

# THE ORAL GRADE READER:

A HANDBOOK FOR ORAL GROUP LEADERS,  
AND GROUP LEADERS IN GENERAL;  
WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUALISM  
EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED.

THE  
ORAL  
GRADE  
READER

By A. T. CONNOR,  
(Asst. Sec. B.S.L.U. Education Committee).

Published by  
THE BRITISH SPIRITUALISTS' LYCEUM UNION,  
—1926.—

# CONTENTS.

Lesson No.		Question in Primer.	Page.
—	Preface ... ..	—	—
—	A Chat about Group Leaders ...	—	6
I.	Pioneers ... ..	3	11
II.	Outlook on Life ... ..	4	12
III.	An Organiser ... ..	12	14
IV.	Earth Planes and Spirit Planes ...	21	16
V.	Spiritual Ignorance ... ..	29	18
VI.	Creeds <i>versus</i> Principles ... ..	30	20
	THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD	31	—
VII.	God the Universal Parent ... ..	—	22
VIII.	God is not a Person ... ..	18	24
IX.	The Mind behind the Plan ... ..	18	27
X.	Ideas and Ideals ... ..	—	30
	THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN	31	—
XI.	We are all Brothers and Sisters ...	—	32
XII.	An Exemplar ... ..	11	33
XIII.	THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AND ITS PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS ... ..	31	35
	SPIRIT COMMUNION :		
XIV.	The Proven Facts of Communion between departed Human Spirits and Mortals ... ..	31	36
XV.	What is a Medium ? ... ..	29	38
	PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, WITH COMPENSATION AND RETRIBUTION HEREAFTER FOR ALL GOOD OR EVIL DEEDS DONE HERE.		
XVI.	Personal Responsibility ... ..	31	40
XVII.	Compensation and Retribution ...	31	42
	ETERNAL PROGRESSION :		
XVIII.	A Path of Eternal Progress ... ..	31	46
XIX.	We Live to Learn, and Learn to Live ... ..	31	50

## PREFACE.

---

The following Lessons, intended primarily for the use of Oral Group Leaders, but also designed to be of use to any Group studying the subjects with which the lessons deal, have been reprinted from "THE LYCEUM BANNER" in order that they may be available in a more convenient form than hitherto. It is hoped that all Oral Group Leaders, at least, will make an extensive use of this booklet, even to the extent of persuading the Lyceum Committee to supply copies to their Group members.

The aim of the Lessons is to assist Group Leaders by suggesting topics and matter for lessons based on The ORAL GRADE PRIMER, in addition to the actual learning of its contents. They explain or illustrate the meanings of words or phrases in the Primer that the children are likely to find difficulty in understanding; and the stories given as examples will interest the little ones, as well as showing the application of the words or phrases concerned.

It is not sufficient to teach children lists of facts. The facts must be explained, or illustrated in such a way that the children will be able to grasp them and understand their full force and teaching. No Spiritualist child should be allowed to grow up without an intelligent knowledge of the basic facts and teachings of Spiritualism; and it is confidently anticipated that a judicious use of the Lessons, Notes and Suggestions will be of great assistance to Leaders—the combination of story and illustration and simple language making the lesson taught easy to grasp and easy to remember. "The Lyceum is the school of a liberal and harmonious education," and it is the duty of all adults to see that the younger generation shall be assisted in every way to attain to "the lofty standard of our commonwealth," as "so shall we come to realise its highest ideal."

Oral Group Leaders who have not had the advantage of a training as teachers should make an earnest study of the many hints and suggestions for proper teaching laid down in the Introductory " Chat "—and, indeed, a study of this Lesson would be beneficial to all Group Leaders in a similar position : whatever their Group.

The Education Committee takes this opportunity of thanking Mr. Connor for his work for the Little Ones, and for the gift of these Lessons.

THE EDITORS.



## GUIDE TO THE USE OF THE LESSONS.

Giving the Questions in The ORAL GRADE PRIMER  
on which the Lessons are Based.

3	I., XII.	4	II.
11	XII.	12	III.
18	VIII., IX., X.	21	IV.
28	V.	29	XV.
30	VI.		
31	VII., VIII., IX., X., XI., XII., XIII., XIV., XV., XVI., XVII., XVIII. AND XIX. (also OUR LYCEUM GUILD Motto).		

