

Our Self after Death

(Can we, in the light of Christ and His Teaching, know MORE on this subject than is commonly expressed in Christian Belief ?)

BY THE
REVEREND ARTHUR CHAMBERS

Associate of King's College, London ;

Vicar of Brockenhurst, Hampshire ;

(Author of "Our Life after Death," "Man and the Spiritual World,"
"Thoughts of the Spiritual," and "Problems of the Spiritual.")

THIRD EDITION.

London :

CHARLES TAYLOR,

BROOKE HOUSE,

22 & 23, WARWICK LANE, E.C.

THIS LITTLE WORK
IS SYMPATHETICALLY DEDICATED
TO THOSE COUNTLESS THOUSANDS OF MOURNING
ONES, IN THIS AND OTHER LANDS, WHO,
BY THIS TERRIBLE EUROPEAN WAR,
ARE FACING THE THOUGHTS
OF DEATH AND THE
HEREAFTER.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
THE GREAT ENQUIRY	3
WRONG AND INADEQUATE ANSWERS GIVEN TO THE GREAT ENQUIRY	8
(a) THAT OF THE MATERIALIST	8
(b) THAT OF THE CHRISTIAN-MATERIALIST	12
(c) THE THEORY OF THE DIMINISHED SELF	23
(d) THE ANSWER OF THE AGNOSTIC CHRISTIAN	29
(e) THE OBSCURATION OF THE TRUE ANSWER BY THE CUSTOMS AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF CHRISTENDOM	33
THE ANSWER FROM CHRIST TO THE GREAT ENQUIRY	44
I. THAT OUR SELF IS NOT DEPENDENT FOR EXIST- ENCE UPON THE PHYSICAL ORGANISATION, AND SURVIVES SEPARATION FROM IT	52
II. THAT, AFTER DEATH, OUR SELF IS NOT A BODI- LESS ENTITY	69
III. THAT, AFTER DEATH, THE MENTAL POWERS AND QUALITIES OF OUR SPIRITUALLY-ENCASED SELF ARE RETAINED	119

Contents

(a) THE RETENTION OF THE MIND ITSELF	122
(b) THE RETENTION OF MEMORY	125
(c) THE RETENTION OF LOVE FOR, SYMPATHY WITH, AND INTEREST IN, THOSE LEFT IN EARTH-LIFE	130
(d) THE RETENTION OF SEQUENTIAL THOUGHT	135
IV. THAT, IN AFTER-LIFE, THE SELF, BODILY, MENTALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY, ADVANCES	148
LIGHT THROUGH THE CLOUD	166

Our Self after Death

INTRODUCTION.

My answer to the interrogatory expressed in the subsidiary title of this little work is, of course, "Yes." I believe—whether rightly or wrongly—that the Church of Christ (and by "the Church" I mean the Anglican, Roman and Eastern Churches and other Christian communities) has not hitherto realised, although it is now beginning to realise, *all* that lies disclosed in the New Testament concerning our Self after death. I humbly venture to submit that it is possible for us who live in an age of enlarged Christian Thought, of Scientific Psychical Research, and of ever-extending knowledge of the mysteries of Human-being, to see in the Gospel-Records far more on the subject of After-Life than Christendom, *as a whole*, has in the past perceived.

My task, in these pages, will be to try and justify this assertion. It may seem a bold

Our Self after Death

thing for me to attempt to do; but I think that this time of widespread death and sorrow calls for the effort; and I set myself to the work only after twenty or more years of earnest thought and study of this great subject.

I ask the reader to carefully think out what is herein expressed; and then to ask himself—"Are these things so, in the light of Christ and Scripture?"

If he can answer affirmatively, then I think he will find, as I have found, that there is more in Christian Truth than Traditional Belief has supposed: a something more potent than that which is commonly expressed in Burial hymns and Funeral sermons, to lift from off the landscape of human experience the darkening shadows of Bereavement and Dying.

THE GREAT ENQUIRY.

“What of our Self after death?” This is the question (embodying in it a host of other questions) which has been asked, anxiously, earnestly, and persistently, by men and women in all ages, and under all conditions of human existence. No question has ever been so universally and so pertinaciously asked as this one. Primitive Man, without any civilisation, books and Religion, voiced it, when he looked on physical death, and intuitively felt that behind it lay some fact of continued existence. The old-world Philosophers and Thinkers were asking the question; when, without any Religious Eschatological formularies, or Christ declared and Christ-demonstrated facts to help and guide them, they told the ones of their age that the grave or funeral pyre was not the goal of themselves and others. And all adown the ages, that question has been constantly asked. Patriarchs, Seers, Prophets, Jews who shaped their

Our Self after Death

lives according to the Law of Moses (which says nothing about After-Life and Immortality), and the big crowd of good and thinking ones who lived before Christ—the great Revealer—came; all these kept on earnestly and persistently asking this question. And *since* the Christ came—since the world has known what He said, and what He, in His own person, disclosed as to the hitherto little known facts of human-being—men and women have gone on asking that old, old question, “*What of our Self after death?*”

Those who are members of the Christian Churches and Communities, who have mentally “drilled-themselves” to unquestioningly accept what their particular Religious Body has told them must be believed on this subject—even they are not quite satisfied with what they have been told. They hardly like to admit it to themselves, and they certainly would not mention it to others, whose “Orthodox” opinions they might shock—that they are not very much comforted, not very much inspired, and not very much impressed by what is commonly pronounced as Christian Doctrine concerning those who die. It lacks something. Within the sanctuary of their innermost thoughts, when the sense of

Our Self after Death

bereavement most heavily presses upon their spirit, and when the words of Burial Service and hymns fall short of what they crave for in the way of comfort—are not such asking mentally, poignantly, or even with a shadow of despair, in spite of all assurances as to distant resuscitation and “beatific visions”—“Oh! *what* of our Self after Death?”

And you, my Reader, have asked this question at some time or another. Did not your spirit whisper it when you stole into the quiet room wherein lay the dead body of one you loved, and still love? How half-fearfully you lifted the white covering from that still, calm face; and as the tears bedimmed your eyes, and a great sob broke from your sorrow-charged soul, you mentally said, “What of the Self that has gone?” Ah! yes; and there never has been, as *now*, such a time when so many have asked this same question. Millions of our fellows in this great and terrible war have been slaughtered on the battle-fields, or succumbed to wounds, or perished by disease. They have gone hence: the husbands, parents, sons, brothers, sweet-hearts, friends of some or others.

From scores and hundreds of thousands who love them and mourn for them one great

Our Self after Death

irrepressible thought, voiced or unvoiced, is arising, "What of those 'dead' ones? What of their Self?"

But no one can ask this question without there arising a number of other questions closely connected with it. What *is* our Self? Is it a personal entity?

Has it, when detached from the earthly body, a consciousness of *Individuality*? Is it in *form*; as possessing some kind of bodily encasement? Is there growth and perfecting of the bodily presence in Spirit-Life? Are the inherent powers of our Self retained in that Life; so that memory, the recalling of past associations, sympathy, concernfulness, desire to help, and love for others are still existent? Is the discarnate Self excluded from the knowledge of things mundane? Is there any *real* communion between those on earth and those in Other Life?

In that Life, is the Purpose of God advancement and development, and ultimate salvation for the Selves of men? In that Life is prayer an exercise of the Self, and can our prayers benefit those Beyond? In that Life, are developed Selves used as instruments for the uplifting of non-developed and less developed others? Are those on the

Our Self after Death

Other Side ever permitted to come and manifest themselves to us in This Side?

These, then, are some of the questionings which group themselves around what I have called "The Great Enquiry." There are very few, if any, bereaved ones who have not asked them, either mentally or orally. Many hundreds of sorrowing souls, by interview or letter, have put them to me. Are there—in the Religion of Christ, understood in its *fulness*—answers to be found, which are clear, definite, doubt-dispelling and convincing? I think so; or I should never have attempted to write these pages. How inexplicable it would be, if from the Gospel of Jesus there came to us no positive, cheery and reassuring Voice, to answer the thoughts of anguished ones as they stand at the death-bed and the open grave, or as they themselves cross over the Frontier of the Spiritual!

WRONG AND INADEQUATE ANSWERS GIVEN TO THE GREAT ENQUIRY.

There is the answer which is given by the Materialist. To the question, "What of our Self after death?" he replies, "There is no Self after death; the individual ceases to exist when life is removed from the physical body." You know the theory to which the materialist stands pledged. He believes that the Self is a physical organization, plus a something called Mind; which latter he asserts is the resultant of certain unknown combinations and configurations of material atoms and molecules. As long as these combinations and configurations are maintained, the mind continues; but when the physical apparatus is brought to a standstill and is disrupted by death, the mind disappears; as the flame of a lamp or candle does, when the oil or tallow is expended; and the Self comes to an end.

I shall not at this stage of the subject show how illogical and unscientific such a concep-

Our Self after Death

tion is. But one can think of nothing more melancholy, depressing and disappointing to any thoughtful person than to feel that this view must be accepted. A few years ago I had an experience bearing upon this point, which impressed me very much. I recount it in order to illustrate, from *fact*, how wholly unsatisfying to himself, as well as others, is the answer of the Materialist to the question we are considering. A distinguished scientist, a very old man, asked me to have a chat with him at an hotel at which he was staying. I withhold his name because he has since "passed over"; and I think it would pain him on the Other Side were I to link his name with views he has now discarded. Somebody had told him of a book I had written. "You believe in an After-Life—don't you?" he said. "Yes," was my reply, "don't you?" "No," rejoined the dear old man, "I believe that at death we come to our *ending*." We had a long and earnest conversation. He said that he believed in the existence of God. I asked him if he could reconcile the idea of extinction at death with the thought of there being a Divine "fitness of things." Did he think that God dealt less consistently and fairly with man, the highest of His terrestrial

Our Self after Death

creatures, than with insects, birds and animals—His lower ones? I submitted that, as far as we know, there exists in creatures, lower than ourselves, no instinct or permanent desire for which a corresponding *satisfying* has not been provided. Thus, the bee desires the flowers and the honey, the bird the free air, and the ox the green pastures; and for each, the thing desired has been provided in the order of Nature. The implanted instinct has not been left without the possibility of satisfying it. Then I argued that this “fitness of things” did not exist in regard to the higher creature—man, if the teaching of the Materialist be right. The literatures and religions of the human race, in all ages and under all conditions, have shown that there is infixed in mankind the thought, the desire, the belief, the hope, the conviction concerning After-Life and Immortality. Is it reasonable to think that God, who never mocks His lower creatures by not supplying the *correspondences* to implanted instincts, *does so mock us*; by allowing us to hold persistently the thought of Life beyond the grave, when no such life exists? Then I pressed the argument in another and more personal way. I asked my old friend, was he, as one who

Our Self after Death

thought that physical dying would end us, *satisfied* that this should be so? Had he acquired, in the course of his long life, *all* the knowledge of his own being and of the universe he was desirous of acquiring? "No," he answered. Did he think that if life and mental power could be sufficiently prolonged to him, there was the *capacity* in him for attaining vaster knowledge than he possessed, and of becoming greater than he was? "Undoubtedly," he replied. And did he not think it a disappointing, saddening and unreasonable order of things that he, endowed with such potentialities, desirous and capable of so much, should have been allowed to mount so many rungs of the ladder of advancement, and then, when the cry of "Excelsior" is ringing in his mental being, for the ladder, as it were, to be kicked away from under him, and the aspiring Self to be swept into annihilation? The old man was silent for a few moments and then turning to me he said, "I wish to God I could believe what you believe!"

"You *will*, dear friend," was my rejoinder, "when you cross the Border-line."

Thus we see that the answer of the Materialist is wrong; because it alleges in

Our Self after Death

respect to Divine working an inconsistency—an instinct pointing to nothing; and in respect to man nought but disappointment and a void.

* * * *

We pass to another answer given to the question, "What of our Self after death?" It is that of a not inconsiderable body of Christians; less, perhaps, in number now, in this age of psychic investigation and phenomena, than they were forty or fifty years ago. They may be called "Christian Materialists"; and indeed they have so described themselves. Their conception of the Self is that of the non-Christian Materialist, with an important difference. The non-Christian Materialist believes that the Self is destroyed *for ever* by the death of the physical body: these Christian Materialists hold the view that the obliteration of the Self at death is not final, but only temporary. They teach, with the other Materialists, that as the mind and consciousness (without which there could be no Self) arise from, and depend for existence upon the material organization, when that organization dies, the Self also dies and the man ceases to be.

But they believe, also, that there is to come

Our Self after Death

a day when the dead, disintegrated and dispersed physical body, in all its constituent parts and particles, will be re-collected, re-organized and re-vivified, and that then, after an interval of non-entity, the Self will again come into existence, and in a resurrected body go straight away to an everlasting Heaven, or a never-ending Hell.

It is a disappointing and soul-chilling doctrine; one with which I could not go to any death-bed, or use for trying to dry a mourner's tears. It is built up not on what Christ demonstrated and the Gospel-records teach, but on statements found in the Old Testament—the statements of men who lived only in the “twilight” of knowledge and revelation; who said many things which were true, but also many things which were not true in the light of the revealments of Christ's religion. The position of those who hold the “Christian-Materialist” views is strangely illogical. They find in the Old Testament a number of passages which, undoubtedly, appear to support their theory: such passages, for example, as “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; and in that very day his thoughts perish.” (Ps. cxlvi. 4); “For in death there is no

Our Self after Death

remembrance of Thee; in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" (Ps. vi. 5); "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." (Eccles. ix. 10); "For the grave cannot praise Thee; 'death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. (Isaiah xxxviii. 18).

Now, it is undoubtedly true that these statements, and others like them in the Old Testament, *do* perplex and sadden many mourning ones as they stand in the presence of death. The only thought which can then comfort them is that their loved one gone has *not* ceased to exist. No belief that the Self extinguished by physical dying will be recalled into existence on a far off Resurrection-Day, will assuage their grief. That doctrine, at such a time, will help them no more than it helped Martha, when, with her heart crying out for a *living* instead of a *dead* brother, she said to Jesus, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection *at the last day.*" What she needed, and what every bereaved one needs, was to be able to realise the truth about the still *living* Self (in spite of the dead body), as contained in the Master's reply to her, "Whosoever liveth

Our Self after Death

and believeth on Me *shall never die.*" You remember Martha's inability to answer the question of Jesus, "Believest thou *this*?" Old Testament statements stood in the way of her perception of fuller enlightenment. Yes, and the same thing is true of many Christians now. The Old Testament texts as quoted above shut out for them the light which streams from Christ. They ask, "Do not such passages clearly teach that the Self dies with the body? Are they not the inspired words of the Bible? Is not the 'Christian-Materialist' right in his conclusions?" These are questionings which are presented to thousands of earnest ones who betake themselves to the Scriptures for light on the subject of After Death. They must be answered before a conviction of truth can be attained.

Take, then, these Old Testament texts about which we are thinking. They certainly teach something very different from what Christ taught, and afterwards demonstrated in His own Person. There is not in them a faintest whisper as to the survival of the Self at bodily death. One could think of nothing more gloom-inspiring than to repeat them to a dying person, or beside an open grave. Again, the personal pronouns used in the

Our Self after Death

passages (“ his, “ who,” “ thou,” and “ they ”) surely refer to *individuals*. How can beings, who at death are declared to be bereft of thought and the power to remember, who are without work, device, knowledge, wisdom, hope, ability to praise and celebrate God—how can they remain as Selves? What answer can we give to these difficulties which confront the enquirer? Well! the answer is not hard to find, if one will exercise a little thought. The difficulty as to the inability of reconciling statements made in the Old Testament with those which stand in the New Testament, will disappear, if Bible-readers will get rid of the idea that everything written within the two covers of that Book is *inspired*, and *equally inspired*. It is an idea which has barred the way to fuller knowledge for many an earnest seeker after Truth. Millions of Christians have formed no more than a dim and inadequate conception of After Life, because the statements in the Bible are conflicting; and they have been schooled to suppose that what a Psalmist, or a Solomon may have written is of equal value and authority with what Christ said and demonstrated. But it is not true that *all* statements contained in the Bible are in-

Our Self after Death

spired, and *equally* inspired. Solomon was not inspired, when, in his pessimistic Treatise, he wrote, "Vanity of vanities; *all* is vanity." (Eccles. i. 2). Those words, if put into the mouth of Jesus, would appear to us jarring, and discordant with his teaching and practice. The Psalmist was not inspired when, under the impulse of feelings which Jesus condemned, he wrote his imprecatory psalms. The writers of the books of the Old Testament lived in ages of lesser enlightenment than did the men who wrote the books of the New Testament. The former had not the knowledge and ideas which the latter possessed. In the statements of the Bible concerning our Self at death, we see the great Law of mental Evolution and Development at work. A consistent Christian, in forming his belief on this subject, will consider, first, what he may know from Christ Himself, and *His* teaching as recorded in the Gospels. Next, he will study what Apostolic Writers, who were associated with Jesus, have to say about it; always remembering that *their* representations of truth are not as authoritative as the representations of Him "Who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light

Our Self after Death

through the Gospel." (ii Tim. i. 10.) And, lastly, the consistent Christian, if he turns to what Old Testament writers have expressed on the subject, will remember that their statements are only those of men who lived centuries before Jesus came; the weight of which is to be measured by the fact of whether they do, or do not, agree with the teachings and demonstrations of Jesus.

In a word, we must sift and group the statements of the Bible, if we want, from that Book, to ascertain the truth about the After-Life. In Class I, we shall put the statements of Christ as made by Him before and at Easter-time; in Class II, we shall place the statements of the writers of the Epistles; and in Class III, we shall place those of the writers of the Old Testament. Class III will concern us very little, except as showing how much the mental old-world needed the light of Christ. Class II will concern us much; while Class I will stand to us as the authoritative source from which we can derive the knowledge we seek. It appears to me that it is only on this principle of enquiry we can proceed, if we would save ourselves from the mental confusion which arises from conflicting passages of Scripture, and gain, from

Our Self after Death

the Bible, a definite idea and an abiding assurance of a continued Self at death. I must add something with regard to a *difficulty* experienced by many who shudder at the thought of the grave of oblivion for themselves and their dead. It is a difficulty which has been expressed to me by many persons. It may be briefly stated as follows: "Are there not statements of our Lord *Himself*, which contradict, or seem to contradict, other statements made by Him? For example, when in the act of dying on the cross, He said to the thief at His side, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' That statement, surely, implied the continuance of the Self at physical death. And yet He made other statements which seem to support the idea that the Self has no existence apart from the material body; and that when the body dies the Self ceases to be; and is only recalled into existence by the revival of the dead body. Do not Christ's words—'The hour cometh, and now is when *the dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God' (John v. 25); 'The hour cometh, in the which all that are *in the tombs* shall hear His voice' (John v. 28)—countenance this latter supposition?"

Our Self after Death

It is a difficulty which must be swept away; since it is manifestly impossible for any one to establish a fixed belief in regard to this all-important matter on the basis of Christ's teaching if He *really* did make irreconcilable statements respecting it. In that case His teaching would cease to be authoritative to us; as we could never be certain as to which of the conflicting passages we should turn as expressive of the truth.

What did Jesus mean by the terms "the dead" and "in the tombs"? Was He asserting that He would speak to lifeless physical remains then lying in the grave, or which had lain there before they were dissipated; so that those dead *self-less* things would hear His voice, and become Selves again? We think not. When Jesus at an open sepulchre said, "Lazarus, come forth," He was not speaking to a corrupting body, but to a discarnate *spirit-man*, to a Self whom the Master awakened from the temporary sleep, which often precedes and follows the act of detachment from the physical encasement. You remember Christ's words to the disciples, "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Christ meant exactly what He

Our Self after Death

said: Lazarus *himself* was asleep, though his body was dead. But the disciples did not understand the truth proclaimed in the words of their Master; and so in order to make it comprehensible to them that Lazarus was no longer in the flesh, Christ had to come down to *their* level of knowledge and expression, and to say plainly, "Lazarus is *dead*."

There is a similar instance in the case of Jairus' daughter. There, in a room of the ruler's house, lay the dead body of a little girl. To the crowd, flute-playing, weeping, wailing, and making an abominable tumult, suggestive of despair and hopelessness, the Master said, "Give place; for the damsel is *not dead*, but sleepeth." He meant what He said; but "they laughed Him to scorn." When He said, "Damsel, arise," He was not speaking to a dead body; but to a living, discarnate spirit-girl. St. Luke in narrating this incident significantly adds, "Her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately." Thus we see that in all those utterances of Jesus in which He employs such terms as "the dead," "in the tombs," "in the graves," &c., He was countenancing no Materialistic theory as to the Self; He was not teaching that the

Our Self after Death

ones who had passed through the experience of physical dying were no more than dead things in the graves; He was but simply making use of a common way of speaking, in order to make His unenlightened hearers understand to whom He was referring. When He said, "The hour cometh, and *now* is, when 'the dead' shall hear the voice of the Son of God"; and when St. Peter wrote, "For unto this end was the Gospel preached even to 'the dead,' that they might live to God in the Spirit," neither of them was referring to lifeless physical remains, but to *living selves*, whom men called "dead."

