

PRIVATE DOWDING

A PLAIN RECORD OF THE AFTER-DEATH
EXPERIENCES OF A SOLDIER KILLED IN
BATTLE AND SOME QUESTIONS ON WORLD
ISSUES ANSWERED BY THE MESSENGER
WHO TAUGHT HIM WIDER TRUTHS

WITH NOTES BY W. T. P.



NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1919

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PUBLISHED 1919 IN THE U. S. A.
BY DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY, INC.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ON Monday, 11th March, 1917, I was walking by the sea when I felt the presence of some one. I looked round; no one was in sight. All that day I felt as if some one were following me, trying to reach my thoughts. Suddenly I said to myself, "It is a soldier. He has been killed in battle and wants to communicate!" That evening I happened to call upon a lady who possesses some degree of clairvoyant power. I had forgotten about the soldier, until she described a man dressed in khaki, sitting in a chair near me. He was gazing intently in my direction. She said he was mature, wore a small moustache, and seemed somewhat sad. Not a very intelligent character apparently, but an honest one. I came home and sat down at my writ-

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ing-table. Immediately my pen moved. Did I move it? Yes, in an involuntary sort of way. The thoughts were not my own, the language was a little unusual. Ideas were mainly conveyed in short simple phrases. It would really seem as if some intelligence outside myself were speaking through my mind and my pen.

Some of the ideas are not in conformity with preconceived notions of my own.

The messages I received in this manner from "Thomas Dowding," recluse, school-master, soldier, are set down exactly as they reached me.

Further comments on these messages will be found on pages 61-76.

W. T. P.

Bournemouth,
20th March 1917.

PART I
THE WILDERNESS

One great truth has become my constant companion. I sum it up thus: "Empty yourself if you would be filled."

Private Dowding.

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THE WILDERNESS

12th March 1917, 9 p.m.

I AM grateful for this opportunity. You may not realize how much some of us long to speak to those we have left behind. It is not easy to get messages through with certainty. They are so often lost in transit or misinterpreted. Sometimes the imagination of the receiver weaves a curious fabric round the thoughts we try to pass down, then the ideas we want to communicate are either lost or disfigured.

I was a schoolmaster in a small East Coast town before the war. I was an orphan, somewhat of a recluse, and I made

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friends but slowly. My name is of no importance; apparently names over here are not needed. I became a soldier in the autumn of 1915, and left my narrow village life behind. These details, however, are really of no importance. They may act as a background to what I have to say. I joined as a private and died as a private. My soldiering lasted just nine months, eight of which were spent training in Northumberland. I went out with my battalion to France in July 1916, and we went into the trenches almost at once. I was killed by a shell splinter one evening in August, and I believe that my body was buried the following day. As you see, I hasten over these unimportant events, important to me once, but now of no real consequence. How we overestimate the significance of earthly happenings! One only realizes this when freed from earthly ties.

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Well, my body soon became cannon fodder, and there were few to mourn me. It was not for me to play anything but an insignificant part in this world-tragedy, which is still unfolding.

I am still myself, a person of no importance; but I feel I should like to say a few things before passing along. I feared death, but then that was natural. I was timid, and even feared life and its pitfalls. So I was afraid of being killed and was sure it would mean extinction. There are still many who believe that. It is because extinction has not come to me that I want to speak to you. May I describe my experiences? Perhaps they may prove useful to some. How necessary that some of us should speak back across the border! The barriers must be broken down. This is one of the ways of doing it. Listen therefore to what I have to say:

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Physical death is nothing. There really is no cause for fear. Some of my pals grieved for me. When I "went West" they thought I was dead for good. This is what happened. I have a perfectly clear memory of the whole incident. I was waiting at the corner of a traverse to go on guard. It was a fine evening. I had no special intimation of danger, until I heard the whizz of a shell. Then followed an explosion, somewhere behind me. I crouched down involuntarily, but was too late. Something struck, hard, hard, hard, against my neck. Shall I ever lose the memory of that hardness? It is the only unpleasant incident that I can remember. I fell, and as I did so, without passing through any apparent interval of unconsciousness, I found myself outside myself! You see I am telling my story simply; you will find it easier to understand. You will

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learn to know what a small incident this dying is.

Think of it! One moment I was alive, in the earthly sense, looking over a trench parapet, unalarmed, normal. Five seconds later I was standing outside my body, helping two of my pals to carry my body down the trench labyrinth towards a dressing station. They thought I was senseless but alive. I did not know whether I had jumped out of my body through shell shock, temporarily or for ever. You see what a small thing is death, even the violent death of war! I seemed in a dream. I had dreamt that some one or something had knocked me down. Now I was dreaming that I was outside my body. Soon I should wake up and find myself in the traverse waiting to go on guard. . . . It all happened so simply. Death for me was a sim-

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ple experience — no horror, no long-drawn suffering, no conflict. It comes to many in the same way. My pals need not fear death. Few of them do; nevertheless, there *is* an underlying dread of possible extinction. I dreaded that; many soldiers do, but they rarely have time to think about such things. As in my case, thousands of soldiers pass over without knowing it. If there be shock, it is not the shock of physical death. Shock comes later when comprehension dawns: "Where is my body? Surely I am not dead!" In my own case I knew nothing more than I have already related, at the time. When I found that my two pals could carry my body without my help, I dropped behind; I just followed, in a curiously humble way. Humble? Yes, because I seemed so useless. We met a stretcher party. My body was hoisted on to the stretcher. I wondered when I should

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get back into it again. You see, I was so little "dead" that I imagined I was still (physically) alive. Think of it a moment before we pass on. I had been struck by a shell splinter. There was no pain. The life was knocked out of my body; again, I say, there was no pain. Then I found that the whole of myself — all, that is, that thinks and sees and feels and knows — was still alive and conscious! I had begun a new chapter of life. I will tell you what I felt like. It was as if I had been running hard until, hot and breathless, I had thrown my overcoat away. The coat was my body, and if I had not thrown it away I should have been suffocated. I cannot describe the experience in any better way; there is nothing else to describe.

My body went to the first dressing station, and after examination was taken to a mortuary. I stayed near it all that night,

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watching, but without thoughts. It was as if my being, feeling, and thinking had become "suspended" by some Power outside myself. This sensation came over me gradually as the night advanced. I still expected to wake up in my body again — that is, so far as I expected anything. Then I lost consciousness and slept soundly.

.
No detail seems to have escaped me. When I awoke, my body had disappeared! How I hunted and hunted! It began to dawn upon me that something strange had happened, although I still felt I was in a dream and should soon awake. My body had been buried or burned, I never knew which. Soon I ceased hunting for it. Then the shock came! It came without any warning, suddenly. I had been *killed* by a German shell! I was dead! I was no longer alive. I had been killed, killed,

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killed! Curious that I felt no shock when I was first driven outside my body. Now the shock came, and it was very real. I tried to think backwards, but my memory was numb. (It returned later.) How does it feel to be "dead"? One can't explain, because there's nothing in it! I simply felt free and light. My being seemed to have expanded. These are mere words. I can only tell you just this: that death is nothing unseemly or shocking. So simple is the "passing along" experience that it beggars description. Others may have other experiences to relate of a more complex nature. I don't know. . . .