It is suggested that, of the above Lessons, Nos. V., X., XIII., XIV., XV. and XIX. should be read to the children by the Leader—the children being allowed to read the others themselves. No child should be allowed to read more than about six lines (or to the nearest full stop after six lines). But on special occasions one child may take up one of the characters in a lesson, the connecting sentences being read by the Leader. This will be found very interesting.

It will be noticed that the Lessons have been grouped under various headings in the Contents Page—but one Lesson may be used for more than one Question or Answer, and it is with the view to helping the Leader to find the appropriate Lesson with the minimum of trouble that this Guide has been drawn up.

The Leader should always lead up to the Lesson by inducing the children to talk generally about what they know of the subject or of subjects allied to it. From time to time hints on how the Lessons may be approached will be given in the Education Department of The LYCEUM BANNER, in which also will be found answers to any queries Oral Group Leaders may care to send to the Education Secretary.

## INTRODUCTORY.

### A CHAT ABOUT GROUP LEADERS.

Assuming charge of a class of young children is a very serious undertaking ; and nobody realised this better than Mary Winfield, during the week that followed her appointment as Oral Group Leader in Thorpedale Lyceum. She had passed Grade IV. with Distinction, and had no option but to take up the responsibility that was thrust upon her ; as the Lyceum Conductor said, she had studied for the Examinations with the sole purpose of fitting herself for the work that was now offered, and so she was unable to refuse. But more and more, as the week wore on, she realised the great difficulty as well as the great responsibility of her task, and doubted her ability to do justice to the young minds entrusted to her charge. At last, near the end of the week, she went to the Conductor and explained her difficulties to him.

Mr. Clarke was a teacher in everyday life, so he was able to enter sympathetically and understandingly into her account of her doubts and fears—knowing from his own experience how large even small difficulties loom before the novice.

“ Now, Mary,” he said, when they had settled down after tea, “ let me hear what is troubling you, and it will be strange if we cannot find a way out. I never knew yet of a trouble that couldn’t be overcome by facing it boldly.”

“ Well it’s like this, Mr. Clarke,” she answered, “ I have to take over the teaching of these children, and honestly I don’t think I am fit for the work. I know I did well in the Examination ; but that was more a test in Conductorship. I believe I could take a group of adults and get on pretty well with them, because they would be able to understand and follow what I said ; but I don’t think I could make the children understand what I would

be trying to teach them, and it isn't fair to them to put me in charge of them."

"I am glad you are taking the matter so seriously," was Mr. Clarke's reply. "Some of our Group Leaders seem to regard their Leadership as a kind of social position, instead of a post of honour and duty. It does not appear to occur to them that they have assumed any sort or degree of responsibility. But really, the work of a teacher is a most important thing; and if you will allow me to advise you, and will set about your teaching in the right way, you will be able to do work that will play an important part in shaping the future of our Spiritualist Movement. Believe me, it is work that is well worth doing."

"Oh, I can see that," exclaimed Mary, "and I would love to be able to do it; but I know nothing about teaching, and it seems so hard to make children understand even the simplest things."

"There is only one way to get the children to understand you, Mary, and that is for you to get to understand the children."

"But how can I do that?" asked Mary.

"In the first place, you must make up your mind that the children are not little machines—not, let us say, little gramophone records, with the question you ask them to act as a gramophone needle to draw out an answer you have already taught them. You must try all the time to treat them as human beings, well able to think for themselves and form their own opinions on what you may teach them."

"Yes. I can follow that, Mr. Clarke; but how am I to make a start?"

"You must start by making a complete study of each one of your children. No two human beings are exactly alike, and no two human beings look at any given thing in exactly the same way; and it is your task to get

such a knowledge of your children that you will know fairly well what each of them will think on any subject and why he or she will think it. Insight into the minds of the children, and tact in finding the right way of appealing to their minds, are absolutely necessary to the teacher who wants to get good results. If you find that you have run up against difficulties, and that your lessons are not being understood, you will know that you have failed in tact or insight, or both, and have not gone the right way about your teaching."

"It all sounds terribly hard," said poor Mary.

"It may sound hard, but it isn't really. All that is wanted is sincerity and perseverance, with a dash of commonsense; and you will get far more satisfaction in teaching the children than in trying to teach their elders."

"Surely not, Mr. Clarke!"