Christ, in these statements, did precisely what we constantly do. Things are spoken of as they seem to men to be. The sun is said to "rise" and "set," because it appears to travel round our globe; and we who adopt the popular expressions, do not thereby endorse the scientific truthfulness of them; but use them as the most convenient way of referring to the sun's position in relation to the earth. Put the words "the dead" in inverted commas, and read after them "so called," and the difficulty which perplexes many will disappear.

* * * *

Our Self after Death

Another answer to the question, "What of our Self after death?" is given by a great number of very sincere Christians. It is a comfortless one for the mourner. I will try to define it as correctly as I can. It rejects the theory of the Materialist and the Christian-Materialist, and declares that the Self does not wholly and entirely cease to exist, even for a while, when the earthly body dies; but that a something of it, a sort of vital essence, survives the physical disintegration, and is preserved. Thus a curtailed and diminished Ego remains. This diminished Ego is not viewed as possessing the qualities, powers and activities which we ascribe to Self-hood (these, it is supposed, can only be possessed in conjunction with an earthly, or a resurrected body); but rather it is thought to be a bodiless, attenuated entity, which in some way or another preserves the nucleus of the Self, and is a connective of the Self as it was before physical death, and as it will be when the dead body shall have been resurrected. In other words, this diminished Ego is regarded as being (if we may so put it) the germ from which God will one day re-constitute the Self in its wholeness. The ideas held about this surviving something are

Our Self after Death

extremely vague; and it is hard to imagine anything more disappointing and depressing to any one who is keenly alive to the fact of his Self-hood and all it implies, than to be faced with the prospect of having to come to such a condition. So far as I have been able to gather from the statements of the supporters of this theory, what remains of the Self, after death and until a future Resurrection, is *less* than the man. It is supposed to *be* little and *do* little; except to inactively wait for a distant judgment, and give itself up to anticipations of everlasting bliss or misery. Certain theologians, indeed, do teach that some of these bodiless entities are capable of "beatific visions." If one asks, "Are these discarnate vitalities in any sort of bodily form?" the answer will be "No; not until the Resurrection-Day; they left the bodily form in the grave." "Can they repent, or amend, or mentally and spiritually advance?" Again the answer comes, "No; the opportunities ceased when they left this earth. Did not St. Paul write, '*Now* is the day of salvation'?" (And the word "*Now*" is taken to exclude the idea of salvation at any *other* period: a line of reasoning which, if logically pressed, ought to be very disconcerting to Chris-

Our Self after Death

tians who have lived since Apostolic times.)

"Do these discarnate ones pray: and should *we* pray for them?" "I think not," is the reply, "as their destiny, on leaving the body, is unalterably fixed for weal or woe. What would be the good of their or our prayers?" "Do they retain those feelings of love, friendship, sympathy, and interest in regard to those with whom they were associated when on earth?" "I should say No," is the rejoinder, "because, you see, they have left this world behind, and its affairs no longer affect them."

It strikes me, if these notions be true, not only have the surviving Egos left the world behind, but have also left a *real* Self behind. Well! this concept of our Self after death cannot, and does not, satisfy those upon whom the gloom of bereavement rests. How can it? How, for instance, can one who has been brought up to think that these ideas are true, and who loses by death the physical presence of the one who is dearest, be comforted thereby? The widow stands beside the dead form of her husband, and her heart pitiably calls out for that departed Self, with all its thoughts, its love, its tenderness and concernfulness for her. In her anguish she turns

Our Self after Death

for consolation and calm to the creed she has been taught. It disappoints her. It has naught to say of a still *unaltered* Self. It does not tell her that the one she loves is still thinking of her, loving her and praying for her in the sphere into which he has passed. It does not tell her that her poor, torn heart will find relief and rest in praying for him. She needs the bread of true Gospel assurance, and gets but the cold stone of a doctrinal notion. Poor soul! she darkens the house, and dons the black emblems of unhopefulness and despair, and makes—as it were—a solemn proclamation to others that her religion has not lifted from her “the shadow of death.”

But it may be asked, how is it possible in the face of what Christ taught and demonstrated as to unimpaired, undiminished, and enhanced Self-hood after death that in the past a great number of Christians, and, at the present time, a still considerable number, have held, and still hold, the opinions expressed above? Suppose the four Gospel-Records were, for the first time, placed in the hands of an enquirer, who possessed no antecedent knowledge of what theologians and others had previously said or written

Our Self after Death

on this subject. To what conclusion do you think he would arrive? If he accepted as *true*, the Gospel-Records of what Christ said and demonstrated in His Person, as to Life beyond the grave, he would at once perceive the contrariety between the statements of the Gospel-Records and other Canonical and Theological statements; and he would say, "To which set of statements am I to pin my belief?" He would not be in any difficulty. He would say to himself, "If I, as a Christian, am called upon to accept these Gospel-Records as truth, I do not think I need trouble myself about what any other persons may have said; except so far as they do not contradict the Gospel-Records, and may help me the better to understand their full significance." Do not let this remark shock the ideas of any who hold that a belief in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is a pre-requisite for "Orthodoxy." We of the Church of England stand up in our most solemn service at the reading of the Gospel, to show that we attach *more* importance to this part of the Scripture than to any other part. But, unfortunately, the ordinary Christian has been taught to believe that *all* statements found within the covers of the Bible

Our Self after Death

are words of Divine inspiration, and somehow or another must be made to fit in with what he thinks he is called upon to believe. Of course, he gets into a mental muddle. He reads the Old Testament, and finds therein much which presents the idea of a diminished Self after death. He notes what the old-time Hebrews thought about "Sheol"—the place, or condition, of the departed. It tells no more than of a shadowy, unreal persistence of the Self. But there it is in the Bible. Then, perhaps, he reads the literature of the ancient Greeks, and finds expressed the same idea of the shadowy Self, associated with the word "Hades." Lastly, he does that which is glaringly inconsistent on the part of any one who professes to attach supreme authority to the teachings of Jesus. He attributes to the Hebrew and Greek notions of the After-Life an importance which they do not possess, and uses them as a counter-balance to the declarations of the Gospel-Records; and essays the impossible task of making these contrarieties concordant. Of course, he fails; and it is for this reason that we place this theory of the diminished Self after death as one of the wrong answers to the "Great Enquiry."

* * * *

Our Self after Death

We come now to another kind of answer which is very often given to the great Enquiry; and given by those who are really sincere Christians. They may, I think, not inaptly be called "*Christian-Agnostics*." The word "Agnostic," I know has an unpleasant sound in Christian ears; and, of course, I do not mean that these good people are in the agnostic position with regard to the *whole* body of Christian truth, but only with respect to the subject of the After-Life. Their mental attitude on that subject is embodied in the words, "We don't know." It has been my experience to come into contact with very many who, in their time of bereavement, have received from Christian friends, and even clergymen, such an answer. I give but one example out of a great number. Quite recently, a lady was telling me of a visit of condolence which was made to her by the clergyman of the parish, on the occasion of the death of her son. "He was most kind and sympathetic," she said, "but he had not a single word to say that could comfort me a tiny scrap in my grief." She asked him, did he think her boy was remembering and loving her still? From a child he had always prayed for her; would he continue to do so?

Our Self after Death

Was it right for her to continue her prayers for him?; and a number of other questions, which sorrow-stricken ones do ask themselves and others when a beloved bodily presence is removed. The clergyman was embarrassed; quoted something as to the blessedness of *the dead*; and then, when pressed for something more definite, said, "Well! you see, we do not know about these things; we must trust and wait." This advice was excellent, but it did not help the lady. Many have experienced this sort of thing. The Christian sympathiser comes to the mourner with his kind words of condolence; with a sincere desire to comfort, he may quote a few religious phrases concerning a far-off Heaven, and a re-union on a distant Resurrection-Day; but no more: if he has any views at all about a still existing Self after death, they are far too misty and undefined to be translated into speech. The Christian Agnostic is out of place at a death-bed, or beside a "Rachel weeping for her children," who cannot be comforted because she thinks they *are not*. I suppose there is not one of my readers who, when a dear one has been taken, has not felt an awful void and want of something, which the commonly-accepted ideas of what

Our Self after Death

we are after death have not filled and satisfied. The "Don't know" theory as to what of our Self after death has given a pathetically undue importance to the *grave*. How forcibly have I experienced this! When I was nineteen, my sister, a girl of seventeen, died; and I felt her death very much. A year later, my father died. Their earthly bodies were laid in the same grave. I was earnestly-minded, and used to read the religious books of that time, and to thoughtfully listen to what I heard in Church. All I read and heard seemed to me to be *agnostic* in regard to a continuance of the Self at death. As far as I could gather from the books, the tracts and the sermons of that time, the good 'dead' were "asleep in Jesus," and would not wake up again until, perhaps, thousands of years hence. Then I mentally pictured a ghastly representation which still stands, I believe, at the gateway of a London church. It is fearful in its crudity of idea and hideousness. Carved in stone is the old theological conception of shattered tombs and bursting coffins, with the long since dead *Selves* coming to life again. Well, at that time, I supposed that this awful grotesqueness was a presentiment of Gospel-truth; so I used to go on

Our Self after Death

Sunday afternoons to the spot where lay the bodies of my father and sister, and think of them as *there*; both of them *dead*, of course, but not to be always so. The thought solemnised me: perhaps it religionised me; but it did not satisfy a heart-cry for *living* instead of *dead* dear ones.

Thirty-seven years later, I stood beside the grave of my mother; and at the conclusion of the Burial Service of our Church, I said the following prayer. I give it here only because it may illustrate how great is the difference in the outlook of a Christian who can only say, in regard to the discarnate Self, "We don't know: it is all mystery," and the outlook expressed in this prayer:

"Almighty and Eternal Father, we bless Thy holy name that Thou hast revealed to us by Thy Son the glorious fact that those who have departed this life still live unto Thee, and that physical death does but usher us into more abundant life. We commend to Thy loving care her whom Thou hast called into Higher being and experience; whose mortal body we commit to this grave. Grant that all which is good in her may be developed and perfected; that all which may have been weak and faulty may be eliminated from her.

Our Self after Death

Grant that in that life of Unfoldment and Advance into which she has passed, she may grow to a fuller knowledge and love of Thee, until she shall become the spirit of a just woman made perfect; and be fashioned into the moral and spiritual likeness of Christ. Give her happiness, re-union with loved ones gone hence, and that Peace of Thine which towers above mind, and make her to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting. We pray also, that uplifting influences from her expanding spirit may reach and help *us* as we pass along the highway of the Temporal to the Eternal. Hear this prayer, Divine Father, for we ask it in the Name of the great Lover of Souls, Jesus, Thy Son. Amen."

* * * *

There remains still another kind of wrong answer which is presented to one who asks, "What of our Self after death?" It consists not so much in what is actually stated in words, but in ideas suggested by *outward* things connected with death and burial. Perhaps I can best define what I mean by calling it, the *obscuration* of the true answer to the great Enquiry by the Customs and Religious Practices of Christendom. Of course, I am only speaking of those customs

Our Self after Death

and practices which group themselves about the incidents of death and burial. Those customs seem to eclipse the truth concerning the departed Self, as that truth gleams forth from the Gospel-Records. A thoughtful person who believes that at death the Self continues to live; that there is not then a diminishing, but an enhancing of its powers; and that, moreover, transition means mental, moral and spiritual advancement, detects a very real incongruity between those truths and the *outward* order of things connected with physical death. "Why is it," he asks, "that Christendom, which, surely, as a whole, believes in maintained life at death, nevertheless, by her customs and practices belies that truth?" The *outwardness* does not agree with the *inwardness* of this matter; and as persons very usually form their ideas from the outwardness of things, it follows that, for many Christians, truth becomes obscured on this account. It is most unfortunate; and it ought not to be so. I believe that the Christian Church throughout the world would be an enormously greater influence than she is in comforting the bereaved, and in opening men's mental eyes to what they are as spirit Egos, if only she would make her cus-

Our Self after Death

toms and practices agree less with the wrong idea of death, and more with the thought of Christ concerning it.

Let us glance at some of those customs and practices of Christians, which obscure and belie the truth as to the departed Self. First, there is that custom of making *black* the notification to our fellows that someone or another belonging to us has left this life, and gone, we believe, into "more abundant life." There must be the darkened house, the black clothes, the black-edged envelopes, the black-bordered handkerchiefs, the black funeral horses; and, until comparatively lately, the black coffin, the black pall, and those monstrosities—the black mutes. And, if the departed one be sufficiently important, the very House of God itself will be disfigured by the symbols of despair. How absolutely and glaringly inconsistent to mark our respect for a dear one "passed over," by using a universally recognised emblem of gloom and hopelessness! Do we wonder that the non-Christian man notes it all, and mentally asks whether those Christians really believe what they profess? I suppose that, on the whole, the Roman Catholic Church has held a more fixed idea on the subject of continued Life

Our Self after Death

at death, than many of the churches of Christendom; and yet, strange as it may seem, it is in Roman Catholic countries that one sees, side by side with this belief in maintained life, the profusest display of the black paraphernalia of woe and death.

Some few years ago, I was asked by a brother clergyman if I would preach in his church on All Souls' Day. In inviting me, he stated that in the ceremonial there were things to which he thought I might object—e.g. a black catafalque, black copes and black stoles, &c.; but would I not waive this point and come?

I replied that I would do so; and that it was not his ritualism to which I took exception, but his symbolisation, which was all wrong: that any amount of white copes or other vestments would not offend me, provided they suggested the true thought of All Souls' Day—continued *life* and *immortality*; but to try and focus the mind of persons upon a Life beyond the grave by a ceremonial which suggested the charnal-house, did not accord with my idea of the fitness of things. I took into the pulpit one of the leaflets distributed in the church. It was a black-bordered sheet with the words,

Our Self after Death

"Prayers for the *Dead*." I told the congregation I knew what the church means by the phrase; that *although* I did not believe in prayers for the *dead*, I did in prayers for the *living*; that I constantly prayed both for "the faithful" and non-faithful *departed*; and that I did so because I believed the words of the text I had chosen, "All souls are mine" (Ez. xviii. 4); "God is not the God of the *dead*, but of the *living*" (Matt. xxii. 32). This little incident will illustrate what I mean in asserting that the glorious truth of continued Life at death, earnestly believed by Christians themselves, is often, by their customs and practices, made as if dim and unreal to others.

Again, take the customs which have prevailed in respect to the memorials erected in our Christian churchyards and burial-places. Some of those memorials are very inappropriate from the standpoint of enlightened Christian thought. The character of such has been marvellously improved during the past thirty or forty years, but there is plenty of room for further improvement.

But go into some of our old churchyards, and forgetting for a while the appealing charm and restfulness of the place, look

Our Self after Death

at the old monuments and stones, and the inscriptions thereon. It is an interesting, though a saddening, study. How far below the level of full Christian thought do many of those inscriptions fall! Here, on one, the visitor will read that John Smith was cut off in the prime of manhood and is lying there in the dust until the trump of the Archangel shall awaken him to life again. By another stone he will be told that King Death will do to him what he did to the late Jones esquire. By other gravestones he will be reminded that "In the midst of life we are in death," and that "All flesh is as grass," and so on. Some of it very true; but naught of it conveying the least thought concerning continued life at death. And yet that truth of the Christian religion is the all-important one to be expressed in anything associated with churchyards and burials. Strange, very strange!

Suppose that we were to bring an educated Hindoo, for the first time, into one of our churchyards or cemeteries and to show him the memorials put up by Christians to their departed friends. The Hindoo might say, "You Christians believe, do you not, that the person whose earthly body lies here is now living in another world? Your religion

Our Self after Death

teaches, does it not, that the man himself is, like the God who made him, a *spiritual* being; and that this perishing body in the ground (if there is anything left of it) is no more the man *himself* than the discarded coat he once wore was his *body*?"

As a Christian, your answer would be, or ought to be, in the affirmative. Then suppose that the thoughtful Hindoo were to look around and were to ask, "Why do you Christians put a broken column here, and an inverted touch there, and a funeral-urn on that tomb, and a figure of a despair-stricken woman on the other; and horror! a grinning skull and cross-bones on the grave-stones? What funny people you Christians are!"

Probably, in order to try and clear your co-religionists from the charge of being inconsistent, you would point out to your Hindoo friend that those representations of curtailed life and destruction refer only, of course, to the earthly condition. I can imagine the reply of the Hindoo, "The dead body! the *dead body* is not the *living man*. You point only to the discarded coat, and not to *the man* who wore it for a while." And methinks that thoughtful one would go away wondering, as other thoughtful ones are wondering, *why*

Our Self after Death

it is that Christians are obscuring a beautiful truth of their Creed by representations which belie it. Further, is there not an obscuring of the truth concerning a *living* Self after death, in many of the hymns which are sung by Christians? Many of the statements made in them are contradictory; and bewildering, if not to the Christian himself, at least to others. It might reasonably be asked by one not versed in the peculiarities of religious diction, "Which of these opposite statements do the Christians themselves believe?" Take for example, the words of a well-known hymn (401 A. and M.):

"Earth to earth, and dust to dust,"
Calmly now the words we say,
Leaving him to sleep in trust
Till the Resurrection day.
Father, in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we now Thy servant sleeping.

But is this true, in the light of full Christian knowledge? That which is "earth and dust," and has become by disintegration and decay more pronouncedly "earth and dust," is surely not the "*him*"; and if the Gospel-Records are true, the departed Egos are not *sleeping*, but awake, and keenly alive to spiritual realities.

Our Self after Death

In another hymn (402), also, there are statements which oppose each other. In verse one, a departed little child is described as *asleep* in a grave:

Oh, how peaceful, pale and mild,
In its narrow bed 'tis sleeping.

In verse two the same little child is declared not to be in that grave at all:

Clothed in robes of spotless white,
Now it dwells with Thee in light.

Ask the bereaved Christian parents who stand by that grave-side, which of these two statements they believe, and they will, of course, say "The latter." But why, we ask, make, and sanctify by Christian use, such ambiguous and incorrect statements, which are so calculated to create uncertainty as to the Self at death? Can we wonder that so many (as I know from long experience) become confused, when even Christian teachers confound (in speech at all events) the lifeless object in the grave with the living Self elsewhere.

Not long ago, I went to see the newly-erected lych-gate of a church. It bore the inscription of words from Job xix. 26 (wrongly translated, as they are in the Burial Service),

Our Self after Death

"Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet *in my flesh* shall I see God." I remember wondering whether the simple-minded villagers, who passed and read it, knew that what Job said was, "*Without my flesh* shall I see God"; and that although the Church knows this she still re-iterates the contrary to what he said. I wondered, also, if they remembered those words of St. Paul, which many of them, with heavy hearts, had often heard, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 50). And I wondered, too, if those who read the inscription gathered from it that, when their dead body would be carried through that gateway, *they* would be dead until the flesh revived.

Surely, in such cases as these, the great truth about the departed Self is obscured!

In passing now from what I may call the *negative* aspect of my subject, to the *positive*; from what I consider the *wrong* answers to the *right* answer to the Great Enquiry, the reader may, perhaps, ask why it has been thought necessary to consider at all those wrong answers. My purpose in doing so has been two-fold. Firstly, I have adopted the

Our Self after Death

method of the artist who, in wishing a figure of light in his picture to stand forth in sharp relief, fills in a background of *contrast*. I, too, have supposed that the Truth about our Self, as gathered from Christ, will gleam upon minds the brighter, when flung into contrast with the gloomy and imperfect notions which have been held. Secondly, in dealing with these wrong answers, I have had to consider how it came about that such have been given. Perhaps, in doing this, I may have helped to clear away, for some, certain difficulties which may hitherto have stayed back the mind from a clearer, fuller and more satisfying perception of the truth concerning ourselves.

THE ANSWER FROM CHRIST TO THE GREAT ENQUIRY.

My effort now will be to show to those who may be bewildered by the conflicting pronouncements of the Schools of Religious Thought, what I conceive to be the true answer to the question, "What of our Self after death?" as it may be gathered from what Christ Himself taught, and demonstrated in His own Person. I will ask the reader to keep in mind one or two very important points. The first is, that it must be admitted that what *Christ* taught and showed on this subject is of vastly more importance and authority in arriving at the truth, than anything that other persons may have said. If Christ be acknowledged as "the Truth," it is manifestly illogical to account the statements of others as possessing the authority and determinative worth of *His* statements and demonstrations; be those others, Old Testament writers, Fathers or Schoolmen of the Church, modern Expositors, or even Apostolic men. And yet

Our Self after Death

that has been done. It has been shown in the preceding pages into what mental confusion even great Christian thinkers can be thrown by the setting aside of this fundamental principle. From the time of Christ until now, Traditionalism has ever blinded men to the full truth of what the Master taught. Every Christian ought to say, in respect to everything submitted to him for belief, "Is this, or is it not, in agreement with the revealments of the Divine Founder of our Faith?"