When I lived in a physical body I never thought much about it. My health was fair. I knew very little about physiology. Now that I am living under other conditions I remain incurious as to that through which I express myself. By this I mean that I am

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still evidently in a body of some sort, but I can tell you very little about it. It has no interest for me. It is convenient, does not ache or tire, seems similar in formation to my old body. There is a subtle difference, but I cannot attempt analysis.

Let me relate my first experience after I had somewhat recovered from the shock of realizing I was "dead."

I was on, or rather above, the battlefield. It seemed as if I were floating in a mist that muffled sound and blurred the vision. Through this mist slowly penetrated a dim picture and some very low sounds. It was like looking through the wrong end of a telescope. Everything was distant, minute, misty, unreal. Guns were being fired. It might all have been millions of miles away. The detonation hardly reached me; I was conscious of the shells bursting without actually seeing them. The ground seemed

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very empty. No soldiers were visible. It was like looking down from above the clouds, yet that doesn't exactly express it either. When a shell that took life exploded, then the sensation of it came much nearer to me. The noise and tumult came over the border line *with* the lives of the slain. A curious way of putting it. All this time I was very lonely. I was conscious of none near me. I was neither in the world of matter nor could I be sure I was in any place at all! Just simply conscious of my own existence in a state of dream. I think I fell asleep for the second time, and long remained unconscious and in a dreamless condition.

.
At last I awoke. Then a new sensation came to me. It was as if I stood on a pinnacle, all that was essential of me. The rest receded, receded, receded. All appertain-

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ing to bodily life seemed to be dropping away down into a bottomless abyss. There was no feeling of irretrievable *loss*. My being seemed both minute and expansive at the same time. All that was not really me slipped down and away. The sense of loneliness deepened.

.
I do not find it easy to express myself. If the ideas are not clear, that is not your fault. You are setting down just what I impress upon you. How do I know this? I cannot see your pen, but I see my ideas as they are caught up and whirled into form within your mind. By "form" perhaps I mean words. Others may not feel this loneliness. I cannot tell whether my experiences are common to many in a like position. When I first "awoke" this second time, I felt cramped. This is passing and a sense of real freedom comes over me. A load has

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dropped away from me. I think my new faculties are now in working order. I can reason and think and feel and move.

Once I read a book about this after-life. It spoke of "planes" and "bodies" and "cycles" and "auras." I think a man named Sinnett or Symons wrote it. It purported to deal with the history and geography of this after-life. I cannot confirm its descriptions from my own experience. I am simply myself, alive, in a region where food and drink seem unnecessary. Otherwise "life" is strangely similar to earth life. A "continuation," but with more freedom. I have no more to say just now. Will you let me return another time and use your mind again? I shall be so grateful.

13th March 1917, 8 p.m.

You are kind to me. You loan me a power I do not possess any longer — the power to convey information to my human fellows on earth.

I can use your mind freely because I see you have deliberately chained your imagination, and so I can impress you freely and clearly.

From this you may notice that I am a little farther along my new road. I have been helped. Also I have recovered from the "shock," not of my transition but of my *recognition* of it. This is no subtlety, it is simply what I mean. I am no longer alone — I have met my dear brother. He came out here three years ago and has come down to welcome me. The tie between us is strong. William could not get near me for

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a long time, he says. The atmosphere was so thick. He hoped to reach me in time to avert the "shock" to which I have referred, but found it impossible.

He is working among the newly arrived and has wide experience.

A good deal of what follows came to me from him; I have made it my own, and so can pass it on. You see, I am still possessed with the desire to make my experience, my adventure, of help to others who have not yet arrived here. It appears that there are Rest Halls in this region, specially prepared for newly arrived pilgrims. I shall use your language. We can only convey our experiences *approximately*. To describe conditions here in WORDS is quite impossible. Please remember this. My brother helped me into one of these Rest Halls. Confusion at once dropped away from me. Never shall I forget my happiness. I sat

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in the alcove of a splendid domed hall. The plashing of a fountain reached my tired being and soothed me. The fountain "played" music, colour, harmony, bliss. All discordancies vanished and I was at peace. My brother sat near me. He could not stay long, but promised to return. I wanted to find you at once to tell you I had found peace, but it is only now that I could do so. On earth, the study of crystal formations was a great hobby of mine. To my intense delight I discovered that this splendid hall was constructed according to the law of crystal formations. I spent hours in examining various parts of it. I shall spend hours and days and weeks there. I can continue my studies and make endless discoveries. What happiness! When I have regained a state of poise, my brother says I may help him in his work outside. I am in no hurry for this.

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You evidently know nothing about crystals. I cannot impress your mind with the wonders of this place. What a pity! This place is so different from any earthly edifice that I fear it is useless to attempt description. As it is, people will say I am romancing. Or else they will say that you, my faithful scribe, have let your imagination run away with you. Please let me return again later. I still have much to say.

14th March 1917, 5 p.m.

I am beginning to meet people and to exchange ideas. Strange that the only person I came across for a long time was my brother. He tells me that I have never been really alone. The mist around me, shutting me off, has emanated from myself, he says. This fact rather humiliates me. I suppose my loneliness of life and character whilst on earth have followed me here. I always lived in books, they were my real world. And even then, my reading was technical rather than general.

I begin to see now that my type of mind would find itself isolated, or rather would emanate isolation, when loosed from earthly trammels. I shall remain near earth conditions whilst learning lessons I refused to learn before.

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It is dangerous to live *to and for oneself*. Tell this to my fellows with emphasis. The life of a recluse is unwise, except for the very few who have special work that requires complete silence and isolation. I was not one of these. I cannot remember doing anything really worth while. I never looked outside myself.

My school? Well, teaching bored me. I simply did it to earn my bread and cheese. People will say I was unique, a crabby, selfish old bachelor. Selfish yes, but alas! far from being unique. I was thirty-seven when I came over here — that is, my body was. Now I feel so ignorant and humble that I don't feel I've begun to have any age at all.

I must dwell on this. Live widely. Don't get isolated. Exchange thoughts and services. Don't read too much. That was my mistake. Books appealed to me more

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than life or people. I am now suffering for my mistakes. In passing on these details of my life I am helping to free myself.

