

TWO WORLDS ARE OURS

by

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DEDICATED TO
MY WIFE
WHO INSPIRED THIS BOOK



I HAVE assumed that man is an organism informed or possessed by a soul. This view obviously involves the hypothesis that we are living a life in two worlds at once ; a planetary life in this material world, to which the organism is intended to react ; and also a cosmic life in that spiritual or metetherial world, which is the native environment of the soul.

F. W. H. MYERS (*Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*).

P R E F A C E



IT is not sufficiently recognised that we are living all the time in two worlds.

By many persons this material universe is asserted to be all there is ; they are unable or unwilling to conceive of a state of existence beyond that which can be apprehended by the physical senses or brought to light through physical experiment. These persons are apt to be looked on askance and intolerantly dealt with in argument by certain religionists of the bigoted type. Nevertheless it would be easy to name many avowed materialists who are models of honour, integrity and kindness, men of genius as well, great scientists and artists. We could ill spare these from our midst. They are benefactors of their kind, however one may regret their materialistic theories of life which, in point of actual fact, are strikingly contradicted by the enunciators' high mental and moral attributes. An innate sense of honour and a devotion to the service of one's fellow men are not the products of a material and

perishable brain, neither does genius, that subliminal uprush, originate in matter but rather in the great storehouse of the spiritual.

For we are spirits. We do not have to die to become so, we are spirits here and now, and although temporarily associated with matter, our real and eternal selves are not so strictly imprisoned in the flesh that they cannot on occasion win free and breathe their native air. Every impression made upon the mind which leads us to the right performance of our daily duties and to the accomplishment of worthy actions whether great or small, has its origin in the spiritual world and proves our contact with that supra-material sphere. And over and above this, there is reason for believing that during sleep the souls of many of us are enabled to escape so completely from matter that they enjoy for a while an entirely separate existence, in intimate companionship with their friends who have passed from earth for good and all.

Yet although we may be convinced that our real home is on the spiritual plane, there is no excuse for our shirking the duties which we owe to the material situation in which we are temporarily placed. A life on earth is given to us that each one may lay the foundation of a character which shall, so to say, ensure

him a good start in the life to come, and he will only establish that foundation through love and service to his fellows, through taking his part in "redressing human wrongs" and doing his best to make this passing world a fitter place for succeeding generations to inhabit.

Meditation upon the delights of "The Elysian Fields" and attempts at communication with our friends who already walk there, helpful and pleasant as these things can prove, must not be indulged in to an extent that will lead to the neglect of our duties here on earth. It is true that the messages which in certain circumstances it is possible to receive from "the other side" can not only bring precious consolation but can also be of the utmost value in aiding the receiver to shape his earthly course aright. At the same time they are by no means to be sought idly and irresponsibly. From the point of view of Psychical Research it is undoubtedly proper that those who are scientifically qualified to do so should investigate the mechanism which operates in establishing a contact—or what to Researchers with a materialistic bias may be only an apparent contact—between this world and the next. Otherwise, at present, until the *modus operandi* of trance communication becomes better known, it is

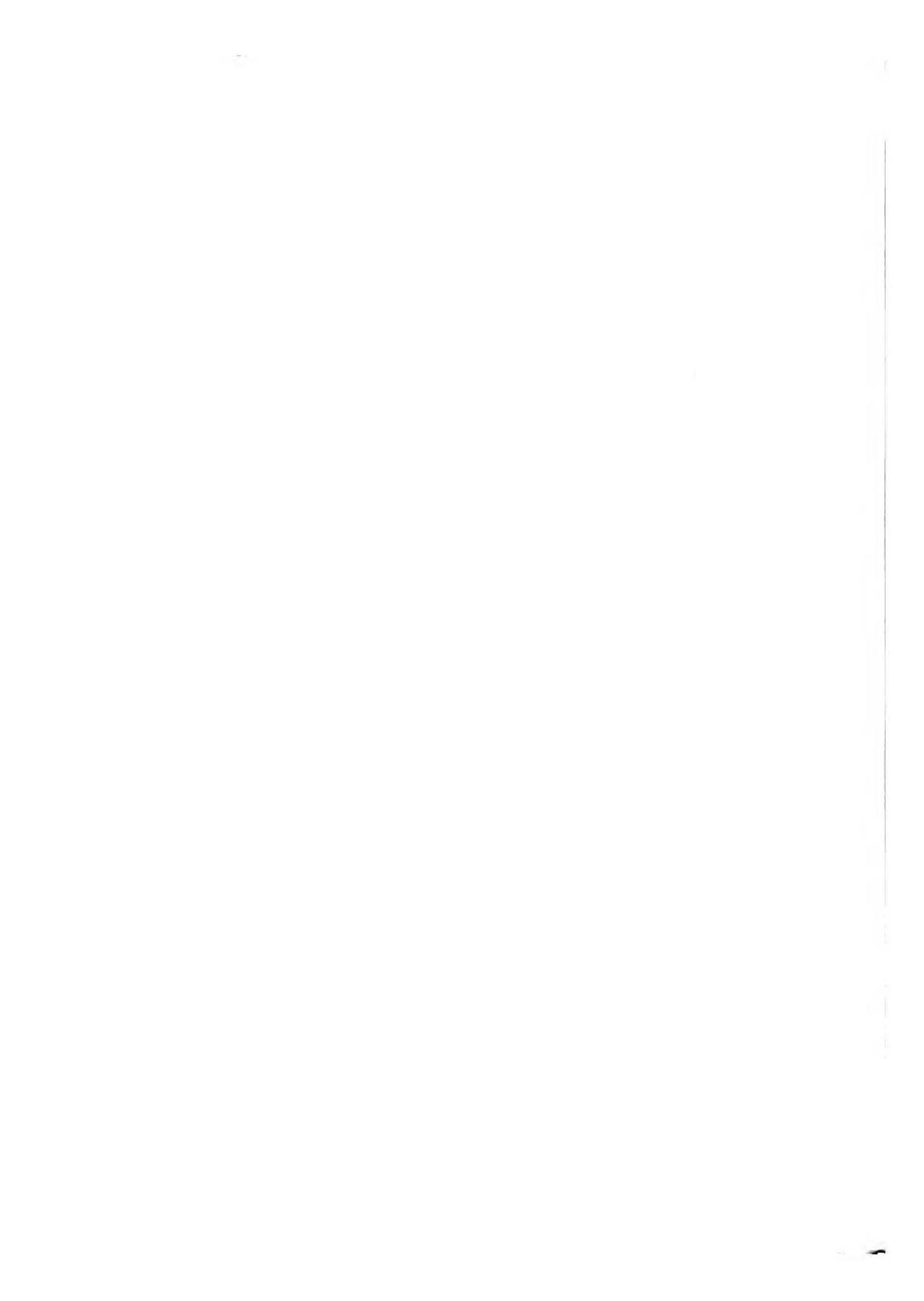
advisable for perhaps the majority of people to be very chary of intruding upon its mysteries.

Apart from Psychological Investigation, a "sitting" should be a solemn and sacred occasion, only to be undertaken after, metaphorically speaking, much "prayer and fasting." So regarded, it is capable of bringing to him who engages in it not only consolation but immense spiritual help. But if entered upon in a mood of levity or mere curiosity, without high or serious purpose, it may well prove a danger. There is always the possibility that evil influences, coming from "across the veil," may be encountered by him who has neglected to protect himself against their onset. This should not surprise us when we reflect that thousands of perverted mentalities are passing out of this world daily, so that a heedless "sitter" with mind unguarded may risk an encounter with spirits of lying, mischievous or depraved propensities.

He, on the contrary, who approaches a "sitting" with pure motives, with a *mens conscia recti*, will find himself, to use a Masonic expression, in a tiled Lodge whose atmosphere radiates a peace and a harmony upon which no harmful influence can intrude, and he will leave it strengthened for meeting the changes and chances of this mortal life and eager to unite with

his brethren in the endeavour to heal some of its ills.

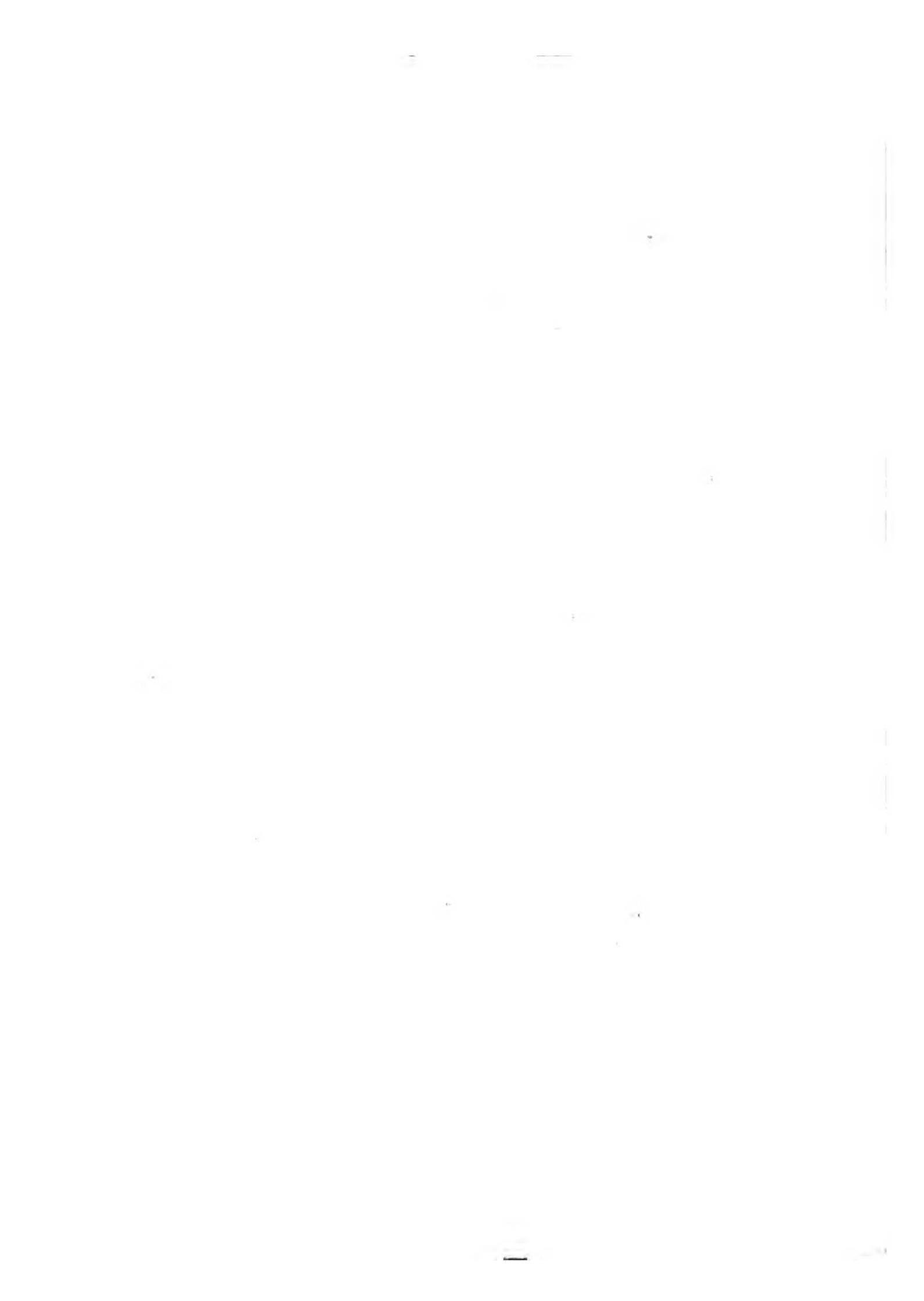
It should be mentioned that the communications from one who has "passed out of matter," which are quoted in the following pages, were received through the mediumship of Mrs. Osborne Leonard.



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TWO WORLDS ARE OURS



I

OUR FUNERAL OBSERVANCES

THE fear of death weighs so heavily upon a large portion of the human race, is such a spoiler of their happiness and such a detriment to their work, that it is worth while considering any means which seem likely to diminish the oppressive influence which it exerts.

For countless generations it has been the custom to magnify death and, almost after the manner of savages, to tremble before it as before a deity, awful, malignant, implacable, a King of Terrors indeed. And yet what is death after all but the exchange of a garment that has become shabby and moth-eaten for one that moth will not corrupt and that will prove in every way more suitable for its wearer's new work and environment? Or, to vary the metaphor, what is it other than quitting a house where one's freedom has been restricted, where the furnishings have shown much that was unsightly and sordid, where the outlook has been limited and distorted, to enter a roomy and beautifully furnished

mansion commanding the widest views where liberty can be enjoyed in its perfection ?

And those whom we speak of as "dead," who are they ? In reality not dead at all but intensely alive and active, not shadowy and holy beings—how they must dislike to be so regarded—not disembodied spirits—an unimaginable concept—discarnate, if you like, but clothed in spiritual or etheric bodies, more real and substantial by far than those material shapes which they have cast off. We hear a great deal about Ether nowadays, and Scientists are telling us that it is the substantial reality which underlies matter, that it is something of enormously greater density than matter, even that it is "the vehicle of the Soul."¹

We should do well to rid our minds of the old vague and unsatisfying theories as to the fate of those whom we have loved and lost from earth, ceasing to picture them either as sleeping, "each within his narrow bed," until they shall be awakened by the blast of the Archangel's trumpet, or as insubstantial phantoms floating in space, or as ranged in ranks with palms in their hands while they chant unending hymns of praise. That they are praising God we may indeed feel well assured, but it is more in accord with reason—and with revelation too—to picture them as doing so through the performance of useful work, work for Humanity, work in helping us their friends, for there is no doubt that those whom we have greatly loved are with us very often, sympathising with our struggles, sharing our joys,

¹ *Ether and Reality*, by Sir Oliver Lodge.

striving to impress our minds with uplifting thoughts. We have every right to believe that the future world is not one of idleness or monotony, but a sphere of active and joyous service, of uninterrupted progress, and when we consider the disabilities which hinder our work here, we can readily appreciate the great advantages which the inhabitants of that other world possess in their release from so much that fettered and oppressed them, especially from that predominating disability, the fear of death.

It may be too much to expect that this fear will ever be entirely destroyed during our present phase of existence, but since it has certainly been unduly intensified by the usages and suggestive pageantry with which the final attentions paid to the material body are so often associated, there would seem to be a way open which might lead, at any rate, to its alleviation. With this end in view the first thing required is a general, or at least a more widespread, comprehension of the real significance of death, a perception that this phenomenon is not, as most of us have hitherto considered it, a deplorable stroke of fate, the cutting short of a career, but rather in most cases the breaking down of an obstacle which barred the way to opportunities for fuller freedom, heightened enjoyment, more effective work. With the gaining of such a comprehension there must of necessity follow a radical change in the usages which now prevail in the case of a death and its attendant funeral ceremonies.

It is satisfactory to find that, in England at least, some improvement as regards these matters has become

noticeable of late years. Funerals and the gruesome paraphernalia of death have no longer quite that prominence which was formerly given them. One may recall the ghastly hearse so common a sight in our streets fifty years or less ago, vehicle, horses and attendants loaded with black feathers and crape, or the ridiculous customs—often savouring of hypocrisy though not always without their humorous side as well—which used to be considered indispensable marks of respect to the deceased. A Victorian writer, Mrs. Henry Wood, in one of her novels, depicts two of the male characters, who on their way back from attending a funeral pay a call upon some friends, as entering the drawing-room with “the silk scarves on their shoulders and the flowing hat bands of crape sweeping the ground.” And those who know Dickens’ *Great Expectations* may remember his description of a village funeral where, at the undertaker’s word of command, “pocket handkerchiefs out all,” the mourners wearing little black cloaks and hats adorned with black streamers filed out two and two with their pocket handkerchiefs to their faces as if their noses were bleeding, the procession exciting such admiration among the villagers that, as the novelist goes on to say, it was “all but cheered.” Even thirty years ago—and for all one knows the custom may still persist—it was a common and grotesque sight in a small North-country town to see a hearse followed by twenty or thirty pairs of men in black each one with a white handkerchief pressed to his face.

Speaking seriously though, even now there is in

many instances far too much piling up of the agony in the case of a death. The survivor's grief at the departure of some loved one, a life-long companion, perhaps, calls for every alleviation which it is possible to afford, and it is certain that in many cases alleviation is a possibility. At least we may affirm that the aggravation of the bereft one's sorrow which our senseless funeral customs are so apt to induce, is a cruelty which is utterly unnecessary. Ceremonies which suggest mourning for one swallowed up in eternal night may be appropriate enough in the eyes of the materialist, of him who believes that death ends all and that the hope of survival is merely an idle dream; they are surely altogether unsuited to the Christian religion professing as it does belief in resurrection from the dead.

The teaching of the Christian Church, however, where it has not been fantastic, has usually been too vague to afford surviving friends of the departed that full measure of consolation which was their right. The misinterpretation of the phrase "the resurrection of the body," for which mediæval painters and sculptors with their "Last Judgments" must take a large share of responsibility, has led to ludicrous confusion of thought which even now is only beginning to disappear. The resurrection of the body is indeed a vital truth, but that body is not the discarded garment which is laid in the earth or reduced to ashes in the crematorium. Resurrection is no re-assemblage and reviviscence of material particles at the sound of an Archangel's

trumpet on some date in the far distant future. It is the spiritual body which rises, which has indeed perhaps already risen even while the mourners surround the open grave.

The sentiment which many feel for the graves of their dear ones as they tend them and keep them adorned with flowers, regarding them as sacred spots to be visited in solemn reverence, is beautiful and touching, partially misguided though it may be. At any rate it is an expression of love in the survivor's heart, and love is the most beautiful thing in the world and the greatest. Equally touching and better based on reality is the sentiment that pictures the loved presence in one's house, in one's daily life, that recognises it as a living force ever ready with sympathy and counsel, unseen indeed by material eyes but apparent to the senses of the soul. One may guess that the departed themselves must feel but scant respect for the spot where the outworn earthly garment is laid, and must yearn to be able to guide the thoughts of their sorrowing friends away from it to contemplation of a wider and more blissful prospect.

Indeed excessive sorrow on the part of their friends must not only be an alloy to the happiness of those who have passed beyond matter, but a source of distraction and even an actual hindrance to their progress. It is not of course to be supposed for a moment that they wish not to be missed. That would be unnatural and indeed a sheer impossibility where there exists great love. But one feels they would desire that beneath the sorrow over their seeming departure there should be

fostered—what would prove a well of comfort—the firm conviction that all is well with them and that reunion is a certainty, nay more, that so far from there being any actual separation, their continued presence with us, physically inaudible and invisible though they are, is assured.

It might be useful to attempt to enter into the feelings of one recently removed by what we call death from the midst of a loving family circle or, let us say, in order to present a more concrete example, the feelings of a wife who has left behind on earth a husband to whom she was devotedly attached. Her first realisation would probably be that instead of being dead she was surprisingly alive. Then her thoughts would surely turn to the husband she had left, and thinking of him she would presently find herself at his side, invisible to him indeed but able to observe many of his actions and to enter into the recesses of his mind to a degree far beyond her ability while still incarnate. If then the husband should fail to control his natural feelings of grief, and should give way to morbid thoughts of death, the tomb and irrevocable loss, what sorrow must she in sympathy with him be likewise experiencing herself, how the joys of the wonderful new life upon which she has entered must seem to have lost their fine edge! Happy for both will it have been if while still together here they shall have given some amount of thought and discussion to the conditions which surround so-called death, and thus shall have prepared themselves for the changed circumstances and opened the door to a realisation of the possibility of constant

communion until the time for complete reuniting shall have come.