"I can assure you that it is quite true, Mary. A good many of the adults have settled down to more or less fixed opinions, and you would not have a very easy task in bringing about any change. On the other hand, the mind of the child is free from prejudices and is open for impressions. It is for you so to conduct your teaching that you will leave their minds not only still free from prejudices, but impressed with the conviction that the only opinions worth holding are those they themselves have formed from what they know."

"And how am I to begin?"

"As soon as you have taken the names and ages of your children——"

"They are nine and ten years old," interrupted Mary.

"Well, then," continued Mr. Clarke, "the next thing is to ask the children why they attend the Lyceum. You are sure to get some very strange replies, but you



must persevere until you get them to give you the answer you want—that it is a school where they will be taught to think properly.”

“ But won’t they all say that at once?” she asked.

“ Not all of them, I’m afraid. You will then try to make them understand why they are going in for the Education Scheme. You will have to be very careful over this, as your children are too young to want education for its own sake; and you will need first of all to attract them by pointing out that, when they grow up, they will be the Spiritualist workers and speakers—and that the more they know the better it will be for Spiritualism. Ignorant workers, you must tell them, make an ignorant Movement.”

“ But will that help me to understand their minds?”

“ It should. You are lucky in having a room all to yourselves; and you can treat your children as chums, and, instead of asking them formal questions, get into conversation with them and let them chat with you and express their ideas freely. You will then be able to judge their mental standard from the opinions they express.”

“ Ye-es, I could do that” said Mary—none too hopefully.

“ Of course you could. Well, then; having found out what you can of their mental standard, you can prepare your first lesson. In doing this, your main aim must be to make it so interesting that all the children will want to take part in it.”

“ How shall I be able to judge whether they will be interested?” inquired Mary.

“ They will be interested in any lesson if you take care to start it in the right way. You must always start from where you know the children are both in mental

power and in knowledge; and you must have a clear idea of where you intend them to be at the end of the lesson."

"But how shall I know where to start?"

Mr. Clarke went to his bookshelf, and brought a copy of the "ORAL GRADE READER," opening it at "*The Mind Behind the Plan.*"

"Here we are," he said. "We might as well have an example of what I mean. In this lesson a boy is led from the plan of a house to the plan of a church, and to all that is needed to make the plan a success. From that he finds for himself the cleverness of the man who prepared the plan, and the wonder of the human mind that made such planning possible. Then the teacher is asked to lead the class on to still further discoveries. But before you allow the Lesson to be read, you should encourage the children to talk about houses and to describe any houses or churches they know. You must first prepare the ground for the ideas you want to bring before your scholars."

After some further conversation—in which three or four more Lessons, and the way to "prepare the ground" for them, were fully discussed—Mary prepared to go.

"Thank you, Mr. Clarke," she said at the door; "I'm much obliged for the trouble you have taken with me."

"That is all right, my dear," was the reply. "It has been a real pleasure. All I wish is that I could persuade all my Group Leaders to meet me here once a month, to talk over methods of teaching and compare notes about results. We should soon have a Lyceum that would be an example to the whole Movement. Good night, Mary, and don't forget—your success as a teacher will depend on your power to understand children, and to draw out and develop the very best that is in them."

## LESSON I.

## PIONEERS (Question 3).

A hundred years ago, the country now known as the United States of America was not full of big cities and towns, as it is to-day; nor were there any railways to take people wherever they wanted to go. White men did not live in the heart of the country, but on the eastern coast—the side nearest to Europe. The rest of the country was mostly forest-land, or prairies (plains covered with grass and shrubs—little bushes), and was inhabited (lived in) by fierce red-skinned men, called Red Indians or Redskins (we have all seen them at the cinema). These Indians did not want the white men to live in America, and tried over and over again to kill them all. So you can see that it was dangerous for a white man to go into that part of the country where the Indians lived. In spite of this, brave men went out hunting in the Indian country, and others went to live there. These cut down the forest trees, built themselves houses, dug up the ground and made farms, where they grew wheat and other crops. As they made their way from civilization to the places where they had decided to live, they often had to fight the Indians, and for safety they used to go in large parties. In the wild country there were no shops, so they had to take with them everything they were likely to want—and if anything got lost or spoiled they just had to go without it. Sometimes they lost their food; sometimes their horses died or were killed—and so, as they fought their way onward, they were often very weary, often hungry and thirsty, and only the strongest lived to reach the places they were trying to get to. But these brave men settled on the land, grew crops or bred cattle, and PREPARED THE WAY FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW. They were PIONEERS.