What a good thing the war dragged me out into life! In those nine months I learned more about human nature than I had conceived possible. Now I am learning about my poor fossilized old self. It is a blessing I came here. Though I do not regret, I like to hear what is going on in the region you inhabit. It seems a long way off already. I told my brother I wanted news about events on earth. He took me to visit an old gentleman who had been editor of a newspaper. Why do I call him "old"? Because he died at eighty-one and has not thrown off earth conditions yet. He therefore surrounds himself with these conditions. His son on earth runs the paper, a French journal. The old man can read his son's thoughts and so divines the world's

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news through his son's mind. He has built himself an office, full of telephones and tape machines. These machines are in a way illusory, but they please the old gentleman. He received me courteously, and insisted on hearing details of my crossing. He was disappointed that I did not know his paper by name or reputation, and surprised that I knew so little about earthly affairs. "I want to get back. I cannot get along without my paper. My son often uses my ideas in his editorials without knowing it." This fact was the cause of much amusement to him. I asked him for some current news. This is what he told me:—

"Something interesting is going on, for my son stays at the office all night. There is 'war as usual.' There is some commotion about food. I saw Guilbert writing an article for the paper on 'World Shortage.'

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England seems to be scared about it. They have suddenly remembered the existence of the land they are fighting for, and they are digging it about. Something must have stopped food supplies or destroyed them.

“Food seems more important now than shells. The rest of the world seems coming into the war — at least, Guilbert thinks so.

“I see an article headed ‘America and China.’ Are they short of food too, or are they to fight? I think they are going to side with France. Turkey must be having a bad time. I see the headlines ‘Turkish Dé-bâcle.’ Guilbert seems full of excitement about Russia. I see into his mind. He is evolving an article on ‘Russia: the Coming World Power.’ Russia must have won a big victory somewhere. Yes, I think the war is going on all right. Our circulation has increased again, but, alas! Guilbert

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cannot get enough paper. I wish I were down there. I would have laid in a big stock months ago."

The old gentleman was still rambling on about his paper and its prospects when I came away. How awful to be chained to an earthly property like that! Tell people to control their worldly interests *from outside*. If you identify yourself heart and soul with some material project or undertaking, you will find it hanging on to you over here. It will obsess you, blot out the view, make progress impossible. This old French editor came over a good many years ago. He still lives on earth in mind, so far as he is allowed to do so. Take a bird's-eye, dispassionate view of all your worldly interests. Master them or they will master you. In the latter case, when you get here you will be miserable. Life will seem empty, a wilderness. Earth ties will tighten their

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grip, yet you will be unable to respond. Confusion will result — that is purgatory.

There are many forms. Each of us creates his own purgatorial conditions. If I had my time over again how differently I should live my life! I was not one of those who lived only for the purpose of satisfying ambition. Money was a secondary consideration. Yes, I erred at the other extreme, for I neither lived enough among my fellow-men nor interested myself sufficiently in their affairs. Well, I have created my own purgatory. I must live through it somehow. Good-night. I will return again.

14th March 1917, 8 p.m.

I want to tell you what I have been doing. On returning to my alcove in the Rest Hall I found some one else there.

He told me he was a messenger from another sphere, higher up. Certainly wisdom shone from his eyes. I think he had just come in for a little quiet. I made as if to go away, but he beckoned me back. "You are speaking to earth. Do not hurry to describe your new life and surroundings. Take my advice: do a little living first." . . . I think he saw surprise in my face. "Do you know," he continued, "that most of what you have conveyed to your friend at the matter end of the line is quite illusory?" —"What do you mean?" I cried.—"You will gradually find out for yourself. Remember what I have just said." This con-

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versation has perturbed me. I try to dismiss it from my mind, but it sticks. It makes me feel smaller still. Am I really the fool rushing in where angels fear to tread? After all, what do I know about my present life? I have not mastered the natural laws of this place. I have not even mastered myself. I remember meeting a man in a railway train when I was a young student in London. He was full of the theory that all "phenomenal" life, as he termed it, was merely illusion. He called it "māya." I thought the fellow mad. He said he had read up the whole subject at the British Museum. How I scoffed! Now that I come to look back upon my "phenomenal" life on earth, I begin to see that it consisted mainly of "māya"! A long chain of illusory episodes with my poor little self in the centre. Was there anything *permanent* in the earth conditions through which

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I passed during my thirty-seven years? I begin to think not. That idea does not worry me any longer. My past illusions may be buried out of sight with my body, for all I care.

I don't like to think that my impressions about myself and my *present life* are mere illusions too! That rankles. It humiliates. Unfortunately, I fear it may be true. I have given the matter much thought. Evidently I am in a state of consciousness not far removed from earthly existence. I am journeying towards a wider, truer life, but I am not yet there. I have no right to speak with any authority of my experiences here. I am ashamed of having troubled you. One thought consoles me. If this really *is* a state of illusion, or illusory ideas, in which I find myself—well, others must pass through it too. Perhaps the ideas I have tried to express may help some of those who

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are not yet here. Anyway, my life seems quite as real as it did on earth, even more real. There is *something* that lives and moves within me that is *not* illusion. That something will forge its way out into the light some day. I can but go on trying. Meanwhile perhaps I had better not come to you again. Let me thank you for your patience. You have helped me through difficult purgatorial hours. I may return. I do not know. Meanwhile . . . Good-night.

PART II
THE AWAKENING

If you would dwell in peace, learn to *love* deeply.
Private Dowding.

THE AWAKENING

I HARDLY expected to hear from my soldier friend again. I had asked him previously why he enlisted so early in the war. He told me he was tired of being a schoolmaster, and the war fever would not leave him alone. Never have I met any one less like a soldier! The poor man must have endured much hardship during his training, owing to his very sensitive and retiring disposition. He had told me that his name was Thomas Dowding, that in earth life he was a little short-sighted, prematurely grey at thirty-six, and that he walked with a stoop. One wonders how he came to be accepted in those early days of the war, when so much fine physical material was available. He was evidently a scholar in his

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way; apparently well read in science and mathematics. All his acquired learning seems to have dropped from him at "death," and he becomes a little child groping his way amidst strange surroundings; lonely, bewildered. It is not easy to believe that I have imagined the whole of this experience; that Private Dowding is a figment without reality. This explanation is possible. I do not wish to brush it aside lightly, but it does not appeal to me. I can but record the experience as it came to me, and let my readers judge.

I now set down the next series of notes exactly as they reached me:

W. T. P.

16th March 1917, 5 p.m.

You will be surprised. I did not expect to speak to you again. I will tell you how it has come about.

I have met the "Messenger" again. I fancy he was looking for me. He wanted to know how I was getting on. I told him I had broken off communication with my earth friend, on his advice. He said he had been speaking to my brother and had learnt my history. My brother had told him how much consolation I derived from speaking to you. He then said that perhaps he had spoken a little hastily, without full knowledge of the facts. He did not think there would be much harm if I kept the channel open a little longer. He impressed on me the importance of reminding you that the

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conditions now around me are impermanent, and, to that extent, unreal. From his standpoint, the value of such messages as these depended upon the emphasis placed on this fact. The spiritual world is everywhere. The life of spirit is eternal, perfect, supreme. We humans hide from the light. We grovel among the illusions created by our thoughts. We surround ourselves with misconceptions. We refuse to rise into the Christ Sphere. The Christ Sphere is everywhere, and yet, by some strange paradox, we are able to shut it out from view. All these thoughts were new to me. I begin to see what is meant. If I did not do so, I could not pass the ideas on. You say these thoughts are quite familiar to you. I am surprised at this. What a little world I have been living in!

