intangible phenomena are presented by the brain, and what a difficult part of the system it is to attempt to understand. God may find room to construct a universe on the point of a needle, but man, when he tries to follow these wonders, finds his powers too feeble. Probably, spiritual manifestations will in time be traced to brain force; still, he must admit that Mr. Bassett had stated things which the brain force theory does not explain, and probably never will explain. He fully admitted the phenomena to be true, and the imposture theory to have no foundation; even if people were discovered now and then playing tricks at spirit circles, it proved nothing. The character of the witnesses was often beyond question, and they had nothing to gain in the matter. It was true he did not

* See Denton's *Soul of Things*.—Ed.

friend and a brother, whom he had known, loved, and respected for many years. He thought that if more Americans would visit England to see its ruins, its paintings, and its libraries, and if more Englishmen would visit America, it would lengthen the chain of friendship and baptize with peace and goodwill the hearts of all those who speak the English language. Truly it is often asked, "What does Spiritualism do?" It gives demonstration of a future existence, for even now clear-headed men often ask the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Once upon a time, he, as a minister, attended a funeral in the town where his friend Mr. Watson, then upon the platform, came from. It was an only child. His text was "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The whole of his sermon was about "faith," but as the mother baptized the coffin with her tears, she turned and said to him, "Tell me what you know about the immortal world, my aching heart seeks for more than faith—for knowledge." She added "Tell me what you know of that world; shall I know my child? Will my child know me?"—and he was dumb. But now, since he had talked with the angels, and heard their lute-like voices, he no longer talked about "faith," for now "We know that we have a house eternal in the heavens." The truths of Spiritualism teach us therefore that there is an immortal life beyond the tomb. Spiritualism is spreading to the ends of the earth. He had found its phenomena in Smyrna, in Constantinople, in Athens, and upon the Pacific coasts; in fact wherever thinking men are found, there is this living truth proclaimed. He knew much of Dr. Newton, for hundreds had clasped his hands who had been healed by him. If he tried to pick out solitary instances from among the large number, it was like trying to select some specially bright star from the thousands in the midnight heavens. In Buffalo several years ago, he was present at the house of Dr. Newton, when a gentleman was brought in upon his bed, who for years had had paralysis; Dr. Newton looked at him, simply laid his hands upon him and said, "Disease, I bid you depart. Arise, you are well," and the man left the bed and crossed the room, then stood before Dr. Newton weeping with joy. "Stop," said Dr. Newton, "It is not I; it is the spirit power of which I am but the humble instrument." On another occasion a lady could not get near him, and Dr. Newton's spirits impressed him to say, "It does not matter, she is well," and she was cured. He had cured the lame, the dumb, and the blind, and did not Jesus say that these signs should follow those who believe? If his hearers would lead more of the Christ life, and not be so scheming, and artful, and worldly—if they would go about doing good and would lead pure lives, so surely as God's words are true, would they receive some of the wonderful gifts which were given to the Apostles. For at least 300 years after the time of Christ, visions, and trances, and wonderful healing gifts were known in the Church, but when, under Constantine, religion became national, and pride was introduced, the angels left it. What is wanted is a life more devoted to the principles of Spiritualism. Mrs. Hardinge stands at the head of American inspirational speakers, and Dr. Newton stands at the head of all the healing mediums connected with the movement. Before him disease departs, and when it does not depart at once it sometimes departs very shortly afterwards, because of its cause being removed—a stream will flow for a little time after its sources of supply have been cut off. He had great faith in Dr. Newton's cures, far more faith than expressed by some of those who had spoken before him, because he had seen more of Dr. Newton's works than they had. He blessed his Father God, that such men were to be raised up, not for selfish objects, but to remove disease, and to help men and women on their way to these holier plains of beauty, love, and truth. He knew that Dr. Newton would nobly do his work, and that he would be blessed by God and His holy angels; he trusted that all present would extend to him love and warmth of soul. Personally, the more time he spent in England, the better he could comprehend and love Englishmen, and he wished to bespeak for Dr. Newton cordial welcomes and greetings while he remains in the country. (Applause.)