When we speak of Spiritualist pioneers, we mean brave men and women who have fought and suffered and worked for Spiritualism, just as these other men (and

their wives and children) fought and suffered and worked for their new homes. The Spiritualist pioneers did not have to fight Indians, nor did they all have to go hungry and thirsty—but people said nasty things to them and about them, and in some cases would not give them work to do; crowds of rough people would break their windows or annoy them in other ways; clergymen said they were very wicked, and preached sermons against them; and, as a rule, everything possible was done to make them miserable. But they never lost heart, and they gladly suffered all these miseries so that we should know the great truth of spirit return.

So we must learn all about these pioneers (they are mentioned again in Ques. 7, and in No. 1 Handbook); above all, we must learn to love them, and make up our minds that we shall work as hard, and if need be suffer as much for Spiritualism, as they did.

---

## LESSON II.

### OUTLOOK ON LIFE (Question 4).

Last July Mrs. Pusey and her little boy Tommy spent a fortnight in the country. They stayed at a farmhouse and what with watching the cows being milked, helping to gather the eggs, riding on the horses, and being woke up every morning by the loud crowing of the cocks—Tommy had a wonderful time. But what he liked best was when his mother took him for nice long walks through the fields. He picked wild flowers, looked for nests (though, being a decent boy, he never touched them); once or twice had a race with a wild rabbit—or else he walked beside his mother, asking questions about everything he saw.

One evening they had been walking for some time when they came to a fair-sized hill. Tommy had just been complaining that, although the hedges were pretty and the big trees threw a nice cool shade, they kept him

from seeing anything else; so his mother asked him if he would like to climb the hill. He said that he would, and they started at once. Before very long Tommy was able to see over the hedges, and when near the top he could see over all but the very highest trees. Arrived at the summit, they found that they could see for a long way. The sun was getting ready to set, and the sky, with its crimson-edged clouds, was beautiful to look at. The sunset glow touched everything with its glory—it made the fields look fresh and sweet; it lighted up the trees and hedgerows; and a river in the distance almost seemed to be on fire.

“ It looks like Fairyland,” said Tommy.

“ Yes,” replied his mother, “ it is a beautiful outlook.”

Tommy wanted to know what an outlook was, and his mother explained that OUTLOOK is a word with a double meaning. It not only means WHERE YOU LOOK FROM, but also takes in WHAT YOU ARE ABLE TO SEE.

Now we know the meaning of “ outlook,” but what do we mean by “ outlook on life ”? Let us take some examples. A child of three or four years old is given a copy of *The Lyceum Manual*. To him it is a lot of white paper with “ funny ” marks on it; to his sister of six or seven it is a collection of very hard words, and some easy ones; to his brother of ten or fourteen it is a collection of Songs, Golden and Silver Chains and Musical Readings, some of which have to be studied; while to his brother or sister of eighteen or twenty (trained in the Education Scheme) it is a splendid book full of great and noble teachings, which give us a new way of looking at things, and new ideas of what these things mean—in other words, it widens our outlook on life.

The ignorant man or woman, or the ignorant boy or girl, are like Tommy when he was in the field. Their

ignorance is like the hedge: it closes them in and keeps them from seeing what life really is (sometimes they are so ignorant as to think that there is nothing outside their "hedge"). As soon as they start learning they are like Tommy climbing up the hill-side: by degrees they are able to see more, and see farther. And when they have been studying for a long time, they are like Tommy at the top of the hill: they find that their hedge (of ignorance) shut in a very small part of the countryside (life in general) and that, now they are at the top (M.R. 219 tells us of "the mountains of knowledge"), they can see and enjoy beauties that till then were hidden from their view. Their whole ideas of life are changed—have become wider.

By doing our calisthenics properly we make our muscles stronger (we call it developing them) and our bodies more graceful; by learning to think properly, and practising proper thinking, we make our brains stronger and better fitted for the work they have to do (we call it developing our mental powers), and our thoughts more graceful. And so, by taking full advantage of the Lyceum system, "we live to learn, and learn to live"; and we find that, in developing our thinking powers, we have widened our outlook on life—which means that we can see more and understand more, and thus can be of more help to others with whom we have to live and work.