In the next place the reader must realise the great import *to us* (in obtaining the knowledge we seek) of the After-Death experiences of our *Lord Himself*. They will bear a significance not usually attached to them. They will become the best means by which we shall be able truly to answer the Great Enquiry.

What is the generally received belief as to the experiences of Jesus after His body died on the cross? Is it not that those experiences were absolutely *unique*; that they could come only to *Him*; and that they were wholly unlike any experiences *we* can possibly have at physical death?

It is supposed that Jesus was able to mani-

Our Self after Death

fest himself as a Being of life and unimpaired Self-hood at Easter-time, *because He was the Son of God*; and that what befell *Him* as such was therefore entirely dissimilar *in principle* from what befalls us when we come to die, (who are not sons of God in the sense He is). Consequently, Jesus' manifestation of His *living* Self, within a few hours of the Crucifixion, is not viewed as giving any ground for belief that *we*, at the time our body dies, will continue as living, unimpaired *Selves*; but must be taken only as a promise and assurance that *one of these days* we shall have experiences similar to what He had at Easter. Thus the fact of the living Jesus of Eastertide does not bring to the mourner the comfort it ought to do. It is not viewed as the revelation of the *present* condition of the beloved one whose earthly body is unconscious in death. Like Martha, the mourning one, only partly comforted by his Creed, cries out, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection *at the last day*"; and the significance of Jesus' words are not realised, "I, *myself*, am the Anastasis (the *Advancement*) and the Life." (Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή. John xi. 25.) As if the Master had said to Martha, "I know what you are thinking.

Our Self after Death

You are yearning for a *living* instead of as you suppose a *dead* brother; and the thought of a distant recalling of him to life, does not meet your case. Look at Me, and note what will happen to Me, when I, like Lazarus, shall have physically died. In Me you will have the demonstration of what befalls every son of Man. My after-death experiences are the proof and pledge of it. That alone will satisfy your soul's deep longing—I *myself* am the Advancement and the Life." No, it is not true that the experiences of Jesus after physical death were *unique* on account of His being the eternal Son of God. It is not true that those experiences of Him were unlike any experiences we can possibly have in dying. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews stated a fact which has not been sufficiently understood by Christians. "It behoved Him *in all things* to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17). That statement is not true, if Jesus in those greatest of all human experiences, the After-death experiences, was *unlike* us. When that murdered, disfigured, sacred Body hung on the cross on that Friday afternoon, it was not the *dead Son of God*. As the Son of God, He did not die. How

Our Self after Death

could He? That which constituted His Sonship with God was deathless. How could the Logos of God, the magnificent Spirit-Being one with God, "Who for us men, and for our salvation became incarnate," temporarily die, when His earthly Body became lifeless at Calvary? Therefore it is manifestly misleading to consider Jesus' dying as a dying of One who underwent that experience only in the character of the *Son of God*. The theological idea has been held that the Son of God, as such, at crucifixion, temporarily ceased to be; but that three days afterwards God recalled Him into being in order to show that He was pleased with and accepted the great Sacrifice of Love which had been made. We cannot accept this view. We believe in Christ as the Son of God, both before, at, and after His Incarnation; but we do not believe that the earthly Body in which He incarnated was anything more, in nature and principle, than a physical human body. It was worn by Him, for a while, as "the *Son of Man*"; the name by which He so often defined Himself. It was because He became "the Son of Man" that He wore that Body. It was because as "the Son of Man" that that Body died; and it seems curiously

Our Self after Death

inconsistent to suppose that, although "*in all things* He was made like unto His brethren," this similarity went only so far as His having a body as they have, and that body dying, as theirs does; and that at that point the similarity ceased; and that the After-Death experiences of Jesus were not at all like what His brethren have. We think that Jesus died as we lesser sons of man must die—with the Self unharmed by dying; and, that He who when His Body lay in Joseph's tomb, was with a departed thief in Paradise, and with once disobedient ones in Spirit-Life, was then what every one of us will be at dying—a Self maintaining all that constitutes real Self-hood. This is the foundation-truth upon which I base all I have yet to say.

I would ask the reader to keep in mind also one other point. It will certainly help in giving weight to the conclusions which are here set forth. It is this. How marvellously the statements of many of the leading men of science in this age *confirm* those conclusions, based as they are upon the fact of our Lord's manifestations of Himself at that Easter-tide. If we accept the testimony of many who stand foremost in the ranks of science to-day, we are faced with the fact that

Our Self after Death

experiences similar to those which came to Jesus after death, can, and do, come to those who cross the Border-line.

A very wonderful change has come over the world of Scientific Thought during the past thirty or forty years. The leading men of science at this present time, no longer view the subject of the Self as the scientists of the last generation viewed it. The Self is no longer accounted for by any hypothesis of the Material. The facts of Psychology and Psychic Phenomena have been very carefully studied and investigated, and crowds of things which the good Christian has been taught to believe could only have happened in Bible-times, are now scientifically acknowledged to be *present day* experiences. There are men in the forefront of science who now admit that our Self after death is an unimpaired living reality, as Jesus' Self was; that, *then*, it can think, remember, desire, love, sympathise, purpose, and can feel the "pull" of old associations, as could Christ's Self; and that it can, at times, under certain conditions, manifest itself to those in earth-life, as Christ's Self did. I quote the words of Sir Oliver Lodge (the author of "The Survival of Man") spoken recently. They are words, I think,

Our Self after Death

far more calculated to comfort the mourner, and to open the mind to the full significance of the Gospel-Records, than many of the words heard from the pulpits, or read in the books of the churches of Christendom. Sir Oliver stated, in speaking of the survival of the soul, "I know that certain friends of mine still exist, because I have talked to them. Communication is possible. I tell you with all the strength and conviction I can utter, that we do persist; that people still take an interest in what is going on; that they still help us, and know far more about things than we do, and are able from time to time to communicate with us."

Here, then, is a very clear and definite answer to the Great Enquiry, given by one who, starting years ago from the agnostic position, has reached a point of settled conviction, which throws into unfavourable contrast the unsatisfying and halting pronouncements of many "who profess and call themselves Christians."

Can we, in the light of Christ and His teaching, come to a like conviction? I think so. Let us see.

* * * *

We gather from Him:

Our Self after Death

I. *That our Self is not dependent for existence upon the physical organization, and survives separation from it.*

It is the realization of this primary fact which alone can comfort the mourner in the face of bereavement, or the dying one who is conscious that the sands of the hour-glass of his earthly life are fast running down. Nothing else can remove from either the one or the other that sensation of blankness and desolation which chills the mind when Death has come to one we love, or is fast coming to us. You know what I mean. You have had the first of those experiences; and the recollection of it often haunts you in your quiet moments. You remember, do you not? how, with a great feeling of void within you, you went into that blind-drawn chamber where lay the body of one so much and so dear to you. Or, if you be one of those who weep for a victim of this dreadful war, you have, when alone in your grief, mentally pictured that dead form of a husband, son, sweetheart, or friend, as it lies somewhere in the soil of the ghastly battle-field. "Dead, dead!" you said to yourself, as you looked at, or thought of, such an one, "and oh! he was so much to me!" And, perchance, a kind Chris-

Our Self after Death

tian friend, who knew only a part, and not the whole, of truth, spoke to you about 'a restored life and re-union in a future Heaven. It was well-meant; but it did not comfort you—did it? You wanted more—something much more than this. "Dead, dead!" you still wailed within yourself. And suppose a bright-faced angel from the realms of Spirit-life—one perhaps who when on earth had known and loved you—had stood before you in your grief, and whispered, "He is not dead; he *lives* whom you think dead,"—would you have been comforted by those words? Well, this was just the fact that Jesus came to tell us, and to demonstrate. Again, take the case of one who is dying, and knows it. Suppose such an one has no conception that his Self will be unharmed and uncurtailed in the catastrophe which is soon to befall his body, nor any fixed conviction that *he* will be alive when his body shall be in a grave—what a miserable, wretched outlook for the poor dying one! Not to know whether at death anything of him which can think, feel, love, remember and desire, will remain; to imagine that his Self, perhaps, may be chloroformed by Death into a condition, at least, of suspended Self-hood! The good clergy-

Our Self after Death

man may come to his bedside, and try to cheer him by speaking of the contrast as presented in the transitoriness of things earthly and the permanency and blessedness of the "world to come." But it only partly lifts the oppression which is weighing-down the soul of that dying one.

He listens, and cheerlessly thinks. He realises, of course, that the things of earth are fleeting. Is not that last view of the panorama of his own earthly experience being solemnly unrolled for him? Does he not even now hear the click of the mental apparatus which tells him that the picture will soon have faded from his sight? How those words he has so often sung in church come back to him! What a melancholy ring they have! How suitable for him, if he just alters the words "years" and "seasons" to "days" and "hours"—

A few more years shall roll,
A few more seasons come,
And we shall be with those that rest
Asleep *within the tomb.*

Of course, as a Christian, he believes that somewhere—in a far-off age, perhaps—there will be a Heaven of recovered manhood; but oh! between the now and that distant

Our Self after Death

Future, there yawns a gulf of unknowableness. How the thought chills and darkens his soul! What will he be in that interval between his funeral and the Day of which he has read and been told, when all the dead, dissolved and dissipated relicts of mortality will become reconstituted men and women? Suppose that he should find himself less than the Self he is, when he, too, slips away with the transient things of earth, and plunges into that After in which he must await the Future! Has not his Self-hood been fashioned and grown and developed amid the things of the Temporal? What if the passing away of them should be the removal of the conditions by which the *man himself* can be! Have not many Christians taught this, and do not many others speak and act as if it were so? How perplexing it all is!

What, do you think, will help and comfort such a dying one? What will take away from him "the sting of death"? What will enable him not to think at all about a dead thing within the tomb—euphemistically described as being "asleep"; but of a maintained and living Self? What will give him, in the hour of dying, that calmness and imperturbability which St. Peter had when he wrote, "Shortly,

Our Self after Death

I must put off this my *tabernacle*, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me"? We answer, nothing will do so, but the absolute conviction that that which was expressed by the poet and demonstrated by Jesus is true:

There is no death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

A few years ago, I was ministering at the bed-side of a young girl who, after a long illness, was dying. It was my last visit to her. As I entered the room, she greeted me with a smile, and said, "I am so glad you have come to-day, because I don't think I shall be *here* to-morrow." I replied, "Well, suppose you are right, suppose God is going to call you out of your suffering body—do you mind?" "Why should I mind?" she answered, "when I know that it is not *I* who will die, but only this poor body. I shall not be far away from those I love." "Then you are sure," I continued, "that, without *this* poor body, you yourself will still be living, with all your thoughts, memory and love, and be still the same girl as you are; only that life will be so much better and fuller for

Our Self after Death

you?" "Of course, I am," she rejoined. I prayed with her, and asked her not to forget, on the Other Side, to pray for me, and to see if she could send me thoughts which might help me to help others. I reminded her how soon it would be when she would know so much more than we here know. She said "good-bye" to me with the smile on her face, and added, "I won't forget." She had gone next day. The memory of the "passing" of that girl suggests to me far and away more of the thought of life and immortality, than all the gloomy religious ceremonial attached to the obsequies of a Pope, or of other church dignitaries.

We face now the enquiry: "What did our Lord teach on the point, that the Self is not dependent for existence upon the physical organization, and survives separation from it?"

As the first of His utterances, we place those words spoken by Him on the Cross to a man dying at His side. "This very day (*σήμερον*) shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43). Here is a statement made under the most solemn of all circumstances; at a time when it is utterly impossible to imagine that Christ's words meant aught to

Our Self after Death

His hearer but that which they emphatically state. The crucified malefactor, with his conscience awakened to spiritual realities, had focussed his thought *on a future*. "Jesus," he said, "remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." Then came the Master's reply: "This very day," which shifted the man's thought from a future to the present. He had asked for a *future* blessing; Christ will give him a *present* one. But how could he receive that present blessing, if Death on that same day, would extinguish *the man*? The "thou" and the "Me," in Christ's words, surely denote two Selves, who would be existent and together, apart from their physical organizations. If the Self has no existence except in a living physical body, then the Master's words were not true. Jesus and the thief, in that case, could not have been together in Paradise on that day; for as that first Good Friday ended, they had ceased to *physically* live; and the Body of Jesus lay in Joseph's sepulchre, and the body of the malefactor in some other place.

Take another great utterance of Christ. It is recorded by St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke, "But as touching 'the dead,' that they are *being raised* (ἐγείρονται—present

Our Self after Death

tense—not, *shall be raised*); have ye not read in the book of Moses, in the place concerning the Bush, how God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (Mark xii. 26 and 27). No words of Christ are stronger than these in affirming the continuance of the Self at death. Let us grasp their import.

This statement was made by Jesus for the direct purpose of showing that the teaching of the Sadducees was utterly wrong. This Jewish Sect denied the existence of any Self after death, and said that there is no resurrection (Anastasis, i.e. advancement), neither angel or Spirit.” These men come to our Lord, and ask a question intended to cast ridicule upon the thought of an After-life. “Whose wife, in that After-life, would a certain woman be, who had had seven husbands, all of whom and herself had died?” Jesus sweeps aside that question by declaring that the ties and relationships, which have no other basis than *the physical*, are not maintained in a Life which is *spiritual*. Then He attacks their main position—their negation of continued life after death. He points out to

Our Self after Death

them the cause of that negation. "Ye do err, ye do greatly err, not knowing (understanding) the Scriptures." Then Jesus proceeds with His argument: "Years and years after Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had died, God, from out a burning bush in the wilderness, declared to Moses that He was *then* the God of those physically dead men. 'I *am* (not, I once was, and shall be again one day) the God of those Patriarchs.' Now, He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You Sadducees will admit that, of course. No dead things can be conscious of a God, or of anything else. That being so, how could God, at the time He spoke to Moses, have called Himself the God of those three defunct fathers ('dead,' as you call them), unless their *Selves* were then living?"

We can put the statement of our Lord in syllogistic form:

God said, long after the three Patriarchs were physically dead, "I *am* their God": He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: Therefore, those three Patriarchs were living *Selves* when that declaration was made.

That Jesus' argument was of irresistible force to those who heard it, is shown by the

Our Self after Death

comments of the Evangelists, that "when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished"; while the Pharisees accounted "that He had put the Sadducees to silence"; and the Scribes said, "Master, thou hast well said."

May I, in passing, make a few remarks about the Greek word *ἀνάστασις* (Anastasis)? It occurs several times in the Gospel records of the incident we have been considering. It is given as the word used by our Lord in His discussion with the Sadducees. In the English Version of the New Testament, it has been translated by the Latin word, "Resurrection"; which word conveys an idea which is not essentially contained in the word "Anastasis." "Resurrection" is taken to signify the resuscitation and re-constitution of dead physical bodies on some distant day. The idea was voiced by Martha, when she said, "I know that he shall *rise again* in the resurrection *at the last day*." Now, the real meaning of the word "Anastasis" is—a making to rise and leave a place, or condition; a removal; an advancement. Thus there is a very important difference in the signification of this term and "Resurrection." The point which concerns us is this. When Jesus used the word "Anastasis" (or the equivalent of

Our Self after Death

it), did He import into it the meaning conveyed by the word "Resurrection"? If He did, then His magnificent argument with those Jewish religious Materialists falls to the ground. Taking His own premise, it would only conduct us to a false conclusion. Thus, if I may again make use of the syllogism:

God said, long after the three Patriarchs were physically dead, "I *am* their God": He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: Therefore, He is *still* their God, because one day they will again be made alive.

St. Mark and St. Luke, in their account of this incident, do not represent our Lord as saying, "As touching the *resurrection* (Greek: ἀνάστασις) of 'the dead,' " as St. Matthew gives it. They write that Jesus said, "Touching 'the dead' that they *are now being raised*" (ἐγείρονται. Mark xii. 26); and "But that 'the dead' *are now being raised*" (same word. Luke xx. 37). I think if the reader will carefully weigh these points I have submitted it will enable him to estimate at its full value the illuminative nature of our Lord's words to the Sadducees, on this great subject of our Self at death.

We pass now to another instance of what

Our Self after Death

Christ taught as to the continuance of the Self at death. It is contained in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus. (Luke xvi. 16 to 30.) I do not, at this point of our enquiry, propose to indicate what, after a careful reading of this parable, may reasonably be surmised concerning the *character* of the experiences which may come to us after leaving earthly conditions. To me, it seems incredible that it should not have been the intention of the Great Teacher by this story to foreshadow them. It is rather the underlying *principle*, the assumption, upon which this story is built, to which I would direct attention. Upon what is it based? What was in the mind of Jesus when He told it? Upon the thought of the Self as it is at death. The story represents two men as being consciously alive after the experience of physical dissolution. "The beggar died, and was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades he lifted up his eyes." Thus Jesus described the dead beggar and the buried Dives as living *Selves* after death; and moreover, made use of two terms—the one, "Abraham's bosom," used by the Jew, and "Hades," used by the Greek—to denote

Our Self after Death

the condition of the soul on leaving the body. Now, suppose there were no foundation *in fact* for the belief in the continuance of the Self at death, do you suppose it is compatible with the thought of Jesus as being God's Great Revealer of truth, that He should have built up a story on an *untruth*, without the least intimation that He regarded that basis as such? He must have known that what He said in this parable would, for generations after Him, carry an enormously authoritative weight for those who should acknowledge His supremacy as Teacher. Did Jesus, by countenancing what was *not* true, mislead us as to what *is* true? That is the difficulty which is presented, if it be denied that this parable gives our Lord's imprimatur to the truth that our Self remains after death.

A lame kind of reply is sometimes given to this reasoning; generally by that class of thinkers who imagine that what Jesus said must often be taken to mean exactly what He did *not* say. This is what, by some writers, we have been asked to accept, viz: that Jesus, when He gave this parable, was setting forth in figurative language some great truth concerning the Jewish nation, or something else equally remote from the applica-

Our Self after Death

tion of the story. We have been asked to think that when He used the idea and the terms which imply the fact of a Self after death, He really was not referring to that particular subject at all, and was only employing the idea and the terms as a figure of *something else*. In other words, that He no more endorsed the *truthfulness* of the figure He used, than we endorse the truthfulness of the fable of the Hare and the Tortoise, when we tell a non-persevering boy not to be like the hare, but to copy the tortoise.

Well, this hypothesis may be ingenious; but we do not believe it; and we will go further, and say that it lowers the conception of Christ as the Exposer of error, and the Declarer of truth.

We believe that, in this gospel story, it was the intention of Jesus to point out to His hearers what might hereafter be the consequence of pride, selfishness and money-loving ("The Pharisees," writes St. Luke, in verse 14, "who were lovers of money, scoffed at Him"); and so the Master lifted the veil of Life beyond the grave, and showed those money-loving scoffers what might be. If He introduced into His story a fictitious Lazarus and a fictitious Dives, He was none

Our Self after Death

the less endorsing the belief held by Jew and Greek that the Self lives on through death. Is it correct to describe this story of Lazarus and Dives as a *parable*? I think not. The Evangelist does not preface it, as in other cases, with the words, "He spake unto them this parable." Is it not more than a parable? There are some not holding the view of a maintained Self at death, who try to obscure the true import of what Jesus said, by asserting that the condition of the beggar and the rich man was a representation of what will be *after* a future Resurrection and Judgment: that Christ just put into the focus of the Present what would be in the Future. The answer to this is very plain. The other statements of the story completely exclude this idea. Abraham is depicted as a then-living Self, and he was not a *resurrected* man. Things were going on as usual on earth. The rich man asks that Lazarus may be sent to his father's house to warn his five brethren. There had been no Resurrection-Day and Final Assize. The story itself confutes the notion.

What, then, do we gather from all this? A magnificent fact, that the Son of God, in calm and earnest discourse with the leading

Our Self after Death

religionists of His time, deliberately labelled as truth—the belief in a living, conscious Self apart from the encasement of the physical.