Dr. J. R. NEWTON then rose amid loud and continued applause. He spoke under spirit influence, with slowness and frequent pauses, and he said that he felt overwhelmed by the cordial welcome. He stood before them as a plain man, and felt like a little child. He was a practical Christian, and was ready at any time to make a sacrifice of himself for the sake of Christianity. It was a wonder to him that few men ever try to live daily as Jesus lived. When he became moral and perfectly Christian in his life, the spiritual powers were showered upon him, and this was as wonderful to himself as to those whom he addressed. He believed in spirit communion and he knew the names of some of the spirits who controlled him in the exercise of his gifts. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, embracing all the law and the prophets, that ye love one another," and that was the advice which he gave to those before him. He loved every man, woman, and child as much as he loved his own children, not that he loved his own children less, but because he loved mankind at large more. Men and women should all do the best they can, for it is by good works alone they will receive their reward; everybody should be kind and loving. He felt that he loved all, that he loved everybody in that assembly, and as to the power of healing, it is merely an illustration of the power of love. When any sick person comes before him, he laid his hands on that person and felt that he loved him, and if the patient were not antagonistic, he was almost sure to be healed; he told them that he loved them, and when this opened their hearts to him the disease must depart. True religion is very simple, plain, and easy. He made no profession to be a public speaker, for there before them he was entirely under the control of the spirits, and what he was then speaking was spirit. At the time of his birth a tree of life was planted, since then it had been growing in all its beauty, and it blossomed that night. It is a tree for the healing of the nations; its fragrance is great, and the atmosphere around it is bright, and all nations are directed to it. In the bright spirit land to which we all shall go, there are houses, and trees, and birds, just as there are here, and to this beautiful tree the birds of all nations fly, and legions of spirits fly to see this beautiful tree.* He would give a few lines of poetry as they were given to him by the spirits:—

This beautiful tree is the Tree of Life,
It is for all nations free,
Its leaves are a balm for every wound,
And it blossoms, dear ones, for thee.

* A possible explanation of the beautiful symbolical illustrations often contained in the higher spirit communications, will be found in Mrs. De Morgan's book *From Matter to Spirit*: Longmans.

This power of healing the nations applies not only to the ills of the physical body, but it will help to heal such every breach among nations, such, for instance, as that caused by the *Alabama* case. He could not say that he had come to England at any sacrifice, because he believed it to be the will of his Father that he should come. He always lived as if each moment were his last upon earth, and for the last ten years he had not done or said anything that he was sorry for. He did not come to London to make money, and he would receive rich and poor alike; he purposed to hire a house, perhaps in the course of this week, and next Sunday evening [to-night] he would be at the lecture of Brother Peebles' at the Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer-street, where he would give more information than he could do at that moment. The welcome he had received prevented him from speaking as freely as he wished to do. He had much to say, but he felt overwhelmed at the reception. He was heart and soul with them. Love is a positive substance; he felt it; and those present might feel it as well as himself. If anybody listening to him had a pain it was now gone, and he believed it to be just as easy to heal many as to heal one. It was done partly by his own will and partly by spirit power. He knew that Jesus was with him, and so were many other beautiful spirits like unto Him; we should love all the spirits, as well as all humanity; we are all brothers and sisters, and should love each other. It was not a matter of belief with him that spirits controlled him—it was knowledge. Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato walk the earth to-day, and so do all the great and good men who have gone before us. He (Dr. Newton) was forty-nine years old, yet he was only twenty-one, (laughter), he was blessed with perpetual youth; he never had any pain, and if he did not look in the glass, he should hardly know that he was so old. A short time ago he met a little boy, fourteen years old, who was a seeing medium, and he said to him, "Your hair is dark, and parted in the middle, it hangs down on your shoulders." Mr. Watson was present at the time. The boy's remark was true, and he knew perfectly well how he should look as a spirit. He would meet them again next Sunday, and gave them many thanks and blessings for their kind attentions. (Applause.)