This Messenger evidently came from the Christ Sphere. Religion never meant much

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to me. Now I begin to see that one cannot live without it.

A great deal was said about reflection: how we can clear out our own poor thoughts and illusions and allow the Christ power to reflect through us. Evidently this power is wonderful. The Messenger seemed to love to speak of it; yet he was in awe of it. It clears away illusions as the sun clears away fog. He said I am still living in a fog, a fog of my own creation and design. Well! well! Once I thought I knew a lot. Then I was sure I knew a little. Now I know I know nothing. It appears that the war is based upon an illusion. I wonder what my old Parisian friend would say to that! Since the Great War began, I believe people have thought it was the only reality on earth! Now I am told it is all based on — illusion. I am told that lust for wealth (of one material kind or another) was the real

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cause of the war. Nevertheless, as a result of the war, all the nations engaged will be far poorer than they were before.

This idea had not crossed my mind. I was told another thing. Your war down there is being turned into a celestial instrument. It was put to me like this. Material forces are becoming exhausted — that is to say, the more they are used the less they achieve. Strange thought! People will realize that material force leads nowhere, is indeed an illusion. I cannot quite grasp the idea yet.

Apparently the impotent clash of conflicting material forces is creating a kind of vacuum. The Messenger said this fact implied a supreme mystery. Into this vacuum spiritual power is to be poured and poured. He had seen with his own eyes the Reservoirs. He spoke of these Reservoirs with bated breath. The light of Heaven is re-

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flected in them. The Water of Life fills them. This Life is still beyond our conception. Our human life is but a shadow. High beings, God's messengers, guard the sluice gates. They await the Word of command. Then will the Water of Life be released.

Already it is available to many. Do you remember that passage in Revelation about the river of the Water of Life, bright as crystal, proceeding from God?

The Messenger told me that we are entering into the period of revelations, when all prophecies will be fulfilled. These things are beyond me. While he was speaking, I felt as if I were suspended in space, without visible support. These high and holy matters are of a spiritual nature. They do not belong to the realms of illusion. I cannot attain to such ideas. I hardly dare to contemplate them. I pass them on because I

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believe they may justify me in keeping the channel open between us. If I only report matters that interest me, connected with my present illusory surroundings, the avenue between us will close up. We cannot live on the celestial heights until we have completed our work in the valleys. That is how I feel. A friend of mine once tried to climb Mont Blanc. He turned back long before the summit was reached. He could not breathe in the rarefied atmosphere. The guides and the rest of the party went on. Alas that I should be one of those forced "to turn back." I never used my opportunities during earth life. My spiritual nature atrophied. You must excuse this self-analysis. . . . How wonderful it must be to be among those who never turn back! God willing, I will begin to climb. God willing, I too will never turn back! God willing, the whole human race will never turn back,

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now it has begun to climb. The Messenger said that a cycle was ending, that human life had just entered an upward arc. This conveys very little to me, but I pass it on. . . . I am sad. I am worth so little. I will come again.

16th March 1917, 8 p.m.

When I left off speaking to you, my brother came up. He said I needed rest. He blamed the Messenger for telling me more than I could stand or understand. William took me to a Hall of Silence. I had never been there before. Heaven's dome was above me. The silence of the spheres surrounded me. The loneliness of the desert was my only companion. There I seemed to remain a very long time, but time also is an illusion. The meaning behind this word still rouses conflicting emotions within me. Shall I be for ever the slave of my own illusions? It is impossible to tell. I shall visit the Hall of Silence regularly. Strength and consolation came to me within its walls. All that the Messenger had said came back to me. Understand-

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ing of many truths dawned within me. One great truth has become my constant companion. I sum it up thus: "Empty yourself if you would be filled." The Waters of Life can never flow through me until I have surrendered my whole self. I begin to see the wisdom of this. To you it may convey nothing. I have begun to try to pour myself away. It is a strange experience. Jesus talked of the children. They entered heaven. The gateway was barred to the wise men. Children have little to unlearn. Although I know nothing, yet have I much to unlearn. This is indeed a paradox.

I believe this Hall of Silence is available to you also. Try to find the road that leads there. War roars through your lives. The thunder of it is everywhere. I am still unable to shut out its rumbling completely. Somewhere within the soul there is silence. Attain unto it. It is a pearl of great price.

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I speak of what I know. I do not think the importance of silence is dwelt upon sufficiently in the Christian scriptures. I never remember being taught its vast import when on earth. I begin to realize what is meant by the Still small voice of God! I am now more myself. My brother has offered to let me help him in his work : I am glad. Good-night.

17th March 1917, 5 p.m.

I have looked into hell! I may have to return to that region. I shall be given my choice. Grant that I may be strong enough to offer myself freely. Hell is a thought region. Evil dwells there and works out its purposes. The forces used to hold mankind down in the darkness of ignorance are generated in hell! It is not a place; it is a condition. The human race has created the condition. It has taken millions of years to reach its present state. I dare not tell you what I saw there. My brother needed help. A soldier, who had committed very evil deeds, had been killed. I will draw a veil over them. He was a degenerate, a murderer, a sensualist. He died cursing God and man. An awful death. This man was drawn towards hell by the law of attraction.

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My brother had been told off to rescue him. He took me with him. At first I refused to go. Then I went. . . . An angel of light came to protect us, otherwise we should have been lost in the blackness of the pit. This sounds sensational, even grotesque. It is the truth.

The power of evil! Have you any idea of its mighty strength, its lure? Can that power be an illusion too? The angel said so. The angel said the power of hell was now at its supreme height. It drew its power from man! As man rose toward spiritual life the powers of darkness would subside and finally become extinguished. "Extinguished" is my word. The angel said "transmuted." That conception is quite beyond me. We descended gloomy avenues. The darkness grew. There was a strange allurements about the atmosphere. Even the angel's light grew dim. I thought

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we were lost. At moments I *hoped* we were lost. So strong is the attraction. I cannot understand it. Something sensual within me leaped and burned. I thought I had emptied myself of self before undertaking this great adventure. Had I done so, I should have been safe. As it was, I should have been lost but for the angel's and my brother's help. I felt the giant lusts of the human race. They thrilled through me. I could not keep them out. We descended deeper. I say "descended." If hell is not a place, how can one "descend"? I asked my brother. He said we were not moving in the physical sense. Our progress depended on certain thought processes evoked by the Will.

It is all very strange to me. I now remember that the Messenger told me I was *not* to dwell on what I saw and felt in this

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dark region. Therefore I will hurry on and not dwell upon details. As a matter of fact, I never reached the point where the rescue was attempted. The angel and my brother went on alone. I waited for their return in what seemed to be a deep dark forest. There was no life, no light there. One felt stagnation everywhere. The angel said that was the most insidious kind of hell, stagnation, because no one recognized it as such. Contrary to belief, hell itself, or rather that part of it visited by my brother and the angel, is brilliantly lighted.