There are people to whom a funeral is an object of morbid fascination, there are others who detest funerals and yet would consider a failure to be present at the final ceremonies in the case of a deceased friend as a mark of callousness and disrespect. No person of course with decent feelings would willingly do anything that might cause additional pain to the bereaved, and at any largely attended funeral there are sure to be some who are present simply because they wish to do all in their power to study the susceptibilities of their afflicted friends and not because they attach special, if any, importance to the ceremony itself, or consider that the slowly moving procession, the sombre black, the atmosphere of gloom, the farewell look at the coffin as it lies in the grave bear the least relation to realities.

If we could altogether change our ideas and methods in connection with the departure of our friends what a blessed relief it would be to millions of people ! And as our ideas gradually change so too will our methods. For the person who believes that his dear one is being deposited in the earth to sleep until the last trump sounds, perhaps thousands or even millions of years hence, an extravagance of sorrow symbolised by lavish funeral pomp might seem excusable. But on the imagination of him who believes—nay, who knows—that his loved one can never lie in a grave at all, but is actually more consciously alive than ever, the proceedings must impress themselves as the playing out

of a gruesome and futile farce. Rossetti very happily speaks of the newly departed as

them
Who are just born, being dead,

and no one would wish to celebrate a dear friend's birthday by a display of such dismal ceremonial as our funeral rites present.

One would like here to make a very revolutionary suggestion—in defiance of the probability that it may seriously scandalise the conventional mind—namely, that the custom of following to the grave the material body of the departed might well become a thing of the past. The body has to be disposed of, naturally, in the interests of the living, but why should the survivors be subjected to impressions of the most morbid and harrowing kind through being compelled by custom to be present at the scene of disposal. Their grief surely needs to be lightened so far as this can possibly be done, not intensified as it so often is under our present system.

We have to-day become used to the holding of memorial services—generally in the case of well-known or distinguished personages—apart from the actual ceremony of interment. One would like to suggest that the latter might be suffered to lapse entirely and that attention should be concentrated on a memorial service in the case of every departed soul, no matter how undistinguished his position here may have been. And it may be useful to reflect, in passing, that, in a sphere where undoubtedly many of the first in this

world will prove last and the last first, some who were little regarded here may well shine out like stars.

The kind of service which one has in mind would be of a very special nature, striking no note of sorrow or pain but rather acclaiming the joy of an emancipated spirit relieved of all fear of sickness and death, translated to an environment of greater happiness, wider experience, increased opportunity, capacity for more effective work. The church would be gay with flowers—these will form a more appropriate setting in such surroundings than if allowed to wither on the cold soil of a cemetery—and the friends who attend would be requested to refrain from appearing in mourning garb. Is it too fantastic to imagine that to the one for whom the service is held, rejoicing as it may be supposed he is in a sense of newly-found freedom, an assemblage met to do him honour of black-habited figures with gloomy faces might appear singularly out of harmony!

Above all there would run throughout the service an insistence upon the ideas of survival and reunion. A wife between whom and her husband death had intervened has said that, although her first feeling was one of affright lest he should be lost to her, once she came to realise the certainty of reunion "*she began to feel she could wait if it was so sure as that, that if the next time is for ever, which is a long time, it would not matter waiting a little now.*" The certainty of reunion then is a truth which needs to be emphasised to the fullest extent both publicly in the religious service and in the private condolence of friends. The acceptance

of this truth will avail greatly—is in fact almost the only thing which will avail—in alleviating the sorrow of those left behind. They will mourn indeed ; they could not help doing so ; but they will not mourn as those without hope, and every believer in survival and reunion who has experienced a great sorrow in the death of one greatly beloved knows that, mingled with that sorrow, there come extraordinary thrills of joy, a spiritual joy transcending any emotion of ordinary material life, and one may be sure that this joy in the soul proceeds from a real communion in spirit with the departed, who is whispering words of comfort to the mourner assuring him that all is well and that a future of great happiness is in store for both. Indeed one may almost say that this same joy is a telepathic reflection of that which the traveller into the new land is experiencing as he realises his newly-acquired freedom.

A word may be added on the subject of inscribed memorials—tombstone is a dismal and misleading term and might well be allowed to become obsolete. Most people will like to erect a memorial of some kind. Whether or no it should be placed on the spot where the discarded body is laid is another question. There is a great deal to be said for the custom, which seems to be growing, of cremation and dispersal of the ashes to the winds of heaven. At any rate, wherever the memorial be erected, simplicity might well be its distinguishing feature. We have many examples in our cemeteries of a style to be avoided at all cost. One would venture to suggest as the ideal a simple cross inscribed with the names of the departed and one or

two texts or quotations indicating the idea of survival or of the day's work well done. Dates and the age at departure seem to savour too greatly of this material world which the object of the memorial has outgrown and exchanged for a region where perpetual youth flourishes and time has ceased to be reckoned. As Rossetti writes in *The Blessed Damozel* :

*Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers ;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers ;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.*

So long as we are in the flesh the necessity is laid upon us of giving adequate time and attention to the duties which our sojourn in this material world imposes. These are in nowise to be neglected because we may entertain a yearning for contact with the land beyond which is freed from earth's grossness, because we may realise that "our conversation is in heaven" and that our true home is in the immaterial sphere. Nevertheless, whenever a perception of the verities which lie beyond the veil can help towards the introduction of greater harmony into the conditions which confront us in this world of sense to which we are temporarily attached, we should embrace the opportunity. This at any rate seems to be the case with regard to the duties we have to perform in connection with our friends who are taken from us by that which we call *death*. The more perfect our comprehension of the environ-

ment and conditions in which these, on their escape from matter, are placed, the easier shall we find it, in the rites and ceremonies which close their earthly history, to eliminate all that is associated with the morbid, the horrible and the terrifying, and so shall we be helping to relieve mankind of some portion at least of that fear of death which our funeral observances are still so apt to foster.

II

THE ABOLITION OF WAR

MOST people if questioned would no doubt freely admit that they are sincerely desirous of the abolition of war, and would profess ready assent to any scheme which gave promise of furthering that end. Yet although such a pious profession may be very well as far as it goes, it does not at all follow that he who makes it has any adequate idea of the radical alteration in our ways of thinking and acting that must be effected before we can hope to see the dawn of an era of universal peace.

The problem of ridding the world of war and instituting a reign of harmony throughout the human race is much deeper than can be solved by the establishment of a League of Nations or a Peace Pact, or the calling of conferences for limitation of armaments, encouraging signs though these undoubtedly are. It demands a *μετάνοια*, a change of mind, an overturning and re-arrangement of ideas in the consciousness of the individual. It calls for the uprooting of moral

defects in his character which, seeming at first sight to have small connection with such a devastating catastrophe as war, nevertheless form, so to speak, the insignificant species of a genus of which war is the outstandingly sinister type. The mighty river has its rise in a myriad minute trickles. Were the tiny seeds of mistrust, greed and hatred, which are sown in each individual consciousness, to be eradicated at their moment of earliest recognition, they would never ripen to form part of a harvest of wholesale slaughter.

The arguments employed by those who write or declaim against war are commonly materialistic in the extreme. In vivid language there are depicted horrible mutilations, widespread destruction by bombs and submarines, the ruin of the workers, the starvation of a whole people, and so forth and so on. These pictures are no doubt perfectly accurate, but the point is that appeal is being made to the lower instincts, to cowardice and to love of the material things of the world, whereas in point of fact if this is the only real argument against war, if it be held that a man's sole concern in life is with his material self-hood, then it would almost seem a matter of indifference were the whole race to be wiped out in an universal destruction.

One might be inclined to judge those who make use of arguments appealing to the fear in the human mind to be themselves men of a purely materialistic way of thinking and strangers to the more spiritual aspirations of our nature, if personal knowledge of some of them did not show that this is far from being always the case, which makes it the more unfortunate and surprising

that they should rely so largely upon arguments from the material standpoint. Perhaps they think that an appeal to fear is the only way to arouse the masses, somewhat as certain Churchmen, though disbelieving the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed, yet consider their enunciation useful for terrifying their flocks into remaining within the fold of Mother Church. Nevertheless it must be admitted that an appeal, for whatever motive, to any of the baser instincts of mankind is not a praiseworthy act and cannot be expected to produce an effect which shall prove of real and lasting good. There are few nobler causes than that which has for its aim the abolition of war, but it is a cause which demands arguments from the spiritual side, for it is part and parcel of that still higher cause, the entire regeneration of the human race and the establishment of one universal brotherhood.

During the last war much was heard of conscientious objectors. Many of these were no doubt sincere enough, but one is afraid that others, to judge from their reported utterances and subsequent actions, were by no means representative of that state of mind which, forgetful of self and inspired by a real love for humanity, lives up to its principles in every situation and is willing with gladness and humility to "endure the cross, despising the shame." One fears that some of those who then posed as martyrs for conscience sake were too prone to arrogance, too fond of self-advertisement, sometimes so far from standing out as specimen exemplars of brotherly love that they seemed rather inspired to an inordinate degree with envy and hatred of their kind.

All inclination to the indulgence of these poisonous emotions must be banished from the individual mind, before society can reach a point where it will be secured against the cauldron of human feelings boiling over in sudden outburst of a general lust for slaughter and destruction.

It is by no means necessary to assume that the actual individuals, the statesmen and military chiefs, who initiate or undertake the direction of a war, are the agents primarily responsible for its outbreak. In many cases they have been overborne by an irresistible gust of war fever, where millions of individual minds thinking thoughts of hatred have, so to say, combined to form one great storm-centre of destructive energy incapable of dispersal. The agent who is primarily responsible is the man in the street. It may indeed happen that the mentality of a military officer of high rank, one who will be called upon to conduct operations in the field, is far less provocative of war than the mentality of, we will say, a man who professes himself a conscientious objector. It is a serious matter to reflect that upon us, the ordinary and perhaps humdrum people of everyday life, whose fame is little likely to spread beyond our circle of acquaintances, depend the issues of war and peace. This tremendous responsibility the average man or woman is probably heedless of possessing.

The public conscience is undoubtedly improving, but it seems unlikely, as things are, that it will in the very near future have improved to a point where the danger of war, whether between nations or classes,

shall have become a thing of the past. It is a difficult matter to bring about a fundamental change in the mentality of a grown man or woman. The quickest way by far in which any radical reform can be effected is through proper training of the children. The instruction which they receive in their earliest years and the principles which are then instilled into them are likely to stay to form the mainspring of their conduct through life. The kind of instruction which they are given at school is of course of enormous importance, but of absolutely supreme consequence is the character which is developed in them through the influence and teaching of their parents, and most especially of the Mother. And here it is that one is drawn to recognise what an asset of surpassing value to a nation its women can be. It is not too much to assert that to the Mothers of a race there is assigned the privilege of shaping its future history, there is handed over the control of its destiny. This is a truth little—much too little—perceived, otherwise the state of the world might be very different from what we find it. Most people of course would admit a Mother's influence to be valuable, but it is as yet hardly recognised what far-reaching results may attend upon its abundant exploitation.

The motive power throughout the world, throughout the whole universe indeed, is Thought. It is Thought, the operation of the Infinite Mind, which created and maintains the stellar systems; it is Thought, the energy of that particle of mind attached to every free-willed being, which determines his actions and shapes

the relations between himself and his fellows, and it is Thought which moulds the character of every child born into the world; from which it becomes apparent what a solemn responsibility devolves upon parents and teachers and indeed upon all who associate with children. These little ones are peculiarly open to the influence of the suggestions, whether audible or silent, which impinge upon their minds, so that the importance of keeping them surrounded by a healthy mental atmosphere cannot be overstated. That atmosphere is of course most easily maintained in home surroundings, in the midst of which, too, it is that the basic foundation of character is laid. Here lies the Mother's great opportunity, and if she only rises to the height of it she will make a practice of impressing upon her infant's consciousness such thoughts of the beautiful, the good, the lovable and the true as will form a fitting groundwork for the building of a character which can be of real service to humanity.

Nor is it necessary to wait for this character building to start until the child's conscious mind begins to awaken. By that time the process should be well advanced. It should in fact have been in action since the moment when the child was first perceived to be on the way, months before birth. This is a point of the very first importance which has so far been singularly overlooked. That it should in future be given conspicuous prominence is the duty of all whose work lies in instructing and advising those who may become Mothers. At Infant Welfare Centres systematic advice is now given to prospective Mothers in regard

to the physical conditions associated with the prenatal state. This is excellent, but how still more excellent would it be were greater emphasis laid upon the even more important mental conditions, were every woman to be taught what a responsibility and what a privilege are hers to have been given the opportunity, through the impression of pure and uplifting thoughts upon the child that awaits its birth, of producing a being who shall grow up a real servant of humanity, a centre of true brotherly love and of all which that term connotes.

It is possible to discredit the doctrine of the Virgin Birth but at the same time to understand how the purity and spirituality of Mary's consciousness opened the door to the influx of the Christ spirit into the mind of the infant Jesus. Revolutionary indeed would be the effect on the Race were the Mothers of our day to take as their model the ideal Mother of all the ages, and following, however far behind, in her footsteps, to foster such a spirituality of consciousness that they too, in their degree, might give birth to children who should grow up to be saviours of the world.

The production is undoubtedly possible of a new generation of men and women filled with the determination to put into practice ideals which indeed are to be found here and there amongst us already, though too often nebulous and unpractical or obscured by regard for material interests. To this new race war would seem not only an unspeakable atrocity but also the most utterly insane expedient for righting wrongs

that could be devised. There would have descended upon the world a striking manifestation of spiritual force which, although we purblind mortals of to-day are wont to shut the door upon it while we persist in putting our "trust in horses and chariots," is the only real force able to control the material at every point. There are not wanting signs and prophecies of the advent of a great awakening, and to this the Mothers amongst us, actual and prospective, have it in their power to make a notable contribution.

Grown-up persons whose ideas are set are too often incapable of envisaging changed conditions, and of stepping out of the narrow rut in which materialistic training and persistent starvation of the soul have planted them. "Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." It is to the children that the fate of the world is entrusted. It has been said: "The race moves forward upon the feet of little children," and it is largely in the power of the Mothers to decide the direction which that movement shall take.

It is true that the late years of world-wide turmoil and disaster do not seem to present much indication of a step forwards. Grim prophecies have been rife which predicted the downfall of civilisation and the overthrow of the labour of centuries for the advancement of the race, and men's hearts have been "failing them for fear." Nevertheless there is reason, much reason, for optimism. Are we not told in the ancient Genesis legend that the presence of only ten righteous people in their midst would have saved from destruction the "Cities of the Plain"? And may we not assume

that this implies an established law capable of operating even in our days? To a sane and reflecting mind it is inconceivable that the aspirations and efforts of so many reformers and saintly teachers for the evolution of a race which shall measure up to the standard intended by the Creator should be utterly wasted, and tenfold more inconceivable that the influence of the life of perfect service, the sacrifice and the resurrection of the Son of Mary Himself, should fade out in disaster and prove to have been inadequate for combating the powers of darkness.

There is a war of course in which we all ought to take active part, a righteous war of good against evil in which "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal," and it must never be forgotten that in waging it we possess powerful, if unseen, allies. The expression "The Ministry of Angels" is familiar to some of us, and in childhood we may perhaps have harboured fantastical notions on this subject. But, putting aside fantasy and all imaginings of a winged host of glorified beings, we may be assured of the existence of bands of our brothers and sisters who have crossed the river of death, co-operating with us in our efforts to overcome the evils of the world and specially, at the present time, concentrating their energies upon the abolition of war. This is no figment of the imagination. Messages from our allies on the heights are being constantly flashed to us, the still incarnate fighters on the plain. The following are brief extracts from one such message out of scores which are continually arriving. Referring to the messenger's

life when on earth : *Oh ! she did hate war. She hated war. You know it was like something black and terrible to her mind when she was here. . . . " My mind could see the sin, the wrongness of war ; there wasn't a personal element in it but it was the recoiling of my soul from the wickedness of war."* Then referring to the life beyond the veil, the message proceeds : *She says, now again that is one of the things she is interested in over there. . . . " There must never again be war, never."* She says, *" we are working for it that there shan't be one, we are working for peace. . . ."* She says, *" it is my work and I am gathering all the minds that are working on the same lines as mine, and we are all binding ourselves to try and help."*

Sursum corda. The spirit of Good has not abandoned the world, it is even now hovering over it beseeching to be given a dwelling-place in the mind of Womanhood and thus gain a vantage-ground from which its powerful and wide-spreading energies may gather force, preparing the way for the birth of a generation wherein brotherly love shall have become second nature and war between nations shall be accounted a monstrous and unthinkable crime. Hopefully then may we await the fulfilment of the Psalmist's prophecy—" He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth ; he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear assunder ; he burneth the chariot in the fire."

III

S E R V I C E

WHY are we here? Where did we come from? What final destiny awaits us? These ancient problems are arousing more interest to-day than ever, but a complete solution of them would involve a knowledge of the plan of the universe in its entirety such as can never be gained by dwellers on the earth. The infinite plan can only be comprehended in its fulness by the Infinite Mind. That "now we see through a glass darkly" is acknowledged by the wisest of our teachers, men of Science and Philosophy, who tentatively and in humbleness of spirit set forth what seem to them the most reasonable theories on the great problem of Being, fully recognising as they do the meagreness of the proof which is adducible.

The question of where we came from is much more a matter of guesswork than are the questions of why are we here and to what destiny are we moving. In a very ancient poem, said to be of Hindu origin, an answer

is given which accords with the theory of many thinkers of our own day :

*“ Who is this ‘ I ’ that is speaking,
This being so wondrous in might ?
'Tis part of the Primitive Essence,
A spark of the Infinite Light.”*

Though from its very nature incapable of proof, it is not an unreasonable hypothesis that we were all originally included in the great Infinite Spirit of which each of us became an individualised portion on our birth into this world, a fragment so to speak detached from the mighty mass but still “ one with the Father ” in possessing the attributes—incomparably less in degree though not in quality—which we ascribe to Him. To one who professes the faith of a Christian and is therefore open to accept “ the evidence of things not seen ” this hypothesis should commend itself, the more so as there are passages in the Fourth Gospel which can be cited in support.

However, be our origin what it may, it is a reasonable assumption that each individual is born into this world according to the Creator's set purpose, with his own peculiar mission to fulfil, his own defined part to play in the great drama of the universe. Evolution applies as much to the individual character as to the race. Each unit, so it would seem, is intended to work his way upwards from a humble and insignificant “ walker on ” to the sustainer of a leading rôle.

It is often asked why we should ever have been brought into contact with matter at all. To most of

us this world seems an unsatisfactory place, to some a very unpleasant habitation indeed. We are ignorant folk and our knowledge of ourselves and of the reason for our existence is small enough, but it seems at least a likely supposition that a temporary contact with matter is intended to form the groundwork of our education, the design being that each of us shall be gradually taught to bear his assigned part in the carrying out of one stupendous plan, which will never reach its final achievement until we co-operators have all become proficient workers. It is clearly impossible for us to reach our full development, or anything remotely like it, during the brief time of our sojourn here. Our real life is to be lived in what we are accustomed to call "the next world"; it is there that we hope to begin to make rapid progress and to "go from strength to strength." Nevertheless our life on earth is an affair of enormous importance not only to ourselves but to the working out of the Infinite Plan, inasmuch as it is here that we lay the foundation for that fuller life to come, and it is on the manner in which we have performed our task here that it depends whether, when we reach the other side, we shall continue in ever-increasing degree to be co-operators with the Plan, or whether laborious and painful work awaits us before we even begin to be of use.

There are two main points to be emphasised, firstly, the importance of our work here, and secondly, the fact that this work should be team work since no one is intended to play a lone hand. Service therefore should be the keynote of this earth life, as it is the

keynote of the life in the world to come, the sphere which we sometimes speak of as Heaven and have peopled in our fancy with ministering angels. But should we not all consider ourselves ministering spirits? It is often overlooked that we too, the inhabitants of this world, though temporarily connected with matter, are just as much spirits as those who have passed from our midst. We too are intended to be ministers, a minister being, as defined by the dictionary, "one who renders aid and service to a person or a cause." And how well worth while serving is the cause to whose establishment we as spirits are called!