---

### LESSON III.

#### AN ORGANISER (Question 12).

When it was first suggested that a Guild Class should be started by Westland Lyceum, the Committee said that it could not be done. What with the Summer outing, the Autumn social and dance, and the New Year tea and prize-giving, there was too much to do already. And besides, they were thinking of learning a Service of Song

to give in the Spring; so there was no time for "fancy ideas." But Kitty Nelson said that she thought the whole Lyceum should be asked if it wanted a Guild, and if it did she would be willing to take charge. This was agreed to, and on the following Sunday the Lyceumists voted in favour of a Guild Class and elected Kitty as Leader.

She did not waste any time. At the end of the Session she took the names of all who were going to join, and they agreed to meet at the Hall on the following Wednesday evening to talk over plans. Most of them came, and it was agreed to have games in the early part of each meeting, and to have a discussion on some subject after the younger ones had gone home. The idea was a great success, and from 7 till 8 every Wednesday the children, and even the bigger boys and girls, had a great time playing Snakes and Ladders, draughts, and other games. But the discussion idea did not last long. On the fourth Wednesday Kitty brought a copy of *Little Red Riding Hood*, and proposed that the second part of the evening should be spent in learning it. Everybody agreed, and then they decided who were to take the parts. That done, they began to wonder how it was going to be done. But Kitty had thought of all that. Each of the bigger girls would make her own dress and help with the dresses of the little ones. The bigger boys would see about the scenery and the stage. Kitty would help all of them and tell them what to do.

The Guild Class now became very busy. The little ones were taught to sing the fairy songs, whilst the older girls sat and sewed; and the boys kept on leaving off in their games to talk over the clothes their mothers were making for them, or how they were getting on with painting the scenery. And everybody worked so hard that the Lyceum gave its Service of Song early in the New Year, and *Little Red Riding Hood* was given by the Guild just before Easter.

On Saturday afternoons the Guild members went for long rambles in the country, and Kitty, who had bought a history of the district, told them stories about the different places they visited. Another member, who was studying botany, told them the names and natures of different wild flowers, and soon it became quite a game to try to find a flower that she didn't know.

New members joined the Guild and the Lyceum, and everything was so successful that at last the Church President noticed it, and asked who had done it. When told that it was Kitty, he asked her how she had planned everything so well.

"Oh," she replied, "I just found out what everybody could do and wanted to do, and gave them a chance of doing it."

"Why, Kitty," he said, "you are a born organiser."

\* \* \* \* \*

[Note:—Oral Grade Leaders could use this lesson to advantage by encouraging the children to tell other stories applying its teachings, in connection with other activities familiar to the children—football, cricket, or walking clubs, etc. Or they could make it the basis of further lessons on organising.]

---

#### LESSON IV.

EARTH PLANES AND SPIRIT PLANES (Question 21).

Being a progressive body—that is, believing in what Mr. Tinker would call "getting a move on"—Milltown Lyceum was preparing all its children under twelve for the Oral Grade Examination. As the Oral Grade Group learned answer after answer out of the Primer, the Grade Leader either explained the hard words or read an Object Lesson from the BANNER. In this way they got to know and understand such words as *pioneer*, *outlook*, *organise* and *exemplar*; but at last they came to the Sunday when Question 21 had to be answered, and as there



was no Object Lesson for it the Leader had to look for a story that would explain the words that the children would not understand. This was not an easy task, by any means; and this time the Leader was beaten. She could not find, or think of, a story—and she knew that she was sure to be asked what a plane was. Of course, SHE KNEW what it was, but, as every Leader knows, that is very different from being able to explain the meaning so that children will understand. So she went to the Lyceum on the Sunday afternoon, wondering what was going to happen. She soon knew! It was easy enough to explain what a PHYSICAL body was, and from that to explain that a SPIRIT body was much the same, only that it was made of finer materials; but then little Jimmy Parsons asked: "Please, what is the earth plane?"

Charlie Wills at once began to tell how his father had a plane that cut shavings off wood—and as he went on, the Leader began to get a clear idea about her lesson. By asking questions, she got Charlie to explain that, when his father had finished planing a piece of wood, the top of the wood was smooth and level. So she pointed out that "planed" wood was "level" wood; that *plane* meant *level*; that things being ON THE SAME PLANE meant that they were ON THE SAME LEVEL (or, equal in every way)—and that when things were on different levels they were said to be on different planes.

As an example, she took the Education Scheme. A Lyceumist who had passed Grade I. would be on a higher plane (of knowledge) than one who had just passed the Oral Grade. Grade II. would be on a higher plane still, and so on to Grade V., which would be the highest plane of all (in the Scheme).