Mr. J. M. PEEBLES then rose and proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman. He said that he knew that before Dr. Newton had been long in London, people would say that he was insane; Dr. Newton, as of old, would enjoy this very much, and he (Mr. Peebles) would enjoy it too. "This much is true, that Dr. Newton is almost continually under a strong spirit influx from the next world, and sometimes it is so strong that mediums are raised into a higher state by the mere touch of his hands. People who do not know that they are mediums sometimes find that they have mediumistic powers after they have been a short time in his presence. Dr. Newton's advice was good, and as Jesus once said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one for another." He had much pleasure in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Coleman, who had presided over the meeting with so much ability.

Dr. EVANS said that the power of healing was great but that the power of prevention was greater. To the Lord Jesus was given the power of healing the bodies of mankind, but if men would live up to the true principles of Spiritualism they would have no disease. In time every man must submit to the Divine power, and to Christ at the head of the divine power; those who do not submit will go into judgment, and be punished.

MR. SHORTER put the vote to the meeting, and those present responded by rising from their seats.

The President gave a brief acknowledgement of the vote of thanks which had been passed. He said that he well remembered when he first had the pleasure of introducing Mrs. Emma Hardinge to them in that room, and how her talents were so greatly appreciated, that the purposes for which the rooms had originally been taken were put on one side to listen to her lectures. He regretted that she was not there, but was very pleased to see that her mother was present. He hoped that her mother would convey to Mrs. Hardinge the feeling of the meeting towards her, and say how they hoped that she would shortly return to this country. Mr. Hardinge's *History of American Spiritualism* is one of the most valuable books ever contributed to the literature of the subject. Those who know nothing of the subject will find it to be a complete history of Spiritualism in America. Mr. Shorter had said that Dr. Newton was an "unqualified practitioner," but it might be as well to state that he had taken out a certificate in America as a qualified M.D., although doubtless he would throw all medicine into the sea, were it not for a kindly feeling towards the fishes. (Laughter.) He took out the degree to save himself from persecution in the courts.

Mr. S. C. HALL, F.S.A., Editor of the *Art Journal*, said that before the meeting closed he should like to say a few words. He came there with no intention to make a speech, but he should like to say a few words of congratulation to Dr. Newton. He believed that he expressed the sentiments of all Spiritualists when he said that it was their desire to give a cordial greeting to all Americans; and that it is a great duty to bring Americans and Englishmen closer together, that they may understand each other better than they have hitherto done. (Applause.) They had all seen great manifestations of Spiritualism, and he thought that they were all impressed with, not the belief, but the knowledge that Spiritualism is an accomplished fact, and he should not have risen at all, except to call attention to one point. He wanted to tell Dr. Newton that great progress is being made in this country among great men, and great thinkers, and men who will become great authorities. He rejoiced to tell him that a society the other day called witnesses before them, and made clear and close inquiry; that that society is about to send forth a report which will do much good among outsiders, for he heard that they would bear testimony that the assertions of fraud and delusion in connection with this subject must be put aside for ever. (Applause.) Thus two enemies of Spiritualism will be entirely removed out of the way. Then those who know that there is no fraud or delusion will find it a comparatively easy task to spread conviction as to its truth. He believed that truth to be essential to national happiness, and to dispel those doubts which afflict the intellectual portion of society more than any other, as to the reality of a continued existence in a higher and holier state. He believed that the great source of human happiness was embodied in the teaching "Love one another." He trusted that all present agreed with him that their course is much easier now than it was three or four years ago, when they first met in that room. He believed that the report of the society would go far towards the removal of the chief obstacles in the path of Spiritualism, and that it would make it easier to help on our divine belief. They would then be, he trusted, the humble instruments in God's hands of destroying the Materialism of the present age, for this he considered

to be the great purpose of Spiritualism, and that God's revelation has one great object at present—that of convincing man that there is an hereafter, and that although the body which we see will become dust, the spirit which inhabits it will be lifted into a higher sphere, where there is eternal progression; also that there are as many states above man as there are conditions below him. (Applause.) He himself had full knowledge of the truth of Spiritualism, and he hoped that many who were not Spiritualists would take his testimony as worth something when he expressed that certainty of belief. The more Spiritualism has been inquired into the more its truth has been exhibited; he thanked God for having given opportunities of proving that which they knew and believed. Dr. Newton has reached London at a good time, with less difficulties than of old to encounter, and with less probability of being considered mad or dishonest. (Applause.)