There are other statements of Jesus, the full significance and truthfulness of which hinge upon the fact of there being a continuance of the Self, apart from the physical body. I take but one instance—our Lord's words spoken to Martha. (I have already referred to them.) Picture the scene. A beloved friend of the Master; a woman, grief-stricken because her brother has died, and she knows that even now the form she loves is becoming too horrible to look upon. The Master is standing beside her. He has come a long journey, she knows, to comfort Mary and her. If only He had come earlier, her brother, if touched by His healing power, would not have died. She has told the Master so. "Thy brother shall rise again," He says. Ah! yes, she knows *that*; the Rabbi has taught her that, in the synagogue. "And," continues the quiet, sympathizing Master, "whosoever liveth and believeth on Me *shall never die*. Believest thou *this*?' You remember the woman's answer, "Lord, I have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even He that

Our Self after Death

cometh unto the world." A splendid indication of Martha's thought of Jesus; but no answer to His question, was it? Poor, sorrowing woman! how could she say, under the limitations of the knowledge which she possessed at that moment, that she believed what Jesus said? Had not Lazarus, until four days ago, been living? Had he not believed on the Master? was he not dead? And *why* did he die, if those words were true, "whosoever liveth and believeth on me *shall never die*"? St. John, in his record of this, writes, that when Martha had given the reply which failed to answer the question of Jesus, "she went away, and called Mary her sister *secretly*." Is it an unwarrantable thought that Martha may have said to the quiet, bereaved Mary, "The Master is here, and calleth thee, and oh! He has said something which, as yet, I cannot understand"? Do you see the point, my Reader? It is this; that the significance and the truthfulness of Christ's words were not realized, at the time He spoke them, by poor weeping Martha; and never will be realized by any other poor weeping soul, until the mourner, in the full light of Gospel truth, has had the mental eyes opened, so as to be able to distinguish

Our Self after Death

between an encasement and the tenant who temporarily occupies it; between a perishable earthly "tabernacle" and the Self who *shall never die*. If the Self be dependent for existence upon a physical organization, and does not survive separation from it, then are these words of Jesus not true.

I pass on to the next phase of the subject. What more may we gather concerning our Self after death, from our Lord's teaching and demonstration?

II. *That, after death, our Self is not a bodiless entity.*

One of the bitterest ingredients in the cup of bereavement is, I think, to have no idea, or a very vague one, as to the *personality* of the one gone hence. Let me clearly define what I mean by this word "Personality." I do not mean "Individuality." The terms must not be confounded. Our *individuality* is that which makes us absolutely sure that we are *ourselves*, and not some one, or something else. Our *personality* refers to the *external* appearance; the form in which our individuality manifests and expresses itself.

In this twentieth century, there are, comparatively speaking, very few persons who

Our Self after Death

know anything at all about the results of the scientific investigation of Psychic Phenomena, who do not believe, or think it likely, that our Self, as an *individuality*, survives physical death. But their conception of the *personality* of this surviving individuality is very hazy. Prove it for yourself. Ask anyone who has "lost" a dear one, how he mentally pictures that one on the Other Side. "Is that one living, as a being conscious of life?" "Oh; yes," will be the reply. "Is that one in *bodily* form—as a *personality*?" The one questioned may be a very devout Christian, but the answer generally given will be of a hesitating and uncertain character. I speak from an experience of many years. You will, probably, be referred to what Church Fathers or Founders of Schools of Religious Thought said on this matter centuries ago; and it is supposed to be quite a profane idea to imagine that, perhaps, we living on earth to-day, in the light of advancing knowledge of the Psychic, may know just a little more about our Self and our Hereafter than those Fathers and Founders did. And, unfortunately, not all those old-time exponents of Christian verities give us a satisfying idea of what we shall be after death.

Our Self after Death

We ask to know more than they told us. Their conception of the Self after death was not a defined one. It left no clear perception of a *personality*. All the assurances of "beatific visions" do not meet the need of the bereaved one who stands in the room of death, or by an open grave. Husband, wife, parent, son, daughter, friend—what is it, in your grief, you most want to know about the erstwhile Tenant of that lifeless form? Is it not that he, or she, whom you knew and loved through a bodily form, is more than a surviving something, more than a bodiless essence of the one who was; that the Self, although the physical "tabernacle" has been vacated, is in bodily form still? What is to be gathered from the Gospel records and the other writings of the New Testament concerning this?

Take a very illuminative statement made by St. Paul in his Epistle, I. Corinthians xv. In answer to the question, "How are 'the dead' raised, and with what *manner* of *body* do they come?" he replies "There are celestial *bodies*, and bodies terrestrial . . . There is a natural body, and *there is a spiritual body* . . . Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural;

Our Self after Death

then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

There are also the same apostle's words in II. Corinthians v. 1, "For we know that if the *earthly* house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have *a building from God*, a house not made with hands, æonial in the heavens." In these words, St. Paul clearly states several very important facts: (a) That there are bodily forms other than physical bodies; (b) That the man (the Self), in this life, is the possessor of *two* bodies, viz. a natural or physical body and a spiritual body. In the sentence "There is a natural body and there *is* a spiritual body," the verb in the present tense (ἔστι) is repeated, denoting that the spiritual body is not a something with which the Self will be invested on some far-off day, but that of which it is *now* possessed. (ἔστι σῶμα ψυχικόν, καὶ ἔστι σῶμα πνευματικόν). In other words, St. Paul's statement is not "There *is* a natural body, and there *shall be later* a spiritual body." The spiritual body is an adjunct of the Self, even while the latter is an occupant of the physical body.

Our Self after Death

The *soul* of a person is not a bodiless spirit; it is the spirit Self in a spiritual encasement—a spiritual body; whether that Self be in a physical body or out of it. (c) We also gather from St. Paul's words that although the first manifestation of the Self is through the medium of a physical body, its manifestation is not limited to that body. The surviving Self is not bereft of the power of manifestation because the physical body has been discarded. He has another encasement—a spirit-body, of which physical dying does not rob him. His second phase of manifestation is through the medium of this spiritual enwrapment. In what the apostle writes, there is not the glimmer of an idea that the Self at death passes into a temporary annihilation, or a condition of impaired animation. He is referring to the *personality*—the embodiment of the Self; to a body, as distant from its spirit-tenant. Of that body he states, "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; *then* that which is spiritual." Speaking of the man as he is manifested on the physical plane, he writes, "The first man is of the earth, earthy"; speaking of the man detached from an earthly body, he describes him as "the second man, of heaven"; i.e.

Our Self after Death

of a spiritual, in contradistinction to a physical environment. That the conception of St. Paul of the Self after death was not that of a formless, unembodied spirit entity, is shown by his declaration that "if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, *we have* (not one day shall have) a building from God, a house not made with hands." (d) Lastly, St. Paul's words, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," completely negative the idea that the physical body, which was used by the spirit-Self as its *first* medium of manifestation, will ever be taken up again as a vehicle of subsequent manifestation. What is the condition of that physical body after the Self has left it at death? Corruption. And what is the condition of the spiritual body, which St. Paul calls "a building from God"? Incorruption. The belief that the poor corruptible thing laid in a grave will be resuscitated and again become the medium through which the Self will everlastingly manifest itself is not in agreement with the words, "Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

There are a very great many Christians who believe that, although the future encase-

Our Self after Death

ment of the Self will not be *flesh and blood*, but an imperishable spiritual body, yet that spiritual body will be constituted by a recollection and a changing, by Divine power, of the relicts placed in the grave. It will be, not the same body, in nature and character, as it was; but a differently constituted body derived from the body which died. Well, this idea is not quite so materialistic as the other one named; but it still leaves corruption as the inheritor of incorruption. In that case, the apostle was still wrong; and moreover, it still leaves us, in dying or bereavement, with the comfort-blighting thought that, from the moment of quitting the "earthly tabernacle" until some distant day, the poor, unclothed Self is left bodiless and impersonal. St Paul evidently did not like this idea of bodilessness. No words than his, could possibly be plainer on this point; only Christians, or many of them, have come to read them in the light of the words of the hymn—

"Soon shall come the great *awaking*,
Soon *the rending of the tomb.*"

But read his words in the light of a fuller understanding of spiritual realities, and how luminous they become: "For, verily, in this earthly house of our tabernacle (R.V. or

Our Self after Death

bodily frame) we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For, indeed, we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not that we would be *unclothed*, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life" (II. Cor. v. 2 to 4). One or two difficulties present themselves to some in realising this truth concerning the Self when dissociated from the earthly body. Probably, the first of these is the words in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in . . . the resurrection of the body." The Reformers, in placing an interrogatory form of this Creed in the Baptismal Service of our Prayer-book, took the liberty of altering the clause: "the resurrection of the *body*" to "the resurrection of *the flesh*." Their intent, no doubt, was good. They wanted posterity to clearly understand what was *their* interpretation of this particular clause. It never dawned upon them that as the human race advanced to fuller knowledge of things relating to the spiritual, the time-worn words of the Christian Church, from the Apostolic age to now, might bear a fuller significance than they had supposed.

Our Self after Death

But what if many hundreds of Christians of these days know more about Psychic and other scientific matters than these good old teachers of the past did! Are we bound to accept as *final* their interpretations? I think not. The Fathers of the Church were firmly convinced that our earth is the central point of the solar system, and that the dwelling-place of the departed is under the surface of this globe. They were wrong; and there is not an educated person of this time who would challenge this assertion. All I wish to point out is this—that it is fatal to any chance of our obtaining fuller light on any subject, religious or otherwise, if we handicap ourselves by attaching finality as to truth to what may have been thought and taught by men who lived in ages of lesser knowledge. What if we know that the Greek word “Anastasis” is but poorly translated by the materialistic, Roman word “Resurrection”? What if we believe that the word “body” in the ancient Creed, may stand for something very much more spiritual than Latin Christianity thought; that it may be taken to mean not the corruptible thing deposited in the grave, but the *spiritual body* of which St. Paul wrote? In that case, this

Our Self after Death

clause of the Creed bears a far greater significance to us. In the light of amplified knowledge, "I believe in the resurrection of the body" may mean something essentially different from the materialistic conception of Latin Christendom, and something more approaching the idea of the early Eastern Christian Church. Those words of the Creed can voice our belief, not that, at some future day, mortal remains, collected together, and changed and immortalised by Divine power, will become again the "tabernacle" of the Self; but that at physical dying there is an Anastasis, an advancement, an emergence into fuller being of the pre-existing *spiritual body* of the Self. There are some persons who suppose that the spiritual-body of the Self does not come into existence until the earthly body has been laid aside. That is not right. As an undeveloped, or partially developed, thing, the spiritual body has been the encasement of the Self all the time the Self has been living within the flesh. As in the case of a nut, so in the case of a man; beneath the husk which super-encases the kernel, lies another encasement of the latter. The severance of the spiritual body from the outer, coarser body only opens out the

Our Self after Death

possibility of the expansion of the former, and its acquirement of greater powers and fuller life. Encased in the physical body, the powers of the spirit-body are restricted, and in some cases inoperative. Detachment from the physical body means the removal of curtailment, and enhancement for the spirit-body. There happens, at physical dying, to the spiritual body of the Self, that which corresponds with what happens to the child at physical birth. In both cases, there is a pre-existent body, each with its unopened faculties. The incident of birth removes a physical body from its previous environment, brings into play its latent faculties, and launches it into more abundant life. The incident of physical dying does precisely the same thing with regard to the pre-existent spiritual body of the Self.

Take a still more striking illustration.—the birth of a dragon-fly. You see what looks like a dried, twig-like something, suspended from a branch over-hanging the stream. That is a little creature which has passed the first stage of its life in the water, and has crawled out of it to moult on that branch, before betaking itself to aërial life. Watch it. Presently there is a bursting of the twig-like

Our Self after Death

thing, and there emerges from it a creature which is quickly developed into a form of lovely colour and gauzy wings. The emergence of the Self in its enwrapping spirit-body from the dying physical encasement, and the speedy opening out and expansion of the powers and faculties of the spirit-body at that time, is no more a cause for wonder than the birth of a dragon-fly. It may startle some to learn that there are many living to-day who have borne testimony to the fact that they, with the perceptive powers of their own interior spirit-body quickened, have actually witnessed the emergence of the spirit-body, as the physical body has been dying. I know of a lady, who, for years, as a hospital nurse, constantly had this experience.

We turn now to another difficulty which is experienced by some who would assuredly find comfort in the truth that the spiritual body of the Self is advanced at death. It arises from St. Paul's words in I. Cor. xv. 42-44. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, there *is* also a spiritual

Our Self after Death

body." "To what," it is asked, "is the Apostle referring by the off-repeated word, "It"? To a *body*, undoubtedly. And the "It" sown is the "It" raised? And the Greek word *σπείρω*—(*speiro*) means, to sow seed? Yes; and on this the assumption has been built that his words can only refer to the placing of a dead body in the ground, as the seed from which an imperishable body is one day to spring forth. In which case, in the interval between sowing and raising, the Self remains as bodiless; and St. Paul was wrong in stating that "if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, *we have* a building from God—a house not made with hands." But is this commonly received interpretation of the passage the right one? I think not. The word *speiro* has another signification than that of casting seed into the ground. It also means to engender, to beget children; and in this latter sense it is used very very frequently in the Bible. I know of no instance in which *Speiro* is used to describe the act of burying a *dead* body. The sowing is the sowing of a something *living*. It is the *life* in the sown seed, which constitutes the promise and potency of what shall be. Again, to which body was

Our Self after Death

St. Paul referring? He speaks of two; a natural and a spiritual body. What if he were not thinking at all about a physical body, but of a spiritual body? Not about the sowing of lifeless materiality in the ground, but of a sowing of a spiritual body within the "tabernacle" of the flesh; which flesh should be, for a while, the vehicle of the Self's first manifestation? In other words—what if the sowing of the spiritual-body *is the moment of conception*; that *then*, when the Self comes into existence, the spiritual-body, the inseparable enwrapment of that Self comes into existence too? Such an interpretation makes the Apostle's words very luminous, coherent, and consistent with the other statements he made. How understandable, reasonable, and concordant with science is the belief that the spiritual body sown in the "corruption," "dishonour," "weakness," and environment of "a natural body," can only become the "*raised*" thing of "incorruption," "glory," "power" and a developed "spiritual body," when, like the life-principle in the seed, it bursts forth from the encasement in which it was engendered, and leaves that encasement to desuetude and decay! The reader must not think that this interpreta-

Our Self after Death

tion of St. Paul's words is a new one. It was held by no less a church authority than Athanasius. In Respons. ad Quæst. xvi. he writes, " But just as when stone and steel are struck together fire is engendered of both, just so upon the embrace of man and woman God orders body and soul to *co-exist*. Let the holy apostle persuade thee of this when he says, 'It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.' " Basil of Cæsarea makes a similar statement; the only difference being that he makes the sowing of the spiritual body to be at the time of birth, and not at the moment of conception. There are the statements of several other church Fathers, which I have not space to quote.

We turn now to the Gospel records, which illustrate what St. Paul wrote about the spiritual body, and which bear witness that the Self after death is not a bodiless entity.

First, there is the incident connected with the Transfiguration. It is described by St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke. On one occasion, our Lord, taking with Him Peter, James and John, brought them up into a high mountain (probably Mount Hermon), apart from the other disciples. We are not told why those three particular men were

Our Self after Death

chosen. It may have been that they only of all the twelve had their psychic powers sufficiently developed to be able to perceive the spiritual realities which were to be demonstrated. Christ was transfigured before them. His countenance was altered, His face shone as the sun, and His garments became white as the light. His spirit-body, although as yet undetached from the physical, was gleaming through the walls of the flesh. Amid the grandeur and solemnity of the scene "there appeared and talked with Him *two men*"—Moses and Elijah. Both of them, centuries before, had left this earthly life. The dead body of Moses had been buried in Moab, over against Bethpeor. Elijah had mysteriously passed into spirit-life. But there they were on that mountain with Jesus and those three disciples; certainly not as bodiless spirits. They were in bodily form as every spirit in this or any other world is. St. Luke describes them as "*two men*." Their form must have been such as to justify this description. St. Matthew and St. Mark expressly state that they were *seen* by the three apostles. They heard these two visitants from the Other World speak, and the subject of their conversation with Jesus is mentioned;

Our Self after Death

and they were so real and man-like that Peter proposed that tabernacles should be made for them. Those three men in the flesh were convinced that they were not in the presence of two unclothed bodiless Selves; and it was because of this, and because this manifestation taught them something which their creed had never taught them and dispersed their dim, hazy notions of what we are after death, that Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here!" We ask in the case of Moses, in *what* body was he on that mount? Certainly not in his physical body; for that had died and been buried centuries before, and there had been no Resurrection Day. There is but one answer—viz. that both he and Elijah on that mountain were encased in the spirit-body of the Self.

We consider now a statement made by St. Matthew, in Matt. xxvii. 51 to 53. He recounts that at the crucifixion of our Lord the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and that there was an earthquake which rent the rocks, and burst open the tombs or monuments (*μνημεία*) of the departed. He then adds—"and many bodies of the saints which had fallen asleep were aroused (*ἠγέρθη*); and coming forth out of the tombs after Christ's

Our Self after Death

raising (ἐγερσιν), they entered into the holy city, and appeared into many." Now what are we to understand by these words of the evangelist? Are we to take them in every respect in a strictly *literal* sense; or are we to take them as the record of an event, described in the mode of speaking common in his day? If, as some say, the statement should be taken *literally*, then we are faced at once with several difficulties. If the scholar will look at the Greek text, he will see that the word "bodies" is *neuter*. Now, St. Matthew, in the after part of the sentence, instead of making the verbs agree with the neuter (bodies), changes into the masculine, and states—"They (i.e. the saints who had fallen asleep; and not merely their dead bodies, or what was left of them) having come forth out of the tombs, entered into the holy city." Are we to suppose that from the date of their physical dying until that Easter-time those saints had just been sleeping in those tombs; so that the latter were not only the receptacles for the dead bodies but also for sleeping Selves? or, that those ones sleeping *elsewhere*, had betaken themselves, or been taken, back to the charnel-house where long ago their disused garment of the flesh had

Our Self after Death

been consigned to corruption? The idea is an unthinkable one, if Gospel truth is to take away "the sting of death." And yet we are committed to it, if to the words of St. Matthew a strictly *literal* interpretation be given. But there is no reason why any difficulty should be found in this passage. The apostle was recording an event which actually took place. That event was that, at the time when the Saviour left the earth-life and returned to spirit-life, a number of departed ones who were accounted dead appeared as *living* beings "unto many" in the City of Jerusalem. His return to spirit-life, as also His coming from spirit-life to earth-life, appeared to give an opening-up of inter-communication between the spiritual world and this world. Before Jesus' birth, an exalted spiritual visitant manifested himself here on earth. Immediately after His birth, crowds of such visitants did so. Throughout our Lord's earthly ministry spiritual beings were constantly present. After His crucifixion, men and women saw and heard them; and the departed ones, of whom we are speaking, were permitted to reveal themselves, after bodily destruction, as living selves, to those in this life. The coming of Christ to this "sorrowful planet"

Our Self after Death

seemed to bridge the gulf between the two worlds. Before He came, as far as we know, there had been, for centuries, a closing down of the inter-communication between this world and the other. When Jesus was in earthly form among men the ideas of the Jews were very materialistic. The truth about the Self after death was not known, or but very inadequately known. Even a beloved friend of Him—Martha—could hold no better hope concerning a physically dead brother than that at some distant period he would be brought to life again. An influential religious community of His time (the Sadducees), had no belief in after-life. Their less materialistic rivals, the Pharisees, could not conceive of the *man* except in conjunction with an earthly body, and had no belief in any after-life for him apart from a resuscitated dead physical organisation. Now consider the position of St. Matthew. He was a Jew, and wanted to tell his countrymen the fact that persons, regarded only as dead and buried, were living and had “appeared unto many.” If he had referred to them as the “departed,” that term, although expressing so much to us who live in the light of Christian revelation, would have conveyed little or nothing to them. “Defunct”

Our Self after Death

is the term which expressed their ideas. Had not their leaders of religious thought said to Jesus, "Abraham *is dead*, and the prophets"? The evangelist had to come down to their level of thought and speech to make them understand that those whom they called the "Dead," those whom they supposed to be in the tombs, had "appeared unto many." He did exactly what we constantly do, and what Christ had to do, as I have already instanced in a foregoing page. When, in His parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus represented Dives as asking that the living Lazarus in Hades be sent to warn the brethren still in the flesh, the Master added, "Neither will they be persuaded if one *rise from the dead*." In going to those brethren it was no case of a rising from the dead; the one asked to be sent was *living*; and yet Jesus to make the meaning clear had to adopt the inaccuracy of common thought and speech. If Christians would but bear this in mind, many of the seeming contradictions in the Sacred Text would disappear, and a fuller perception of truth would be reached. What, then, is the point in considering this particular Gospel record? This, that those departed ones at that long-ago Easter-time, when as living Selves they

Our Self after Death

“appeared unto many,” were not bodiless entities. They were *seen*, and some of them, perhaps, recognised.