The light is coarse, artificial. It keeps out the light of God. In this awful glare the angel's light nearly lost its radiance.

All this my brother told me afterwards. Those who die filled with thoughts of selfishness and sensuality are attracted down the grey avenues toward this hell of the senses. The darkness of the deep forests appals, the

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loneliness is intense. At last, light is seen ahead. It is not the light of heaven, it is the lure of hell. These poor souls hasten onwards, though not toward destruction; there is no such thing. They hasten down into conditions that are the counterpart of their own interior condition. The Law is at work. This hell is a hell of the illusions and is itself an illusion. I find this hard to credit. Those who enter it are led to believe that the only realities are the sense passions and the beliefs of the human "I." This hell consists in believing the unreal to be real. It consists in the lure of the senses without the possibility of gratifying them. I was told a great deal more about this awful region, but I must not pass it on. The angel said that the "condition" would ultimately dissolve into nothingness. Hell, apparently, or that part of it we are speaking about, depends for its existence on

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human thoughts and feelings. The race will never rise to greatness until the passions are controlled. This refers to nations and to individuals. On earth I was never interested in such matters. I did not realize the existence of the sexual canker at the heart of human life. What a terrible thing this is! Do not wait until you come over here. Set to work at once. There is no time to lose. Gain control of self. Then retain control by emptying yourself of self. All the thoughts of lust and passion, greed, hatred, envy, and, above all, selfishness, passing through the minds of men and women, generate the "condition" called hell. Purgatory and hell are different states. We all must needs pass through a purging, purifying process after leaving earth life. I am still in purgatory. Some day I shall rise above it. The majority who come over here rise above or rather THROUGH purgatory into higher con-

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ditions. A minority refuse to relinquish their thoughts and beliefs in the pleasures of sin and the reality of the sense life. They sink by the weight of their own thoughts. No outside power can attract a man against his will. A man sinks or rises through the action of a spiritual law of gravity. He is never safe until he has emptied himself completely. You see how I emphasize this fact. Some of these thoughts came to me whilst I waited in that gloomy forest. Then the angel and my brother returned. They had found him for whom they sought. He would not come away. They had to leave him there. Fear held him. He said his existence was awful, but he was afraid to move lest worse conditions should befall him.

Fear chained him. No outside power can unchain that man. Release will come from within some day. Sadly we returned to our own places. I began to realize what power

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King Fear holds over nearly all of us. The angel said that Fear would be destroyed when Love came into her own. He said the time was coming. . . . I have much to think about. I am going into the Hall of Silence. If I can return again, I will. Good-bye.

17th March 1917, 8 p.m.

Soon after returning from the states of hell I met the Messenger again. He said I had not learned sufficient of the spiritual life to visit such dark regions with impunity. He took me with him toward a Mount of Vision. The light was dazzling. No doubt he thought such a pilgrimage would prove an antidote to my journey toward the demon realm. It was almost too much for me. I can remember little of what I saw. I gazed upon the Reservoirs of Illumination. They were afar off. They nearly blinded me. The Messenger told me many things concerning the manifestations of God to man. He said a prophet of the Most High was in charge of each of the gateways to these Reservoirs of Light. When darkness and ignorance grew apace among men, the

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“Word” was uttered. Then the prophet, whose turn it was to descend among men, made deep obeisance and opened wide his own gateway to the Reservoirs of Light. He descended to earthly regions that he might guide the spreading of the new illumination. The Messenger told me that one of these holy prophets fulfilled his divine mission during the last century. He said the illumination then released was about to spread through East and West. The prophet has returned to heavenly spheres — his work accomplished. His work would become manifest when the war was over. The war itself was an outward manifestation of the powers of evil in their attempt to obstruct the inflow of the light. It was very interesting, but beyond me. He said a spiritual revival was destined to take place within all the great world-faiths.

He said that unity would become estab-

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lished, that universal peace would become an accomplished fact. He seemed to imply that the golden era was at hand; nearer indeed than we could realize. He asked me to return to the Mount of Vision with him, but I feel I cannot, dare not do so. I am unworthy. I cannot unself myself sufficiently. Such heights are not for such as I am! I returned to my own place alone, by the force of an interior gravity. But I ask you to mark the Messenger's words. He spoke of what he knew. Let his words blaze forth a channel through the minds of men.

I ask this of you : to make them known.

18th March 1917, 8 p.m.

I have returned once more.

I cannot come again. There are several things I want to say. I find it difficult to tell you what they are.

I will tell you why. I am a person who cannot pretend to teach or preach. I do not wish to do so. I am not sure enough of my own faith yet.

I feel it my duty to tell you something of what the angel and the Messenger said, not because I understand or believe it all, but because they have been good to me. They have recognized my ignorance, have not scoffed at my unworthiness. I have not come to you to preach, to show the way to heavenly states. I do not know my way there, so how could I guide you? You are probably nearer heaven than I, though still

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on earth. Because I pass on what has been told to me, do not think I am a "superior" person. Do not think that all I say must be true. It may be. I cannot tell myself. I am grateful to you for listening to me. I am grateful to my brother for meeting me over here. Above all, I thank God for the Messenger who deigns to come and talk to me at intervals. I have met other people over here, and have been allowed to help one or two distressed souls. But I remain a lonely person, working out my own salvation in fear and trembling. Put fear behind you! That is one of the things I must say — I try to do it. Fear is a power opposed to life; it is the weapon of the Evil One. It is illusion. Can you believe what I say? Fear has no reality of its own. Its power is generated from within ourselves. Cast it out. Never fear again.

I want to say a few words about love —

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very few, because I know so little. Also because love is spoken about too much already, whereas it should be lived. If you would dwell in peace, learn to love deeply. Never cease from loving. Jesus said a good deal about love, if I remember rightly. Look up what He said and *live it*.

Love God by pouring yourself away. Love your fellows by giving them all you possess of light and truth.

Love LOVE for her own blessed sake. Such love will bring you nearer heaven.

I have spoken about illusion several times. I return to it once more. I begin to see that phenomenal existence, whether on earth or here, is so impermanent as to be unreal. This is a hard saying. I do not yet understand it.

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Live above those conditions which, after much meditation, appear to you to be illusory. That is the best advice I can give.

The Messenger has spoken several times about evil. I cannot entirely shake off the effects of my visit to the lower regions, where evil reigns as lord and king.

It appears that evil is not real or permanent. Its *power* is permanent, but this power can be transmuted, until it serves ends that are divine. More than this I cannot say, because I do not know. If you can realize that evil has no real existence and can be eliminated entirely from human life, you will have learnt much. Remember what was said about stagnation. Keep moving in some direction all the time. How was it that I lived so stagnantly whilst on earth? — Let my life be an example.