There exist many people of course who are rendering service more or less valuable; probably there is hardly anyone who gives no sort of service whatever, however infrequent it be. But there is service and service; indeed of true service there is but one kind which really counts, that which, forgetful of self, is occupied with promoting the good of others. Of this we have our great Exemplar, He who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

Everybody who thinks at all must be perturbed at the state of affairs throughout the world to-day, and many are the remedial measures suggested. Nothing, however, is likely to effect a permanent improvement without a great change in the consciousness of the individual, without a general turning from selfishness to service. One might liken the human race to a football team which should be animated by one single purpose, that of co-operating to capture the goal plainly marked out before it. But what an astounding

spectacle do the human players present! How the onlookers—whom one may liken to the hosts of the spirit world—would deride their efforts, were they not grieved by the team's pathetic inability to play the game and by the ludicrous insanity of the methods displayed! They would see many of the players, neglectful of the goal to be mastered, engaged in abusing and fighting each other, exulting when they had dealt some comrade a disabling blow. Others playing the game for a while would be seen suddenly diverted from their purpose to run amok among their neighbours in a blind fury. A few here and there would be found steadily pursuing the objective marked out, though hampered at every turn by their fellows striving to trip them up, to impede their progress in every way, to kick the ball away from the goal it was intended to reach. What a spectacle for the gods!

There is only one way by which we can become renderers of true service, and that is by observance of the Royal Law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It often seems a difficult, even an impossible task to love some particular neighbour, yet by striving to think the best of him we shall be serving him in the highest manner. By not recompensing evil for evil, by regarding—as one of our broadcast preachers has recommended us to do—a fellow creature, the very sight of whom perhaps is an offence to us, as God's own, we shall be performing service of the most valuable kind, and we may for all we know be influencing our brother to experience an entire change of character. We are putting a spoke in the wheel of the world's

progress to perfection when we resent another's unkindness or selfishness. If we could see matters in their true light we should know that he is injuring not us but himself, for the only things that can really harm us are those evils that assault and hurt the soul, and if we are clad in the protective armour of love we shall feel for our would-be injurer nothing but pity and a desire to help him to a better understanding. The only real power in the world is Love, and it is vain for the material to contend against this great spiritual weapon.

Most of us probably in the course of our lives have come across a few truly saintly people, humble folk very likely and unknown beyond their small circles, and we have been struck by their extraordinary faculty for creating an atmosphere of harmony around them, for subduing strife and evil-speaking in their vicinity, for softening the disagreeable traits of their neighbours with whom they are brought into contact. These rare souls, loving and lovable, should be object lessons to us all, for the results which are manifested in their restricted spheres are proofs of the far-reaching effect which, were their numbers increased a millionfold, they would produce upon the race at large, turning men's hearts and inaugurating a golden age, a veritable millennium as foreshadowed by many a prophet. We are all familiar with the motto *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, and most of us do to an extent give some attention to it. It would be a great step in advance if we were to furnish ourselves with another motto on similar lines, *de vivis nil nisi bonum*, and pay at least as much heed to this as we are wont to pay to its

counterpart. We should thus be rendering a true service to our brother and should be making his part easier, for it is evident that the way would be wonderfully smoothed for us all were we assured of freedom from the shafts of envy, hatred and malice, and could we feel that our mistakes and our unlovable traits, instead of being "rubbed in" and exaggerated, would be treated in a spirit of kindest criticism, the critic's sole thought being to help us and save us from their recurrence.

It is perhaps too much to expect that a wave of desire to live a life of service to one's brethren will suddenly descend upon the world at large, but there may be hope of its gathering head in the next generation. And here it is that the magnificent opportunity presents itself to women, especially to those who will be the Mothers of the coming children. If into the mind of these little ones there can be instilled from the earliest possible moment the true meaning of Service and the principles of the Royal Law of Love, then there will indeed be hope of the appearance of a Race in whose mind an ideal will be enthroned conforming to that which, offered for the world's acceptance nineteen hundred years ago, has so far—though never entirely lost to view—been largely despised and rejected of men and yet, since it contains in itself an immortal seed, is destined whenever it finds the requisite conditions to ripen into immortal fruit.

IV

(?) SAFETY FIRST

THE motto " Safety First " is excellent to bear in mind in connection with some of the everyday conditions which we encounter. It is unexceptionable if displayed for instance by the roadside as a warning to motorists, or inscribed upon an omnibus as a timely reminder to the alighting passenger. Yet to erect this motto into an infallible principle by which to rule one's life in every circumstance, in every crisis, is surely one of the greatest of mistakes.

The spirit of adventure certainly forms an integral part of the nature of many more people than would appear on the surface, indeed one may even suppose it to have a potential existence in every human breast, though only among the comparatively few does it succeed in attaining practical outlet, so rigorously suppressed is it apt to be by modes of education or by seemingly overwhelming force of circumstance or by a timidity to fly in the face of convention. That such a spirit is constantly striving to express itself, feeble

and foolish as the end in view so often seems, one can deduce from the prevalent rage for betting. This habit may be deplored by moralists, and indeed its undesirable features are patent enough, but all the same it is indicative of a mental activity which so far as it goes—and that is in most instances not very far—has shaken itself free from slavish obedience to the slogan “safety first.” This same spirit is even to be seen peeping out in some of the most prudent of the habitual players for safety in worldly affairs, men to whom gambling is usually anathema. Do we not find once a year some of these cautious souls so far seduced from the narrow path of circumspect and worldly-wise routine as to venture a bet or a ticket in a sweepstake on the Derby?

It is far from unreasonable to conjecture that in the nature of every member of the human race there may be inborn the spirit of adventure and the willingness to take risks, if one holds the belief that, in Scripture phraseology, man is made in the image and likeness of God, or in other words that in every individual human being there resides a spark of the Infinite, so that he is endowed—in an exceedingly minute degree of course—with those qualities which belong, on a scale of grandeur transcending our imagination, to that all-pervading Mind which we acknowledge as Deity. Doubtless there are some who will consider the ascription to God of a willingness to take risks as blasphemy. But if the question is intelligently considered is it not apparent that, in the creation of man and in the endowment of him with freewill, so that—

in part at least—man himself is made responsible for his own actions and for the development of his own character, God was in very truth taking a risk?¹ This conclusion seems inevitable, for otherwise man's every thought, word and deed must be determined by inexorable fate, and the mass of evil in the world must be the deliberate expression of God's will.

The Creator then, though it was within His Omnipotence to have employed the principle of "Safety First" and to have established the perfection of mankind at a stroke, when on the contrary He decided to invest man with freewill and to make him, to an extent, the arbiter of his own destiny, would appear to have initiated a plan which might or might not ultimate in success. And this, though not baldly stated in so many words, seems to have been recognised even by the compilers of the Old Testament, not only when they used such a phrase as "it repented Him that He had made man," but when they plainly point out that the fate which finally befell the children of Israel was directly the result of their own evil deeds, for God had left them free to do well or ill and if, in spite of the pleading of their Creator they deliberately chose the ill, their's was the responsibility.

Infinitely worth while indeed is the risk which God takes with mankind, for what prospect could be more glorious than that of the created co-operating of their own freewill with their Creator to establish a realm of perfection in which the existence of anything evil

¹ Vide *Evolution and Creation*, page 144, by Sir Oliver Lodge.

shall have become impossible? Still the risk remains, and it is even comprehensible that a crisis might arise where the human race should persist in maintaining an attitude of such extreme opposition to the Creator's beneficent intentions, that no fate would be left to befall it save that of complete annihilation.

Now if even God, the Infinite Omnipotence, wills to take risks it cannot be wrong for us to do likewise; certainly the Founder of Christianity stands out a conspicuous example to us in this respect. William James has said:¹ "*Not a victory is gained, not a deed of faithfulness or courage is done, except upon a maybe; not a service, not a sally of generosity, not a scientific exploration or experiment or textbook, that may not be a mistake. It is only by risking our persons from one hour to another that we live at all.*" Only let us remember that when we do take the risk it is imperative that it shall be for something definitely worth while.

Writers on psychology tell us that vicious or undesirable propensities often betoken a trend of mind which, if its energies can only be transmuted to expend themselves in a different and legitimate direction, will prove a valuable asset to its possessor. It is probable that the gambling spirit so prevalent everywhere is capable of such a transmutation, and if divested of its present foolish and sordid features, and lifted out of the mud of desire for selfish and personal profit on to the higher plane of a willingness to serve one's fellow

¹ *The Will to Believe.*

man, would become a powerful factor in making the world a better place. This gambling spirit is in its essence a fine thing to possess. We recognise it in the explorer, the scientist, the inventor; it has been a marked feature in the character of some of the greatest saints—who for instance led a more adventurous life, who, metaphorically, faced longer odds or plunged with more seeming recklessness than St. Paul?—and no one can deny that the risks they took were from the spiritual view-point eminently worth while.

Motive is an important consideration, and to be adventurous in the hope of rendering service to one's fellow creatures is grand. No matter if the particular adventure upon which we have launched proves a failure :

*“ 'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it.”*

If failure were impossible there would be small merit in success, and there is such a thing as a glorious failure, something that perhaps in the long run will turn out to have been actually no failure at all but a stepping-stone to higher things, or a shining example from which those who follow us will profit. In any case, to be adventurous in great matters is to be truly progressive, to be truly co-operative with one's Creator in the endeavour to establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. Disappointments it is true must be encountered, but the finer type of soul will not be discouraged by these, and however little of material advantage may come his way—though this indeed will enter not at all into his

calculations—he will be richly rewarded in having lived a life of usefulness, and what is more, a life abounding in interest.

It is fairly certain that the man who has always played for safety and acquired material prosperity thereby, who has led a peaceful, guarded and equable existence unmarked by stirring incidents, will at the end look back upon a career with far less satisfaction than will he who, never perhaps having succeeded in gaining materially more than a bare competence, can yet regard a past coloured by the spirit of adventure, a medley of storms and brilliant sunshine, and can exclaim with sincerity “at least I have lived.” And further, after entry upon the life hereafter where material possessions and honours have ceased to count, it is undoubtedly the latter of these two who will be the better equipped for embarking upon the great adventures which surely await us there.

In any case there remains to every person living one great adventure, the greatest of all, inevitable though peculiar in this that we are forbidden to seek it for its own sake, an adventure which those who look beyond matter and take a comprehensive view of life are sure to anticipate with interest. One who was lost on the *Lusitania* is reported to have discussed calmly with a friend—as they stood on the deck awaiting the vessel’s sinking—the great problem which they seemed about to solve, and to have expressed his extreme interest at being about to engage in “a great adventure.” That was grand and displayed the kind of spirit in which we should all look forward to the

close of mortal life. Yet there are comparatively few of us who do so. To most the prospect of their own death is an unpleasant and unwelcome subject, although we can, many of us, bear up with surprising equanimity against the departure of a friend into that "undiscovered country," and can attend his funeral without experiencing feelings deep enough to rob us of an hour's sleep.

It is very different when we envisage our own future. The prospect of death is apt to inspire such horror that, for the peace of our souls, we make every effort to relegate it to some secret cupboard of the mind where its skeleton shape shall be least visible, while we strive to fill our thoughts entirely with the cares and interests and pleasures of this present world. This kind of attitude neither benefits one's fellow beings nor brings happiness to one's self. The man who looks forward to death as the great adventure, he it is who has the power of being of real use to the world at large. His work is cramped by no paralysing fear of what is going to happen to him at the end of his earthly days ; he is ever ready to take risks in the execution of purposes which seem to him worth while, for he knows that, even if these risks are of a nature to involve him in personal danger, death is something which, although not to be wilfully sought, is least of all to be feared since it is the means of admittance into fuller and freer life. The vast majority of risks which men take do not of course involve a possibility of death in their connection, nevertheless it will be found that he who under inspiration of high motives

is the readiest to launch out upon projects where success seems a toss-up, possesses a spirit of such high courage as will enable him to face even the danger of death, when circumstances demand this proof of his manhood.

Probably a number of those who volunteered for service in the Great War came forward mainly from a deep sense of duty, although filled with horror at the idea of "dicing with death." All honour to them for their resolve ; they did a fine thing. But there were others, inspired with the true spirit of adventure, who apart from questions of duty and patriotism welcomed the opportunity of engaging in such a splendid risk, undeterred by the knowledge that the odds were greatly against their coming out of it scatheless, and indeed by the possibility which bulked large of their failing to come out of it at all.

A leaning to the adventurous side of life is a mental quality deserving every encouragement. But it needs correct orientation. Risks may properly be taken but for altruistic, not for selfish motives. A desire to serve the race should ever be uppermost. A spirit of adventure may inspire equally a social reformer or a "Raffles." In the latter instance an impulse of the human mind which might have been used for good, is perverted and gone astray. Is not this so often found to be the case because much of the vast field of education remains unexploited, and especially that portion of the field which has relation to the spiritual side of human nature ?

As things stand, the tendency is to devote too

exclusive an attention to those educational subjects which bear upon our material life. Not of course for a moment does one wish to minimise their importance. So long as we remain incarnate it is our duty to equip ourselves for dealing with material conditions in the most effective manner. But our studies in this direction have tended to overshadow the vital necessity of drawing out and establishing on a firm foundation those spiritual qualities which belong to the kingdom of Reality, and far transcend in importance the merely intellectual accomplishments which fit us to cope with the affairs of our present world.

Elsewhere in these pages something has been said about the great opportunity which the Mothers of the nation possess for instilling into their children's minds those eternal principles, which will not only enable them to serve the cause of Truth in this life but will remain their heritage throughout the life to come. Among these principles one may reckon as by no means the least in value the cultivation of a fearless nature, a courageous outlook upon the universe at large. This once acquired will enable its possessor to strike out with boldness upon any original line that may disclose itself in his consciousness. Unrestrained by narrow bounds of timid conventionality he will not hesitate, when occasion prompts with an object good and desirable, to take the adventurous path, cheerfully regarding whatever risk may be attached and considering it rather as giving an added zest to the enterprise. There can be joy in a strenuous fight for a noble cause, and even the wounded on a stricken

field from which, to all appearance, hope has fled, may find that in the end his endeavours have not been in vain, the risk taken has after all been worth while, seeming failure has turned out but the prelude to a real and lasting success.

V

MIRTH AND THINGS THAT MATTER

TO a higher order of Beings, spectators of the drama being enacted upon the earth as—to use Rossetti's simile—it “spins like a fretful midge,” how futile and aimless must a large portion of Mankind's activities appear!

One sometimes reads in the newspapers statistics of the number of hours of labour lost in industrial concerns through strikes or the rheumatism of the workers or what not, and proper comments are appended emphasizing the seriousness of the consequences entailed. Small notice however is generally taken of the immense waste of time, of energy and of opportunity which is constantly going on from end to end of mankind, not only in their methods of business but even more in their choice of recreations. As regards the latter one desires to speak in no kill-joy spirit, but with a very real perception of the rightness and indeed the necessity of taking pleasure. St. Paul said “God hath given us all things richly to enjoy,” but there are many pleasures to be

found in the world capable of affording solid happiness which, at present, seem to be appreciated only by the few, while the majority are too apt to seek enjoyment in ways that, if one thinks seriously about them, often appear too futile and unsatisfactory for words.

As a small illustration of this latter point one might recall a movement—if that term may be used for what was mainly a newspaper “stunt”—that took place a few years ago in favour of a “brighter London.” It is a reflection upon the intelligence of human nature in the mass that any idea put forward with sufficient emphasis by a newspaper, is at once seized upon by thousands without an attempt at examination of its merits. It will be remembered perhaps that this “brighter London” idea resulted in one business house installing outside their building a peal of bells—joy-bells presumably—which started to chime after sunset, in another house mounting searchlights upon its roof—as though London had not experienced its fill of such illuminations during the years of the war—and in other concerns adopting kindred methods of simulating the prevalence of a spirit of carnival.

This sort of thing is a symptom of a real disease which seems chronically to affect humanity; it denotes a restless pursuit of pleasure combined with the inability to comprehend in what true pleasure actually consists. The searchlights and the joy-bells were a childish and comparatively innocuous indication of this warp in human nature; a much more serious feature is the

wholesale surrender of a section of the community which is one of the most prominent in the public eye to a kind of pleasure treadmill, as though it were being forced to work out a "sentence." One of our British institutions which, even in these democratic days, still holds its own is the "London Season." Year after year, with what one is inclined to regard as nauseating regularity, the same old round recurs, Courts and Levées, Ascot, Ranelagh, Lords, Goodwood, the Scottish Season, country house parties and the slaughter of pheasants, till finally when winter has set in there comes the choice between the Riviera and winter sports in Switzerland. Are not all these activities recorded year after year, with irritating and monotonous regularity, in the "Society" illustrated papers? Indeed, but for the changing fashion in garments the same illustrations could almost serve from one season to another. One might liken the whole affair to the rolling of some huge barrel each of whose staves comes up unvaryingly in its turn, presents its dull surface and passes from view to reappear in due course of revolution the same uninspiring object as ever.

Now it is possible to have a sincere dislike of Communistic or even Socialistic principles and yet to experience immense impatience at the thought of a system which, coming down to the bedrock of reality, not only embodies an amount of vulgar display sufficient to inoculate every proletarian observer with the virus of Communism, but involves a strenuous working at pleasure which cannot but

swamp all inclination to reach out after higher ideals, and must needs divert into unproductive channels a store of energy which might have been used for objects and pursuits really counting for something in the scheme of the universe. The leading of a useless life of so-called pleasure is bound to hasten the decay of spiritual faculties, besides being provocative of infinite boredom, a condition which notoriously lays the mind open to invasion by undesirable suggestions.

It is a common mistake for a moralist to decry the fashionable follies of his own day, and assume the rôle of *laudator temporis acti*, for as a matter of fact it is improbable that human nature has changed in the extent of its follies, only in the particular mode of them. Our ancestors indeed—fortunate people—had no jazz bands but enjoyed the privilege of dancing to strains which really were something like music, nor did they flock for meals into restaurants and carry on dinner conversation in a pitch of voice which had to contend against the crude cacophony of ukulele and saxophone. Probably, however, those upon whom the opportunity fell to tread the social round were just as much afflicted with boredom as are many of their descendants of to-day. One can find hints of this in literature ranging back through the reign of Victoria to that of Anne.

It is on the occasions when people much in the public eye flock together in their search for amusement that the futility of many of our so-called pleasures becomes most noticeable, but the futility is there just as much

in the more commonplace ways of life, at tea-parties for instance or in the conversation of city men in a suburban train where one encounters time after time the same kind of talk and might suppose that the fate of the universe depended on which horse will carry off "The Derby," which football team will win "The Cup," what clues the Police are following in the latest murder case. The study of life is of course not only laudable but necessary, nor is that of its more frivolous or more sordid aspects to be neglected, but these aspects need not be dwelt upon further than is necessary for the investigation and comprehension of human nature, much less are they to be regarded as those facets of a large and complex whole which alone can hold interest for us. There is an infinite variety of subjects dealing with mankind and the universe generally which it is infinitely worthwhile to investigate, and the neglect of those which would exercise our intellectual powers and stimulate our diviner sentiments is surely a grievous omission. Before each individual there stretches the long path of progress which at some time or another he is bound to tread, and if he fritters away his life here in the constant pursuit of trivialities, it only means in the next life a more arduous and uphill task and a longer absence from the attainment of that satisfying joy in living which earnest seeking for greater knowledge and experience brings. There is a pleasure in thinking out and discussing the deep things of life, of Nature, of God, and in the endeavour to arrive at the solution of some of the vital problems of reality, which transcends in an immense degree any

satisfaction obtainable from the evanescent amusements of material existence.