The business part of the meeting then came to a close, and it assumed the character of a *conversazione*. Miss Katherine Poynts and Mr. Maltby favoured the company with some singing, and Mr. D. D. Home gave two recitations in a high-class style; the subject of the first one was "Jane Conquest," and of the second "Widow Bedott." The latter caused much amusement. Mr. S. C. Hall spoke of the duty on the part of Spiritualists of rallying round Mr. D. D. Home, and supporting him well in his public readings, remembering that in this way he was working most honourably for a living, and that he never had taken and never would take a single farthing from anybody for the privilege of witnessing those wonderful manifestations which take place in his presence.

The refreshment department was well patronised; in fact, all the arrangements were well planned and neatly executed, proving that there is nothing to equal a "committee of one" to execute good work, when that one person is competent to perform the duties he undertakes.

Among the representative Spiritualists present at this meeting was Mr. Alfred R. Wallace, F.L.S.

PRIVATE SEANCES.

MR. PEARCE'S CIRCLE—DEDICATION OF CHILDREN TO THE CARE OF GUARDIAN SPIRITS—A FAMILY CIRCLE UNBROKEN BY DEATH.

ON Good Friday, the 16th April, many friends met at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pearce, 19, Hargwyne-street, South Stockwell; for the purpose of assisting in the dedication of their children to the loving care of their angel guardians. The party consisted of Mr. C. W. Pearce, Mrs. Mary Pearce, Mr. J. M. Peebles, Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, Mr. A. C. Swinton, Mr. N. F. T. Daw, Miss Shaw, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Pearce, Mrs. Maggs, and Mr. Harrison.

Amongst the spirits known to be present were—Edward N. Denny (author of *The Alpha*, and of a course of twenty-five lectures, edited by Mr. A. C. Swinton, now in the hands of Mr. J. Burns, for publication); Tien Sien Tie, the Chinese philosopher, who instructs Mr. Morse; Annie Blore, the guardian of Mrs. Everitt; John Watt, who controls her circle, and some of his friends; Powhattan, an Indian friend of J. M. Peebles; Robert Shaw, late of 5, Cambridge-road, Kilburn; Mary Swinton, mother of Mr. A. C. Swinton; Richard, Susanna, Richard, and Nahar Gill, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, and brother of Mary Pearce; John and Martha Bream, grandfather and grandmother (on mother's side), and Sarah Pearce, grandmother (on father's side) to Mr. Charles Pearce; also, Frederick Pearce, his uncle; Clara, his sister; and Florence Mary, a daughter, who about three years since exchanged the earthly life for the higher existence; Felix, an eastern sage, who frequently visits the circle of Mr. and Mrs. Pearce. There were present likewise many others, friends of the above, who accompanied them, to witness the dedication.

Mr. J. M. PEEBLES conducted the proceedings, which were very touching and interesting in their character. The friends present were arranged in a half circle form, and Mr. Peebles was between the poles.

After reading an appropriate passage from the Bible a hymn was sung and an aspirational prayer to the Almighty was offered, in which was recognised the indivisible oneness of the whole human family, whether found upon this or any other world in the boundless domain of the universal Father. Then, taking Edward, the eldest, Mr. Peebles placed his right hand upon his head, and with his left uplifted commended him to the tender care of his loving friends above, who signified their acceptance of the charge by loud "raps." Then Mr. Peebles was inspired, in feeling language, to acknowledge the love which brought Florence Mary, the second child (for nearly three years a resident in the Spirit land) to join in the ceremony, that the family circle might be complete. Annie Martha, a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked girl, between three and four years of age, was then taken and in the same manner offered, and accepted. Next, Bertie, a boy of two years, went from his mother's arms into Mr. Peebles', and nestled there, as if sensible of the overshadowing influence of the angel band who took him into their society; last, Ernest, a babe of four weeks, apparently unconscious of external surroundings, was dedicated to those whose faithful love will follow him and his brethren until united with them above.