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One other thought I wish to leave with you. The Messenger told me that we have entered the period of revelations. The childhood of the race is nearly over. Vast spiritual purifying powers are waiting to be poured forth. Create vessels for this purpose! Make yourself a vessel that you may receive the gift of the Spirit. You will then require no teaching from outside. Revelation will come to you from within. Retire into the Hall of Silence. Think on these things. Think on these things. . . . The time has come for my withdrawal. I will ask the Messenger to bless your life and work. You are a soldier too. Your life will bring you many opportunities. You will be protected, safeguarded, illumined. Should it be your fate to come across to this region soon, I will try to meet you. I may be useful. But I do not think you are coming yet. I have said so much about myself!

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Only now, as I am leaving, do I speak of you. Forgive me. Once more, my friend, I thank you. I owe you more than I can repay. In some special manner you have buoyed up my faith when it would have failed me otherwise. God grant you understanding. God grant you peace. Good-bye.

NOTE BY W. T. P.

I have not heard again from my friend. He has evidently passed beyond my ken. Probably he is already free from earth conditions and has entered upon the pilgrimage of selfless service.

I can quite believe that this is possible. His nature was *au fond* humble and child-like. The humility of the man was indeed very splendid. I hope we may meet again some day.

There are several points in his narrative worthy of comment. I must treat the whole experience as real. Otherwise it would not have been worth while setting down. To me, my communications with Thomas Dowding were so real that he seemed to be in the room sitting at my elbow, prompting my pen. I know there have been many books

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written containing messages, said to have been passed down from another plane of existence. One cannot doubt the possibility of "spirit communion," as it is often called. It seems to me that there can be no final proof concerning these matters. One must be guided by the interior worth of the messages themselves. I tell you, for instance, that I am satisfied I have been speaking with a soldier who was killed in battle seven months ago. I have set down the experience in writing exactly as it came to me. I cannot, however, prove the genuineness of the experience to any one else. I cannot even prove it finally to myself.

I will now comment upon Thomas Dowding's statements and beliefs, in the search for interior evidences of their genuineness. It is evident that these messages come from a mind in a state of consciousness not far removed from earthly existence, and not

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from any more spiritual source. I believe that the messages set down in a little book called *Christ in You* were received inspirationally in a manner akin to the experiences with which we are now dealing. The interior evidence of the *Christ in You* communications certainly points to their being genuine. The spirit of truth breathes from these pages, and therefore their actual source is a matter of little moment. Can the same be said of the messages from Thomas Dowding? They belong to a different order of communication and must be considered in the light of their own internal worth.

In the first place, Dowding, or whoever is speaking, has no very clear idea of what truth is. He emphasizes the fact that he knows nothing. He passes on the information he receives from the "Messenger" and the "angel," but he cannot very often en-

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dorse the truth of such information in the light of his own experience. In one place, he says he is helping to "free himself" (presumably from ignorance) by passing on the details of his life. As the record proceeds, one is forced to the conclusion that our friend finds the shackles dropping from him. The tone of his remarks begins to change. A new and more spiritual note becomes apparent. He takes more interest in what the Messenger tells him.

He realizes more and more the worthlessness of human "knowledge," and proceeds to empty his mind, that it may begin to reflect spiritual rather than earthly ideas. In a way, his humility and his confidence grow together, yet a certain diffidence is noticeable right to the end.

One does not know why he felt impelled to communicate with earth, nor why he chose to "speak" to one who was an entire

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stranger to him. He does not seem to think that doubt will be cast upon his story; indeed, he goes out of his way to say that my imagination has been "chained," and that his ideas are correctly taken down. The Messenger warns our friend against communicating with earth at all. "Do you know that most of what you have conveyed to your friend at the matter end of the line is quite illusory?" This is a very perturbing thought to Private Dowding, but he is told that he will gradually discover the truth of what the Messenger tells him. Towards the end he does begin to disentangle that which is real in his life from the unreal, and does his best to tell us how he reaches his conclusions. On this point his final dictum is this: "Live above all those conditions that appear to you, after much meditation, to be illusory." He is forced to the conclusion that very little of his own earth life

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or of his present life can be termed "real" in any final sense. Nevertheless, his faith in a spiritual life gradually grows, until he is able to exclaim: "There is *something* that lives and moves in me that is *not* illusion. That something will forge its way out into the light some day."

It will be noted that I have called my friend Thomas Dowding. It is very difficult to get through names correctly. Dowding may have been our friend's earth label, but I doubt if it is a matter of any importance. The only name he himself mentions is that of William, belonging to his brother, who meets him on the "other side." Names are evidently of no moment over there.

Finally, let me say a few words on the teaching that comes to our friend as he wanders about seeking for truth. To my mind, there is much of value and real beauty in the spiritual lessons conveyed to him by

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the personage he calls the "Messenger." Evidently only fragments of these messages have been passed on to us. I think our friend was unable to grasp the import of a great deal he was told, and feared to pass it on. Evidently he originates no teaching himself and is careful to point this out. He says: "I cannot pretend to preach or teach. . . . I am not sure of my own faith yet." Then he goes on to explain why he feels it his duty to pass on the teaching of the angel and the Messenger. Personally, I consider that this teaching, whatever its actual source may be, is well worth careful attention and study. It certainly does not emanate from my own mind, conscious or subconscious — that is, so far as one is in a position to judge. I realize that the mysteries of the subliminal and subconscious regions are still beyond our grasp.

Because of this, I say, study the teaching

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itself. Accept or reject it according to its own interior worth. Again and again I would urge the importance of studying the teaching in its relation to life as we now know it. Except in that aspect, no such communication from the other side can have any practical value.

Do not confuse the teaching with the simple record of Private Dowding's surroundings. He tells us that from the standpoint of the Messenger the value of the messages depends upon the emphasis placed upon the fact of the impermanence of the conditions described, and it must never be forgotten, if the teaching in this narrative seems incomplete, that Private Dowding does not pretend to teach. He himself is still seeking, and that somewhat blindly. He says he knows nothing. His was not an enlightened soul. He passes on fragments of a teaching which he only dimly under-

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stands, and the value of these fragments to us must lie in our reading of their deeper meaning in relation to our own lives.

If his loneliness is not at first understood, we have to bear in mind that he made no profession of faith here, and consequently his vision of higher things must have been very dim on crossing over. It may be that all those who are without an appreciation of inner values, are, in a sense, in the same spiritual loneliness, shut off as they are from the perfect inviolable whole "by the fragmentary bodily senses, and by the limitations of the sense-intellect — that is to say, by the intellect that recognizes only the testimony supplied by the senses and reasons from that alone."¹ And probably the "fog of our own creating" is but the dark veil of separateness arising from this blindness of the soul. The man who lacks rever-

¹ J. Bruce Wallace in *Brotherhood*.