People in general are apt to consume so much time over futilities in the course of every day life that it is not surprising to find in matters of public and general importance, in political and religious questions, for instance, a persistent obsession which makes for the employment of tinkering methods in cases where the radical treatment essential for rectifying what is wrong remains unperceived or at least, if not that, is set aside as being too difficult or beyond the range of practical application.

As an example, one might mention the case of the Revised Prayer Book, which recently has been so greatly agitating the Church of England. Into its merits or demerits it is unnecessary here to enquire. No doubt both supporters and opponents of the Book were actuated, or at least believed themselves to be so, by what they conceived to be high principles. To a neutral observer it seemed that many of them had lost sight of the highest principle of all, brotherly love and tolerance, and were too narrow and self-opinionated to recognise that if your neighbour's way of getting to God is not exactly the same as your own he can yet reach the desired destination as surely as you can yourself. They appeared to have missed the truth that what is really needed to render the Church a more effective power for righteousness is less a revision of forms and ceremonies than a great spiritual awakening in each individual member's consciousness, and an earnest concentration of effort to this end.

Resolute turning from "the letter that killeth" to "the spirit that maketh alive" might have accomplished much.

In political affairs one has been quite accustomed to find expediency over-riding principle, though it must be confessed that latterly an improvement in this respect appears to have set in. There have of course been notable instances to the contrary, but in general how comparatively seldom it has occurred in the past that a policy which embodied absolute right and justice has been courageously and wholeheartedly pursued regardless of what might be the consequences to its individual backer. Love of place and power, desire of standing well in the eyes of the rich and influential and fear to give them offence, a cowardly flinching from entry upon a path beset with dangers and difficulties when the road of compromise offered so pleasant a prospect, these and such as these are factors which have determined the actions of the majority of mankind, and pointed to an absorption of the soul in the material interests of this passing world rather than in those spiritual ventures which, bearing the stamp of reality and eternity, are the things that matter. But let us not forget that if those who are responsible for the conduct of public affairs ever fall short of the standard at which they should aim, it is when one comes down to bedrock the fault of the people, Tom, Dick and Harry—and nowadays Joan, Mary and Susan as well—who put them into their positions. We get the rulers whom we deserve, the type which reflects the modes of thought uppermost in our own hearts. A general

uplifting of the ideals of the commonalty, of the man in the street as we are wont to call him, could bring about an ennoblement of national life throughout all its departments which would herald a real millennium.

Let it not be supposed however that anything which has been said is meant to imply that one is desirous of seeing the establishment of a state of society in which will be seen nothing but solemn faces and an unrelieved gravity of demeanour. On the contrary, a spirit of happiness and joviality even is in no way inconsistent with an absorbing interest in the serious things of life.

It might in this connection be helpful to review our ideas of the nature of God. Immense beyond conception as are His Power, His Majesty, His Responsibility, yet surely we may ascribe to Him as well the more homely attributes of Humour and Playfulness. There is no irreverence in supposing that God can laugh, can appreciate a joke, can take delight in the fantastic expressions of *la joie de vivre* which His creatures so often display. One can imagine Him smiling at a dog racing round in circles, at a plover performing for pleasure its aerial "stunts," at a world-renowned Scientist or a venerable Archbishop unbending to take part in some ridiculous children's game. It might seriously lessen one's desire of admission into the New Jerusalem were it believed that its walls would never echo to the sound of laughter.

We rightly think of our friends who have passed beyond the veil as engaged upon work of the highest

import, and may just as rightly picture them enjoying their periods of relaxation amid mirth and laughter and scenes of friendly banter. Were we as awake as they are to the true intention of life and to the greatness of the design towards the fulfilment of which the whole creation is moving, we should devote ourselves much more earnestly to the discussion and pursuit of objects which really matter, and at the same time should find ourselves no whit cut off from pleasure and jollity but on the contrary enjoying them with a keener zest than ever.

Yet though one's observation of the fare set forth by our daily newspapers, of the goods displayed on our railway bookstalls, of some of the pastimes and amusements in vogue to-day, might incline one at the first blush to think pessimistically of the chances of a national conversion to a desire for pursuing the things that matter, it is essential to avoid too superficial a judgment. One may travel in a railway carriage full of business men, one may associate at a party with young people of both sexes, and in either case may be driven to the limit of patience by the seeming inanities and trivialities displayed in their conversation, and by the futility of the interests which appear to absorb their whole attention, and yet were one to be involved in any sudden difficulty, an accident, or what not, one would very likely find that these same people were capable of manifesting an amount of sympathy and helpfulness which could suggest that, beneath all the surface froth, there lie deep down in human nature generally a seriousness and a non-material tendency

which are of bright augury for the progress of the race.

How often too, we are surprised to find that people who seem at first sight essentially thoughtless and frivolous, can sit down and discuss deep problems of being not only with interest but with an intelligence which shows their thinking faculties to be far removed from sterility. We may deplore the prevalent craving for pleasure and excitement, we may recognise that many forms of so-called amusement to-day—especially among the well-to-do and those who constitute Society with the big S—not only fail as promoters of genuine relaxation and enjoyment but are worthy of condemnation as a sad waste of time and energy, and yet in spite of all this we may suspect that in the hearts of the great mass of the people there exists, subconsciously at any rate, a mine—its surface as yet barely scratched perhaps—of genuine aspiration towards the things that really matter, an instinctive yearning for a more earnest and a more purposeful life.

Joy and light-heartedness, it is to be hoped, will be always with us—progressively so indeed—and even as regards frivolity and buffoonery one would be sorry to think that these should be altogether lacking in our midst, but that which seems at the present day especially necessary for us to acquire is a better sense of proportion, a larger power of discrimination between what constitutes genuine amusement and recreation and what is merely their shallow semblance, together with a perception that, while joy and mirth will always

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have their place, they can only be truly attained where there exist a serious realisation of the purpose for which we are created and a determination to carry on with earnestness and devotion the particular work assigned to us by our Creator.

VI

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

THE infliction of the death penalty is a subject concerning which there has been much discussion of recent years, and the question of its abolition is already coming within the range of practical politics. The really important consideration in the matter bears upon religion pure and simple—is Capital Punishment in accordance with the Divine Will or is it not ?

While there are some parts of the world where the death penalty has already been abolished, there are others where its continued existence seems to incline jurymen towards the pronouncement of a verdict of "not guilty" in cases where, according to the judgment of every reasonable mind, the accused person's criminality has been definitely established. No one will deny that we in England have made an enormous advance since for instance the earlier days of George the Third, when the punishment of death was inflicted for a host of offences, many of them of the most trivial

nature, and even since the more recent time when Fauntleroy was executed for forgery. Public opinion appears to be moving towards the abolition of the extreme penalty, and this may account for a tendency observable in some murder cases to the display of an undue amount of sentimental feeling for the prisoner. One may rejoice that ruthless severity of the bad old type no longer holds sway, but any inclination towards the opposite extreme of false sympathy and mawkish sentiment should be sedulously discouraged.

We need to attain to and abide by the golden mean of sanity and justice. However sincerely one may deprecate the hanging of a murderer, the heinousness of his crime is most assuredly not a thing to be minimised. The criminal has not only brought a desolating calamity upon his victim's family, but he has actually arrogated to himself a function of the Deity in determining when a human being's life shall be cut short. Those who show an excess of sentimental sympathy for the convicted murderer in view of his approaching end while bestowing perhaps not a thought upon the suffering of those who mourn his victim, possess an unbalance of mind almost amounting to moral depravity. At the same time when we reflect that even the very lowest specimen of the human race is one of "God's own," a certain sanely directed sympathy for the murderer cannot be said to be misplaced, a sympathy, be it understood, which is undivorced from the sense of justice, for one can foretell that on the next plane, if not on this, he is bound to pass through the fire of mental agony and

remorse before he has purged his crime, and one must acknowledge it to be entirely righteous that the full payment of his debt should be exacted.

That however is very far from saying that the criminal's earthly life ought to be deliberately cut short. Two wrongs do not make a right. It is not for human justice, any more than it was for the murderer, to arrogate to itself the functions of the Almighty. Christ did not denounce his slayers as deserving of physical extinction for their deed. He prayed for their forgiveness knowing well that full payment must be rendered by them first, though every extenuating circumstance would be taken into account in measuring its extent.

One of the main grounds of argument in regard to the advisability of abolishing capital punishment is whether it is or is not a deterrent to other potential assassins. The crucial question however is something very different, based upon higher principles and less material considerations. Have we the right to cut short the earthly career of anyone for no matter what reason ?

There are many who hold the Creator's design to be that each unit of the human race should evolve, both in this life and in that hereafter, into a perfect being fitted for co-operation in carrying out the divine purpose for the Universe. That any approach to perfection can be achieved on this earth is clearly impossible, but it may be reasonably presumed that a man is born into contact with matter in order that, by subdual of its claims and by cultivation of brotherly love towards his fellows and of a desire to co-operate with them in

all which makes for righteousness, he may lay such a fair foundation for his character as will ensure his rapid progress after he has passed from this material sphere. Earth, in short, is to be regarded as a kind of school, where the intention is to offer the pupil the means of so moulding his consciousness as to fit himself for the acquisition of great knowledge in the future, rather than to afford an opportunity of gaining advanced understanding in the present. We are surely intended to profit by the advantages which this school gives us to the very utmost of our ability, and for the longest period of time that we can compass. It will go hard with us if in an access of extreme folly and blindness we wilfully cut short our own allotted course or that of one of our fellow creatures.

It would appear that to each one of us there is assigned an earth life of a certain duration. When its days are accomplished leave it we must, and if we have taken due advantage of our opportunities we should leave it with the joyful feelings of one who is moved up into a higher class, there to associate with old companions in more important and interesting work and in the enjoyment of more satisfying recreations. But it will go hard on him who strives to shorten for himself or another that early period of probation. Suicide is rightly regarded as a crime, though it is not everyone who fully realises its seriousness or what a terrible payment is likely to be exacted in many an instance from its committer, and through what a wilderness of darkness and agony of mind he may have to pass before he finally emerges into the light, even

allowing, as no doubt is the case, that there will be reckoned in his favour every extenuating circumstance possible.

We are apt to regard ourselves with complaisance as highly evolved and reasonable beings, when as a matter of fact our ideas and methods are sometimes illogical in the extreme. For instance—however evil a life a man may have been leading and however great the harm he may have wrought upon those around him, our laws would still condemn suicide on his part as a criminal proceeding and would by no means account it a justifiable act of self-execution. It would have been right for him, we say, to have continued living ; it was a crime on his part to bring about his own death. On the other hand in the case of a murderer—who may, for all one knows, have been in the sight of God less of a sinner than was the suicide—we say exactly the opposite. We consider that for him to continue to live would be a miscarriage of justice. We should most of us agree that, if sufficient time be allowed, there lies open for every criminal the possibility of repentance and reformation. In many cases, no doubt, their achievement seems improbable, but at least it is something which *can* take place and has in fact done so in certain instances.

The principle of a life for a life should appear monstrous at our present stage of evolution. It is never to be forgotten that in dealing with a murderer, however abominable the nature of his crime, we are still dealing with a son of God, with one who—æons it may be after his upright judges but in the long last

equally with them—will be purged of all his sinful impulses and will take his place among the redeemed and perfected. How can we justifiably assume the responsibility of sending him who, however criminal nevertheless remains our brother, posthaste into the life to come, almost it may be said “unhousel’d, unanointed, unanel’d,” cutting short the term of who knows how many earthly years which might have been left him in which to render himself more fitted for the transition !

It is customary for a Judge to admonish a convicted murderer that a few weeks yet remain to him in which to make his peace with his Creator. Those few weeks are of course better than nothing but, generally speaking, they must prove miserably inadequate. It may easily be that one who has committed murder from motives of anger or revenge is by no means incorrigibly evil. At the same time he may remain after his trial still under the influence of those passions which drove him to the deed, and it might well require a long period—much longer than the weeks intervening between sentence and execution—before those passions subsided and their victim regained sanity of mind enough to realise the atrocity of his act, and enter upon the stony path of remorse and repentance.

The murderers executed under our laws are clearly of varying degrees of guilt, ranging from the relatively high-minded man who has been overborne by a sudden gust of rage, to him who has committed the crime with cunning premeditation and for motives entirely sordid. Yet even in the heart of the most depraved specimen,

of one whose mentality inspires nothing but loathing, a Fagin or a Bill Sikes, ought we on serious reflection to suggest that it is right to put a deliberate end to his earthly existence? Somewhere in his nature there burns "a spark of the Infinite Light," and who are we to say that even in the very vilest that spark might not at any moment be kindled into flame? Probably there are few characters in fiction more villainous than the two cited, yet the brutal Sikes could inspire devotion in a woman and a dog, and even Fagin, the worse of the pair, is pictured by the novelist as having on one occasion at least given way to a feeling of pity.

Among civilised peoples in all ordinary circumstances it is a recognised thing that life shall be kept going to the uttermost limit. A doctor, however much his sense of compassion may cause him to deplore the necessity, considers it a sacred duty to endeavour to conserve life in his patient till the latest possible minute, even when every breath is being drawn in agony, and it is certain that relief is impossible while the vital spark remains. Similarly we may conjecture that those unseen helpers, who guard us on our way through this troublous world, never cease their life-preserving efforts while there is one breath left for us to draw. It would seem as though it were one of the fixed principles of the universe that the life of every sentient being should be spun out to the last second of the length ordained. If this is so then it is clear that deliberately to put a summary end to any individual human existence is an act of arrogance and impiety so great that, to apply the phrase an ancient Greek might

have used, it must needs draw down upon its perpetrator the wrath of the Gods. And in this connection it may be of interest to refer to a message, received by the writer from one who has "passed over," which, after a pronouncement of the communicator's opinion that a certain friend on earth who was involved in unhappy conditions would be better *on the other side* concluded as follows: *but she* (the communicator) *is not allowed to wish for it. She has to take the idea that life has to be nourished wherever it is, the flame kept burning. It is our duty.*

It is significant that the Greeks, who produced some of the deepest thinkers of all time, should have laid such stress in their poetry and legends upon the penalty which awaits those who presumptuously arrogate to themselves judgments and functions which are the peculiar prerogatives of Deity. This viewpoint of theirs might well be seriously taken to heart by us who, after the advantage of nineteen hundred years of Christianity, surely ought by now to have acquired a juster apprehension of the principles which should guide us in our dealings with those of our fellow men who, in violating the divine law, "Thou shalt not kill," merit and will certainly, without the least need of our interference, receive the expiatory punishment which is their due.

VII

WITH UNVEILED FACE

THEY see themselves in others, for all things are transparent and there is nothing dark or resisting, but everyone is manifest to everyone internally.

Such are the words of Plotinus speaking of the dwellers in the realm of pure thought. He is here concerned no doubt with consciousness at its highest and most perfect, but present-day communications from "the other side" afford good grounds for believing that his words would be not inapplicable also to that less exalted sphere which is likely to be the first we shall enter at the close of earth life. It seems as though we may expect to find there that concealment of our thoughts is impossible and the mind is an open book for everyone to read, so that in all intercourse a man's real sentiments will be invariably apparent, and any chance of obscuring them by lying or mental reservation will have gone by for ever. Perhaps many of us have never realised that this is likely to be the case, although it was suggested by St. Paul when he

says, in the famous thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, "then shall I know even as also I am known," or "have been known" as the Revised Version puts it, an expression which may incline us to suspect concealment of our thoughts from those friends who have passed out of matter to be even now impossible or at least unlikely. This suspicion is bound to be disquieting when it is considered how deeply ashamed we should, many of us, feel, were all our secrets laid bare to the scrutiny of our incarnate contemporaries. At the same time it may be useful if it acts as a warning to us to exercise a far stricter heedfulness in regard to the subjects which occupy the mind, and if it leads us to be prompt in expelling from our mental kingdom any unworthy thought which may flash into consciousness and be of a nature to shock or sadden our invisible friends.

We are so careful to guard against the betrayal of certain of our real feelings, and so convinced that this care is necessary if we are to avoid chaos in our human relations, that it is a little difficult to conceive of a state of society where a person's every thought is read, and where he, so to speak, carries his character about with him displayed in its naked reality. It should never be forgotten that we incarnate dwellers on this material earth are spirits in no less a degree than are those who have passed out of matter and inhabit an immaterial or etheric sphere. A time may finally arrive when the human race will have evolved, mentally and morally, to such a height of perfection that the ability to communicate with—to walk and talk with—

our friends upon the etheric plane will have become a commonplace of daily existence, and then perhaps intercourse between those who are still incarnate will likewise be divested of all need or desire for mental reservations and the disguisement of their actual thoughts. The dawn of such an epoch seems even now to be faintly discernible, although in the meantime the habit of camouflaging our real sentiments persists and in fact may be pronounced necessary, if pandemonium throughout human society is to be avoided. It ought to humble us, when inclined to boast of our civilisation, to reflect that it is because we stand on so low a rung of the ladder of progress that, in order to escape strife and unpleasantness, we are so frequently driven to employ methods which cannot but put a strain upon our sense of honesty. It is truly regrettable that there are so many crises in life, minor as well as major, where the best we can do seems to be to take a course of which we cannot help feeling a little ashamed. If we had purged ourselves of all selfishness, envy and hatred, and of overweening fondness for material advantages and enjoyments—for the majority of us are vastly too preoccupied with scheming for our own profit or pleasure—we should be cultivating a far greater openness in all dealings and conversations with our neighbours. Eradication of the idea of one's self-importance would eliminate the sensitiveness which manifests itself in hurt feelings, and the recognition that diversity of opinions on all sorts of subjects is natural and should add to the interest of familiar communion, would ensure a liberal tolerance and a

ready hearing for views differing from our own. We are a long way as yet from the attainment of so high a rung upon the ladder of progress, though there is hope of the race arriving there some day.

In the meantime the members of the present generation are daily crossing in thousands from this world into that beyond, and it is not without a touch of humour that one can speculate upon the bewilderment which many—perhaps most—of them must experience in their new surroundings, when they find their secret thoughts laid bare for all to perceive. The dreams which come to some people of being projected unclothed into the midst of a public gathering would be a trifle in comparison with the sense of spiritual nakedness by which many of these newcomers must be overwhelmed. Accustomed here to use language so frequently for concealment of their thoughts, they must be amazingly at a loss there where—though for all one can tell verbal intercommunication may still be partially employed—the reading of another's mind, without any need for exchange of words, is a faculty which all exercise.

But although one can imagine the distress and embarrassment which might descend upon the newly arrived, as he awakes to find himself enveloped in so novel an atmosphere of crystal truth, one may also not unreasonably suppose that he will speedily experience a certain relief, on finding that the many unworthy thoughts which he has brought over with him are received by his new companions, not so much with horror and aversion as would be the case on this mortal

plane, but with a tenderness of sympathy which could scarcely fail to reassure him. Truly in that discarnate sphere there must prevail an understanding, far beyond what is attainable here, of the trials and temptations which beset the incarnate, a liberal allowance for the failure to cope with them, and a recognition that this failure may be often due to defects in the subject's early education and training.