This is the first time that any dedication analogous in some few respects to a "christening" ceremony, has taken place within the ranks of English Spiritualists.

THE *Liverpool Mercury* of last Tuesday has a long article about the cures effected by Dr. Newton in Liverpool last Sunday and Monday.

SPIRITUAL PERIODICALS.—An idea is prevalent that it is the intention to bring out a weekly paper in connection with this journal. This supposition has no foundation whatever, for the notice recently given of the securing of the copyright of *The Spiritual News* refers only to a little journal which will be brought out once a month in the next London season, that subscribers may not have to wait a whole month for news. If any subscribers have had any difficulty in getting the SPIRITUALIST they should write to the publisher; from the first it has been brought out punctually on the day of publication, and any delay in receipt is not due to the London agents.

THE TRANSMISSION OF MESSAGES BY SPIRITS.—With reference to the article on this subject in our last, wherein "a black spirit named Zambia," appeared at the same hour to some Spiritualists in England, and to some Spiritualists on board a ship on its way to New Zealand, it further appears on comparing the records made by Mr. Everitt and Mr. Meers, that Zambia told both of them that "although he had a black skin, he had a white heart." This still further completes the chain of evidence. When by research more is known of the conditions necessary to enable spirits to communicate, may it not be possible to increase the precision with which messages are given?

CHARGES FOR ADVERTISEMENTS.

1. Advertisements of Public Companies, Half-a-guinea per sixth of a column, or every portion of sixth of a column.
 2. General Advertisements, Five Shillings per twelfth of a column, or portion of twelfth of a column.
- Note.—Advertisements at the foregoing rates will be "displayed" so as to occupy the full space paid for, but advertisements at the following rates will be in closely set type:—
3. General Advertisements, Half-a-crown per first five lines or portion of five lines, and Fourpence for every line in addition.
 4. Situations Wanted, or Apartments to Let, One Shilling per first four lines, or portion of four lines; Threepence for every line in addition. Ten words are allowed to the line, and six figures or initial letters count as one word.
- When five or more insertions of the same advertisement are paid for, twenty per cent. reduction will be made in the above rates.
- The power is reserved of refusing to insert any advertisement. Advertisements and remittances should be sent to the Publisher, Mr. E. W. ALLEN, Ave Maria-lane, St. Paul's Church-yard, London, E.C.

To Correspondents.

All letters should be brief and to the point, as the amount of space available for correspondence is at present small.

Communications intended for the Editor should be by letter only, addressed to the care of the Publisher, Mr. E. W. ALLEN, Ave Maria-lane, St. Paul's Church-yard, London, E.C. Until the Spiritualist movement in England, together with this journal, have both grown considerably, time cannot be spared for personal interviews on subjects connected with the literary work of THE SPIRITUALIST, but all letters will meet with careful consideration.

THE SPIRITUALIST is a periodical intended to give great freedom of expression to all the different shades of opinion to be found among Spiritualists. There will therefore be very little uniformity in the ideas promulgated in this journal, more especially in the correspondence columns. Under these circumstances every reader will find occasionally something in THE SPIRITUALIST which he or she does not like, but the right of reply remains. This freedom of thought given to others, the Editor claims for himself, and those who do not like the contents of leading articles can write against them in the correspondence columns. This plan is thought better than that of reducing the contents of the journal to a pale weak mediocrity, by inserting only those contributions which please everybody. The preceding remarks are not intended to imply that those who have crotchets which they cannot get printed anywhere else, can find an outlet for them here, for none but those letters which are considered worth publication will be inserted.