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ence is blind, for if he could see, he would have reverence; and the man who does not love is blind, for if he could see, he would love. In the Hall of Rest there came peace, and in the Hall of Silence there came understanding. These Halls are available to all here and now. If we can but enter the Hall of Rest, the senses are stilled, and we can then enter into the Silence, there to hear the "still small voice," and to understand. "Somewhere within the soul," we are told, "there is silence. Attain unto it. It is a pearl of great price." To enter into the Silence, to have vision, is necessarily to have reverence, to love, and to serve.

He urges us to control our affairs from without, to live widely, to pour ourselves away, not to live for self. "The spiritual world is everywhere; the life of spirit is eternal, perfect, supreme." "The Christ spirit is everywhere, and yet, by some

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strange paradox, we are able to shut it out from our view." "We are unable," says Private Dowding, "to clear out our own poor thoughts and illusions and allow the Christ power to reflect through us." And here the remark, "You evidently know nothing about crystals. I cannot impress your mind with the wonders of this place," is of far-reaching interest as indicating the need of the faculty of understanding before the interior realization of any truth becomes possible.

In the presence of the "powers of darkness" he finds it necessary to *empty himself of self*. "Gain control of self," he tells us, "then retain control by emptying yourself of self." On the Mount of Vision the Reservoirs of Illumination nearly blind him. He says: "I feel I cannot, dare not, return. I cannot *unself* myself sufficiently." In the first of these experiences, the self he speaks

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of, the self that is illusion, the sense-self, is *drawn* by the lure of the power of evil, and in the other it is *blinded* by the Light of the Reservoirs of Illumination. He returns to his "own place alone, by the force of an interior gravity." There is nothing indefinite, and there is much to ponder over in these experiences. We are told with the same certainty that vast spiritual purifying powers are waiting to be poured forth. "Create vessels for this purpose," says Private Dowding. "Make yourself a vessel that you may receive the gift of the spirit. . . . Retire into the Hall of Silence. Think on these things. Think on these things." It is difficult to place too high a value on this teaching.

On page 55 he says, "I ask you to mark the Messenger's words. He spoke of what he knew. Let his words blaze forth a channel through the minds of men. I ask this

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of you: to make them known." What is it that he is so definitely anxious to make known? The message of the existence of Reservoirs of Light of the uttering of the Word, of the illumination about to spread through East and West, or of the establishment of unity and universal peace? Perhaps all of these things. And whether the Reservoirs of Illumination be the latent but unawakened and therefore unexpressed spiritual strength and capacity of the races we cannot tell, but the uttering of the Word and the coming of the Revealer of the Word brings illumination nevertheless surely to the hearts of men.

It is true that great spiritual movements were initiated last century. One of the most remarkable of these has centred in the East round the Persian prophet Baha'u'llah. This Messenger of God has returned to his own high place, but his message of brother-

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hood and love begins to stir the hearts of men. Many of his prophecies have already been fulfilled. The ideals of unity and brotherhood for which he stood are spreading widely, despite the war. His Book of Laws remains to be made known to the world, but the inspiration which called it forth is certainly divine in origin. Baha'u'llah's son, the explainer of the message, whose name is Abdul Baha (servant of God), still dwells among men, controlling and directing the promulgation of a spiritual movement that seems likely to encircle the globe with the great ideal of unity. And in the West there is, among others, the wonderful spiritual movement known as Christian Science. It is perhaps the most remarkable religious revival initiated during last century in the Western world, and its growth and influence, particularly in America, is little short of marvellous.

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The Messenger tells us that the light dawns within individuals first, and that its radiance spreads, that outwardly its influence will show itself in many great reforms, and that "great lamps will shine forth in East and West." And again I would say in Private Dowding's words: "Vast spiritual powers are waiting to be poured forth. Create vessels for this purpose. Make yourself a vessel that you may receive the gift of the spirit." And I would close by repeating what he says with reference to love, which, in my opinion, seals the whole experience with the stamp of truth. "If you would dwell in peace, learn to love deeply. Never cease loving. Love God by pouring yourself away. Love your fellows by giving them all you possess of light and truth. Love LOVE for her own blessed sake. Such love will bring you nearer heaven."

W. T. P.

Bournemouth,

1st March 1917.

PART III
THE MESSENGER

The Spirit will re-illumine all religious faiths. The new religion will be one of Service and Fellowship and Unity.

The Messenger.

THE MESSENGER

20th March 1917, 8 p.m.

NOT long after Private Dowding's farewell visit, it began to dawn upon me that, as he could not return himself, he was trying to set up direct communication between the being whom he called the "Messenger" and myself.

I have therefore held myself receptive in the hope of securing some further news of my friend, and I now set down the message that has reached me. I will reserve comment until later. . . .

Yes, I am the Messenger, and am speaking to you at your friend's special request. He will not be able to communicate with you again.

W. T. P. Why is this?

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Messenger. Because he has many lessons to learn and much work to do. Continued contact with earthly conditions would have a disturbing effect and hinder his advancement and growth.

He had already given you all the information available from his lips at the present juncture.

W. T. P. May I ask a few questions?

Messenger. I am here to answer them.

W. T. P. Do you really see brighter times ahead for the human race?

Messenger. My son, you need have no fear. Your world is now plunged in grief and chaos. The hour is dark, the outlook strangely gloomy. We can see the light behind the thunder-clouds. Improvement in

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world-conditions is already taking place despite the war. Next year there will be a further rending of the veils, and in 1919 the light will stream into human consciousness through many channels. Few kings will be left in Europe or, for that matter, anywhere. Russia will lead her people toward peace and joyful emancipation. The illumination of a New Day will be reflected in the soul of the Slavonic race and will become apparent everywhere. In time the dawn will break over Germany and the Northern peoples, sweeping before it the cruel darkness of ignorance and despotism.

Tribulation will be great; revolutions must be expected, but nothing can withstand the light. Vast changes lie ahead of South-Western Russia, Austria-Hungary, the Balkan Peninsula. Were I to tell you of these miracles, you would not credit them.

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We see regeneration in Persia, transformation in India; spiritual uprisings in the Far East and new discoveries; revolutionary events in the New World, North and South; but the light grows and grows.

France rises again, purified, uplifted, and becomes the inspirer of the world in arts and sciences. Ireland comes into her own at last and becomes the cradle for great men and women. England joins hands with many nations in raising the standard of unity and fellowship among the peoples of the world. She will be called upon to make immense sacrifices in East and West, but she grows to a new greatness through her acts of renunciation.

Democratic republics rule the world with free and peaceful intercourse between the nations. Peace does not come into her own

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immediately, but the floodgates of God's love have been opened, and the divine power is for all nations.

Fear not the breaking down of barriers everywhere. Make the paths straight! The Lord of lords is destined to make a divine progress, and the ways must be prepared.

W. T. P. This is all very wonderful indeed.

How will this new spiritual radiance make itself manifest?