This event narrated by St. Matthew must not be viewed as a *unique* happening in the history of the human race. Long before those departed ones appeared to many in Jerusalem, persons whose physical bodies were dead had appeared and been recognised by dwellers on earth. The prophet Samuel, after his decease, manifested himself to the woman of Endor. In Rev. xix. 10 it is stated that St. John fell down to worship a spiritual visitant whom he did not recognise as being a discarnate human being. “See thou do it not,” said that one to the aged and sorrowing apostle, “*I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren.*” One who had laboured with him for Christ, and had passed hence, probably by martyrdom, was permitted to come and cheer the old veteran of the cross in his exile and loneliness; and it was no *bodiless* entity whom St. John saw. But it is outside the records of the Bible that the overwhelming mass of testimony is forthcoming, as to appearances after death; and in regard to this, I note this fact—that these numerous manifestations of spiritual beings

Our Self after Death

—whether they be the angels who figure so largely in the pages of Scripture, or those who have lived in the flesh and died—have all been manifestations in *bodily form*.

We come now to what was actually *demonstrated* by Christ, as to the Self being in bodily form when detached from the physical body. In the Gospel records concerning the manifestations of Jesus, during the forty days of the first Eastertide, I believe we have a revealment of how we may think of *ourselves*, when physical death has effected a certain change in the outwardness, but not in the inwardness of the Self; a change in the mode of Self manifestation—the Personality, but not in the Ego—the Individuality. To some it may be a new and startling thought, that ones departed this life should, immediately after physically dying, find themselves under the same conditions of continued life as Jesus found Himself at that first Eastertide. But I believe that it is only as this thought is gripped, we shall gauge the true and full significance to us of the Christ of Easter. Consider the facts concerning Him at that time. Within three days of physically dying on the cross, Jesus manifested Himself in a bodily Form, which

Our Self after Death

certainly, was not conditioned and restricted by the laws that govern *material* organizations. In that Form, for a period of about six weeks, He was seen on different occasions, both individually and collectively, by certain men and women, and by a company of five hundred brethren at the same time. At the close of that period, those frequent manifestations of Jesus ceased; and afterwards, He was only rarely seen, and then, in a bodily presentment of Himself different from that in which He appeared during the forty days. In that latter presentment, He was seen by St. Stephen, St. Paul and St. John; as far as Biblical testimony goes. But there is no reason to suppose that there have been no manifestations of our Lord subsequent to these last-mentioned ones. Many testimonies during the centuries have been given as to Christ having been seen. My mother constantly avouched that on one occasion she had seen the Saviour; and once when I was lecturing in London, a young man in the midst of the large audience, calmly declared that, at a critical point of his career, Christ had manifested Himself and spoken to him. Why not? Why should some Christians discredit testimonies such as these, and that

Our Self after Death

the great "White Comrade" has been seen on the battle-fields by brave, self-sacrificing men, and yet unquestioningly accept as truth the Biblical statements as to similar experiences?

It is concerning the *nature* of that bodily Form in which Jesus appeared during those forty days, and afterwards, we must deal. Was it wholly and essentially different from the bodily form in which we as living Selves are encased after death? And, again, was Jesus, in those Eastertide manifestations, in a *physical* encasement? Suppose we say that the bodily Form of Jesus at Easter was essentially different from the enwrapment of our spirit when detached from the earthly body. Such a view will materially affect our idea of the position in which Jesus stands in relationship to us, as closely and vitally allied to us in *human* nature and experiences. His representation of Himself, and the apostolic representations of Him in this respect, are very clear and emphatic. When the glorious Spirit-Son of the Eternal Father became incarnate in a human Personality He became truly and really *Man*. He assumed the *all* of man's experiences—his life, death, and after-death conditions. Surely, Jesus Himself

Our Self after Death

affirmed this, in His constant description of Himself as "the Son of *Man*." St. Paul's words on this point are significant. In Romans vi. 5 he writes: "For if we have become united with Him with the likeness of His death we shall be also with the likeness of His anastasis." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. ii. 17) expresses the same thought. "It behoved Him in *all* things *to be made like unto His brethren*." Are these statements true? Is there a *likeness* between the human experiences of the great "Son of Man" and those of us lesser sons and daughters of men?

Now, if we say, as a good many devout Christians do, that the experiences of Jesus, after His crucifixion, were wholly dissimilar from any experiences which those departed this life can possibly have, we have to explain away, somehow or another, Jesus' words and those who wrote of Him. Take the gospel facts. His earthly Body died on a cross. His Self did not die. That is quite clear: as on the cross He said He would be that same day with a repentant robber in the spirit-world. Shortly afterwards, in a bodily Form, He manifested Himself to friends. Are we, after the incident of death, in bodily

Our Self after Death

form as He was? Is any after-death manifestation of ourself a possibility, as it was to Him?

We have to remember that there are thousands now living, including men in the fore-rank of science, who answer these questions in the affirmative. They will tell us that, after careful investigation, they have received absolute proof of some of the possibilities concerning the Self after death; that their assertions are not based on the mere acceptance of a belief, but on demonstrated and personally experienced *facts*. There is no fact so universally and persistently attested as that the departed have been seen in bodily form and recognised. But the ordinary Christian, in spite of his belief in the Bible, does not realise it. If you were to ask him if he thought it was true that Peter, James and John really saw departed Moses on the mount of Transfiguration, he would answer, "Yes, yes, of course; it says so in the Gospels." And then, if you were to go on to tell him that you yourself had seen a departed one, and that you know scores of persons who had had a similar experience—you know what would happen. Your friend would put on a smile and a "superior" kind

Our Self after Death

of look, and would tell the next friend he met that he thought you were not quite right in the head. He would consider himself a "heretic" if he did not believe that such things took place *in Bible-times*; but he could not possibly believe that they have ever happened since. It never strikes him how inconsistent it is for him to say, Sunday after Sunday, "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be." Ask such a one the above-mentioned questions. The answer will be, "No; certainly not until a future Resurrection Day."

Well! the answer is wrong; and I will tell you why it is so. If it were right, it would mean that there is a tremendous gulf of difference between the manhood of Jesus and our manhood. The *nature* of the two manhoods would be unlike. What befell Him as a Man would not be what befalls us. In that case, there would be union between Him and us, in point of human likeness, just as far as the act of physical dying; but there it would stop. The human Self of Jesus after death would have been unlike what our Selves are then. And so the words would not be true—that Jesus "*in all things was made like unto His brethren.*"

Our Self after Death

But if, on the other hand, we can believe that Jesus, as truly "the Son of Man," stands to us as the grand revelation and pledge of what will be the condition of our Self when the physical has been cast aside, then, I think, and only then, will dying be divested of its suggestion of blankness and gloom.

We turn now to the other question which was asked. Was Jesus, in His manifestations at Easter-time, in a *physical* body? What is the answer we may gather from the Gospel records? The testimony borne by the evangelists is, that the bodily Form in which our Lord presented Himself to a number of persons on various occasions, between Good-Friday and Ascension, was such as to preclude the idea that that Form was a *physical* one. In nature and possibilities it differed essentially from the Body which died on the cross. It was a Body the appearance of which to others could be *altered at will*. St. Mark mentions this fact. "He was manifested *in another form*." (Mark xvi. 12). Jesus did not present Himself, in outward appearance to Mary Magdalene, who supposed Him to be the gardener, in the same way as He presented Himself to the women returning from the sepulchre, who immediately recog-

Our Self after Death

nised Him. Nor was He, in appearance, the same to the two men journeying to Emmaus, who mistook Him for a stranger, as He was when later they recognised Him in the breaking of bread; or as He was to the ten apostles in an upper-room on the same evening. Nor, when a week later, He showed Himself to incredulous Thomas, with the marks of nail-wounds in His hands, was He outwardly like the One who appeared to the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee, when they “saw Him and worshipped; *but some doubted.*” Again, when the Master met some of His disciples in the early morning on the beach of the Sea of Tiberias, there must have been some difference in His appearance from their sight of Him in the upper-room, or St. John would scarcely have written, “None of the disciples durst enquire of Him, Who art Thou?” although they felt it was Jesus. Now, these changes in the appearance of Jesus’ Body—causing Him to bear in turn the semblance of a gardener, a stranger, a crucified one, a person readily recognised, and one not easily identified—exclude the idea that the Body which underwent these changes was a *physical* one. But this fact of change in

Our Self after Death

appearance is not incompatible with the thought of a *spiritual* body. Throughout the Bible we have the accounts of angels who visited men. They were spiritual beings, not encased in physical organizations; and yet they were seen as being in appearance like men; and indeed the term "men" is constantly applied to them. In the innumerable instances of persons seen after death, they have borne the form and even the characteristics of dress by which they had been known before departure from this life. How is this to be accounted for? As beings of another world, they are not possessed of a physical, but a spiritual body; how then can the Self so present itself as to cause the spiritual body to bear the semblance of the physical? For instance, a distinguished judge, lately passed over, told me when sitting with him in the retiring-room of the Winchester Assize Court, that he had seen, and heard the voice, of a beloved daughter who had died some time before. I asked in what form she appeared. The justice replied, "She was exactly as she was before her illness; and dressed as I have often seen her dressed." I asked if she had spoken to him. "Yes," he answered, "I was going through notes of evidence and

Our Self after Death

depositions in view to my summing-up of a case; and there she stood in my room at the judge's lodgings. She smiled at me, and said, 'Father, you are quite wrong. You think of me as *dead*; but I was never so much *alive* as I am now; though your grief hurts me terribly?' And then she vanished." "Now, Mr. Chaplain," added the justice, "if all the parsons of Christendom were to tell me that I did not really see my girl; that it was only a subjective impression, I would tell them they are wrong. I *objectively* saw her; and that at a time when she was not even in my thoughts." How was it possible for that girl in spirit-life to so present herself to her father? It was the question he asked of me. The answer, in the light of present-day psychical research and knowledge, is not a difficult one.

The Self, considered apart from any bodily expression, is a spiritual entity, and in its essence is *Mind*. That is so whether the Self be, or be not, encased within the physical. It is this which differentiates the human being from other creations, and especially links him with God Who is Supreme Mind. In this age of scientific Psychological enquiry, we now know Mind to be a

Our Self after Death

formative principle; that is to say, it is capable of impressing itself upon that which is closely associated with it, in such a way as to visualize itself. Thus even when the Self is incarnate, and under the restrictive conditions of the physical, it is able to make its imprint upon the physical organization. Good thoughts, or bad ones, will, if persisted in, stamp themselves upon the face of an individual. Further, the detachment of the Self from a material body enhances the powers and possibilities of the Mind. There was no reason why it was expedient for us that our Lord should leave earthly conditions, except that His *mental* power to bless mankind was enhanced thereby. Again, the spirit-body with which the Self is clothed after death, is so constituted as to be more fully and perfectly the vehicle by which the enhanced Mind can express itself. On that plastic, registering spiritual body can be impressed, shaped and visualized the thoughts and pictures which the Mind conceives. Why was Jesus, at one time, seen in an appearance which was recognisable, and at another time in one which was unrecognisable? Was it that a *physical* body experienced a series of quick transformative changes, or was it

Our Self after Death

that His thought of Himself, as He wished Himself to appear to others, created a *thought form*, which, as long as that thought was held by Him, impressed itself upon and about the spiritual body? I know of no explanation, other than this, which will account for the fact that hundreds of the departed, in these times, in appearance as they were before leaving this life, have been *objectively* seen, heard, touched, and have, by action on the plane of the physical, demonstrated their presence and reality. But there is still another wonderful possibility connected with the Self after it has left the earth-life. It can, under certain conditions, even build up around its spiritual body, what may be called a *temporary super-encasement*, which is *physical* in its constitution and appearance. This latter is, for the time being, as real as any other physical body; and it is appreciable by sight, touch and hearing, as our present bodies are. But it is evanescent in its character. It can be assumed by the spiritual Self for a purpose—the purpose of making the Self cognisable to physical eyes—and when that end has been attained, the super-encasement is discarded and dissolved. It is but a concomitant, and not an essential,

Our Self after Death

of the spiritual; as Christ's earthly Body was but a concomitant, and not an essential, of His Divine Self. And this super-garb of the spiritual Self can only exist, as in His case, just as long as spiritual presence is manifesting itself to those seeing through the flesh. It may be asked, how is it possible for a being, who has left earth-life, and who exists as a spirit in a spirit-body, to super-clothe himself with the physical? It is effected by drawing, *from the domain of the physical*, material particles which are built up, for the purpose of physical cognition, around the spiritual, moulding, shape-producing Self. Perhaps, the best illustration of this power of the spiritual Self to assume this temporary super-added enwrapment, is to be found in the case of the crystal. In it we have an example of how a living, formative principle can gather from its surroundings, by an inherent power of cohesive attraction, those various forms of crystallization which have been mathematically defined. This power of a spiritual Self, as being able, in its manifestation of itself to physical eyes, to assume, for the time being, *physical* conditions of appearance, is no idea born of imagination. The Bible bears testimony to

Our Self after Death

the possibility. The spiritual beings, the angels, who figure so largely in the Sacred Writings, came to those in the flesh, in all the appearance and reality of ones *physically* encased. The three angels who came to Abraham, as he sat in the tent door, by the oaks of Mamre, in the heat of the day, were not in appearance physically different from other men. He proposed to fetch water to wash their feet; and that they should rest themselves and eat bread. And the Biblical record states that they actually did eat. In Genesis xix. we have an account of two angels who came to Lot. He asked them to wash their feet, and to enter his house, and "he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." And so I might instance a number of cases recorded in the Bible, in which spiritual visitants to men were just the same in appearance to those to whom they came, as any ordinary men; and did exactly what those in the earthly body do. How is the Christian, who professes to believe in what the Bible states, going to explain this? Spiritual beings, declared to be angels, present themselves on the earth-plane exactly as you or I might have presented ourselves—had we been living in

Our Self after Death

the time of Abraham and Lot. Well, the ordinary Christian does not attempt to explain it. He just takes the Bible statements, and accepts them as being true, without bothering himself as to whether they have any basis in probable fact. He puts *credulity* in the place of *faith*; and does not seem to know that faith requires a mental and moral acquiescence on our part in regard to what we are asked to believe. The position of some of us who know something about Psychical Phenomena, and the possibilities of the Self after death, is very different. We have no difficulty in accepting the Bible records as true. We know that one of the possibilities of a spirit-Self is that of being able, under certain conditions and for specific purpose, to assume a super-structure which in its character is physical, and as long as it is retained by the Self, comes under laws which govern the physical. May it not be that the knowledge of this will remove a difficulty which confronts all Christian teachers in regard to the Eastertide manifestations of our Lord? If we take the greater number of the Gospel records of these manifestations, we are driven to the conclusion (as I am now trying to show) that He was not then

Our Self after Death

in a *physical* body. The powers of which that Body was capable negative the thought. On the other hand, the Gospel accounts certainly do give circumstances concerning Him which seem to favour the supposition that His Body at that time was a *physical* one. For example, St. Luke records that Jesus showed His disciples His hands and His feet; and that when they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, He took it, and did eat before them. But suppose we assume from this that Jesus was still tied to the physical, because He did that which is commonly supposed to be only possible in regard to a physical body. Are we confronted with a set of contradictory statements? Was the Body in which He presented Himself at Easter both a non-physical, and a physical one? I think not. The one set of Gospel statements which record that His Body was capable of that of which no physical body is capable, simply tell us of the Christ manifestation of Himself in His *spiritual* Body, which could take and register on its plastic form every mental impulse of its indwelling Self. The Gospel statements which tell of Jesus' Body as doing that of which a physical body is capable, indicate, I think, to us that

Our Self after Death

His spiritual Self did that which is, undoubtedly, a possibility to spiritual beings, viz. to assume temporarily the conditions of the physical; to exercise the power of attracting from the environment of the earthly, a super-form which, as long as it is held, is in its nature and possibilities physical. The Bible statements show that Jesus at Easter did but that which angels who visited men are declared to have done. They, accounted as never possessed of earthly bodies, appeared as *physical* existences; they talked with, touched, and ate with men. And so did He. I humbly submit that only this explanation will give us anything like a coherent idea on this all-important subject.

Have we any other evidence as to this possibility concerning the spiritual Self? Yes. A distinguished scientist, now living, whose name is known throughout the civilised world, has published his experience in regard to this possibility. He narrates how, under strict scientific tests, he saw a material form built up around a presence. I have seen the same thing. Some years ago, in company with a brother clergyman, I saw a spiritual presence (at first invisible) manifest itself in all the reality of physical encasement. It

Our Self after Death

was in the poorly-furnished parlour of an artisan. There was no cabinet, no apparatus of trickery. There, in the light, we and four others, first heard the voice of a little child (the deceased daughter of the workman in whose house we were). Slowly in the centre of the room, there accumulated a vaporous, white mist, which seemed to come from us who were sitting in a semi-circle. Gradually, in the sight of all of us, the mist assumed consistency and shape; and in about ten minutes there stood in that room, a little girl of about six years of age, as real as any other child. She spoke, she moved, she went and kissed her mother who was present, she passed closely before me, she chattered in a child-like way; and then, in the midst of saying something, exclaimed, "The power is going." We all watched her as the physical form melted; and when she became invisible, we still heard a little voice, "Good-bye, mother dear; I will come again, if I may." I have only one thing to say in regard to this experience. It was no hallucination. Six persons were witnesses of it, and it would be as impossible to shake my belief in what I saw, as it would have been impossible to convince the justice (to whom I have referred)

Our Self after Death

that he did not really see his daughter after death.

I have no space to adduce further testimony. If any reader has not grasped the possibilities of the Self after severance from the earthly body, it will open his mental eyes considerably, if he will read the two volumes of the late Professor F. W. H. Myers, "Human Personality, and its Survival of Bodily Death." This work was the result of twenty years or more of most careful, laborious and scientific investigation of the subject.

We may gather from the Gospel records other testimony than that adduced in the foregoing pages, viz. that the Self of our Lord after crucifixion was not encased in a body physical, but spiritual. Not only, at Easter, could Jesus change the appearance of Himself, but He could do other things which transcend the possibilities of the physical. He could render His bodily presence invisible. He could cause His being to pass through closed doors. He could transport Himself, irrespective of limitations of Time and Space, from place to place. The Body He wore could act in contravention of the laws of gravitation. What are the Gospel statements as regards these points?

Our Self after Death

As to the power of rendering Himself *invisible*. At Emmaus, as He sat in the presence of two disciples, and took bread, and blessed it, and brake and gave it to them, St. Luke records that "He vanished out of their sight." His bodily presence was able to pass through closed doors. St. John mentions that "the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews," and that then "Jesus came and stood in the midst." He could transport His presence, apart from considerations of Time and Space, from place to place. According to the Gospel-records, Mary Magdalene and other women went early on the first Easter morning to the sepulchre. Mary, seeing the stone rolled away, had her worst fears aroused, and leaving the other women, ran off to acquaint Simon Peter and John of the ominous circumstance. In the meanwhile the other women pursued their way to the sepulchre. There they saw a spiritual being, "a young man" (an angel), who bade them tell the disciples that Jesus was not there, but risen. The women consequently hastened to Jerusalem. Mary had already reached there, and had hurried back to the tomb, following Peter and John. The two men had made their

Our Self after Death

wonder-arousing inspection and gone, and left Mary standing without the tomb weeping. The other women were, by then, a long way on their road to the city. And yet Jesus appeared to Mary at that tomb-side, and under conditions which made it *physically* impossible to overtake those women on their journey, appeared to them also, and greeted them, in His recognisable Form, with His "All hail!"

There is another instance of Jesus' power of quickly transporting His bodily presence from one place to another.

The day was far spent, the evangelist states, when Jesus in company with the two disciples went into the house at Emmaus; and yet on that same evening He was in a room with closed doors, seven or eight miles distant. Further, the body worn by Jesus at that first Easter-time could act in defiance of the laws which govern physics. St. Luke records that in bodily presence He "was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." A physical body has no ascension power.

Now none of these records concerning our Lord are reconcilable with the thought of Him as being after death in a *physical* body;

Our Self after Death

but they are concordant with the belief that He was then in a *spiritual* body; and moreover, our knowledge of psychic facts and of the possibilities connected with spiritual existence, places these experiences in the domain of the verifiable. And is not this what we should expect, if we regard Jesus, although the eternal Son of God, yet truly and essentially "the Son of *Man*" also? Why did He so persistently claim this title, if in the greatest experience which can befall human nature—the change after death, His experiences were in principle and character so radically different from ours?

I even venture to think that the fulness of the Gospel of Life and Immortality can never be adequately realised, until the Jesus of Eastertide is viewed as standing to us as the demonstration, the pledge, and assurance of what we shall be; not at some far off distant day, but at that time when the Self, breaking away from the perishable encasement of the physical, shall, in its already possessed enwrapment of the spiritual, rise to an anastasis of fuller life and ampler experience.