Notices of Public Meetings in connection with Spiritualism should be sent to the office several days in advance.

To Subscribers.

The first twelve numbers of THE SPIRITUALIST will be forwarded regularly by penny post to subscribers, who remit four shillings in payment to Mr. E. W. ALLEN, Publisher, Ave Maria-lane, St. Paul's Church-yard, E.C. No notice will be taken of orders received unaccompanied by a remittance.

When the day of issue chances to fall upon a Sunday, this journal will be published on the preceding Saturday.

The Spiritualist.

SUNDAY, MAY 15, 1870.

SEEING MEDIUMSHIP.

WHEN the knowledge is gained that spiritual manifestations are real, intelligent investigators usually attempt to learn something about the principles which produce them. Evidence is soon obtained that the communications are much coloured, as a rule, both by the mind of the medium, and by the tendencies of the thoughts of the members of the circle, although an independent intelligence is at work foreign to both. The thing required to be known is the message of the communicating spirit in its original purity, free from the colouring it has undergone in traversing that wide and deep chasm of the grave, which our friends on the other side are working so hard to bridge over.

For this reason it is necessary that the amount of error introduced by the transmitting instrument shall be known. In the endeavour to eliminate this source of unreliability, we once attempted to question the spirits at all circles as to how they produced the manifestations, but a very great expenditure of time at this work produced very meagre results, for the simple reason that other persons at spirit circles had their own questions to put upon other subjects, and the time of those present could not be monopolised to carry out the views of any one individual. As it is only possible at miscellaneous circles to put questions of this nature at rare intervals, we hit upon the plan of getting different seeing mediums to watch how the manifestations were produced, and to note all the particulars. To begin with the alphabet of the phenomena, they were first asked to give especial attention to the common table tiltings.

The result was a most complicated mass of contradictions. One medium saw arrangements below the table, and spirit hands, by means of intermediate contrivances, forcing up the table from below. Another saw spirit hands touching the table from above, and moving it by a lifting process. Another saw a spirit floating above the table, and every time the spirit raised and depressed her hand the table rose and fell, whilst a stream of blue light seemed to connect the hand with the table. A fourth saw a luminous cone above the table. Andrew Jackson Davis corroborates this statement to some extent, for he says that he has seen a luminous cord stretching from the table to a band of spirits seventy or eighty miles above the house, which cord widened into a cone before it touched the table. Another seer, again, said that he saw the communicating spirit with his hands on the shoulders of the medium, and moving the table by the exercise of his

will. Amid all these disheartening contradictions two facts stood their ground most firmly. In the first place, the table did actually move in the presence of many witnesses, without the intervention of imposture; in the second place, seeing mediums did actually sometimes see spirits so as to be able to describe departed friends in a recognisable way to strangers whom the mediums had never seen before.

After following up this method of research for some time, somewhat conclusive evidence was obtained that the majority of seeing mediums have their organs of sight acted upon by independent spirits, and what the spirits wish them to see they actually do see, just as a biological lecturer can make his sensitives see what he chooses. Should this explanation be true, it follows that communications through seeing mediums may be reliable or unreliable, and must be subjected to the test of reason, just the same as messages received by tilts or raps. Mrs. De Morgan narrates how the spirits told her that seeing manifestations are produced by a spirit standing near the medium, and that what the spirit thinks the medium sees. We once mentioned all these circumstances to Mr. Peebles, because his long experience of spiritual manifestations in America makes his testimony of value. He said that in the majority of cases spirits make the medium see what they choose, but some mediums have the power of independent spirit vision. Such independent and reliable seers may be distinguished from others, because they have the power of seeing spirits at all times, and look upon their neighbours with pity as half-blind individuals, because they cannot see their departed friends. The ordinary seeing medium can only see now and then, when his clairvoyant powers are temporarily developed at a spirit circle or elsewhere, and then what he sees is probably under the control of his attendant spirits.