Messenger. You are already witnessing its leavening power. The world is not in such darkness as it was even five years ago, and this despite the warring of the nations. The light dawns within individuals first and then the radiance spreads. Outwardly its influence will show itself in many great re-

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forms. The drinking of alcohol will cease. This, when it becomes world-wide, as it will, will bring with it a flood of well-being. The very air itself will become purer. Climates will improve; disasters caused by earthquake, sea, and air will diminish; but there will be cataclysms first. Conflicts between religions will cease, the bitterness of sect will die away.

Women will hold equal rights with men. Great women, inspirers of the race, will rise up in East and West. Diseases — physical, mental, political, social — will gradually disappear. This must sound incredible to you. Remember that a spiritual remedy is becoming available for all human sins and discords. It will veritably prove the elixir of the new age and will be within reach of all mankind. The Christ spirit will dwell among men with healing in its wings.

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W. T. P. Shall I live on earth to witness these stupendous happenings?

Messenger. Your children and your children's children will be in a position to prove the truth of all I tell you. Prepare sanctified vestments that we may send high and holy souls into the world to wear them.

W. T. P. Why do you tell me all this?

Messenger. Eyes must be opened; ears must be attuned to the message of the coming day. Knowledge of the joy and peace that lie ahead will help you through these days of sore distress. By a consecrated act of faith bring understanding and wholeness into your own life and the lives of those around you.

W. T. P. Will the barriers between this world and the next be broken down?

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Messenger. The veils are already thinning. As the race becomes regenerated from within, all need for barriers will disappear, and death will lose its awful sting.

Already we can reach you more surely than ever before in human history.

The piercing of the veils must come about through spiritual and natural processes of mind and heart, and not through the employment of magic, ritual, or trance.

W. T. P. Will a new religion become necessary?

Messenger. The spirit will re-illumine all religious faiths. The new religion will be one of service and fellowship and unity. The standard of this world-wide faith has been set up in Persia. In days to come, Persia will regain her ancient glories.

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W. T. P. And Egypt?

Messenger. The great land of the Pharaohs has still a part to play in the evolution of the race, but it may not be through British influence. There are vast preparations now being made for the enlightened progress of the whole Moslem world. The disintegration of Turkey must first take place.

In Europe there will be three great federations of states. These federations will come to birth naturally and without bloodshed, but Armageddon must first be fought out.

W. T. P. How long will this take?

Messenger. I am not a very high being, and to me are not revealed details of all these wonderful happenings. So far as I am allowed to see, peace will be re-estab-

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lished during 1919, and world-federations will come into being during the following seven years.

Although actual fighting may end in 1918, it will take many years to bring poise and peace into actual and permanent being.

W. T. P. Who are you?

Messenger. I am one of those commanded to direct the new illumination into the avenues leading down towards the hearts and minds of men. I greet and protect certain souls, chosen for special work, as they reach this shore.

W. T. P. Was Thomas Dowding one of them?

Messenger. We met by what you would call "accident." He is making quick prog-

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ress, and his power of service to his fellow-men will be great. It is often the most unexpected people who are chosen for important work

W. T. P. What about the Far East?

Messenger. A great leader rises up in the time to come, and will avert many dangers. This one is already expected, and will bring about moral and social progress in China and elsewhere. The flames now visible between the Orient and the Northern hemisphere of the New World will be transmuted, purified, and harnessed to fine ends.

W. T. P. America?

Messenger. Her hour of tribulation is at hand. A splendid destiny will come into view. So long as material wealth remains

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the idol, so long will the light be held back. You must expect revolutions of a peculiar order at no distant date.

W. T. P. May we return to Germany?

Messenger. Already the world faintly perceives the probable progress of events in that great land. Germany as an empire ceases to exist, but as a federation of independent states her future and ultimate well-being are assured. The days are still dark, but remember this: the greater the darkness of the night the greater the brilliance of the dawn.

W. T. P. And how are all these wonders to be brought about? Are we to expect prophets and teachers in our midst?

Messenger. Great lamps will shine forth in East and West. The period of revela-

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tions is upon you. The light is for the whole race, but individuals must reflect it within themselves, that it may become readily available for all.

Rise up and proclaim the dawn of the New Day! You can all become prophets and seers in this new dispensation. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

Physical birth and death are not for ever. Generation and dissolution as known to you will be transformed, transfigured. Herein dwelleth a mystery that cannot yet be unveiled. The road to its unveiling is the pathway of spotless purity.

W. T. P. Will your words be understood or believed?

PRIVATE DOWDING

Messenger. The wonders soon to be revealed are such that the peoples' vision will become unclouded and the sun's rays will shine through the minds and hearts of men and women. Then belief will become understanding.

W. T. P. What about social evils and injustices, poverty and ignorance, lust and greed? Can all these become transmuted?

Messenger. My son, have faith. Realize that the love of God is indeed all-powerful. The Golden Age will not be ushered in in the twinkling of an eye, as is thought by some. The law of evolution must be respected and cannot yet be overruled.

Extremes of wealth and poverty will disappear. Yes, this is so. The war itself has become a "celestial instrument," as you

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have already been told. Governments will become simpler, less unwieldy, localized, filled with the ideals of justice and brotherhood.

The Oneness of Humanity, as emphasized by the great prophet who manifested last century, will become recognized, and as a result of this, vast reforms, social and ethical, will gradually be introduced throughout the whole world.

W. T. P. What about food?

Messenger. Grossness will disappear. The race will learn to live more simply on the blessed fruits and herbs and cereals. Unless the race learns this important lesson, it will be found that the earth cannot support the populations now inhabiting it. Over-eating and over-indulgence in the sense desires must cease.

PRIVATE DOWDING

The inspiration of the spiritual in life will take away the need for the domination of the grosser appetites. Set the example! Fight the good fight! Increase your faith. To the God-endowed man all things are possible.

W. T. P. Your utterances are so utopian that I fear it is impossible to secure a fair hearing for them.

Messenger. Compare 1817 with 1917. Compare 1900 with 2000 A. D. The latter comparison is only possible through the exercise of faith and vision. All that I have foreshadowed will have become established before the year 2000 A. D. My son, I give you my blessing and wish you God-speed. Good-bye.

N. B.— I have set down these very uto-

THE MESSENGER

pian sentiments and prophecies exactly as they flowed through my pen; but, although I am an optimist, I find it difficult to believe that the race is nearing the realization of *all* its ideals like this.

It is impossible for me to guess at the identity of this visitor. In taking down his message, I adopted the same methods as on previous occasions, making my mind a blank and allowing my thoughts to be moulded by an influence from outside myself. Here again imagination may prove responsible. Imagination of a subconscious order is capable of playing strange tricks with the mind.

The prophecies are interesting despite their vagueness and extreme optimism. It is useless for me to do more than place them before my readers, and allow time to set its seal of truth or falsity upon them. Cer-

PRIVATE DOWDING

tainly we live in strange times, when all things are possible, when even the wildest dreams are being fulfilled before our eyes.

W. T. P.

Bournemouth,
20th March 1917.

LAUS DEO

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