An important question will suggest itself to the thoughtful reader in connection with

Our Self after Death

the foregoing. It is this. What can we think befell that physical Body of our Lord, in which He was "tabernacled" during His earthly life, and which died on the cross? Was that dead Form which lay in Joseph's sepulchre, so re-kindled into life as to continue, in *nature* and *organization*, the same as it had been before it died? If we answer, "yes," difficulties at once obtrude themselves. The Body in which Jesus manifested Himself at Easter-time, exhibited powers not possessed by any physical body; and the thought of a raised physical body passing into Heaven—the pre-eminent sphere of spiritual existence, is certainly opposed to St. Paul's declaration, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Are we, therefore, to think that the dead Body of Jesus was re-kindled into life as a physical body, and *afterwards transmuted into a spiritual body*? Here again a difficulty is presented. Such would seem to be a reversal of the divine order of things. We regard the physical as arising from, and owing its existence to, the spiritual; and not the spiritual as being the outcome of the physical. The source of all material expression lies in spirit; and not that spirit is derivable from matter. That will, surely, be

Our Self after Death

granted. Is there not a difficulty in supposing that the *spiritual body* in which Jesus appeared after death, owed its existence to a body which had come into being on the plane of the physical? The Gospel records give us very clear and precise statements as to the *personality* of the Lord Jesus after dying. Do they give us any definite knowledge as to what befell the dead earthly Body of Him? I do not think they do. May we not rather detect, on the part of the evangelistic writers, a silence as to this particular point? Does it not seem as if they did not actually know, and that it was intended that we should not actually know, *all* that happened to the erstwhile physical enwrapment of Jesus? May not the motive of this withheld information have been that the Master after death wished rather to focus the gaze of mankind upon Himself as an ever-living spiritual Self, encased in the garb of the spiritual, than upon a physical body, which He had once inhabited and left? St. Peter, referring to Jesus after crucifixion, speaks of the quickening of Christ as being *in the sphere of spirit*. He writes that He was "put to death in the flesh, *but quickened in the spirit*; in which (this quickened condition)

also He went and preached unto the spirits in keeping" (I. Pet. iii. 18, 19). St. Paul also, makes a remarkable statement which conflicts with the idea that the body in which Jesus showed Himself at Easter, was the physically revived body which died at Calvary. In II. Cor. v. 16 he writes, "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet *now we know Him so no more.*"

We turn now to the statements of the evangelists concerning the circumstances connected with the crucified Body of our Lord. St. Peter, in his sermon at Pentecost, declared that Christ's flesh "did not see corruption." That fact implies that there is a point of difference, not between the SELF of Jesus as the true "Son of Man" and our SELVES, in the act of physically dying; but a difference as to what befell the earthly garb *He* wore and what befalls the earthly garb *we* wear. The Body of Jesus did not moulder in a grave. As far as we know, it was not seen by human eyes after that Friday evening, when the women helped in the last sad offices at the sepulchre, and noted "how His Body was laid." What followed is significant. In the early morning of the first day of the week, those same women, on arriving at the sepul-

Our Self after Death

chre, found the stone rolled away; and a spiritual being, after telling them that Jesus was not there but risen, specially invited them to "come and see *the place where the Lord lay.*" Something strange had taken place. They saw the linen cloths lying exactly in the position in which they were on that Friday evening, except that the dead Form beneath them was gone. Had it been removed by friends or foes? The undisturbed grave-clothes excluded the idea. Had it, with restored life, arisen from its prostrate position? The grave-clothes would have been disturbed thereby, unless—an incredible thought—they had been purposely carefully replaced as they were before. So in their wonder and perplexity, the women hurried back to Jerusalem to the apostles, to whom their words were "as idle talk, and they disbelieved them." But Peter would test the truthfulness of the women's story. St. Luke recounts that "he arose and ran unto the tomb, and stooping down and looking in, *he seeth the linen cloths by themselves*—(the body had gone); and he departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass." St. John, also, went into the sepulchre; and after noting the position of the grave-clothes, the record

Our Self after Death

states, "He *saw and believed.*" But what caused him to believe? Was there something in connection with those grave-clothes which led him to give credence to the women's words about a risen Jesus, when as yet *he* had not seen the living Master? Perhaps so; we do not know. Is there any deep significance in these repeated references to the place where the Body of Jesus was laid, *how* His body was laid, the grave-clothes, and their disposition? On that first Easter morning there stood in that sepulchre, beside a lifeless physical Form, a Jesus in all the wonder and mystery of spiritual being. That sacred dead Thing lying there had been His super-vesture, as He had sorrowfully passed across the stage of earthly existence. It could not "see corruption"; It had been worn awhile by the exalted Son of God and Man.

May it have been that the Lord over physical nature, who had power to still a storm, to multiply bread, and to cause, by a word, a tree to wither, caused the *physical elements of that sacred Body to be dissipated*, as it lay beneath those grave-clothes; because it was no longer needed by Him as He energised from the plane of higher spiritual life and

Our Self after Death

possibilities? We do not know; nor is it important now for us to know. Only, if this be so, a beautiful thought suggests itself—that now, on this earth on which we live, there are somewhere, in the circulative power of nature, the very particles which once constituted the physical Body of the incarnate Son of God. Of one thing we may be sure, that it was no physically-organised Jesus who appeared at that Easter-time; nor was He so constituted, when subsequently he revealed Himself from a still loftier plane of spiritual existence to the martyred Stephen, the persecuting Saul, and the sorrowful old apostle at Patmos.

The reader will perceive *why* it is I have dwelt somewhat lengthily upon the fact of our Lord's *Personality* after dying. To us, when we shall come to die, and to every bereaved one, it means a very great deal. He is the true "Son of Man." Can I think of myself when dissociated from my perishable earthly body, and think also of dear ones gone hence, as being *like Him, in principle of being*, as He was in those Easter weeks? No; not if I have to suppose that His personality and powers, then, were resultant from the re-animation and resumption by Him of a

Our Self after Death

physical body which died. I must wait, and they must wait, for that likeness to the great Elder Son and Brother of our race, until the indefinite "somewhen." And the chilliness, the blankness, the sense of broken continuity, the "sting of death" is left to us. And nought will remove it, I think, but the glorious conviction that the Jesus of Easter stands to us as the pledge, the assurance, and the demonstration, that neither the Self, nor its bodily spiritual encasement, is touched by the hand of Physical Death.

It is on the basis of this truth that all I have to say further on the subject of our Self after death rests; and may it not be that this thought of Jesus, as being in the experience of dying in likeness to us, will make Him to earth's sorrowful ones unspeakably more precious, and invest His Gospel with a fuller light of comfort and hope?

III. *That, after death, the mental powers and qualities of our spiritually-encased Self are retained.*

Nothing can be more needed by us, in view of our own departure from this life and the departure of those we love, than assurance on this point. If it could be shown that the

Our Self after Death

Gospel of Christ, while opening out the vision of a *future* Heaven for mankind, is silent as to the Self's maintained mentality when out of the earthly body, it would, I think, cease to be the Gospel which robs death of its sting. Indeed, it seems to me, that any idea of the discarnate Self as being bereft of mental powers and qualities, does away wholly with the notion of a Self as an individual and a consciousness. One is convinced that he is a Self, an individual, and a consciousness—why? Because of indwelling mind and qualities. Were it possible for a spiritual entity to exist without mind and thought, it would be less than a Self; individuality would be lacking. It could only, in that case, be an unindividualised vital essence, which might form the basis for an individuality to be called into existence; but no more. There have been, in the past, a great many Christians who have believed that at physical death the Self, although not destroyed, becomes a mentally and qualitatively denuded thing; a sort of semi-consciousness, that has to await re-union with a resuscitated earthly body, before the character and powers of Selfhood, meanwhile suspended, can be regained. But continuity of mind and consciousness is an

Our Self after Death

essential of Selfhood; and there could be no identification of the Self *to be* with the Self that *was*, unless in the interval the continuity of mind had been maintained. In what way am I to think of myself when this physical of me shall have been laid aside as the disused garment of the temporal? How may I picture my dear ones and those other myriads who have gone hence? May I think of them as the ones over whom death has no power, except that it has stripped from off them a husk of being? The imperishable Self—does it remain unimpaired in undergoing the change? Encased in its finer vesture of the spiritual, does it retain its thoughts, its memory, its power to sympathise, love and pray, its desire to help, and its capability of receiving the thought-waves of blessing sent out to it by others? Can there come to it as discarnate what came to it as incarnate—that it could be loved by another soul, and could love that one? This is what I mean by the mental powers and qualities of our Self being retained after death.

And what answer can be given to these questionings? An affirmative one, if that answer be given in the light of the Jesus of Easter, and the lesser light which streams

Our Self after Death

from the declarations of the writers of the New Testament Epistles.

(a). *The retention of the Mind itself.*

Before considering what *powers* of the mind are possessed by the discarnate Self, it may seem well to estimate what sort of testimony we have in the Gospel of Christ for the fact that Mind itself survives physical dissolution. And yet it would hardly seem necessary to do this; because if this fact were eliminated from the New Testament Writings, it would be as if those Writers had essayed to produce a beautiful piece of mental tapestry, without a canvas of truth to work it on; or to raise a great building of Thought on no foundation of fact. We contend that the teachings and demonstrations of our Lord, as well as the declarations of His Apostles, are inexplicable, except on the basis that the mentality of the Self is neither destroyed nor impaired by death. What do the teachings, and experiences of Jesus in His earth-life, show on this point? I have already referred to many of His teachings. When He told His parable about Dives and Lazarus, did not His representation of those two discarnate Selves imply and plainly teach, that the mentality of both was preserved? It is, to

Our Self after Death

my mind, a blasphemous thought that Jesus, in this story, spoke in such a way as was calculated to mislead men on a most important of truths. Again, when Jesus spoke of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as still, after death, "living unto God," did that statement not imply maintained mentality? Can we suppose that anyone can "live unto God," Who is Supreme Mind, except that one be himself possessed of mind? Turn now, to that spiritual experience connected with the Transfiguration. Moses and Elijah figure in that incident. They were both Selves in Other-Life. St. Mark—the amanuensis of St. Peter who was present on the occasion—says, "They were talking with Jesus." To talk, as they did, with the world's Redeemer on a momentous subject, as the Evangelist states, surely must include the idea of the exercise of Mind on the part of those departed men; and that, too, on a high plane of action. Then, there are the words of Jesus, spoken as He was dying on the cross, to a crucified one beside Him. "This very day, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." What sort of a meeting between the discarnate Self of the Son of Man and the discarnate Self of the repentant thief can we imagine, apart from

Our Self after Death

the remaining Mind of both? Again, St. Peter states that Jesus, in the interval between Good Friday afternoon and Easter early morning, was prosecuting His mission of saving souls in the Beyond, by preaching His glorious Gospel to "the spirits in keeping." He was out of the flesh, and so were they to whom He preached. Are we to suppose that the Preacher and His hearers were *mindless*? The answer is obvious; and it cuts away completely the idea that physical dying strips any Self of mentality. Turn now to the manifestations of our Lord at Easter-time. Every one of those manifestations is characterised by the fact that Jesus was energising in the domain of Mind. It was no mindless, speechless, shadowy *simulacrum* which appeared to Apostles and others during those truth-revealing forty days; but a Jesus Who had left earth-life, and in and through Whose spiritual Body mental power expressed itself in all its potency. Take the men whom He impressed with this truth. St. Paul, for instance, wrote in Phil. i. 21, 23, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . . But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and to be with Christ; for it is very far better; yet to abide in the flesh

Our Self after Death

is more needful for your sake." It was the mind of the Apostle, as it focussed itself on Jesus, which made him able to write, "To me to live is Christ." Can we suppose that his desire to depart this life, and to be with Christ would have existed, apart from his belief that the Mind would not be harmed or diminished by the touch of physical death? Very much more might be adduced from the New Testament in confirmation of the truth with which we are dealing; but the foregoing will suffice. If the mighty import of the statements of that Book, around which the religious thoughts of the centuries have grouped themselves, be grasped, surely to the one who is called to face the experience of dying, and to those who mourn for the departed, it will become unspeakably precious. For it tells us that the spiritually-clad Self, as it leaves the shell of the Physical, takes with itself the Mind. But the Gospel records tell us more than this.

(b) *The retention of Memory.*

No assurance we can receive as to the survival of our Mind in the incident of dying, apart from the fact that the power of Memory is then retained, can possibly satisfy the yearnings and hopes of the human spirit.

Our Self after Death

How can it? As far as we know, in regard to ourselves, Mind is greatly, if not wholly, dependent upon Memory. It is difficult, if not impossible, to dissociate Mind, as it expresses itself in Thought, from Memory. Take any thought which is held as a clear and definite mental impression. Whence did it come? From the mind, you say. But what gave it its particular character as a definite mental impression? Memory, we think. Fix your thought on anything you will. You hold a defined impression of it. But your mind has built up that impression on what is *remembered*. Your Sub-liminal Mind which, as the Scientists of to-day tell us, forgets nothing, has registered in the department of your spiritual being, all that you have heard and been taught, all that you have read, and all that you have thought before, about that particular subject. Your present thought, begotten of the Mind, has, therefore, been moulded into mental distinctness by Memory. The thinking powers of mankind would be sorry manifestations of Mind-Force apart from the constructive factor of Memory. Bring this truth into the concrete. We will suppose I am conscious that I am about to die. The Gospel of Christ says, "You will live on, as

Our Self after Death

a spiritually enwrapped Self possessed of Mind." But I want more than this. I want to retain my Memory. Shall I be able to think at all without it? And even if I may be able to do so, under the conditions of enhanced being, no amount of increased mental power, if dissevered from Memory, will compensate me for the loss of a Mind which could remember the past. I do not think that even "beatific visions" would delight my soul unless, in some way or another, they called up recollections of the past. Further, how can my discarnate Self be the *continued Self* of earth-life, except it shall be able to remember?

O! mourning one, I put it you. That dear one you loved, and still love, has gone into the greater domain of spiritual existence. If he has been there long enough, he has become mentally developed. Suppose, as a few cold, dry-as-dust, metaphysical writers have told us, that the price that that one has had to pay, for mental development is loss of the memory of the Past. Well! picture him in that condition. His memory has been obliterated. His Mind is only directed on the Present and Future. Presently, your turn comes to go into that Higher Life. There, you meet him,

Our Self after Death

recognise him, and marvel at his mental advancement; for not as yet have the memories of your mutual love and the thousand and one things that knit you together quite evaporated from your soul. But he does not know you; his memory of the past has gone. Do you know what I think you would do in such a case? You would just bow your spiritual head, and feel "the sting of death" afresh, and cry, "O my God, the disappointment, the bitterness of this!"

In the teaching of Jesus are we given the assurance that the Self, after death, retains the power of Memory? Yes. In the parable to which I have already referred, the fact is forcibly declared. The rich man in spirit-life is represented as being told by Abraham to "remember"; and it was his memory of the earth-life which caused him to proffer the request that Lazarus might be sent to his father's house with a warning to his five brethren. Take another instance of our Lord's teaching on this point. Speaking of the future life, He declared that there would be unworthy ones who would come to Him in that day, and say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy name, and by Thy name cast out evil spirits, and by Thy name do

Our Self after Death

many mighty works?" The doing of these ones was that which was connected with their Earth-life; and the remembrance of it from the plane of Spirit-life implies that Memory had been retained. Again, in regard to those words of Jesus spoken to the thief on the cross, do they bear any significance, if we suppose that the thief in Paradise carried with him no recollection of the horror of Calvary and what had preceded it? But it is to our Lord *Himself*, as He was at Easter after leaving Physical conditions, that we must specially turn for the assurance that the memory of the Self is preserved after death. With respect to those manifestations of Jesus, after passing into Spirit-life, I will, at this point, only say this—that there is not one of them which does not demonstrate the fact that Memory is retained by the Spiritual Self. He remembered Mary; He remembered His faithful women-friends, and Peter and that man's denial of Him, and loving but doubting Thomas, and the thoughts, the fears, the ignorances and short-comings of the men who had been His companions in earth-life. So comfort your heart, sorrowing one! The cry which comes from your anguished spirit is, "Oh! if I could only be sure that

Our Self after Death

my dear one gone hence is *now*—now as I lovingly think of him—thinking of me!” You can be sure of it; for in that Jesus of Easter, the true Son of Man, lies the pledge and demonstration that those passed “Behind the Veil” remember us, and remember, also, those experiences of earth which mysteriously fashioned the cords which spiritually bind them to us and us to them.

(c). *The retention of Love for, Sympathy with, and Interest in, those left in Earth-life.*

A lady, shortly after the death of her husband, to whom she was devotedly attached, said to me, “Do you know what it is that makes my bereavement so very, very bitter to me? I am quite sure my husband is living in Other Life; but I am not sure that he can now love me as he did, and is still interested in what concerns me. I spoke to our clergyman of this; but he could give me no comfort. He said that the Scriptures are very silent on this point; that there would be, he thought, re-union at “the last day”; but of the rest we know very little, and must remember that the conditions of the Other Life are so very different from what obtains here.”

But it is not true that the Scriptures are

Our Self after Death

silent on this point; and in the light of them, and of present-day knowledge of Spiritual facts, it is an incredible thought that the surviving Self in spirit-life has laid aside its love, sympathy and concernfulness in regard to those who have been left behind. If it were so, it would mean that death, instead of being a birth into fuller life, would be a calamity to human beings. It would involve the diminishing and de-humanizing of the Self, the stripping it of those qualities, powers and characteristics which made it the Self, and the setting up in its place of a self-centered Individuality that, whatever might be its subjective power of enjoying bliss, would certainly be as unlike the Self that was, and the Christ Who is, as it is possible to conceive. Well! the matter which concerns us is—what do the Gospel records declare as to this matter? Does our Lord, in His teaching and after-death manifestations, clearly show that the Self, dissociated from the physical body, retains Love, Sympathy and Concernfulness in respect to those living in earth-life? I think so.

When Jesus told the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, which was meant to reveal to us what might be the consequences, in

Our Self after Death

Spirit-life, of selfishness and lack of sympathy in the earth-life, He represented the rich man in Hades as becoming solicitous about his five brethren remaining on earth. The disciplining of the After-Life had called into existence in the discarnate man the qualities of sympathy and concernfulness; and those qualities extended themselves to the *earth-plane*. Can we suppose that Jesus would have made such a representation, had there existed no basis in fact for the same? But turn to the *demonstrations* of Jesus in respect to this particular point. The Son of God Who became the true Son of Humanity, died as we lesser sons and daughters of Humanity have to die. After death, from the sphere of Spirit-life, did Jesus show that He retained those essential qualities of His Self of which we are speaking? Had He *then* the same kind of feelings toward dwellers in earth-life, as He had *before* He physically died? What do the Gospel records declare? In His earth-life, sympathy and concernfulness described Jesus' attitude toward Mary Magdalene. In spirit-life, did He retain those feelings for her? You know the answer. That loving faithful woman, as she wept at the sepulchre, had the high honour of being the first to see

Our Self after Death

Jesus as He manifested Himself from Other-Life. His one word, "Mary," better demonstrates the Self's retention of its qualities after death, than all the learned disquisitions of theologians could set forth. In His earthly life, love, sympathy and concernfulness characterised the attitude of Jesus toward those women who followed and ministered to Him. He had wept with Mary and Martha. He had been distressed when "the daughters of Jerusalem" bewailed Him on His death-march to Calvary. His cheering words, "Go into peace" had kindled hope and happiness in many a woman's troubled soul. From the height of Risen-life, was His sympathy and concern for them gone? Nay; it was to them, on that first Easter morning, that He presented Himself in all the mystery of enhanced being, and spoke those calm-inducing words which voiced the fact of an unaltered Jesus, "All hail!"

Read on in the Gospel records. To Jesus, in His earthly life, poor, weak Peter had been an object of special concern and sympathy. He had prayed for him, and there was love and sympathy in the look which that pale, tired Prisoner cast upon the conscience-stricken man in the court-yard of the high-

Our Self after Death

priest. Were those qualities, as exercising themselves in the 'direction of Peter, existent in Jesus after death? What was it, think you, which caused the Master, on Easter-day, to reveal Himself *first* to Peter of all the men? Why did He put that thrice-repeated question to him, "Lovest thou Me?" Was it not that, in a marvellously refined and delicate manner, Jesus wished to remind Peter of his weakness, and at the same time to make him know that nought of His love and concernfulness had diminished?

Take the case of Thomas the doubter. Surely, our Lord's way of dealing with him denotes that sympathy and concern were actuating principles in the Jesus of Easter-life. He knew that Thomas loved Him. When He had 'expressed His intention of going to Jerusalem—a course which might expose Him to death—had not Thomas declared his readiness to stand by Him, even at the cost of life, and said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die *with Him*"? Jesus knew, also, how difficult it was for Thomas to grasp the truths of the Spiritual. Had he not said, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how know we the way?"