There is a fantastic story, entitled *The Guilty Party*, by O. Henry, the American writer, which is apposite in this connection. It is the tale of a young girl, with a selfish father too intent upon his own ease and comfort to bother about his daughter or to pay the smallest heed to her up-bringing. Following a picture of the crowded street outside their home, one of those streets, as the Author describes it, *in which, as twilight falls, Satan sets up his recruiting office—he proceeds—A little girl of twelve came up timidly to the man reading and resting by the window and said: "Papa, won't you play a game of checkers with me if you aren't too tired?"* The red-haired, unshaven, untidy man sitting shoeless by the window answered with a frown: "Checkers! No, I won't. Can't a man who works all day have a little rest when he comes home? Why don't you go and play with the other kids on the sidewalk?" The woman who was cooking came to the door. "John," she said, "I don't like for Lizzie to play in the street. They learn too much there that ain't good for 'em. She's been in the house all day long. It seems that you might give up a little of your time to amuse her when you come home." "Let her go and play like the rest of 'em if she wants to

be amused," said the red-haired, unshaven, untidy man, "and don't bother me." The upshot is that the girl is practically driven into the streets, there to consort with vicious companions until she finally drifts into a life of evil. She ends by stabbing a faithless lover and to avoid capture throwing herself into the river. The Author concludes the tale by recounting a dream or vision of himself as newly-arrived in the next world and forming one of a crowd outside a courtroom where the judgments are going on. Among the crowd he sees the girl in charge of a kind of spirit-detective. She is summoned into the court, and presently a court officer emerges with the announcement that she has been discharged and that the detective is to blame for having arrested the wrong person. "*The guilty party you've got to look for in this case,"* he says, "*is a red-haired, unshaven, untidy man, sitting by the window reading, in his stocking feet, while his children play in the streets."*

If we try to put ourselves into the position—which we shall each of us have one day to occupy—of a newcomer into that world where one's whole mental attitude is laid bare, we can readily imagine that he will be more quickly led to eliminate faults from his character when his imperfections, however serious, are sympathetically dealt with, and the necessity and method of amendment lovingly pointed out, than if he is haled for punishment before an inexorable judge.

When we consider the—as it seems to us here—awful truth that in the next world the secrets of all hearts will be disclosed, it should be a strong incentive

to us to cultivate during our earth life as great a frankness of mind as we can possibly compass. Half the misunderstandings in the world proceed from the fact that people will not take the trouble to know each other. *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*. Were we cognisant of all our brother's temptations, of the many wheels within wheels whose revolutions have produced his state of mind which offends or exasperates us, we should have less hesitation about throwing a broad mantle of charity over his foibles, and all the less in proportion as we are conscious of our own weaknesses and of our own need for merciful consideration.

Our forebodings then of the shock which it may be to us, on our arrival into the next world, to find our heart's secrets laid open for all to see can be mitigated if, as we may suppose, the friends whom we shall rejoin have gained a far juster and broader view of life, with all its trials and difficulties, than mere earth sojourn can afford, and if we may be assured of being received by them in no condemnatory spirit, but with the sympathy and understanding of which their more educated natures must certainly be lavish. His judge will be a man's own conscience, as he recalls every incident of his earth life and from his widened viewpoint is able to follow up the consequences. Shame and remorse he will undoubtedly experience, but from this purgatory he will ascend into a purified consciousness, the more quickly that his rejoined dear ones will be guiding his steps and surrounding him with a wealth of sympathy and love.

It is not pleasant to contemplate the hypocrite's

feelings when he arrives over the border—one is thinking particularly of the successful hypocrite, the man with canker in his soul who lives a life of prosperity and influence to the envy of his acquaintance, and is finally borne to his grave amid a crowd of sycophantic followers. Well, if they only knew these may have little reason to envy him ! But of course we are all, or nearly all, hypocrites in a greater or less degree. The chief need at present is for us to become honest with ourselves, to know ourselves, and when we earnestly try to do so we are undoubtedly averting much agony of mind in the hereafter.

Actually the dissection of the secret thoughts of our hearts in the endeavour to get to know ourselves is tantamount to "Confession." To the Protestant ear the word may have an ugly sound, and yet the emphasis laid on its necessity by the Catholic Faith is in essence one of the most valuable contributions which that Faith makes to the world, and the doctrine would be more readily appreciated by non-Catholics were it not for the abuses which are possible when Confession is put into practice in its auricular form. It is a doctrine with much scriptural authority behind it—for instance : "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Certainly the more effectual the cleansing of our mind which we can accomplish in this world, the lighter the purgation—the purgatorial flames of the Catholics—which will be needed hereafter.

Speaking of Confession, William James says :¹ "*It is*

¹ *The Varieties of Religious Experience.*

part of the general system of purgation and cleansing which one feels oneself in need of, in order to be in right relations to one's deity. For him who confesses, shams are over and realities have begun; he has exteriorized his rottenness. If he has not actually got rid of it, he at least no longer smears it over with a hypocritical show of virtue—he lives at least upon a basis of veracity."

The popular mind chiefly associates Confession with its auricular practice by Catholics, to many of whom no doubt this is a real spiritual help. Is it, by the way, ultra-fantastic to imagine that good Catholics, regular at Confession in this world, might, when entering upon the next plane, be embarrassed to a less extent than men of other religions by the exposure of their secret thoughts? The Protestant who uncompromisingly condemns the exercise, shows himself possessed of a lack of understanding of the diversity of the universe with its many paths which lead to spirituality. Confession, however, is a very much wider thing than the mere telling of one's sins to a Priest. In its large sense it implies for the individual soul, as William James suggests, an ousting of hypocrisy and an inrush of honesty, for, coming to bedrock, it is actually to himself that a man's confession is made and, whether another person is a confidant in the matter or not, the effect is that the penitent—for repentance is necessarily involved—has attained a state of mind in which he finds it possible to meet his fellows in a spirit of greater frankness and sincerity.

All of us on earth are apt at times to withdraw ourselves into our shell, indeed some of us are scarcely

ever to be seen outside of it and remain throughout life loth to give anything away. There is in reality much for every individual in his relations with his fellows to give away, a store of encouragement and sympathy and appreciation for them, and a readiness to lend calm and kindly consideration to the ideas they express. The generous outpouring of these qualities could only have the effect of establishing an all-round spirit of frankness and confidence, in which diversities of views might be freely put forward with no fear of provoking hostility and angry rejoinder, but rather with the result of arousing interest and eliciting friendly argument. One may feel pretty sure that in the next world nothing is on a dull level, but that differences of opinion, though with all trace of bitterness and impatience wiped out, still exist and—since the inhabitants must be always striving after more knowledge—that they provide occasion for discussions which, purified of all egotistic tendency to an obstinate insistence upon personal views, are of real value in paving the way for a solution of some of the great problems of Being.

VIII

INVOCATION OF SAINTS

THE deplorable venom too frequently poured forth by members of religious bodies, in combating what they consider to be the false doctrines emanating from rival sects, has always been one of the principal obstacles to the achievement by Christianity of the results at which it should aim. Cordial acknowledgment that there are many roads leading to God, that the diversities of human nature require diversities of views concerning the doctrines of religion, that a dogma which offends one's susceptibilities may, nevertheless, embody in its kernel an aspect of truth which is of real value to one's neighbour, would promote a spirit of brotherly love that might go far towards healing the dissensions and divisions which distract the Christian world.

To take only one creed—several of the Roman Catholic doctrines which are anathema to the militant Evangelical could be cited as affording occasions for hostile criticism, to “spread itself” in exaggerated

fashion and to shoot absurdly far beyond the mark. Granting that their original intention has been perverted, that the truth in them has been distorted or even buried out of sight beneath an accretion of superstition, yet there remains the fact that actual truth is there which, if dug up and freed from the baser matter in which it has become embedded, will shine out pure gold. One of these doctrines, misconstrued and misapplied though it may have been by devotees, is that of the Invocation of Saints.

Now we may freely acknowledge that there is no power in the Universe apart from that which is exercised by the Being we call God. At the same time, in the fulfilment of His designs, He works always through agents—"Ye ministers of His that do His pleasure" as they are called in the Psalms. If we have it clear in our minds that there is One Sole Ruler of the Universe, and that everything down to the minutest atom depends upon Him alone, we shall not be likely to mistake the agent for the Principal in any activities which we are considering. While we address our prayers to the Omnipotent as the ultimate source whence good can come to us, we may yet make request to a human personality for help in respect of our particular requirements, recognising him as a divinely appointed channel through which there may flow from the Infinite Reservoir that supply which we happen to need. But our request to the agent is on a very different level from our prayer to the Divine. We might for instance pray to God to be cured of a sickness, but this will not prevent us from requesting the services

of a physician as being the agent through whose means the healing power is ordained to reach us.

When the Roman Catholic supplicates the help of The Virgin or St. Francis or St. Joan, he is at least acknowledging that behind the veil there exist personalities once incarnate, who are able to cognise the thoughts and desires of those that still dwell upon the earth, to perceive their needs and to afford them assistance. This is a fact by the realisation of which a flood of comfort can be directed to the hearts of those in perplexity or distress.

But it is not necessarily to the Saints of history that we are obliged to go for help and counsel; we may apply to those loved ones who once companied with us here. They are far indeed from being "the Saints" as a Catholic reckons such, they are much more homely and familiar personalities, men and women like ourselves, striving to follow along the path of progress just as we are, excepting that more light is shed upon their way than is available for us gropers amid the fogs of earth. That they are eager to help us, that they long for us to admit them into our daily companionship, to allow them to share in our pursuits and aspirations, to hold converse with them as though they were still materially visible and tangible, there is abundant evidence to prove. It must be a real sadness to them if they perceive themselves to be thought of as gone for ever, as definitely excluded from contact with their friends left behind.

Many of us were taught as children to believe ourselves under the protection of guardian angels. Some

who claim to have knowledge on these subjects will tell us that we are, each one, under the guidance of a higher being. This may be so, though it is not necessary to consider such a being as belonging to some order of spirits immensely superior to mankind. When St. John "fell down to worship before the face of the angel" who had shown him the glories of the New Jerusalem, he was told "see thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren. . . ." But whether or not we are under the care of any highly exalted spirit, it is extremely probable, to say the least of it, that we are subject to the special influence of one or more of those departed whom we once loved upon earth.

Many, even among earnest Christians who profess a belief in survival of bodily death, deny the possibility of communication with friends who have left this world, though, rather inconsistently, some of these good people claim to be able to make their desires known to certain of "the Saints" and to obtain answers to their requests.

There exist, however, a number, and a growing number, of ordinary everyday folk who have no more doubt of the possibility of communication with friends who have passed to a fuller life than of their own existence, and who are convinced that, at times and in certain conditions, they do really receive direct messages from over the border. These messages in part consist of the production of proofs by the one communicating that he is the personality which he claims to be, a very necessary preliminary of course.

That accomplished, there quite commonly follow attempts to describe something of the conditions of the communicator's new life, the relation in which he finds himself towards those whom he has loved on earth and left behind, and generally speaking the interaction of thought between the two planes. These latter descriptions are of course unverifiable ; there is and can be no certain proof of their truth. But as regards this point let us reflect for a moment that when on earth we listen to a friend—in whom we know we can place the utmost confidence—telling us of things he has done or scenes he has viewed, although no corroboration of his statements may be available we do not dream of doubting his *bona fides* or suspect him of mere romancing. His concepts it is true may be coloured by the trend of his own mentality, but at least we fully accept his descriptions as being faithful representations of events or scenes as they have impressed him. Similarly in a talk with a friend who has "passed over" it is possible to obtain as clear a perception of his identity as though one were meeting him face to face, and, this effected, there is surely no reason—indeed to human sense it would be insulting—to doubt the *bona fides* of further messages which in their very nature admit of no corroboration.

There is ample evidence in many communications from the departed of their continued interest in and sympathy with their friends still in a state of mortality, and of their eagerness to help them in their trials and difficulties. A woman who had left her husband behind on earth transmitted him this message : "*In*

future when you feel one of these minor matters beginning to depress and upset you and keep you from concentrating, just speak to her and say—"Here's another silly little thing I am going to worry about"—and she will come in and help you." The same communicator further went on to say that if at any time her husband desired special help either for himself or for any of his friends, he should tell her so the last thing at night before going to sleep, or whenever he had a little quiet time, and that she would without fail respond to the best of her power. The receiver of the message has declared that since then on many occasions he has asked for her help, either for himself or for some friend who was ill or in trouble, and that almost invariably a change for the better has been the result, indeed in one or two instances a change striking beyond expectation. There is of course nothing evidential in all this. The result each time may have been simply due to chance—coincidence. On the other hand it may not, and it is to be remarked that this, far from being an isolated experience, is only one of many which are continually coming to those who claim to be in close communion with some loved one beyond the veil. It may be added that the communicator referred to had during her earth life been endowed with the gift of healing, and in the course of its exercise had been the means of bringing help and comfort to hundreds, not alone to the sick but to persons involved in trouble of every sort and kind. Surely it is monstrous to suppose that those higher faculties, which have adorned a character in this life, are dissipated with the shedding of the

mortal envelope. Rather must they form conspicuous features of the surviving personality, and not only continue to shine out but to do so with ever-increasing lustre.

Communication with the departed is a much commoner experience than the ordinary man in the street might suppose, for it is something which the one attempting it is apt to speak of only among intimates. It seems as if the healing influence, in the case of sickness or sorrow or trouble, exerted by dwellers upon another plane were showing itself a matter of everyday occurrence. Though reticence about any sort of dealing with things supernormal is understandable, it is a question whether it might not in the end conduce to the general good if more publicity were given to the help and comfort being received by so many who obtain convincing proofs of the continued existence of those who have vanished from earthly sight. There are people of course who have never as yet lost one very dear to them, among whose departed relations and friends there is no one with whom they have any strong yearning to establish contact. They therefore feel no absorbing interest in the subject. But to many of these there must finally come a time when some one very precious is snatched away, and it is in such a crisis that indifference to the possibility of communication may yield to the desire to be assured of its feasibility. In cases where this desire is fulfilled the comfort to the survivor on earth can be great beyond words. There is an especial joy in knowing that one can still confide one's troubles to a near and

dear companion and continue as of old to receive sympathy and help and consolation.

We can see then how "The Invocation of Saints" may be a phrase suggestive of an underlying reality of immense significance, even if we do not accept its wording as technically correct. Our friends on the other side will indeed pretty certainly decline with some firmness to be considered Saints, and for most of us imperfect mortals their consideration in that light would only tend to make them seem more remote and unapproachable. What we may say of them is that they are a little further advanced than we are, and that living as they do in a purer atmosphere and relieved of the disabilities which attend a state of mortality, they have the advantage of a clearer vision than is obtainable by ourselves.

There is another point which, while we are on the subject, might be stressed. We have spoken of the help which those who have passed over can be to us; it must not be forgotten that we on our part can likewise prove ourselves a help to them. "Prayer for the Dead" is another practice at which the rigid Evangelical may baulk. Prayer for the Living rather, for "all live unto Him," and in point of fact it is we, not those discarnate ones, who may more fittingly be considered the dead, as has been humorously but seriously suggested in a work of a well-known contemporary writer.¹ Indeed our prayers for our loved ones who have passed out of matter may well avail,

¹ *All Men are Ghosts*, by L. P. Jacks.

to a greater extent than we can guess, in aiding their progress, and the more so since there is implied a realisation on our part that they continue living personalities and that between them and us there intervenes no impassable barrier. This realisation must not only cheer and encourage them—for it will surely be a disheartenment and an actual impediment to their activities if they find us regarding them as lost or removed by an immense gulf—but must render it easier for them to establish contact with us, and to afford us that help and support in our daily life which they are so anxious to give and we ought surely most gladly and thankfully to welcome.

IX

TRUE AFFINITY

MARRIAGE is a human institution which, while essential to the solidarity of society, is manifestly imperfect since it so often marks the conjoining of couples who speedily prove themselves to be ill-mated, but it is nevertheless symbolic of that complete spiritual union between male and female which, although achieved comparatively seldom on this earth, may be expected to exist as an outstanding feature amid the conditions of the hereafter. It is a reasonable belief that for every man and woman there awaits somewhere in the universe his or her affinity of the opposite sex. In nearly every department of human endeavour that work which turns out the most satisfactory has been accomplished through a suitable combination of the male and female elements, and it may be supposed that this is a rule applying not only to the short period of our existence here but to that eternity of life—upon which indeed we, while still incarnate, have even now entered—where we are

destined to proceed "from strength to strength" in the fulfilment of duties of ever-increasing importance.

It seems probable then that each one of us is intended to find, here or hereafter, his or her complement of the opposite sex, and in so supposing it is as well to recognise that sex is mainly an affair of certain specific mental and spiritual qualities, and only in a very minor degree of physical form and characteristics which, although they appear to bulk so large in the world's estimate, are merely evanescent phenomena adapted to our brief sojourn in matter. The search for one's affinity, a question of absorbing interest to the majority of mankind and a prominent theme in their lighter literature, is clearly the response to the demands of a law of the Universe. That this search should in many instances prove unsuccessful here below is not surprising, seeing that it is being conducted in a world filled with illusive appearances. Careless readers of those novels in which a love story ends with a wedding are apt to close the book with the complacent thought that the young couple would have "lived happy ever after." That this is not a necessary conclusion to draw we can easily see from real life, where so many people marry in the full belief of having found the true affinity, only to behold themselves sooner or later disillusioned. This is not to say that all such people are thereby doomed to lead specially unhappy lives. When the first burst of passion has subsided and they settle down to a perhaps humdrum existence, they are, many of them, apt to accept their lot with resignation, believing their experience to be only what is normally to be

expected, and are satisfied if they are able to live with their partner on terms of ordinary friendliness. At the same time they have missed the sense of spiritual oneness which is realised by a minority of fortunate individuals who do actually discover upon earth the destined soul-mate and, no matter what the changes and chances, experience even during mortal life a foretaste of the joys of Heaven.

There are others again who, convinced at first that they have found the ordained partner, are later beset with doubts ; for there supervenes an apparent drifting apart, so that the two seem to be gradually fading from each other's sight. And yet, at long last, the final recognition of themselves as true affinities may come after all. Although one or both halves of such a pair may have seemed for a while so straitly imprisoned in material sense that the spiritual self, the real he or she, is lost to view or at best but dimly and rarely perceived, nevertheless—the time may be long or short—provided that the two are actually the foreordained complements of one another—behold ! there is wrought what seems to be a miracle. Soul calls to soul, the enveloping cloud is dissolved and, as it were in a lightning-flash, the twain are one, each knowing the other for its very own with a certainty of knowledge that is able to rob death of its sting, a knowledge that overleaps the bounds of matter and has its root in an eternity of love and life and the joy of service. Of this class are they who, after so to speak wandering in a far country and having come through great tribulation, find themselves back in the Father's

house, filled with a peace and a bliss that no further trials of this mortal pilgrimage can seriously touch, for there shines the dawning of a love which is opening to them the very gates of Heaven itself.

But what, one may ask, of the millions of lives where love, or what passed itself off as such, has declined into ordinary, commonplace friendship, or what of those far too numerous cases where discord and antipathy have become habitual inmates of the household? Is each of these souls destined to pass through the ages of eternity side by side with his or her present partner? While it seems in accordance with likelihood and justice that each soul shall be at some time attracted to its kindred soul, its true affinity, yet the meeting, if inevitable sooner or later, is by no means obliged to occur in this material world, where the duration of one's sojourn is but as a drop in the boundless ocean of eternity.

It is an interesting exercise to speculate upon the kind of companionship that we shall enjoy when we have passed out of matter. One may guess that over there the ties formed on earth through considerations of material interest or of false sympathy will be cut, and that the society in which we shall habitually move will consist of those souls alone who are united to us by bonds of a sympathy that is genuine and unbreakable. It is even conceivable that ties of relationship in which, as is frequently the case, no love or fellow-feeling is involved may be severed, or that a husband and wife who have lived together for years on earth and whose mortal remains are mingled in the same tomb, may

even not meet at all after death but inhabit widely separated spheres. This seems all the more likely when there has existed between them—one need not go so far as to say hatred but—indifference and a total lack of common interests. In instances where there has been nothing of that absorbing love which betokens affinity, and yet there has prevailed a general feeling of kindness and affection, it seems natural that the two should again meet on the next plane, not indeed as those who are all-in-all to each other, who could not endure to be long deprived of each other's company, but still as good friends who, while continuing to follow each a separate path of existence, are pleased to foregather and hold converse with one another from time to time as opportunity offers.