Then she took the earth plane and the spirit planes, and pointed out that life on Earth was at a different level from life in the Spirit World. For life on Earth we need a physical body; for life in the Spirit World we use a

spirit body. So living or working in the Spirit World is called being on the spirit plane.

But the Spirit Friends are not all on the same level—some are more wise and loving than others, because they know more. It is just like the Grades in the Education Scheme—the more they know, the higher plane they are on. And finally, just as the Earth is called the earth plane, so the places where these different grades of Spirit Friends live are called the spirit planes.

The Oral Graders were very pleased with the chat, and glad that there had not been an Object Lesson.

*N.B.*—It is suggested that the above lesson should not be read at the beginning of the class. The Leader, by asking questions, should draw from the children as much as possible of the above information, merely giving a lead as and where required, and seeing that no point is left untouched. The lesson could be read before the class closes, in order to gather and join up all the points.

---

## LESSON V.

### SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE (Question 28).

Mrs. Macdonald looked at the calendar and sighed. It was the 4th of January, and she and her husband were very sad; for on that day, eighteen years ago, their little son Alick had died. They called it "died," because they were not Spiritualists, and did not know that Alick, although only three years old at the time, had not "died," but had only passed into Spirit life, and was as much "alive" as ever he had been. So, instead of being comforted by the knowledge that their boy was being well looked after by Spirit Guardians and teachers in the Summerland, Mr. and Mrs. Macdonald sat at home on the 4th of January every year, and grieved over the child

they had lost. For in their state of spiritual ignorance (that is, not knowing that their boy was a Spirit and could not die) their son was lost to them just as much as if he had been really dead—they thought only of his physical body; and of course they did not know that he had grown into a man. They still thought of him as a little child of three.

But on that very day Alick, in the Spirit World, went before some of his Spirit Elders and asked to be allowed to adopt a Mission in Life. He had finished his course of instruction (that is, he had learned all his lessons, and knew all that he was expected to know at his age), and was anxious to become a worker and use the knowledge he had obtained, for the helping of others. He was informed that he could put his present knowledge to good use in one of two ways: He could come back to Earth conditions and work through a medium (See Lesson XV.); or he could go as a missionary, and teach Spirit people who did not know anything of Spirit life or its laws and were living in spiritual ignorance. Alick did not want to work through a medium, and said he would like to be a missionary, if they would tell him what he had to do.

A missionary, he was told, is one who is sent to carry a message of hope and gladness to others. It was then explained to him that some people, when they came into Spirit life, thought they had to wait for a Day of Judgment, to know whether they would be sent to heaven or hell. He would have to teach them that there was no judgment such as they expected, and that the only way into heaven was to make themselves happy by doing good to others. There were some who thought they had been forgiven all their sins, "because Jesus had died for them." He would have to teach them that they would have to save themselves—by doing good deeds. There were others who had thought it clever to steal, or cheat, or tell lies, or to become rich and powerful by dishonest

means. He would have to teach them that all these things were wrong ; that the only thing worth having was a pure, loving mind ; and that the only way of being really happy was in doing good—because we want to do it.

“ These, and other people you will meet,” said one of the Elders, “ are all living in spiritual ignorance—which is really spiritual darkness ; they have never been taught that Love is the only spiritual light, and that to know Love is the only way of getting to know true happiness ; they do not know that they are Spirits and that the central parts of their natures are Love and Wisdom—which are Divine. It will be your task to teach them that they are Spirits, that the light of their lives must shine from within themselves, and that the only progress a Spirit can make is spiritual progress.”

So while his parents, in their ignorance, were grieving over him, Alick set out on his mission, full of joy and hope, and certain of winning happiness—for always, as we know, The Workers Win.

---

## LESSON VI.

### CREEDS versus PRINCIPLES. (Question 30).

The Oral Grade Group was studying Question 30 in the Primer, and for some time the Leader had been trying to make plain the difference between a Creed and a Principle. The Oral Groupers could easily understand that a Creed was a form of belief, or as one of them put it, “ something you believed in.” But, in answer to Question 30, they were told that “ there are certain Principles in which all Spiritualists believe.” And to their young minds it seemed that there could not be much difference between a Creed and a Principle, if both of them were “ something you believed in.” And at last young Ronnie Singleden put all their thoughts into words when he asked :

" Please, Leader, are our Principles a Creed?"