Our Self after Death

Jesus, moreover, knew that Thomas' doubt was of such a character that only a *special* manifestation of Himself would sweep it away. Well! we know what the Master did in order to enlighten Thomas as to spiritual possibilities, and convince him that the statements he had heard were true. Jesus manifested Himself in "another form"; in a form such as He was not when He appeared to Mary at the sepulchre, or to the two men as they journeyed to Emmaus. Have we not in this instance of Jesus' adaptation of Himself to meet the requirements of this man's mental disposition—a proof that in the Jesus Who stood before Thomas in that upper-room, there still dwelt the unimpaired principles of Sympathy and concernfulness?

(d) *The retention of Sequential Thought.*

Let us clearly define what we mean by this phrase. By Sequential Thought we mean that power which is possessed by the Self of connecting the thoughts which are held in the present with the thoughts which have been held in the past; whereby a mental line of succession is established, and the *continuity of Individuality* is maintained. Sequential Thought is that by which the Individuality that *is* can be identified with the

Our Self after Death

Individuality that *has been*. Without such thought, I might be able to say, "I am *I*"; but I should not be able to say, "I am the *I* who was, forty or sixty years before." We can illustrate this truth in the case of any one now living on earth. Here is a person, we will suppose, of fifty years of age. He is quite sure of his Individuality. He has a consciousness of his Self, as distinct from all other Selves that may exist. Further, he knows that this sense of Individuality owes its existence to his mind, and not to his physical organisation. He is aware that his physical body, in the course of his life, has been wholly disintegrated and re-built at least seven or eight times. Yet he is absolutely sure that throughout these demolitions and up-buildings, his Individuality has remained intact. He is positive that his Self has *persisted* through all these physical changes. He can easily prove that this is so. He tells you of something which happened to him when he was a boy; and all the argument in the world would never convince him that the Individual who narrates the circumstance is not the Individual who experienced it forty years before. But whence comes this unshakable conviction that the Self of ten is

Our Self after Death

the same Self at fifty? From the Sequential character of Thought. The thoughts held in the past were merged into the thoughts of succeeding years; and so the thoughts held to-day are linked up with the thoughts held before, and thus constitute the foundation upon which the sense of maintained Individuality rests. If it were possible, at physical death, or at any other point of time, to obliterate from a Mind all the thoughts connected with the past, and to make that Mind a blank, of course, all sense of Individuality would disappear. And if that Mind so denuded were to have a *new* set of thoughts imported into it, which thoughts were unconnected with those which had been obliterated, Individuality might again be created; but it would be an Individuality in no way related to the Self that had been. A wholly *new* Self would come into being. Thus, it becomes impossible for anyone who accepts the teaching of Christ, and believes in the continuance of the Self after death, to account as true the statement of the Psalmist, that when man's "breath goeth forth . . . in that very day *his thoughts* perish." (Ps. cxlvi. 4).

There is a question which ever presses itself upon us in view of dying, and in view

Our Self after Death

of the departure from this life of dear ones. It is this. Shall we, do they, dissociated from the earthly body, retain Sequential Thought? Does the surviving Self, however enhanced the powers of its Mind and enlarged its conceptions, think in such a way that its thoughts are detached from and unrelated to the thoughts which had been held in the past? Or, do the thoughts held in earth-life commingle with and colour the newer and fuller thoughts which may arise? Unless this latter question can be answered affirmatively, Death must be viewed by us in the light of a calamity. We shudder at the thought of our sense of Individuality becoming lost or weakened. But what sort of Individuality can one imagine, apart from the inter-linking of present thought with past thought? Try to suppose such a case. You hold in your mind a crowd of good thoughts. They came into existence because of your contact with others. Without that contact, those thoughts would not have been held by you. A mother, a wife, a sweetheart, a friend, caused you to think the thoughts of Love. That Love is a constituent of your Individuality. Your contact with distressed and sorrowful ones caused

Our Self after Death

you to think the thoughts of Pity and Sympathy. Those qualities, too, are constituents of your Individuality. You are loving, pitiful and sympathetic, simply because those qualities are the outcome of your thinking about those you could love, and those for whom you could feel pity and sympathy. If when the consciousness of your Selfhood first dawned upon you, you had been shut off from all contact with your fellows, and your mind had had no thoughts connected with a past to fall back upon—do you suppose that Love, Pity and Sympathy would have had any place in your being? And more—do you think that your Individuality—essentially the outcome of Mind—could have been anything but an attenuated thing? Now, suppose it were true that in going hence our “thoughts perish.” What an outlook of depression for the dying one, or for the mourner! To start a new mental existence with the mind as a blank in regard to the past! For there to be no gathering up into the thoughts of Spirit-life the thoughts which had been held in earth-life! Not to recall the ones and the circumstances that had induced in us activity of Thought! To find nothing in our mental constitution which is

Our Self after Death

linked up inseparably with the memory of parent, wife, child and friend, and what they said and did, and were to us! Picture, if you can, a Self in Other Life, in whom Sequential thought does *not* exist. You meet such an one as you pass into that Life. A thousand and one ties and associations knitted you together in previous life. The sight of him recalls these to you. It is your boy, Mother, who gave up his young life on the awful battle-field. Once he lay in your bosom. You taught him about God and Christ. He used to say his prayers at your knee. He always loved you, thought of you, worried about you. That letter found in his blood-stained tunic, and sent to you, told you that his latest earthly thoughts were of you. That was years ago, but there is no break in the chain of *your* loving thoughts of him. You have always prayed for him, in spite of all that a cold, cheerless and loveless "theology" said to the contrary. How beautiful he looks in his "soul's expansion"! "Speak to him," whispers one who has crossed the Frontier-Line with you, "it is your spirit-boy!" Your words pour forth your pent-up thoughts of the past. You lift your eyes to his, and oh! you realise in the look that meets yours,

Our Self after Death

that that Spiritual Mind is one which stands detached from all that went before! How, think you, would you feel, if such a thing as this were a possibility? Be honest in spite of shocking the "orthodox" notions of some. What can best comfort you as you lie upon a bed of death? The expectation of the vision of a heavenly Jerusalem, with its golden streets, and of harping angels and glorified saints? Or the expectation which arises from that inherent power of our Self—to think again as we have thought? To be able to look into the spiritual eyes, to grasp the hand, and to hold in a still-loving embrace those dear ones we knew in earth-life; and to be able to talk over with them all that created, maintained and fixed the spiritual affinity between us and them.

Some Reader may, perhaps, say, "But you have only been dealing with Sequential Thought as it bears upon *good* thinking. There is the *bad* thinking. Will that be remembered in Spirit-life? If so, would it not be a disadvantage, and even a hindrance, to a repentant Self, moving on to better condition?" No, I think not. What if the moving power of *Contrast* were an uplifting force with us there, as it is with us here? Many a

Our Self after Death

drunkard is brought to sobriety by linking his past thoughts of the disaster which his drunkenness brought to him, with his awakened thoughts of better possibilities. The very *contrast*, in his case, between how he thought in the past, and how he thinks now, becomes an uplifting principle to him. May we not think the same in regard to a Self in After-Life? I can believe that when a Self, after death, moves on, under Divine judgment and discipline, to better thought and life, the very remembrance of wrong thinking and doing may serve as a mighty spur to the development of the soul. In I. Peter iii. 18 to 20, and iv. 6, is an Apostolic statement which, in spite of all the theological ingenuity that has been expended to explain away its meaning, is very illuminative. In these passages, St. Peter declares that Jesus when out of His physical Body preached "the Gospel" to once disobedient ones, in order that they might "live according to God in the spirit-life." They were the old-world sinners who perished in the Flood. At the time when the pitiful Saviour preached to them, they were no longer in a condition of disobedience. Must we not think that their power of reviewing the past, with all its sin, failure and

Our Self after Death

physical and moral ruin, was the very means, in the manipulative hands of God, whereby higher thoughts and saving possibilities were opened up for them? But it is *facts*, rather than suppositions, we ask for to assure us that the Self in After-life possesses the power of Sequential Thought. Are those facts forthcoming? Yes. There are, first, the facts which rest on our Lord's teaching and demonstration on this point. These ought to be authoritative to all "who profess and call themselves Christians." Next, there are those facts, the knowledge of which has come to us, during the past forty or fifty years, as the result of the patient investigation of Psychic Phenomena. It is about this latter class of facts that I would first say a word or two. It is impossible, within the compass of this little work for me to enlarge upon them, as I would. Every Christian Reader, who is abreast of present day knowledge, and has not shut himself up to think only on the lines of traditional thought, knows perfectly well that mankind holds at this time, more particularly than at any previous time, a mass of evidence which is of incalculable worth in enlightening us as to the condition of the Self after death. From distinguished

Our Self after Death

men of Science of this age, and from thousands of others now living, this evidence is forthcoming. To what does it bear witness? That discarnate ones can, and do, establish at times communications between the Spirit-world and this world; and have demonstrated that the thoughts held after death are in sequence and close relationship with the thoughts held before death.

In the course of the past twenty years, a great number of remarkable instances of this have come within my own experience. I will recount one of a purely personal character. A few years ago, I stood many times at the death-bed of a good-living and religious relative. He was a kindly, tender-hearted man; but his religious thought was overshadowed by the awful teaching of everlasting perdition for the many, and salvation only for the few. Fortunately, that blasphemous slander on God did not bring him to the mad-house, as it brought three other good Christians I have known; but it invested his death-bed with horror to himself and to me. As I stood beside him in his dying hours, again and again he said, "Oh! I am a lost soul: God has rejected me. Hell—everlasting Hell!" And then I think I won-

Our Self after Death

dered what would be God's judgment on the mistranslators of Bible-texts, and on any Church who had endorsed the blasphemy on Divine Love, in order to suit the perverted theological notions of a Tertullian, an Augustine and a Calvin. I told that dying one that God is *Love*, and prayed the thought with him again and again. He gave me no sign before he passed hence that his mind had freed itself from the baneful influence of the men whom I have mentioned. "God is *Love*, and He loves and wants you," were my last words to him. He smiled sadly, but incredulously. Well, here is the sequel. I had not mentioned the circumstance connected with the death-bed to any one. It seemed too painful a subject to talk about. A year or more later, another near relative of mine was visiting an elderly lady-friend, who was clairvoyant. I have never met this latter, and the relative who died was unknown to both this one and her visitor. Suddenly, the clairvoyant lady said to her visitor, "There is a spiritual presence beside you. I see him but do not know who he is. I gather that he wishes to say something to you." And then the message came, "Will you tell A—— (myself) that I 'know the truth

Our Self after Death

now, and that he was quite right when he told me that God is *Love*." I will only add that, in this case, no hypothesis of Telepathy will explain it. The message received was unintelligible to the receiver, until subsequently recounted to me, and I explained its significance. To me, it amounts to a proof—among thousands of similar experiences—that the Self in Spirit-life carries with it Sequential Thought.

But the point I am specially considering in this little work, is—Did our Lord teach and demonstrate this truth? Yes. As far as I am capable of judging, everything He said and did after death, confirms the conclusion; and this is supported by an ever-accumulating weight of evidence. His teaching very clearly implies it. In His illuminative parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, was it not Sequential Thought—past thought connecting itself with after thought—which caused Dives to request that Lazarus might be sent to his five brethen? Take any of our Lord's declarations as to Selves in After-life, in view of future judgment. Do they not presuppose that the thoughts held in earth-life, together with the deeds resultant from thinking, will be inseparably connected with the mental

Our Self after Death

experiences of discarnate life? There could be no justice in punishment or reward if this were not so. In the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, neither class is shown to pass into subsequent experience without knowing the reason *why*. In both cases, earth-life thoughts and actions are placed in review before the ones undergoing judgment; and Sequential Thought is held by the mind of the Goats who "go away into æonial pruning" (εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον), and by the mind of the Sheep who go into "æonial life." (ζωὴν αἰώνιον, Matt. xxv. 46). Did our Lord, after death, demonstrate this truth? Did He show that the thoughts He held in spirit-life were vitally connected with the thoughts He had previously held in His earth-life? The brief Gospel records concerning the Forty-days emphatically declare that this was so. In His first manifestation of Himself, He addressed Mary by name. He selected Peter as the first of the men who should see Him on Easter-day. He greeted the women on the way to Jerusalem in the same way as He had so often before spoken to troubled and sorrowing ones. He unfolded Divine truth to the two men journeying to Emmaus, as He had been wont to do when in earth-life. His "Peace be

Our Self after Death

unto you ” to the Apostles in the upper-room was the same blessing which they had heard from His lips many times before. His thrice-repeated question to Peter, “ Lovest thou Me ? ” was but the gentle reminder to that man that death had not obliterated the Master’s recollection of his unfaithfulness, or extinguished His old love for him. All these incidents show that the Son of Man in spirit-life stood with a mind in which were linked up the thoughts of the past.

And in that Son of Man lies the pledge of that which we all want to know, viz., that Sequential Thought is retained by the Self, as freed from the limitations of the Physical it moves on to the ever-extending possibilities of the Spiritual.

IV. *That in After-Life the Self, bodily, mentally and spiritually advances.*

The *full* teaching of Christ’s Religion can not be grasped by us, until we are able to think of the Self after death as *progressing*. In what way must we picture dear ones who have gone into Other-Life, in order to illumine the dark cloud of bereavement with comfort and hope? Are we to think of them as being, mentally and spiritually, as they were when

Our Self after Death

we placed their body in the grave? Or are we to think of them as ones who are outwardly and inwardly advancing? The beautiful words of Longfellow exactly voice our highest thoughts on this point.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child;
But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

But many Christians have viewed askance the thought that a Self can progress after death. They have supposed that, at the moment of physical death, the spiritual condition becomes unalterably fixed, and that the state of the Self is then—as it were—stereotyped for eternity; that the Self does nothing, and acquires nothing; that the After-Life is a sort of ante-chamber of final destiny, in which souls, remaining in the condition reached at death, must expectantly, or tremblingly, await unending bliss, or hopeless perdition. The Gospel teaching is set aside, and the words in Eccles. xi. 3, "In the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be," are supposed once and for all to settle the

Our Self after Death

point. That view is not in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, and is opposed to every scrap of knowledge we possess as to the method of Divine working. Is it to be wondered at that so many bereaved ones, who have been schooled in such ideas, find that Religion fails them at a time when they most need its comfort? With no belief in mental and spiritual progress after death, there will be no prayer for the departed one; while even to mention the name of that one to God will be viewed as theologically questionable. Well, what is the consequence? The ones we so loved, and who before going hence were so interwoven with our life and Religion, afterwards seem to be dismally dissociated from us and it; and the mourning garb we don becomes the suitable symbol of an unsatisfying creed.

The spiritual body of the Self experiences advancement in After-Life.

The spiritual Body of our Lord, Who "in all things was made like unto His brethren," underwent this experience. The spiritual Body in which He was at Easter-time became a grander and more glorious Body. Why were those frequent Easter manifestations of Himself limited to the forty days?

Our Self after Death

I venture to think that it was because, at the end of that period, His spiritual Body had so marvellously advanced, and had so quickly assumed the highest phases of spiritual development, that it became impossible to those in the flesh to receive the manifestations of Him as they had done. During those six weeks, Jesus had been seen through the mediumship of *physical* vision. He was seen afterwards, but in quite a different presentment. After that Easter period, our Lord's Body had become so spiritually refined, and so lifted above the conditionings of the Material, that it became impossible for Its vibrations, by which It could be made visible, to be registered by merely physical eyes. Science teaches us that there exist many things of which unaided physical vision gives us no knowledge. But, assuredly, some marked and important change had taken place in the Spiritual Body of Jesus, before the forty days had quite expired; or how came it about that when the eleven disciples met Him on a mountain in Galilee, "They saw Him; they worshipped Him; but *some doubted*"? Why in doubt about Him? They had frequently seen Him since Easter-Day. Does it not point to some great change as

Our Self after Death

taking place in connection with His Person?

After Ascension-tide, Jesus still continued to manifest Himself to dwellers upon earth. But by that time His Spiritual Body had undergone a marvellous progression. In His manifestations at the martyrdom of St. Stephen, on Saul's journey to Damascus, and to St. John at Patmos, it was no longer a Jesus in appearance like a gardener, a wayfarer, a crucified One, or one of whose identity there could be any doubt. Christ, in respect to the spiritual Enwrapment of His Self had gloriously advanced. It was with this concept of Him that the Apostles went forth to the world and preached, "Jesus and the Anastasis (Advancement)" (Acts xvii. 18). But, further, it may be asked—Does the New Testament record instances of *others* than our Lord, as experiencing advance of the Spiritual body after leaving earth-life? Yes. St. Luke, in recounting the incident of the Transfiguration, states, "Behold there talked with Him two *men* (i.e., beings in bodily-form), which were Moses and Elijah; who appeared *in glory*" (Luke ix. 30). Again, the spiritual being who came to St. John at Patmos declared himself to be a "fellow-servant" with the Apostle and his

Our Self after Death

brethren; and yet this former co-worker with him had so progressed in spirit-life that St. John regarded him as *an angel*, and would have worshipped him (see Rev. xxii. 8 and 9). Moreover, the New Testament explicitly states that there is this advance of the spiritual body of the Self.

St. John writes (1 John iii. 2), "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if it shall be manifested, *we shall be like Him*; for we shall see Him even as He is." St. Paul writes (Phil. iii. 21), "Who (Christ) shall change the form of the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the *body of His glory*." Instead, then, of the notion of an unprogressive, bodiless Self after death, which must indefinitely await the re-encoding and rehabilitation of mortality, to bring it into personality and bodily likeness to Christ, the Gospel records teach us that the casting off of the physical body 'does but make way for the expansion of the spiritual body, and that, as the discarnate Self moves on to higher attainments, the spiritual encasement of that Self moves on also; until it reaches the great Advancement—the Anastasis, and becomes like unto the Saviour in "the body of His glory." An interesting

Our Self after Death

fact may be noted here. In the great many recorded instances of appearances after death, the manifestations have continued for a considerable time, and then have wholly ceased. If space allowed, I could add to the great amount of testimony which has been borne as to this. Why is it so? May it not be that, as departed ones advance in spirit-life, the spiritual body becomes so sublimated and uplifted from the plane of the Material, that it is no longer able to make itself visible to physical eyes, and to maintain a *rapport* with the Physical? Those spiritual presences may still be seen by those in the flesh, viz., by a quickening of the faculties of the interior spirit-body of the perceiver. As everyone knows who has investigated the subject, the departed are being constantly seen. In spite of all the incredulity of religious teachers as to spiritual verities, the experiences of thousands of men and women to-day are like the experiences of those who lived in Bible times. The physical eyes of Balaam failed to register the presence of an angel, and the physical eyes of the servant of Elisha failed to register the presence of the spiritual host who protected the prophet. But both the angel and the host were perceived, when the eyes

Our Self after Death

of the spirit-body of Balaam and the young man had been "opened." Moreover, there is a contact and communion between those who have gone hence and us, which transcends both physical and clairvoyant vision. The advancing Self in spirit-life has the power of transmitting mental and spiritual impulses which can be consciously received by us here. This world and the Spirit World are linked by Telepathy. The scientific testimony concerning this fact is ever accumulating, and I could give a great number of remarkable instances of it in regard to others and myself. It constitutes one of the great proofs of continued life after death.

There is mental and spiritual advancement of the Self in After Life.

Without such advancement there could be no development and perfecting of the spiritual *body*. The form through which the discarnate Self is expressed stands in correspondence with the mental and spiritual condition of the Self. Mind and Spirit are shaping powers. Mental and spiritual conditions are registered on the plastic spiritual encasement. A spirit-body may be beautiful or ugly, developed or undeveloped, attractive or repellent, or at any stage intermediate between these opposites,

Our Self after Death

according to the character of the Self. This principle even obtains in regard to our earthly body. The character of a man, cruel, selfish, bad-tempered and unloving, will be marked upon his face. If, by the grace of God, the same man becomes kindly, unselfish and sympathetic, his face, after a while, will give indications of the inward change which has taken place: the physical organization can receive the impress of the mind. The principle becomes more intensely operative in regard to the Spiritual body of the Self. In Other Life, what the Self is will be shown on the sensitive-plate of his spiritual enwrapment. This is a truth which is of vital concern to us. It makes the cultivation of *character* of enormous importance. Even many Christians are but little concerned that bad-temper, irritability, selfishness and other defects lurk in their moral system. They have the idea that, because of what they believe, death will effectually rid them of these evils and imperfections. It will make us earnest in developing the Christ-like qualities, if we believe that it is not so; that the mental and spiritual condition of the Self is neither brought about, nor interrupted, by the act of dying; and that every advance made by our spirit in this

Our Self after Death

life, is a step forward to fashioning us into outward and inward likeness to Christ.