If there is one thing that can certainly be predicted of the next life, it is that all as they enter it will be stripped of every rag of pretence and hypocrisy. Each soul will stand out in the full light as it really is. Deceit will be impossible. It will be easy then for us to choose those with whom it will be helpful and agreeable to associate, since the characteristics of all will be discernible at first view. There is not likely to be—as here, where worldly interests are so paramount and material considerations exert so preponderant an influence—any linking together of pairs whose divergent sympathies can only be a drag upon the spiritual progress of both. There is no doubt that if we in this world were more desirous of acquiring spirituality, and if we had sense enough to realise that what this material sphere affords is not to be taken as an end in itself,

but is intended to be used as a means of enabling ourselves and our brethren still incarnate to pursue with more steadiness and certainty the upward path of progress, the union of affinities here below would become of more frequent occurrence, much to the spiritual advantage of those who succeeded in discovering their rightful complement and powerfully conducting to the evolution of a generation more alive to the high purposes of Creation.

There is nothing fundamentally wrong with matter. The evil which we find in it—and what a vast amount we do find—proceeds from the wrong use we make of it. Matter is the inert substance assigned us, during our sojourn here, to work upon through the operative power inherent in our soul-selves. It is the clay out of which mind, the potter, fashions forms beautiful or ugly according as its thoughts determine. Possessed of free-will we have the opportunity of dealing with matter in whatever way we choose, and following our choice we are helping to advance or retard the progress of the human race. There is no doubt that in associating each individual with material conditions in the preliminary stage of growth, the Creator has a purpose very definite and far-reaching. It would almost appear as though He had handed over the world to mankind to make or to mar, to progress or to retrogress therein, as their own will shall lead them, and that they even have the power of annihilating themselves if they choose, at any rate of wiping out civilisation so effectually that to re-implant it would seem to require a start *de novo* and might almost be said to imply a

reversion to the primitive conditions of the remote past. We appear recently to have been within the shadow of a world-wide impulse to commit that act of suicidal destruction, and what greater tragedy could be conceived than such an over-turning of the Divine plan !

Of course it is unthinkable that any design of the Creator, in whose eyes we are told a thousand years are as one day, could ultimately fail. But since for certain of His purposes He seems to have admitted man to the privilege of co-operation one may suppose that man, being free-willed, has the power—if he so determines and even though he may destroy himself in the process—of slighting this privilege and thus delaying the achievement of God's great purpose.

Co-operation on the larger—the world-wide—scale depends upon co-operation on the smaller, and no sort of co-operation is more ideal than that of two kindred souls, male and female, indissolubly knit together and inspired by a common desire for service in the cause of the advancement of the human race. A man or a woman alone may be doing splendid work, but it is work performed so to speak at reduced power. Each if united with his or her predestined complementary half will achieve results infinitely more important.

Why, it may be asked, do not the destined co-partners, the two halves of the perfect whole, more frequently come together here in this world ? No doubt because spiritual vision is obscured by material cares, by the deceitfulness of riches and the similar errors of mortal sense which cloud men's judgment. There may indeed be instances where a man and a woman

destined for each other have actually come together on this earth, and yet have both failed consciously to recognise here the reality of their affinity, or where the recognition has been on one side only. In the latter case, supposing the one realising the true akinship to have "passed over" and the other, with whom it remains hidden, to be still on earth, it is possible to imagine circumstances arising which could seriously affect the happiness of the one who has become discarnate, but whose devotion to the partner left behind not only remains undiminished but is probably intensified.

And here we are led to the question of re-marriage. This is of course something to which a general principle is inapplicable. Each case must be considered on its merits. A second marriage may be the most right and proper thing in the world ; it may on the other hand be a crime against the partner who has passed from earth. Mr. Gandhi, the Indian Nationalist, has written :¹ " Where there is true union of souls, re-marriage of a widow or a widower is unthinkable, improper and wrong. . . . Where marriage is a sacrament the union is not union of bodies but the union of souls, indissoluble even by the death of either party." To many this may appear an extravagant piece of sentimentalism, but it will most surely be endorsed by all who have had the blissful experience of discovering upon this earth the true soul-mate.

Years ago there was a poem popular with givers of

¹ *Young India*.

recitations which imaginatively depicted the feelings of a woman snatched away by death from a lover to whom she was devotedly attached. Her unceasing prayers that she might be allowed to return to him on earth, were it only for a moment, are finally granted, but on condition that she shall endure a thousand additional years of Purgatory. She eagerly accepts the terms, but arriving on earth finds the lover, whom she had thought so entirely hers, in the arms of a new mistress. Returning to pay her penalty she is met at the gates of Purgatory by an Angel who bids her pass straight into Heaven, for the moment of anguish she has just endured has wiped out all the destined years of purgatorial pains. This allegory is hyperbolically suggestive of what may actually be a matter of no very uncommon occurrence. One may see a couple living together on terms, seemingly, of the greatest devotion ; one is strongly impressed by the apparent depth of their love. The wife, we will suppose, dies, and a year or two later we are astounded to find the widower, so disconsolate and broken-hearted as he showed himself at first, taking another partner and seemingly launched upon a new phase of existence conspicuous for its perfect contentment and the obliteration of landmarks of former associations. Doubtless it does not become us to judge the actions of our neighbours, but it is impossible to evade the impression that in some instances of re-marriage little or no consideration has been given to the feelings which the former partner, the unseen witness of what transpires, may be expected to entertain. This is not

necessarily due to lack of affection on the survivor's part, but often to the fact that he has never faced the problem of after-death conditions, or given any earnest thought to this all-important subject. Possibly if he purports to belong to the Christian religion, he has never gotten beyond vague surmises as to what may befall one in the next world, and while professing allegiance to the tenets of his faith has attained at the most to not more than a half-belief in survival and reunion. Were he convinced of what is surely the case, namely, that his late partner, if she had genuinely loved him, is actually with him still, filled with greater love for him than ever, able to observe his actions and to enter into many of his inmost thoughts, it is inconceivable that if he on his side truly loved her he would not ponder long and earnestly whether, by taking into intimate association with himself a new companion, he might not be bringing distress or even agony upon the loyal object of his first choice.

All the evidence goes to show that in those who have passed out of matter there still persist many of the traits, freed it may well be from some of their dross, which marked their characters on earth, and most especially that there survives undiminished devotion to those who were dear to them, so that it mightily behoves us all neither by thought nor by action to distress those lost to our physical sight, to whom, in our better moments, we should have thought it a monstrous thing wittingly to give pain while they were still with us in the flesh.

Marriage, viewed as a purely human institution,

is clearly a necessity amid our present imperfect conditions, even where the companionship involved will be limited to the term of earth-life. One may prophesy, however, that as men's spiritual eyes are opened to the immense perspective which extends beyond the confines of this mortal phase, to the grand realities and purpose of Being, it will happen more and more frequently that those destined to be each other's complements will find one another here, will marry one another here, and will be qualified to become parents of a purified generation whose aim shall be to serve and advance the Race.

X

PRENATAL TRAINING

“**T**RRAIN up a child in the way he should go : and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” This maxim from the Book of “The Proverbs” may be thought to possess a triteness and an obviousness which would render it mere waste of time to embark upon any extra labouring of the subject at this enlightened time of day. It is a truism, it will be said, with which everybody agrees ; what need of further elaboration ? A truism no doubt, and yet included in it there is a detail which, if not completely, has at least been most usually ignored, and this is the supreme importance of the training being consciously initiated long before the period at present generally accepted, long before birth in fact. It would be of inestimable advantage to the world if it could be borne in upon every Wife that the task of educating her child should commence at the instant when she first perceives it to be on the way, and that upon her consecrated devotion in this endeavour it will largely depend

whether the budding life is to blossom out into a flower destined to contribute beauty and fragrance to the garden of Humanity. A Mother's responsibility is great beyond words. The real builders of nations are the women. The old idea of their forming an inferior and more or less servile portion of the community is fast disappearing. The essential service which they can render in ways hitherto undreamed of is being widely recognised and accepted, and there is no way in which they can prove their value to the community more effectively than by devotion to the Service of Motherhood.

The vital importance to the nation of attention to the conditions which herald the entry into life of its children, is being more fully realised each year. There are few populous districts where a Child Welfare centre is not to be found, and the ramifications of The Mothers' Union extend far and wide. Organisations such as these are performing a great work, and yet there still remains much more which could be done. Necessary as instruction in regard to the physical care and well-being of children obviously is, even more important is a knowledge of the power and influence which mind—the Mother's mind—can exert in determining the health, moral as well as physical, of every newcomer into the world, and in preparing him to be a genuine asset to the nation and an active agent in the elevation of the human race.

The immense power exercised by thought, although realised by an intelligent and growing section of the public, is still a fact which seems to weigh little with

the majority of mankind. And yet thought is the motive power which shapes all our actions, which governs all our movements, which determines the course of the life of the individual and the fate of nations. It is mind which starts and keeps going the entire activities of human society, whose serious enterprises, whose antics, whose virtuous and vicious manifestations are all the result of mind, of thoughts, the thoughts of that society's individual components. Now it is a fact that, generally speaking, a man will be disposed to entertain in his mind, and consequently make manifest in his actions, thoughts similar in quality to those which were impressed upon his consciousness in childhood. The child is truly father of the man, for according to the mental foundation laid in him during his earliest years, so will his character develop as he grows up.

Everyone sees the importance to a child's future of an education based on sound principles, but few realise that his education is begun pre-natally, and that every infant comes into the world with a certain bias in its character which originated through the powerful if unseen influence of its Mother's thoughts. The predisposition to develop certain characteristics may of course be affected, or even partially annulled, by the kind of education which is subsequently adopted, nevertheless it is a point to be seriously marked that if an infant is launched into the world freighted, so to speak, with the virtuous and elevated thoughts and aspirations which the mind of an enlightened Mother has been holding during those months in which the child

still formed part of her being, it begins its course with the fairest prospects. The foundation laid in its mind will have been such as to predispose it, as it grows up, to attract and make part of itself thoughts similar in quality to those which entered into its original mental constitution. As the unborn child's physical framework is being built up by nourishment derived from the Mother's material body, so is its subliminal self being developed by means of the thoughts which hold predominant place in her mentality. It is clearly of enormous importance to the child that the thoughts which later on will emerge from beneath the threshold into consciousness should be of a type conformable to a character capable of rendering genuine service to its generation. If the Mother is not consciously using thought to build up her child's mentality, this structure may be erected by wrong suggestions implanted in the subconsciousness and embodying old failings, vices and diseases of ancestors, or undesirable ideas prominent in the general mental atmosphere of the day.

There is clearly a pressing need in the world for the development of a purer and more earnest race, which shall entertain high ideals of service to mankind at large. Such a race is perhaps in course of development, but the process is a slow one, and could be greatly speeded up if only women were brought more generally to recognise what a revolution would be accomplished if even one-tenth of the future Mothers applied themselves seriously to the systematic impression upon the coming children of thoughts which make for purity, justice, selfless service and brotherly love. A Mother's

task in this respect, far from being irksome—indeed it should be considered a privilege rather than a task—is essentially divine. Viewed in the true light, her “Service” is upon the highest level possible; rightly performed, her work is perhaps more important than that of any other individual or section in the community. One is inclined to believe that the most effective agents designed by the Creator for the betterment of the world should be looked for, not among statesmen or reformers or archbishops—or even archangels—but among simple everyday women. As it was written long ago: “God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” Only let those women in our midst who are possessed of fine instincts—and there are many such—once be brought to realise what a mighty influence they can exert upon the future of the world through the children they bear, and the rapid moral progress of the race will be assured.

It is true that a great effort is needed on the woman’s part, but if made in the right spirit it will be an effort accompanied with joy and inspired by hope. *From the first moment that she knows a child to be on the way, the prospective Mother should devote regular time each day to its mental feeding, supplying it with such pure and uplifting thoughts as will establish the foundation of a character of that kind which later on will be led naturally to devote itself to the cultivation of the beautiful, the good and the true. She should avoid like a plague everything morbid or unpleasant, such as conversations upon sickness or accidents or evil of any*

kind, subjects which, with the connivance of many of our daily newspapers, seem to absorb the interest of a large portion of the population, and she should exercise dominion over all sensuous emotions if she wishes her child to be the master of the senses and not their slave. Strong in quietness and confidence she should close her mind to any suggestion of fear, and above all should in her relations with others cultivate Love, the source of all the good there is or ever will be in the world, and without which all our doings—however grandiose and high sounding they may appear—are “nothing worth”—Love “the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead” before God.

It may be a little difficult at first, especially in the very early stages, to realise that there is actually another mentality there, one capable of absorbing suggestions, but with perseverance the realisation will come, and it will be a help to this end if the Mother makes a practice of audibly speaking to this unseen mentality, impressing it, as though it had an objective presence, with such uplifting ideals as she would wish to see bearing fruit later on in its conscious life. It is unnecessary to go into every detail of the mode of life which the Mother would be well advised to lead. It will obviously render her task easier the more she devotes regular time to the contemplation of such pictures and objects as delight the eye and convey a sense of true beauty, and the more she cultivates a taste for that class of literature which is born of elevated ideals.

One may also suggest that she will acquire invaluable nourishment for her own soul, as well as for that whose awakening is dependent upon her, by taking every opportunity of communing with Nature. Let her try to make herself feel at one with it, at one with all beautiful living things, with birds and animals, with the flowers, the grass, the trees, with the sun, the wind, the rain. It is hard to overestimate the value to the human soul of the acquisition of a genuine love for Nature, in subduing the baser instincts and implanting a yearning desire for the beauty and perfection which transcend all material modes of expression and appertain to that world of imperishable splendour which is our rightful heritage and may be viewed in glimpses even here. By surrendering herself to Nature and striving to enter into its rhythm the Mother will be supplying the tender subconsciousness of her child with impressions which, amid the changes and chances of its subsequent life, will never be effaced but will remain available as an ennobling and healing influence in all times of trial and stress.

To the majority of persons Nature remains largely a sealed book. They may feel a vague admiration in face of some of her manifestations on the larger scale, such as a rocky coast, a mountain range, a sunset of many tints ; they know little of the refreshment of mind to be obtained by training one's faculties to observe the myriad beauties which she can display, for example, in the fields and woods of a quiet countryside. A marked elevation of character and a peculiar peace of mind are the reward of those who come to

regard Nature as a lover, making herself beautiful for them, satisfying them with nourishment for the soul, speaking to them through the ripple of brooks, the song of birds, the rustle of leaves, the rhythm of all creation, singing to them an exquisite melody, always calling them to love the Creator of all these delights. The Mother who steepes herself in Nature is indeed doing well for her child.

It would not do to omit Music from a catalogue of those subjects which can awaken the Soul's highest instincts—one is thinking of genuine Music of course, not of its spurious counterfeits. Any woman to whom Music makes appeal will be doing a foolish thing and neglecting a great opportunity if she discontinues the indulgence of her taste in this respect, on the plea that a baby is coming. Music in the soul—and Shakespeare tells us that “the man who hath no music in himself . . . is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils”—can be powerfully suggestive of the eternal realities which lie beyond the veil of matter, and can contribute in large degree to that harmony of mind which makes its possessor a centre from which good is diffused throughout his environment. It is far from indispensable, however, for one to have acquired a knowledge of the technique of Music, in order to gain that spiritual harmony which the art is capable of suggesting. Indeed there exist musicians for whom a perfect knowledge of the technique must be actually a drawback, when we see it inclining them to give vent to jealousy and carping criticism. Anyhow there are undoubtedly many persons unable to play or sing and

with no understanding of musical theory, who can listen to a classical symphony with a delight which lifts them for a time right off the material plane.

Enough perhaps has been said to indicate the general lines which a Wife might profitably follow before and also for some time after the birth of her child. The great point is that she should put herself *en rapport* with the world of Spirit, and if she is able to do this effectually nothing can prevent the spiritual manifesting itself with the happiest results to the child on the physical plane, for we may regard matter as that which, possessing no intelligence or initiative in itself, responds to the motive impulse of mind and is moulded in accordance with mind's intentions. Spenser said: "The Soul is Form, and doth the Bodie make," and Emerson expressed a similar idea when he wrote: "Great men are those who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force ; that thoughts rule the world." The more therefore that the Mother can look upon her child in the light of a mental concept rather than as a combination, no matter how beautifully put together, of material elements, the more is he likely to be attracted, as he grows up, to pursuit of the spiritual, the real and eternal, rather than of the material and temporal.

Once more, one cannot too urgently insist, even at the risk of repetition, that mind is the energy behind every material act and manifestation, and that if a Mother is to see her child develop into a good and useful member of society she must keep that fact constantly before her, she *must* retain a firm hold upon those

realities which transcend matter. It is useless for her to take every precaution for her child's physical well-being, and to slur over the vastly more important duty of building him up mentally. Spiritual health, that is, the habit of right thinking, will bring physical well-being along with it. This is law. In any case, a race of supermen from the physical standpoint, but lacking the necessary moral equipment, would be a bar to the progress of humanity. Certain of the societies formed to deal with Mothers and the bringing forth of children are not altogether unmindful of the need for spiritual training, but taken on the whole and with full acknowledgment that attention to the physical circumstances connected with child-birth is most necessary, there is need for much more systematic and definite instruction to Mothers upon that vastly more important branch of the subject, namely, their responsibility for the child's spiritual development and the wonderful opportunity which is given to them of promoting it.

XI

SPIRITUAL HEALING

IT might reasonably be argued that healing of every description, whether by mental or physical means, is spiritual, that Infinite Spirit, the Creator of all that exists and the Author of all that takes place, must necessarily be the original source of all healing whatsoever. We are told on high authority that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above," that is to say, from the spiritual sphere. Healing, by whatever means effected, is undoubtedly one of the most perfect gifts which a mortal can receive, so it is logical to conclude that in every instance it is of spiritual origin, no matter whether it be a mental or medical practitioner who appears as the agent.

One is here, however, employing the term "spiritual healing" in the more limited sense in which it is popularly understood, that is, as denoting a class of healing which is effected by purely mental means and possesses some definitely religious association.

William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*

writes : “ *As regards prayers for the sick, if any medical fact can be considered to stand firm, it is that in certain environments prayer may contribute to recovery and should be encouraged as a therapeutic measure.*” Of late years spiritual healing has been making great headway, and medical men, who were generally wont to disparage it, and not without excuse in certain cases where it was applied with total disregard of common sense, are now it would seem looking upon it with greater tolerance and even, in some instances, are ready to welcome its assistance. It no doubt increases the chances of a successful result when the patient himself is conscious in some degree of a leaning towards spirituality, but this does not appear to be a positive essential. We learn from the very highest source that God “ maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,” and would it not be inconsistent to affirm that the unjust, while sharing in the other general benefits lavished upon mankind, must be debarred from all participation in the great benefit of spiritual healing ? The idea that a super-physical power is involved may be ignored or scoffed at by the beneficiary, who might attribute any favourable result to powers appertaining exclusively to the human mind, but this would not alter the fact that the healer is inspired by an influence that proceeds from beyond the world of matter.

Probably every system of mental healing has successful results to show, and it would be as unfair to insist on the superiority of one particular method over the others, as to pick out one religious denomination

and assert that to be the chief exponent of spiritual truth. As a man is inclined to adopt the form of religion which most appeals to his psychical make-up and requirements, so will he be led in the selection of a mode of mental treatment. A Roman Catholic might be healed by a pilgrimage to Lourdes ; it is unlikely that the same would have responded in equal degree to prayer by a Christian Scientist. Of all the mental healing systems, and they are numerous, which exist throughout the world to-day probably the best known is Christian Science, whose church is organised with an efficiency rivalling that of the Church of Rome itself. Something is said later on about the peculiar philosophy of this modern movement but, whatever judgment is to be pronounced upon this point, there is not the least doubt that Christian Scientists do effect genuine cures in certain cases, and there can be no question but that their Church is fulfilling a valuable purpose in the world at the present time. Valuable likewise are the results achieved by some of the other systems. For the most part more loosely organised and figuring less in the public eye than Mrs. Eddy's Church, they are yet doing a grand work in their way, and the moral effects they produce are, as in the case of Christian Science, often as striking as the physical.