Should these ideas be correct, it follows that many of the things observed by seeing mediums are not actual facts, but mental impressions; that the communications made by means of their organs of sight may be truthful or untruthful, and must be subjected to the test of reason and common sense before they can be accepted either as truths or falsehoods. A low spirit, for instance, may make the medium under his control see demoniacal-looking beings round some particular person, and thus raise a repulsion in the mind of the medium towards the society of that individual. In this hypothetical case an untruthful idea is communicated by seeing mediumship, just as effectually as by a deliberately false message spelt out by raps.

In the first experiences of mediums which have been recorded in these pages, it will be noticed that at the outset the communicating influences were very frequently of an unpleasant nature, but that a gradual improvement took place. The first stages of seeing-mediumship are sometimes unpleasant, probably because an undeveloped spirit makes the medium see repulsive things. When a case of this kind appears among those who know nothing of the phenomena of Spiritualism, the doctors of course are called in. They find the patient perfectly sane on all subjects but one. "I see these things," says the patient. "You do not see them," say the doctors. "But I do see them," reiterates the patient. Whereupon the doctors sign a certificate, the medium is sent to the nearest lunatic asylum: there, worse psychological influences than were in the home of the parents or friends surround the patient, who is very shortly driven mad by them in real earnest, in consequence of want of knowledge of these subjects among members of the medical profession. When a case of a similar nature occurs among Spiritualists, the patient is taken to a spirit circle where there are good influences and a powerful well-developed medium. Here the unseen individual who caused all the trouble is usually sent about his business or taught better by the higher influences, and the freed medium learns something of the bright side of the gift of seeing-mediumship, which, in time, permits him to see and communicate with friends and relatives on the other side of the grave, to the satisfaction of observant individuals who will carefully investigate such cases. The liberated medium should then take care to lead such a life as to offer no attraction to spirits like the one who first annoyed him, and not to live with relatives or people who are surrounded by spirits of a

malicious or revengeful nature, because his sensitive organization renders him liable to a possible return of the persecution.

HALIFAX PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—At a social meeting of this Society on Good Friday, about sixty Spiritualists sat down to tea, and afterwards gave attention to some of the business of the society, as well as to a few songs, recitations, and glees. Mr. Henry Ambler, president, occupied the chair. A good inspirational address also was given through the mediumship of Mr. Wood. On the following Sunday, at a gathering of the Halifax Spiritualists, an interesting address was given through the trance mediumship of Mr. Wood to an crowded audience. Subject, "He shall go in the spiritual power of Elias."

SPIRIT MESSAGES.—The *Banner of Light*, of April 30th, 1870, contains the following message, given through the mediumship of Mrs. J. H. Conant, 158, Washington-street, Boston, United States:—"I suppose my friends will not have heard of my death. But we encountered a gale three days out from Newcastle, England, and were lost. We were bound for New York. [Was the vessel and all lost?] Yes, all I know of. I am William Benson. I have a family in Liverpool, and I want to send some word that I can come back, and that this life where I am is not so much separated from the earth-life after all. It was the ship *Myra*. Say that I want to talk—not here again, but there if I can. [You wish to go to some medium there through whom you can speak.] Yes. I was thirty-one years old. Say we went easy, and they must not mourn.—Feb. 21." The same paper of April 23rd, contains the following message to Miss Houghton, of 20, Delamere-crescent, Paddington, W.; it was given through the same medium, but by writing instead of by trance speaking:—"My beloved sister, I rejoice to be able to return testifying to the truth of your beautiful faith, in which I could not believe when on the earth. Oh! bear for me my blessing to my dear wife and children, and say I will not rest until I have given them some light. I have met your friend, Miss Elizabeth V. Ingram, here in America, and she has kindly called me to return to those I love. Georgiana, forgive me if I could not understand you, and have patience with my dear ones, and believe me to be ever near to aid you. Clarence Houghton, to Georgiana Houghton, London, England, February 17."