And does not this truth concerning the mental and spiritual advancement of the Self invest the Other Life with enhanced interest to us? It enables us to think of it so differently. It becomes to us less of a theological conception, and more of a reality. We get rid of the depressing idea that at death the Self stops short in developing-activity. There is that which chills us in the thought that we must leave a life of improvement, activity and ministry to others, to pass into a condition whose characteristic—according to a very common representation—is only a waiting for a future. And, surely, to every bereaved one, there is intense comfort in the truth of which we are speaking. What of those dear departed ones for whom we mourn? What of those brave brothers who by the fiendish devices of war have been prematurely hurled into Life Beyond? In these latter, as in the best of us, there was that which denoted the existence of sin and imperfection, as well as of good. Not one of those, whose poor, mangled bodies lie in nameless graves, had reached mental and spiritual excellence. Many, a rung of

Our Self after Death

the ladder of ascension will have to be trodden by them, as by us, before that prophecy of Jesus shall be fulfilled, "Ye therefore shall be *perfect*, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48). Those men who laid down their life on the battle-field made a bigger sacrifice for the sake of others than ever you or I have made. In their death, they exhibited the Christ-spirit of self-forgetfulness far better than have some self-satisfied ones, who have made themselves happy by the thought that they are "saved," and not made themselves miserable by their belief that the bulk of their fellows will be everlastingly lost. What of those departed ones? Oh! believe me, it will make a tremendous difference to our trust in God and our hope in Christ as the Saviour of the world, whether we think of those gone hence as the Selves who, by the love of God, and even by His disciplinings, are moving on to mental and spiritual advancement; or whether we think of them on the lines as expressed in the words of a hymn, as they once stood in a popular Church hymn-book:

As the tree falls, so must it lie;
As the man lives, so will he die;
As the man dies, such must he be
All through the days of eternity.

Our Self after Death

The one belief illumines the dark cloud of bereavement with the magnificent rainbow of Hope; the other belief leaves that cloud in the still darker shadows of the mental night-time of disappointment and despair.

Do the Gospel records assure us of the mental and spiritual advancement of the Self in After-Life? We place, first, the statements of our Lord. In quoting the words of Isaiah, and applying them to Himself, He said, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking-flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory" (Matt. xii. 20). In what condition are the vast majority when they depart this life? Surely, no words could better describe their spiritual state than, "bruised reeds and smoking flax." That condition, then, can only be bettered by advancement in the Other World. Then, Christ's "sending forth judgment unto *victory*." What victory? There can be but one kind of victory for Him Who "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them"—a victory for Goodness; whereby even the judgments of the After-Life on sin, however searching and severe, are not to ruin, but restore. This declared purpose of judgment, then, implies advancement in the Life Beyond. Further,

Our Self after Death

take that promise of Jesus made to His disciples, "When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into *all* truth" (John xvi. 13). The fulfilment of that promise involves the mental advance of the Self after death. The Apostles had received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but they were not the possessors of *all* truth when they left this life. St. Paul, even in the light of his unique knowledge of spiritual realities (see 2 Cor. xii. 2 to 4), wrote, "*Now* we see in a mirror darkly; but *then* face to face: *now* I know in part; but *then* shall I know even as also I have been known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). This statement of the Apostle indicates that the guidance of the Spirit of truth is not a Power which will illumine men's minds only to the frontier-line of the Beyond; but is, in spirit-life, an indwelling Force which still leads them on to highest life and fullest truth. There are two facts concerning our Lord which confirm the belief that mental and spiritual advancement characterises the After-Life. The one relates to what He, the Divine Revealer of truth, said when He hung upon the cross; the other, to what St. Peter declared He did, after His physical Body had died. On the cross, Jesus told a thief dying

Our Self after Death

at His side that, on that same day, He and the thief would be together in Paradise. It was a magnificently grand statement for even the Christ of Love to make! That poor, wretched, undeveloped soul, who had only just stopped his jeering at Jesus, and who, when he realized the fact of a hereafter, only said "Remember *me*," was promised a contact with Jesus in spirit-life. But why? There can be but one answer, unless we alter our ideas about the character and mission of Jesus. It was, by Christ's loving Presence, to lift a low-toned Self to higher thought and spiritual arising. St. Peter tells us (I have referred to his statement before), that Jesus, when He left His earthly Body, went as a Spiritual Being and preached the Gospel to ones in the Spirit-World who had at one time been disobedient and suffered the judgment of God. Again, how magnificently loving of Christ, with all the sorrowful experiences of His earth-life fresh upon Him, to go at once to these! Yes; but every action of Jesus, before, at, and after death, reveal His saving-passion for the souls of men. But why did He go and preach to those "spirits in keeping"? Not to pronounce sentence of condemnation; for they were no

Our Self after Death

longer disobedient. St. Peter discloses the reason, "that they might live *according to God* in the spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 18 to 20 and iv. 6).

Here, then, in this particular incident, is a two-fold testimony to the truth of advancement after death. Those who physically perished at the Flood because they were disobedient, were no longer so when the 'discarnate Saviour preached to them; and He preached to them for the direct object of spiritual progress—that they might "live according to God in the spirit."

Do the Apostolic Writers confirm this truth? Yes. Take the words of St. Paul, in Phil. i. 6. He writes that he is 'confident of this very thing—that He which began a good work in you will perfect it *until the day of Jesus Christ*. To what day is he alluding? Surely, to that period when God's great "Purpose of the ages, which He purposed in Christ Jesus" (Eph. iii. 11) shall be fulfilled; when "the times of restoration of *all things* shall come, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began" (Acts iii. 21); to that "fulness of the times when *all things* shall be summed up in Christ. the things in

Our Self after Death

the heavens and the things upon the earth " (Eph. i. 10). But here is the point—that good work begun in those Philippian Christians is to go on until that great Day. If that be so, it involves progression in After-Life. Take another statement. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. xii. 22 to 24) states, "*Ye are come*" to certain spiritual realities, e.g., to a heavenly world, innumerable hosts of angels, to God, to Jesus, and to "*the spirits of just men made perfect.*" He is not referring to what shall be, but what now is. "*Ye are come.*" Clearly, this Writer was referring to those who had left the earth-life. Would he have described any one, however good, at the time of physical death, as a spirit made *perfect*? I think not. Then, this statement about departed ones is confirmatory of the glorious truth of advance in After-Life. In 1 Cor. iii. 15, St. Paul speaks of a man's work being useless, and of his suffering loss. He then adds, "But he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire." The inference is plain. The abortiveness of a man's work, done in the earth-life, must be due to some moral, mental and spiritual inadequacy in the man himself. If, in consequence, the work perishes, but the man

Our Self after Death

himself is "saved" by judgment and discipline, surely, it implies betterment and advancement in After-experience. There are a great many other statements in the Epistles which demonstrate that the sacred writers held the belief in this great truth; but the words of our Lord, too often so inadequately understood in their fulness of meaning, seem to me, more than aught else, to make us confident that the Life Beyond is a life of Progression. Not long before His earthly mission was closed, the Master said, "In my Father's house are many tarrying-places (*μοναὶ*); if it were not so, I would have told you" (John xiv. 2). The latter words of this sentence seem to imply that Jesus took it as a matter of course that a Self's condition in After-Life could not be defined by the popular conception of either highest Heaven, or lowest Hell. "Many tarrying-places," He said. And yet, a great deal of what has been called "Gospel" teaching has affixed but two conditions for any soul after dying—Heaven, or Hell. But why these "*many* tarrying-places"? Oh! surely, surely, in spite of all the dogmatisms of some teachers of Religion, which may have been propounded to the contrary, the Christ of the Eternal All-Father was not misleading us.

Our Self after Death

He meant what He said. In the Other-Life, there are "many tarrying-places." Each one of us, as did Judas, will go to his own place. Each one of us will remain in our particular "tarrying-place" just as long as we are mentally and spiritually unfitted for a higher sphere; and over the portal of every one of those "many tarrying-places," the repentant, aspiring soul may read the word "Excelsior"; that God is Love, and His Purpose is Love; that—as the Lenten Collect in the Prayer-Book says—"He hates nothing that He has made"; and that one day He will "be all things in all beings" (*τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν*, I Cor. xv. 28).

Brand upon your mind but this one utterance of Jesus, and it will cast upon your thought of the Other World, a light, a magnificent radiance of Hope, unperceived and undreamed of in the Religious philosophy of many.

LIGHT THROUGH THE CLOUD

The task I have set myself in this little work is all but finished. After many years of thought and study of the Gospel records, the Light through the cloud seems to me to gleam very very brightly. I have sought to track the rays of that Light upward to their Source. They focus themselves in the great "Light of the world," "our Saviour Christ Jesus, Who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10). It is as we see Him, the true Son of mankind, in the wonder and mystery of Easter life and manifestation, that we can be assured that these words of the Apostle are true. Jesus has taught and demonstrated that there is no death and corruption for the Self; and it is this glorious truth which alone can illumine the most sombre of all human experiences. The cloud, gloomy and darkling, is overshadowing the mind of millions at this time. It will overshadow the mind of all at some time or another. With no light

Our Self after Death

through that cloud—what? To die, and for those we love to die; and for there to be *no* vision of an unimpaired, progressing Self, whom death has not cast outside the area of Divine Love, or put beyond the saving reach of Jesus! How awful! No wonder that men spiritually shiver as the shadow of the cloud falls upon them! To die, and for those we love to die; and to be able to hold no better belief of a future for us and them, than that of a Heaven for the few, and an “everlasting perishing” for the many! And yet that has been taught in the past, in the name of “Gospel.” Is there any cause for surprise that so many, as they have passed under the cloud, have failed to find solace in the Christian Religion as it has been imperfectly taught by some? Oh! dying ones and mourning ones, it is for you especially I have humbly written the foregoing. I have tried to tell you how the Light through the Cloud presents itself to me. If you can believe that “life and incorruption” really have been brought to light and have been demonstrated by the incarnate Son of God, Who lived and died and went through after-death experiences, as we all must do, it may be that the Gospel records will seem to you, as they seem

Our Self after Death

to me, to be invested with a grander significance than has been supposed; and the Light through the cloud will gleam more brightly. Our advancing knowledge of spiritual realities—so characteristic of this present age—will not be viewed as being something to be kept apart from the consideration and religion of Christian men and women. Rather, will all forthcoming testimony as to the Self after death, its retention of mental powers and qualities, its memory, love, sympathies, sequential thought, its interest in those left behind for a while, its bodily, mental and spiritual advancement in Life Beyond—all testimony as to this will be to us a corroboration of what the Great Revealer taught to sorrowful humanity in the long ago. Yes, and more. The World Beyond will become a living reality to us. By a clear idea of our loved ones who have passed thither, and by prayer for them, that World will seem, not “the happy land, far, far away,” but close to us; so close, so real, that when our time shall come to cross the Border-line and “go up higher,” there will be no shivering at the thought of the strange and unknown; but rather the magnificent conviction and expectation that God’s power

Our Self after Death

“ will still lead us on ”; and that “ with the Morn those angel faces smile, which we have loved long since, and lost awhile.” Yes, and more. Our fuller thoughts concerning Life Beyond, will make us in our prayers for those who have passed thence, more like Jesus. We shall not limit those prayers, as some earnest ones do, to “the *faithful* departed.” In that Other World of living Selves, there are many who need our prayers far more than those “faithful” ones do. There are the sinful, the weak, the undeveloped ones there. The thought of a loving Jesus, Who after death, was with the thief and once disobedient ones, in order to bless and uplift them in spirit-life, will give us a conviction, which no theology can ever shake, viz., that Christ-attuned thoughts, impulses and prayers sent forth from our spirit are, in regard to those Beyond the Veil, as they are here, contributory means to the blessing, uplifting and saving of souls.

And, surely, such thoughts of the After Life will draw us in profounder love and deeper gratitude to the still living, exalted and unchanging Saviour. “ I am the Light of the world,” He once said to earth’s over-shadowed ones. “ Yes, Lord Jesus, Thou art the Light of *both* Worlds; for to us sorrowful

Our Self after Death

ones here Thou hast shown that Death is but the gateway to more abundant life; and in that Other World, Thou art the mighty uplifting and saving Force, whereby, in the working out of the great "Purpose of the Ages," we sons and daughters of Time can rise into likeness to Thee and union with God. Master, in the place where Thy Name is honoured, and at Thy Holy Table where Thine undying Love is commemorated, we will bow ourselves before Thee, and, although there be tears in our eyes and sorrow in our heart, we will bless and thank Thee for Thy shining through the Cloud."

THE END.

**A few of Mr. CHARLES TAYLOR'S Important Publications
that can be obtained at nearly all Booksellers.**

IMPORTANT WORK.

Thoughts of the Spiritual

(Already in its Eighth Edition).

By the well-known Author of "OUR LIFE AFTER DEATH."

REVEREND ARTHUR CHAMBERS,

Vicar of Brockenhurst, Hants.

Crown 8vo, blue cloth, silver lettered, **3s. 6d.** net, post free **3s. 10d.**

REVIEWS.

Church Bells: "We are glad to welcome another volume from the pen of this gifted author. . . . There is a real fascination in the author's style and treatment of his subjects. He possesses the rare gift of arousing thought and interest, and so step by step he leads his readers to accept his well-thought-out conclusions. There is nothing vague or hazy in his deductions, and his descriptive power is so plain and natural that it carries conviction until the object sought for is fully displayed. Above all, the simplicity of style, and the quiet force of plain truth, set forth in sympathetic language, gives this volume a real value among the writings of modern theological teachers, and we trust that as wide a circulation may be given to it as to those other works of Mr. Chambers—'OUR LIFE AFTER DEATH,' which has reached its 121st Edition, and 'MAN AND THE SPIRITUAL WORLD,' now in its 26th Edition."

Newcastle Chronicle: "Mr. Chambers has already become a great spiritual force, and this new volume should serve to enlarge the sphere of his usefulness. He is a thinker of great originality, and an expositor of marked lucidity. Where many have laboured in the domain of Christian evidence with barren result Mr. Chambers has the happy art of bringing conviction. He seems to us to find evidence in the Scriptures themselves which others have overlooked, or at least to present it in a light which makes it appear new and directly convincing."

Literary World: "The Rev. Arthur Chambers has received conclusive proof that a large public is interested in his teaching as to the future life, and 'THOUGHTS OF THE SPIRITUAL' is a further volume in which he discusses various aspects of this subject."

Booksellers' Review: "There is sure to be a demand for the new volume."

Scotsman: "It cannot but prove interesting and instructive to devout readers."

*Order a Copy of this important Book from your Bookseller,
or write direct to the Publisher.*

CHARLES TAYLOR, Publisher, 22 & 23, Warwick Lane, London, E.C.

A LOVELY AND USEFUL GIFT. 17th Edition Now Ready.

Truths Illustrated by Great Authors

Preface by the Rev. ARTHUR CHAMBERS,

AUTHOR OF "OUR LIFE AFTER DEATH."

A DICTIONARY OF FOUR THOUSAND AIDS TO REFLECTION.

Bound most beautifully in white and gold, crown 8vo, gilt tops,
550 pages, **3s. 6d.** post free.

Mr. Chambers mentions in his Preface that this work will furnish the public or private speaker with a well-nigh inexhaustible stock of quotations.

NEW AND CHEAPER EDITION OF THE POPULAR WORK BY THE LATE BISHOP R. MILMAN, D.D. (of Calcutta).

Love of the Atonement

Reduced from 3s. 6d. to **2s.** post free, has just been issued by CHARLES TAYLOR, and the publisher anticipates a very large sale at this popular price. This book should be read by all. Send P.O. 2s. for a copy nicely bound in cloth, bevelled.

9th Edition Now Ready.

Gone Before

Crown 8vo, 400 pages, beautifully bound in cloth, bevelled,
carmine edges, **3s. 6d.**, post free, **3s. 9d.**

**Being a Manual of Consolation for the Bereaved and
a Well of Sympathy for the Sorrowing.**

With Preface by the Rev. ARTHUR CHAMBERS,

AUTHOR OF "OUR LIFE AFTER DEATH."

CHARLES TAYLOR, Publisher, 22 & 23, Warwick Lane, London. E.C.

THIRD AND CHEAPER EDITION
OF THIS
REMARKABLE BOOK.

Appreciation by
SIR OLIVER LODGE, F.R.S.

“SPEAKING
ACROSS THE
BORDER-LINE”

F. HESLOP.

Being Letters from a Husband
in Spirit Life to his Wife on
Earth.

Crown 8vo. Bound in Art Linen, 2/6 net.
Post free, 2/9.

Paper Back, 1/6 net. Post free, 1/8.

For Appreciation by Sir Oliver Lodge, see next page.

LONDON:
CHARLES TAYLOR, Brook House, Warwick Lane, E.C.

"SPEAKING ACROSS THE BORDER-LINE."

APPRECIATION BY
SIR OLIVER LODGE, F.R.S.

"I find this book simple and straightforward, and likely to be a help and an encouragement to people in distress. It appears to me to relate a genuine experience honestly set forth.

"Yours faithfully,

"OLIVER LODGE."



EXTRACTS FROM REVIEWS.

"We have been much moved by this poignant document in its effort to establish heartfelt communication between a husband in spirit life and his wife on earth. . . . The Rev. Arthur Chambers, in his Foreword, says he hopes the little book will command the interest of many readers. We are sure it will. To the writer of this note, the letters—almost sacred—have been a real pleasure, and we are sure that it will bring many, many readers much quiet joy and encouragement; it will go far to dispel that creeping paralysis of the soul—despair. It will revive the hope of a Beyond; it will rekindle the trust in a looked-for reunion."—*Occult Review*.

" . . . The letters are deeply religious in tone and dwell on a large variety of topics, such as prayer, spiritual healing and worship. . . . The Literature of this and kindred subjects is growing rapidly in these days and the obviously sincere spirit in which books like this one are written entitles them at least to a careful reading."—*The Scotsman*.

"This is a work none the less valuable for its atmosphere of homeliness. It consists of 'letters' from a husband in spirit life to his wife on earth, and contains the husband's communications on a great variety of spiritual subjects. It might have been called 'the new epistles of John.' . . . It can be cordially recommended to all seeking light on the future life."—*The International Psychic Gazette*.

" . . . We should like to quote liberally from the book—so full of interest and suggestiveness are many of the letters. . . . The letters are published that they may be of comfort to sorrowing souls, a mission which they are well qualified to fulfil."—*Light*.

"While the navigation of the material air, a thing not long ago regarded as practically impossible to man, is now carried on daily on a rapidly extending scale, the exploration of the spirit world is being sedulously but less demonstratively pursued by many persons of spiritual discernment. An important addition to the vital and practical literature on this subject has just been made by the publication of a remarkable book by F. Heslop, entitled, 'Speaking across the Border-line.'"—*Dorset County Chronicle*.

" . . . The book is, indeed, a remarkable one; every page breathes a spirit of love, earnestness and devotion."—*The Bournemouth Visitors' Directory*.

IMPORTANT WORK.

When a Man Dies Where Does He Go ?

OR,

Some Things about the Intermediate State

BY A PRIEST OF THE -
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

NEW EDITION.

Price **2s. 6d.** net.

Post Free **2s. 9d.**

In Rainbow Weather

A Book of Daily Comfort. Daily Messages for
those in Trial.

By MARGARET HAYCRAFT.

Post free upon receipt of P.O. for **1s.**

The Royal Way

A Most Suitable Book for the Suffering.

By MARY FRANCES DREW.

With Preface by the late

Very Reverend S. REYNOLDS HOLE, D.D.,
Dean of Rochester.

Post free upon receipt of P.O. for **3s. 6d.**

CHARLES TAYLOR, Publisher, 22 & 23, Warwick Lane, London, E.C.

Beautiful Illustrated Bible

Steel engravings, yapp circuit binding.

Marvellous Line. 1s. 9d. post free.

St. Paul's Edition of Common Prayer and Hymns

Beautifully bound in smooth, limp leather, red under gold edges,
round corners, all boxed. **1s. 2d.**

Clergymen and Superintendents should see his marvellous line.

An Important Work by the Rev. JOSEPH HAMMOND, LL.B.,
Author of "Church or Chapel," etc.

Mistakes of Modern Nonconformity . . .

Price 1s. 6d.

The Publisher, being anxious that this convincing work should have a wide circulation, will send a **1s. 6d.** Edition for nine stamps, or special terms will be given to any clergyman anxious to distribute copies in his parish. A most important work at the present crisis, and cannot fail to be helpful to those in doubt. Twelve 1s. 6d. copies sent post free for 8s.

Important Offer to the Clergy.

CHARLES TAYLOR, Church Publisher, will send for distribution 100 assorted of Canon Hammond's Grand Tracts for Church and Chapel upon receipt of fifteen stamps. **1s. 3d.** Don't lose this opportunity, usual price 6s. per 100.

Canon Hammond's Tracts should be seen before distributing other tracts that in many instances are too severe and very often tend to do harm instead of good.

CHARLES TAYLOR, Publisher, 22 & 23, Warwick Lane, London, E.C.