Perhaps the most bizarre of all these various systems is that which exists within spiritualistic circles, where mediums profess to be controlled by healer spirits, in some cases purporting to be those of formerly incarnate physicians. Here too cures appear to take place—whatever the means may be which bring them about

—but those without personal experience of these phenomena may prefer to adopt a non-committal attitude in regard to the claims made concerning the agency which operates.

Quite apart, however, from mediumistic sittings, if one grants the fact of personal survival, it is a matter of extreme probability that healing influences do in fact proceed from certain of those who have passed from this world into the next life, and not by any means necessarily from those alone who belonged to the medical profession while on earth. We may reasonably suppose that our intimate friends on the other side of the veil continue to regard us with a love and interest which, so far from being diminished by the circumstance of death, are probably intensified in minds which must have gained a clearer apprehension of realities. We can picture them as discerning our needs and striving to affix upon our consciousness impressions which may be a help to us in our difficulties. The Psalmist said : “ He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.” We need not, however, entertain any notion of glorified creatures with wings ; it is surely more natural to conceive of these angels, or messengers, as human beings very much like ourselves, excepting that they have shed material encasement and enjoy the opportunity of acquiring greater knowledge than is available for us who still sojourn on earth. Those of them whose duty it is to guide and guard us mortals must, it seems to stand to reason, find included in that duty the work of healing physical infirmities, since health is an essential

for us if we are to be "kept in all our ways," that is, if we are to accomplish our allotted tasks here with due efficiency. It is easy to conceive of a high order of mental healing manifesting itself by such means. Unfortunately it is only too likely that the impressions which these discarnate minds endeavour to convey often miss their mark since, however willing the agent, he can effect nothing without some response, conscious or subconscious, on the part of the intended recipient. One can imagine the agent's sorrow and disappointment if he finds himself, so to speak, brought up against a barrier with no chink for the transmission of the least ray of light. One can picture on the other hand his joy and satisfaction, when the mind he is trying to impress proves receptive and offers no obstacle to the passage of the healing current.

There are those on earth to-day who consciously avail themselves of the good offices of their friends beyond the veil, and who in time of sickness or trouble mentally ask for assistance as confidently and naturally as though making their request to a visible presence. These may so far form only a small minority, but quite apart from them there are a number of people who, although not awakened to the actual nearness of their friends who have passed over, and although unaware of the availability of help from that source, yet entertain a kind of general belief in the existence of a spiritual order and in the possibility of mortals in some way or other obtaining succour through its means. Such as these possess minds which are open at times to influences from the world of spirit. They very likely pray to a

God whom—although to them in the fullest sense He “ moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform ” —they nevertheless believe in their inmost heart to exist as a God of Love, and their call for help, vaguely directed though it may be, connotes an ability to receive an answer. God works through agents, and one rejoices to think that there are ministering spirits ever at hand to bring comfort and healing to those who can pray “ the prayer of faith.”

In all religions there are to be found remarkable instances of answer to prayer. In the religious literature of Anglo-Saxon countries perhaps few more astounding—to many minds they may appear incredible—examples will be found than those to be gathered from the records of Protestant Evangelicalism, some of which are cited by William James.¹ Many of these have no reference to the healing of sickness—although instances of this are common enough—for it is clear that to the mind of the earnest Evangelical spiritual influence from another sphere is available for every variety of human need.

We are sometimes told that in each human being there reside certain latent faculties which actually are only capable of being brought to the surface and openly manifested by a small minority. We hear this asserted especially in regard to the psychic and healing faculties. Perhaps it is true that in the subliminal consciousness of each one of us, all faculties that exist in the universe do reside potentially, but

¹ *The Varieties of Religious Experience.*

certainly many of them are destined to remain hidden during earth life—at our present stage of development at least, though what sort of Supermen evolution may make of us in the course of the dim æons of the future it is impossible to predict. Anyhow, it is quite evident that at present the gift of healing by mental means is sporadic ; it is capable of being exercised only by the comparatively few. This was seen by St. Paul who definitely speaks of the Spirit being divided up amongst different people. “ To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ” he says, and asks “ have all the gifts of healing ? ” The answer is obviously in the negative. Nevertheless, although it seems to be the case that while “ the harvest is great the labourers are few,” there may be hope for a more abundant supply in the future. From time to time there suddenly springs into prominence some individual—usually associated with one or the other religious sects—who appears to be endowed in unusual degree with the gift of healing, and becomes a centre of attraction for large crowds. His achievements are very likely given headlines in the newspapers, and after making every allowance for exaggeration there is reason for belief that much of the healing so reported, sensational though it be, is genuine enough. This sort of thing draws the attention of the man in the street for a day or two perhaps, till its recollection is dimmed by some newer sensation. He might be more permanently impressed were he to realise that there exist up and down the country a certain number of persons unknown to the general public who, exercising their peculiar

gift, accomplish much valuable healing work, apart from ostentation and the collection of curious crowds, in their own limited circles. One is inclined to prophesy that this, at present, small band is the advance-guard of a host of healers who will be everywhere found later on, when the general consciousness of the nation shall have become more completely penetrated by a realisation of the plenitude of power inherent in mind.

It is essential for the good name of spiritual healing that it should be clearly recognised which particular individuals actually possess that gift. This is a point which has often received insufficient attention. In the case of some associations it has been too readily concluded that every adherent who is trying to lead a spiritual life and is persuaded that spiritual healing is a fact, is capable of exhibiting this power. The same is by no means the case, and discredit has been often brought upon certain organisations through the failure to heal by some of their members, earnest persons enough no doubt, but misguided in their attempt to galvanise into activity a faculty buried far too deeply ever to be awakened on this earth.

It is furthermore well to remember that enthusiasm for spiritual healing needs to be tempered by sanity and common sense, and by the recognition that God does not disdain to make frequent use of material means in carrying out His designs. In the work of mental healers there have been tragic cases where patients were allowed to endure great suffering and even to drift downward to death, when recovery might have been assured by a resort to medical aid—

to a surgical operation, for instance. Although the time may indeed arrive when mind will be universally recognised as dominant in all human affairs, and when resort to spiritual healing will be sufficient to meet every requirement of the sick, nevertheless that day, though we may now appear to see a faint glimmer of its dawn, is still so far distant, and such a vast growth of spirituality among mankind needs to be achieved first, that it is not only crass stupidity but may almost be accounted criminal to act as if the day had risen already, and to deny the sufferer the use of such material means as seem to offer a fair chance of affording him relief. There is not the slightest reason why a spiritual and a material healer should not work together in harmony. Despite the outcries of those who profess to live "in the absolute" and who deny to material means any efficacy whatsoever, one may remain confident that neither the odour of drugs and anæsthetics nor the display of surgical instruments is going to constitute a barrier against the curative efforts of our friends on the other side of the veil, however stern the ban placed upon matter by certain would-be spiritual healers in our midst who, since their vision is still circumscribed by earth's twilight, "see through a glass darkly" and can only "know in part."

XII

SOME ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

IN this very imperfect world it would be obviously absurd to expect to find a form of religion that is above criticism. In all denominations there exist flaws which even the most sympathetic well-wisher is bound to see and acknowledge, and there is no sect but exhibits in its doctrinal system details which are susceptible of being turned into ridicule by the maliciously inclined. Christian Science forms no exception. It has certainly had meted out to it a great deal more than its fair share of scorn and ridicule at the hands of virulent opponents, but that some of its doctrines are contrary to both reason and experience may, without suspicion of malice, be fairly argued. Nevertheless, if one regards Christian Science from a broad and generous standpoint, and keeps in mind the fundamental idea which gives it vitality, the idea, namely, that it is the spiritual which moulds and directs everything in the universe, it should be obvious that this religion has come into the world a power for

good and a valuable agent in combating the materialism of the age.

Mrs. Eddy vigorously repelled all suggestion that she herself was a Medium, a designation which she seems to have considered a term of reproach, although if one defines a Medium as a channel through which impressions flow from the spiritual sphere to the world of sense, there is surely nothing opprobrious in the title. Inspirational writing ranks as one of the highest forms of genuine mediumship, and as an inspirational writer there is no doubt that Mrs. Eddy takes a foremost place. In studying what she has given to the world there is need, of course, to exercise just as much discrimination as would be required in the case of any other inspirational writer, not excluding such an outstanding example as St. Paul, one of whose more inspired injunctions "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" was reiterated by Mrs. Eddy herself. In writing of this nature there is apt to be found, mingled with messages which to all appearance have their origin in a superhuman source, material coloured by the personal thoughts and prejudices of the incarnate Medium or channel. The message which was given to the world through Mrs. Eddy is no exception. It is clear that she was a woman of a dominating and unyielding personality, and little likely to compromise with beliefs which had once gained firm foothold in her consciousness. To suppose that every one of the ideas which she put forward in her writings was the pure fruit of the Spirit, would be not far from placing her upon a level with the Founder

of Christianity Himself. She was without doubt a genius, and endowed with psychical qualities of so remarkable an order that one can understand why she should have been selected by the Higher Powers as a medium for the promulgation of truths of vital import to mankind. Yet she was by no manner of means exempt from the foibles and weaknesses of human nature, although certain of the more absolute among her followers must have gone near thinking her to have been so when they have taken every word she wrote as gospel truth, a position which, akin to that of Fundamentalists in relation to the Bible, has involved them in some absurd conclusions and has naturally tended to bring discredit upon a form of religion which serves a purpose of very real value to humanity.

Mrs. Eddy's writings, if their worth is to be adequately appraised, need to be considered from a standpoint embracing a wide and general purview, without the laying of too serious a stress upon the more debatable points of her philosophy. So viewed it will be found that the *motif* running through the whole is an insistent call to look away from the material to the spiritual, a constant reminder that "the world passeth away and the lust thereof" and that our "conversation is in heaven." Seeing that in connection with the doctrines advanced there is initiated a system of spiritual healing, materialism finds itself up against a formidable antagonist, and when we regard the conditions of the world to-day we may surely welcome sympathetically so valuable an ally on the

side of the forces which are contending for righteousness.

Of course a critic might say that the Christian Science Church itself has become tainted with materialism, that it is apt to boast of its opulence, that some of its methods have come to bear a strong likeness to those pursued by the Church of Rome, and so forth—in short that it has declined in spirituality since the time, not so very long ago, when it could have been truly said of it, as was said of the early Christians, “as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against,” that time when to become a member of it was to risk being branded as eccentric and not quite respectable. There would be some amount of truth in all this, and yet it remains to the credit of Mrs. Eddy’s teachings that many individual members of her Church have been led by them to cultivate a desire for greater spirituality, and have to some degree succeeded in relaxing their grip upon the material things of this world, a result which might not by any other means have been brought about.

Spiritual healing has been touched upon elsewhere. In spite of failures and abuses it is that and that alone which has established this Church upon a solid foundation, a consequence which Mrs. Eddy’s philosophy with the necessity for healing left out could never have achieved.

Her main thesis may be shortly put thus—that Spirit is all in all, the only substance and existence, therefore there is no matter, no sickness, no sorrow, no inharmonious condition of any kind. There is not

even what she terms "mortal mind," which, in the course of her definition of it, she states to be "nothing, claiming to be something" and "that which neither exists in Science nor can be recognised by the spiritual sense." Well—however exaggerated a doctrine we may consider this to be, it is at least one which for those who can bring themselves to accept it may tend to persuade them to set their "affections on things above, not on things on the earth," and in so far as it can produce this effect it is a valuable instrument for the sapping of materialism and the establishment of a holier standard of life.

Mrs. Eddy's insistence that there is no matter, although this may be an over-statement which has led to unjustifiable theorising concerning the actuality and the import of mortal existence, is strictly speaking not perhaps quite so outrageous as some of her opponents have made out. Everyone knows now that Science has reduced matter to electrons and protons revolving in the ether of space, and telepathy has shown that mind is something much more extensive than brain. Mrs. Eddy herself well remarks: "Give up the belief that mind is, even temporarily, compressed within the skull," and "the dream of life in matter" is a constantly recurring and by no means inapt phrase in the literature of Christian Science. Her contention that there is no "*mortal mind*" is also verbally correct so far as one can ever know. That mind survives the dissolution of the material body is certain; that it is immortal is highly probable although incapable of proof. She seems to imply, however, that there is

actually no such thing as a consciousness which is in contact with physical senses and able to draw inferences from what those senses tell it. This is really the crucial point in her doctrines at which reason is most apt to revolt.

The human three-dimensional consciousness may, and frequently does, misinterpret the phenomena coming within the sphere of its experience. It might in a certain sense be not entirely incorrect to speak of it as a dreamer. But even a dreamer has experiences—however he may misinterpret them—and his experiences can embody a serious purpose and may even embrace foreknowledge, as is argued in a recent book that has aroused considerable interest—*An Experiment With Time*, by J. W. Dunne. A study of this book, by the way, is useful in connection with the examination of Mrs. Eddy's theory of matter, since it suggests that certain of the experiences recorded by one's mortal brain, one's three-dimensional consciousness ("mortal mind"), far from being meaningless dreams or "things that never happened" are necessary for the development of that four-dimensional self which may be called the soul.

It appears indeed probable that this mortal existence should be considered, not as an affair of nothingness devoid of reality and purpose but as an episode of supreme importance designed to furnish us with indispensable experience, to put us to the test so to speak, and that our life on earth ought to be accepted as a necessary period of instruction in a kind of preparatory school. Mrs. Eddy herself makes use of

this simile when she says "earth's preparatory school must be improved to the utmost," which is a very different matter from implying, as some of her writings *do* imply, that there could in reality exist no such school if it is the case that our seeming experiences on earth are merely empty dreams of something which never happened.

It might be of interest here to quote a few extracts out of a communication from one who, while on earth, had been for many years a member and an active worker in the Christian Science Church. It came in the course of a reply by the Communicator to the question whether her estimate of Christian Science had changed since she left the earth :

The power of thought is everything in my new world, everything ; we can't move without understanding it. . . . Taking it in the general way the teachings of Christian Science are correct. . . . Yes, taking it generally, it is what should be. I have met several of the exponents of Christian Science on my side. . . . Many of them have modified their views on it, even the leaders. They have also modified their views about communication. . . . She thought a lot about Christian Science when she was here—AND I STILL DO (emphatically spoken). I see they have the right principles and are trying to work them out in an imperfect world. The principles are right as applying to the world of spirit, but when you come to the physical world you have something to reckon with, which they deny the existence of. That's where I have modified my view. I think it is absurd not to

admit the existence of matter. We must admit evil and disease if we are going to fight and conquer them. . . . We do recognise, even on this side, that certain conditions must be admitted, in order to help them. I help those who pass over in ignorance. Many come over mentally hugging their physical infirmities, which should have been left behind. The idea of the disease is so much there. Until they can forget it they cannot make themselves part of this new life. We have to admit, in dealing with them, that they did have the disease, that they were suffering from cancer, etc., and then try to get the idea out again. I'm applying Christian Science to every moment in my present life, living on the laws of it. . . . If I were back on earth I should bring new light to bear on it, new ideas on it. The power of the spirit, the power of mind, is remarkable, but it has to reckon with matter. Matter is the clay, mind the sculptor. He can mould it, but he must have something to mould, he could not do without the material to express himself in. On our side we have something that I have to speak of as material but not of the same coarseness, a material more suited. I am solid to those who are on this side.

As regards the final remarks one is reminded of St. Paul's words : " There is a natural body, *and there is a spiritual body,*" and the term " body " which he used should be particularly noted. One need not fear that the soul will ever lack its objective manifestation, the cognizable symbol of its existence and activity.

Where Christian Science appears to show a palpable weakness is in regard to its Eschatology. Members of

that Church, it is true, assert that in time of bereavement no comfort to the mourner will equal that which is afforded through a belief in its teachings, but an impartial outsider who has studied the literature may find it difficult to comprehend this assertion. The repetition of such phrases as "this thing never happened" or "it is nothing but a bad dream" or "there is no loss or separation in Truth" may have some sort of mesmeric or narcotic effect, but scarcely seems likely to bring comfort in the depths of the soul. Mrs. Eddy has certainly stated in her writings the scientific facts, that one's character is not immediately altered by death and that progression continues in the hereafter, but with most persons the human mind in bereavement cries out for something more substantial, generally speaking, than it is possible to extract from the literature of this movement. There are even passages which one would think might actually intensify a mourner's grief, as for instance:¹ "The Christian Scientists . . . believe those who have passed the change of death are in so entirely different a plane of consciousness that between the embodied and the disembodied there is no possibility of communication." In fairness it must be said that Mrs. Eddy does suggest the happy state of the departed—as when speaking of one of her deceased followers she says:² "He is wiser to-day, healthier and happier, than yesterday." All the same it seems as though it could only increase

¹ *Pulpit and Press.*

² *The First Church of Christ Scientist and Miscellany.*

a bereft one's sense of loss, to believe that to the end of his life an impassable gulf will exist between himself and his friend who has gone before. In truth there may be found adherents of orthodox branches of religion who find themselves in a more hopeful position than that, persons who, although unpersuaded of the possibility of communication as a Spiritualist might understand the term, yet derive comfort from the belief that their lost ones are still near at hand, that their thoughts and influence still surround those left on earth.

It must be acknowledged that Christian Scientists, more perhaps than the members of any denomination except the Roman Catholic Church, are apt to lay themselves open to an accusation of bigotry. They appear to think that what Mrs. Eddy has written is the last word in revealed religion. It is regrettable, for their faith contains much which does undoubtedly help the world now, and could become of many times greater value, given a broader viewpoint and a recognition of the fact that truth has never yet been discerned and proclaimed in its entirety, but on the contrary is continually unveiling new phenomena and laws hitherto unsuspected. One may quote the following sentence out of a little book written from a high spiritual standpoint:¹ *No religion can hold the content of absolute truth, and those theologians who persist in believing that they have the whole truth revealed in their sacred books, and deny that religion is a progressive science, will clog the life of the Spirit with obsolete doctrines.*

¹ *The Faculty of Communion*, by Edith Lyttleton.

In this country at any rate, and no doubt in others too, there is a great and growing desire to know what is in store for us after death, and to acquire some information about what one may term the geography and the conditions of that world into which so many of our intimate friends have entered. Christian Science is doing splendid work in so far as it is calling upon mortals to look beyond the material and to set their affections on things above. In this respect it shines out as a lighthouse to the voyager on (to quote Mrs. Eddy's words) "earth's troubled angry sea." But it is likely, as time goes on, to find itself becoming increasingly handicapped by its unwillingness to investigate in greater detail after-death conditions, and its usefulness being curtailed in proportion as new vistas of the universe open up and new laws are revealed.

If Christian Science is to hold its own, it will sooner or later find itself compelled to strike out of its authorised literature those passages in which Mrs. Eddy denies the possibility of communication with the departed. At the time she wrote her Text Book, soon after the middle of the last century, scientific Psychical Research was to all intents and purposes non-existent. Spiritualism indeed was beginning to make a stir in America, but it was largely unorganised and presented, mingled with what were no doubt genuine manifestations, much that was sordid and fraudulent, so that it is no wonder if the subject came under grave suspicion. Even at the present day, when Psychical Research societies are spread over the civilised world and evidence for survival and communication is rapidly

mounting up, it is probably wiser that any thorough study of the subject should be entered upon only by those who possess in some degree a critical quality of mind and can be trusted not to slip into the pitfall of an easy credulity. One may totally disagree with Mrs. Eddy's pronouncements as to the impossibility of communicating with those upon the next plane, and yet commend her prudence, at the particular period when she wrote, in discouraging her followers from experimenting with the supernormal. In this she but followed the example of Moses, when he forbade to the members of the primitive civilisation over which he presided all resort to them who had "familiar spirits," although in his day there was this significant difference, that there did exist an authorised channel of communication for the receipt of messages from the spiritual world, in the person of the high priest wearing the breastplate adorned with the Urim and Thummim.