SERVICES IN THE CAVENDISH ROOMS.—The Sunday evening meetings in the Cavendish Rooms have been continued as usual under the ministrations of Mr. J. M. Peebles. On Sunday evening, May 1st, during the absence of Mr. Peebles in Yorkshire, Mr. Edmund D. Rogers, a literary gentleman, of Norwich, officiated in his place. Mr. Rogers is a Swedenborgian, and in his address he tried to reconcile the opinions of Spiritualists, Swedenborgians, and orthodox Christians, on the subject of death-bed repentance. Citing the case of the dying thief upon the cross, as stated in the New Testament, his chief endeavour was to produce evidence that the thief was in reality not a thief, but a political offender, who might, therefore, have been as good a man as Garibaldi. The Sunday afternoon conferences in the Cavendish Rooms are also continued, but they are very thinly attended. On Sunday, May 1st, Professor Blackie, F.R.S.E., was present. Somehow or other the discussion turned upon the enormous amount of pauperism and misery caused in the United Kingdom by the present English land laws, which have long since been abolished in France, Belgium, Russia, and most civilised nations. Professor Blackie said that Spiritualism should be investigated, and that he was in favour of the abolition of the laws which favour primogeniture. Professor Blackie is now delivering a course of lectures at the Royal Institution; his style of speaking is eccentric, and he detains the listeners considerably beyond the time fixed by the managers for the conclusion of lectures. On one occasion he stated the interesting fact that "the Word," in the opening chapter of St John's gospel, is a mistranslated passage, and the verse should read:—"In the beginning was reason, and reason was with God, and reason was God," which explanation makes good sense of a passage which, as it stands, has no meaning at all.

MR. MORSE'S MEDIUMSHIP.—The *Medium* states that at one of the weekly public sêances held at 15, Southampton-row, Holborn, W.C., on Friday evening, March 18, 1870, a spirit who spoke through the trance mediumship of Mr. J. J. Morse, said that his name was Edward Moore, and that he was killed at Helmsdale's Works, Samuel-street, Spitalfields, by an accident with machinery. Mrs. Main, of 321, Bethnal-green-road, inquired into the matter, and found the statements to be correct. On another evening, a spirit, who gave the name of Best, stated that he died in the second week of February last, and that his address was Christleton Lodge, Chester. This was published in the *Medium*. The editor of the *Cheshire Observer* inquired into the case, and published the result as follows:—"Mr. Best did not die in the second week of February, but the fourth; the name of his residence is spelt Christleton and not Christleton, and there is no resemblance whatever between the spiritual handwriting and that of the deceased gentleman when he wrote in the flesh. With these exceptions, the spirit's account is quite correct." The preceding circumstances, together with others which have been published in these pages, tend to prove that most of the names and addresses given by the spirits who speak through Mr. Morse are correct, but that some of them are altered more or less by the difficulties besetting the transmission of the messages. His mediumship, therefore, is very much of the same character as that of Mrs. J. H. Conant, of Boston. The messages sent through Mrs. Conant are published regularly in the *Banner of Light*, and two of them will be found in another part of this issue. An experiment was made a month ago to ascertain Mr. Morse's powers as an inspirational lecturer; he gave an address by invitation to the St. John's Association of Spiritualists, but the control was very weak, partly from the unpleasant closeness of the room, and partly because he was somewhat worn out by previously sitting too much for manifestations. Doubtless, when his power is stronger, another trial will be made. Since then he has received the following message from his guardian spirit:—"It is our request that you abstain from holding any private circles during the summer months, until you hear to the contrary. Attendance to the above will be productive of benefit to yourself and your friends, otherwise we shall be compelled to withdraw ourselves from you.—TIEN." Mr. Morse's weekly Friday evening public sêances are still held at 15, Southampton-row, High Holborn. His guardian spirit, Tien Sien T'ie, says that he and other immortals come down to earth in the attempt to teach its inhabitants, thus withdrawing themselves from their own pursuits and aims, because of the love they bear to those still on this plane of existence. He says that by the law of "eternal progression" man must rise, even did he receive no direct spiritual teachings from higher spheres,