It is not improbable that a great revelation is coming—and not through Christian Science as at present understood by its followers—which must profoundly affect the human race and greatly alter the conditions of life. The following message received from the communicator before-mentioned, is only one of many like messages which are constantly arriving :

Our world, her own, it's certain to be discovered. I feel certain that in time it will be discovered scientifically. It's region, the point at which it becomes connected with the earth will be located, located scientifically, so that

on the earth you will be able to say, " I have done something which is putting me in touch with the fringe of that other world." You will be in contact with it and us. But she says, " Oh that won't come, of course, completely in your earth life, but it will begin. You are very near to it now on earth, nearer than you know, and even before you pass you will have got many steps towards it so that," she says, " even before you pass over you will be coming here and saying to her " it's nearer, it's nearer fulfilment " . . . and before you pass over you will have seen wonderful strides in this marvellous knowledge."—

And to this one may respond with a fervent AMEN.

XIII

SLEEP AND THE ETHERIC BODY

WHAT is actually happening to us when we are asleep? What has become of the Real Self, the Soul, while the material body is lying wrapped in unconsciousness? This is a question which has exercised many a mind, only in most instances to be given up as insoluble. Some extracts from communications received by a husband from his wife who had passed out of matter may suggest a partial answer to the problem, and may be of interest as well for the indications given as to the kind of environment in which we may expect to find ourselves, when we eventually exchange this mortal state for what may be truly called "the fuller life." These messages are of course not evidential, although in their principal points they are accordant with descriptions obtained by other psychical investigators. Summarily to reject them, however, as mere flights of the imagination or as the dramatisation of ideas hidden in some living person's subconsciousness, would be contrary to reason

and to the usage customary in dealing with the more ordinary experiences of life.

In estimating the communicator's reliability, it should be pointed out in the first place that, on the occasions when these particular communications were received, other messages came through recalling intimate facts known to no one on earth but "the sitter." No doubt some would say that this pointed to a reading of his mind, subconscious as well as conscious, in which case it may be pertinently asked what marvel of intelligence was it which was capable of selecting from that storehouse such exceedingly apt and convincing samples, some of them touching upon things or happenings so remote from his conscious mind that it was weeks or even months afterwards before their appropriateness was recognised. Moreover, there were included instances—too numerous to admit of chance—coincidence—of the prevision of events which actually took place, it might be days or weeks later. These were at the time of the sitting entirely beyond the knowledge of the sitter, into whose consciousness the possibility of their occurrence had never entered. But beyond all this it should be emphasised that throughout the sittings the speaker was displaying, in the clearest manner possible, a personality with a definite and consistent character, recognisable as accurately conforming to that which had distinguished the purporting communicator while on earth. Whose surpassing ingenuity could, on the spur of the moment, have extracted scores of fine points of delineation from the sitter's mind and woven them into a homogeneous

and lifelike portrait, such as he himself, with all his previous intimate knowledge of the alleged communicator, was quite incapable of presenting with anything approaching such exact fidelity, excepting after long thought and much sifting of memory? Is it not by far the most reasonable and simple hypothesis that the communicating intelligence was actually the discarnate personality which it claimed to be? And if one grants this, is it not also reasonable to assume that those messages of which, in the nature of things, no corroboration was materially obtainable, are as deserving of credence as that portion of the communication whose accuracy was capable of being checked?

To trace an analogy, we might imagine two intimate friends, one of whom disappears into the wilds of Africa, leaving the other so long without news that at last the traveller is definitely given up as having perished. Let us suppose that, after a lapse of time, the survivor one day receives a telephone call and is astounded to find that the caller-up purports to be this friend who, long given over for lost, now claims to be returning safe and sound. The latter, met with incredulity and eager to prove his identity, recalls details from the past, no matter how trivial in kind, which could by no possibility have a meaning for any but the one at the other end of the line, who is thus forced at length to a conviction of his friend's survival. Once fully assured of this, is he, when the speaker proceeds to relate incidents and experiences which he has encountered, likely to disbelieve them, either because their nature is unusual or because he has no

other evidence of their occurrence beyond his friend's word? Surely not, if in the past he placed implicit confidence in him and has had every reason to be convinced of his abiding truthfulness and integrity. Similarly when we speak with our discarnate friends and receive the plainest proofs of their identity, is it not unnatural to discredit their *bona fides* when they go on to describe some of the conditions of their new environment, however strangely these may strike us?

The following are verbatim extracts from messages received at different times, which refer to the temporary reunion during sleep of a spirit still incarnate on the earth plane with a permanent inhabitant of the discarnate sphere :

You have been with me in our home, the home I have got, the home I am living in, and she says, I bring you back and stand just at the side of your bed. One moment you are there and I am saying something to you, and the next moment you are awake, and have forgotten.

The first time you went over to her, after her passing, you didn't enjoy it so much, though you loved seeing her. You wouldn't listen much to anything else, but you couldn't understand that you could be anywhere with her but on the earth, because the surroundings looked to you so much like the ones you were accustomed to. You had to go over to her several times before you really knew that those very natural surroundings were spiritual ones, that they belonged to what you thought of as another world. When you first took in the fact, it was a great relief to

you, you liked it, you were glad that it was like that, that there were the flowers, the trees, the birds, the conditions to which you were accustomed on the earth.

She says, you are out with her every night and she says it's a happy time. (The Sitter.) I wish I enjoyed it when I woke up. (Answer.) I think perhaps it wouldn't do, because the earth would seem a miserable place after the other side, awfully grey; then if they were able to (remember) people couldn't be contented. Half of their minds would be wanting the other place.

"When you are out with me in sleep the mind is what I call then all one to my mind. The subconscious and what you call conscious in the day are united. When you are with me you remember everything clearly, then when I come back with you to the body in the morning the mind divides again and becomes conscious and subconscious."

You carry your etheric organism about with your physical one. . . . Your etheric organism contains a brain just as your physical one does, and when you die the physical body and physical brain disintegrate. She says, the etheric is still existing and that's the one the soul uses at death . . . and that is the one the soul uses at night time when you are out with her. (The Sitter.) I wish I knew what we do when we are out of the body. (The Communicator.) . . . "We can see each other. It isn't only I can see you then, but you see me there. You are conscious all the time with me. You have seen my home, you have seen my garden, my flowers, you have seen my surroundings, you see, you know where I am. You lose it again in the day, but you know at the time.

And the wonderful part is that at the time you know all the other times you have been with me as a continuous night memory, just as there is a continuous day memory. As you remember what you did yesterday, so you remember to-night what you did last night. And we talk about things sometimes and the people you have seen, what they have said or you have said, what you are going to say to them next time. We talk it all over at night, and it isn't a meeting full of excitement and emotion one might think it was, because it has been a meeting so often repeated. It's just a meeting full of quiet joy, quiet acceptance of the fact that we have been together, and are together, and always shall be. A sharing of life as we know we should share it. And there is always that quiet happiness with it, peaceful happiness."

It would appear that not all persons are able during sleep to leave the body and visit their friends on the next plane. The ability is stated to depend upon the possession of what is termed *an elastic condition which allows the soul and the etheric (body) to separate themselves*. This elasticity is said to be determined by the mental attitude of the survivor upon earth, an attitude which must combine a deep love for some one who has passed from earth with—and this is of great importance—the habit of *thinking of that person as living*. As the same Communicator says :

"If you have loved some one and relegated them to a long, long sleep, or put them away in the store-cupboard of the past and shut the door firmly on them, or even if you think of them as being in some unknown condition,

then though you may have loved them you have not prepared that mental condition you could use at night."

There are hints in the foregoing messages that final transference from the scenes of earth to the spiritual sphere involves no violent change. That which, in the case of many persons, has notably contributed to their dread of death, is the thought of being summarily precipitated into an environment of appalling strangeness and experiencing some shattering shock. It is the idea of *omne ignotum pro terribili*, of an undiscovered country containing who can tell what monstrous inhabitants, of a possible exchange of "the ills we have" for "others that we know not of." Nearly half a century ago Henry Drummond, in his classic work, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, writing of what he termed "The Law of Continuity," said: *It is altogether unlikely that man spiritual should be violently separated in all the conditions of growth, development and life from man physical. It is indeed difficult to conceive that one set of principles should govern the spiritual life, and these at a certain period—the very point where they are needed—suddenly give place to another set of principles altogether new and unrelated. Nature has never taught us to expect such a catastrophe. She has nowhere prepared us for it.* This pronouncement of his is being strikingly confirmed in our present time. That the fear of any shock-producing change of conditions is groundless is evidenced in consolatory messages constantly arriving from those who have gone forth into that other country before us, and the

following declaration, by the same Communicator who has been quoted above, may be taken as a sample :

You know she doesn't understand people thinking it must be something very different, because there's nothing to which you can point in life, nothing you have ever known in life, that has sudden and abrupt changes. God hasn't arranged that any form of life that is created shall be subjected to violent changes. He has made everything so that it grows naturally and gradually. It is a natural growth. If it is transplanted, it has to be transplanted to some other conditions that are good for it. If you dig up a plant or a tree, you don't try and find the most violently drastic conditions to transplant it to, you try and give it conditions such as it has been used to. A rose you try to plant in similar ground or soil to that it has been in. . . . And so when you are transplanted from the earth to our side. That's all it is, it's simply being transplanted to a different part of the garden, giving you as nearly a similar condition to the one you have (now) as possible. If your mind is very limited and you are not ready mentally, spiritually, for a very much better condition which would be a very different one, you don't have it, because it would be too different even if it would be so much better. There's nothing that gives one a shock in Nature. Why even the most elementary and ignorant gardener understands that—that nothing must be given too much of a shock, and that after all is the chief ground-work. God is The Great Gardener. We think of Him that way as The Great Gardener, and He puts us in our right place in the garden.

St. Paul once declared his preaching of "Christ crucified" to be "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness," and ever since, announcements of spiritual truths transcending ordinary mundane experience have had a similar reception. The assertion of the possibility of obtaining direct information and counsel from our friends who are dead (as we are heedlessly wont to call them), is indeed to many orthodox religionists a stumbling block, and to many of the intellectually and scientifically minded foolishness. This need not disturb us. *Magna est veritas et prævalebit.* When the light of a great spiritual truth has shone upon a man's soul so clearly that it is impossible for him to question its reality, he may pursue his way calmly, with no wish to busy himself about intensive methods of propaganda or to try and force his views on his friends. The truth is very well able to fend for itself, and assuredly at the right time many who now disbelieve or, it may be, scoff will be led to experiment on their own behalf and will receive proof of the existence of unsuspected forces interacting between the visible world of sense and that which—no longer "the world to come"—will be found to be actually present with us here and now.

XIV

C O P A R T N E R S H I P

THE dissolution through death of associations formed on earth is, with the majority of people, too readily submitted to as being the decisive act, from which there lies no appeal, of a stern Fate writing *Finis* at the end of the last chapter of the book. "Dissolution" is no doubt to a materialist the fitting expression. To his mind "the dead know not anything neither have they any more a reward." Even in the eyes of many orthodox Christians who profess a belief in the survival of the soul, the departed friend or colleague so far as regards his interest in earthly affairs is as good as blotted out, whether they conceive of him as sleeping until the Day of Judgment or as dwelling in some far-removed region, a Purgatory or a Paradise, ignorant as to how his friends may be faring, and totally cut off from them until they too are wafted to the same region or are encountered at some epoch in the distant future arising from the tomb at the Trumpet's summons, to congregate before "The Great White Throne."

The minority who have gained a juster comprehension of death and its conditions will hold a view more practical and serviceable than that. As has been remarked before, we appear to have been placed on this earth in order that each individual may learn to commence the hewing out for himself of a character which shall finally measure up to the standard befitting a true son of God. In the course of this character's formation, service to one's fellows is one of the outstanding requirements. That our service is not limited to life on earth but will have ample range for its activities in the world which lies beyond the grave, who can doubt? We are told that Christ himself immediately upon his withdrawal from materiality "went and preached unto the spirits in prison," and we may be sure that those who leave this world with, probably, only a very partial apprehension of the great purpose of The Creator, will not only have the advantage of help and instruction from spirits immensely more advanced, but will enjoy abundant opportunities of diffusing the small light to which they themselves have already attained among the host of souls which is still walking in darkness.

It seems, however, by no means necessary to assume that their activities must be confined entirely to that immaterial world into which they have entered. True it is that those living upon earth to-day form a quite insignificant fraction of the totality of all the souls which exist in God's universe. Nevertheless, in view of the supreme importance of the position which this earth holds as a preparatory school for the building

up of character, it is natural to conceive of personalities upon "the other side"—especially newcomers there who have friends still remaining in the material world—as being desirous of putting at the disposal of these last their slightly greater knowledge and experience, and of standing by with help and encouragement.

If we reflect that Christ—our example, whose steps we are bidden to imitate—promised His friends that after His departure out of material conditions He would yet be with them always "even unto the end of the world," it is surely logical to suppose that those, His followers, whom we have greatly loved and with whom we have been closely associated here, will exert every effort to impress us, their friends still incarnate, with a sense of their presence and of their continued co-operation with us in our activities. There is, of course, a type of good orthodox Christian to whom this supposition will appear shocking, impious even. Yet it is based not only on logic but on evidence. There are those in the ranks of the orthodox—one is far from thinking of them unkindly, or seeking to belittle their many good qualities and actions—whose minds have become so trained to turn round and round within a limited circle, that they are blind to logical conclusions and vehemently decry facts the clear evidence of which they persistently refuse to examine. It may well be that *every* individual on leaving this earth retains, for a while at least, an interest in his former friends and earthly pursuits. Whether this be so or not, there is irrefragable evidence to show that *some* at least of those departed, not only manifest undiminished

affection for their friends left behind but preserve an interest in schemes which they themselves had at heart whilst here, and do not cease the endeavour to impress their old colleagues with suggestions likely to further the attainment of the objects in view. An instance bearing on this point was mentioned in a previous chapter where a communication from one who, while on earth, had earnestly desired the abolition of war was quoted, denoting her association with a band of workers "on the other side" united in the endeavour to bring about this same object.

Indeed one may assume that all upon the earth who are working, singly or in association, for righteous ends have the opportunity, if they will embrace it, of receiving help and advice from unseen partners. It is true that the readiness of these to co-operate is too often ignored by us, and so the partnership is apt to lack the effectiveness which should distinguish it. One can conjure up a pleasing picture of the results which might ensue, if those on earth who are engaged in the pursuit of some worthy project were to admit into consciousness a realisation of the presence and activity of these would-be co-operators, and so render themselves receptive to their help and guidance. And yet, even though the conscious realisation may be absent, it is impossible to doubt that, for instance, in the case of an association of workers for some high purpose which would benefit humanity, the influence of helpers from the unseen world does produce a certain effect, and that some at least of the impressions emanating from those discarnate minds succeed in reaching their

mark. All who are actuated by high ideals do, if only subconsciously, lay themselves open to receive from the world of spirit impressions which deepen their convictions and suggest wise courses of action. One is often apt to speculate upon the origin of unexpected thoughts which flash upon the mind. Is it not at least possible that these may proceed from some personality in that other sphere who, regarding with sympathy our aims, or it may be our difficulties, is enabled to reach us with helpful counsel or warning ?

It is of course in cases of intimate personal relationship that one is apt to find the clearest evidence of a co-partnership between the spheres of spirit and matter, cases where one of a united pair has been translated from earth. A firm belief in the continued life and presence of the seemingly departed one will bring to the other a joyous sense of uninterrupted community of interests. It will be felt that no real separation has occurred, that the mind "on the other side" is intimately conversant with every phase in the life of the lingerer upon earth, and that active partnership remains a reality. There is abundant indication of this in messages received from those who have gone "beyond," a few of which, proceeding from the communicator so often referred to in the preceding pages, may be quoted here :

You won't pass over yet because she has got a lot of work to do with you here. She would like you to go over too, but she says there is work for you to do, important work, and that is what we are with you for, not

only just to communicate but to make you feel that need. . . .

She has been trying in some way to impress your mind, to put an idea and words into your mind to write. She thinks she has helped you enough, but done it in such a way that you might think it was you doing it, but she has been doing it too. . . . She says what she can help more is in helping your brain to get the right idea. She is almost doing collaborating with you, do you see? In fact, she says, that's what she hopes to do with you. That's what she is trying to do with you. She is going to be almost a partner from the other side. It's her work to help and she enjoys it. . . .

You know we often work what she would call mentally together. Oh often, often. Sometimes you have got something to begin, to ponder mentally, and you aren't quite sure how you are going to do it or anything. She will often impress you and get you going. After a little while you begin to react to her, and she can keep you going, almost like feeding you mentally. . . . She doesn't pretend that you hear everything, that you hear her voice saying so, so, so, but she puts the idea there and she loves doing that. She loves working with you more than anything. She has got some work to do with you just now. There is some rather important work that she wants to get through with you. She says, "I shall be able to help with it, not only to help with it, but to make everything go smoothly and rightly with it."

Again, at a sitting during which the sitter, to his astonishment, had been given a considerable amount

of information—later proved correct—about a person with whom he had only the most casual acquaintance, this comment was added :

I (the Medium's Control) don't think she is an old friend of your lady (the Communicator), not that at all. Someone whom your lady has brought to you. Oh, she's smiling and she says " I have been very much in this, but I want you to keep it up because I feel she will be a help. And," she says, " I feel that perhaps we can help her."

Possibly the most interesting part of this message is to be found in these concluding words of it :

She is giving a lot of time to the discussion of some one who is a comparative stranger, some one that just seemed to have been blown towards you. She says, " No, I am giving it partly as a little evidence of something you are not likely to have in your own mind, and also because I am at the back of this. I am often at the back of little things that happen about people that you meet."

These words seem to furnish a hint that there may be occasions when some person or circumstance appears to have been, as this Communicator expressed it, *blown towards* one, with which chance has had nothing to do, but where the agency should be looked for in a discarnate friend acting with a definite purpose. It is a great consolation when bereft of the visible presence and the audible voice of some one greatly beloved, hand in hand with whom one has shared the joys and troubles of earth life, to be assured of that presence—though

unseen—still remaining with one, and of that voice, —though physically unheard—continuing to utter words of love and comfort and wise counsel. It should add greatly to the efficiency of one's work and to the avoidance of worry over difficult problems, to feel that the former partner upon earth is still at one's side, a coadjutor perhaps more helpful than ever before since, throughout all the communications from which excerpts have been quoted in these pages, there are constant references which show most intimate knowledge of every phase of the sitter's daily life from both the mental and physical standpoint, and even a perception of matters far outside of his conscious mind.

It really would appear as though we dwellers upon the material plane are singularly blind to the advantages which we might acquire, if we would only enlarge our horizon and cease to think of ourselves as occupying one small corner of the universe hedged round, as it were, by an insurmountable barrier shutting out all view of the illimitable space beyond with its myriads of active inhabitants. Once let us become convinced that this barrier exists only in imagination, and that there can be free interchange of communication between ourselves and those who have laid aside mortality, that in short both they and we are inhabitants of one and the selfsame universe, and we shall have prepared for ourselves conditions which will allow of a free and effective partnership with our friends in, what we are wont to call, the other world. These have no doubt their special duties to carry out in their own etheric

surroundings, but they are far from being neglectful of us, and find ample scope for sharing our interests and assisting us in every detail of our earthly life.

In this connection it may be fitting to conclude with some words of the same Communicator who has been so often cited, the occasion being one where the sitter had mentioned a certain project in which he was specially interested :

She sticks things into your mind . . . think of her and ask her to go along and help it. She likes you to, and it doesn't worry her a bit. She loves it. "It gives me a share in your life. You know how I loved to share it when I was here." . . . Now she so much enjoys your inviting her into what you're doing. "It isn't cutting me off, it's letting me in. You can't yet take an entirely active part in my life, but I can in yours. Always let me in."