" Yes, Ronnie, they are—but, as the Primer says, not in the usual meaning of the word ' CREED.' "

" What is the usual meaning?" asked Tommy Woods.

" The usual meaning," answered the Leader, " or rather I should say the meaning that is usually given to it, is that a Creed is something you MUST believe in."

" Didn't it always mean that?" asked Ronnie.

" I don't think it did," replied the Leader. " In the early days of Christianity, when a Christian was asked what he believed in, he would be sure to give what we would call the Principles of Christianity, and begin the list with the words " I believe," telling whoever asked him what he believed to be true. It would only be by degrees that it would come to be claimed that not only was this *Credo* (a Latin word which means ' *I believe* ') true—but that nothing else was true; and then, at last, that the Creed must be believed as a means of salvation. And so it has come that those who believe in any particular Creed think that they possess the whole and only truth, and that everybody else is wrong."

" But that seems silly," said Tommy. " They cannot all be right."

" Of course," continued the Leader, " there are many Christians who do not believe that everybody else is entirely wrong—it is only the very ignorant and narrow-minded in any religion who would think of making such a claim in the present day. But Spiritualists, with this example of what Creeds may lead to, have been wise enough to avoid having one, and to adopt our Principles instead. A Principle is something that everybody can see is true, although we may hold different opinions about it."

The Guardian of Groups had been an interested listener, and now broke in for the first time:

“ You mean,” he said, “ that a Creed tells us what to believe, and also the lesson of what we must believe—a Principle tells us what is or can be believed, and leaves us to find out the lesson or message for ourselves.”

“ Exactly,” said the Leader; “ that is the great difference between a Creed (as we now understand it) and a Principle. A CREED ties us down, and a PRINCIPLE sets us free.”

---

## THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

### LESSON VII.

#### GOD THE UNIVERSAL PARENT.

(Question 31).

To get an idea of what THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD means, we must first try to understand what Fatherhood means. Really, we ought to say Parent-hood—because God is the same to the whole world, and to everything that is in it, as our fathers and mothers (our parents) are to us. Let us consider what happens in a real good home.

Father goes to work and brings home the money he earns, so that we may have food and clothes; he pays rent, so that we may have a house to live in; he sends us to school and buys books for us, so that we may learn things that will be useful to us—and though sometimes we ask for things and he does not let us have them, it is not because he does not love us, but because he knows that the things would not be good for us. All through our childhood he cares for us and guards and guides us; and when we want anything very badly, we always go to

him. He helps us with things that we are trying to do—and when we have done them he is just as proud and glad as we are ourselves.

Mother stops at home and looks after us. She cooks our food and sees to our clothes, and keeps the home clean and comfortable. She tells us stories, and helps us with our toys and games. Sometimes, if Father is not earning any money, or if he is not earning enough to keep us in comfort, she goes out to work, so that we shall not go hungry. If we are ill, she attends to us and does her best to make us well again. She will sit up all night with us, so that if we should want anything she will be there to give it to us. If something has upset us and we feel sad over it, we go to her and she soothes and comforts us. When we are not sure what to do about something that is worrying us, we go to her and she tells us what she thinks it would be best for us to do. And as we grow up we get to know this—that whatever our troubles may be, Mother is always our friend, whether we are in the right or wrong. Parent-love does not inquire as to what we DESERVE.

In the Spiritualist Movement we have come to look on God as being in the nature of a loving PARENT, who, in some way which we cannot attempt to understand, is Both-Father-and-Mother to us and everything else in the world. When we grow up, and are in trouble, or sorrow, or doubt, or danger (of any kind); or when everything around us is so dark that there seems no chance of light ever coming again—we go to God, with hope and faith in our hearts, and ask for His love and help. And if our faith is as great as our need, help and comfort will surely come, and we shall have the feeling of a great parental love which surrounds and enfolds us.

When we grow older, and have learned a lot more than we know now, we shall understand this better; and we will also be able to form other ideas about God. But at present the best and nicest way for us to look to Him is as Our Loving Heavenly Father.

## LESSON VIII.

GOD IS NOT A PERSON. (Note to Ques. 18).

Harry was sitting at the table, with his Shakespeare before him and a frown of deep thought on his brow. Two or three times he looked at his father, who sat reading before the fire, and then at last he spoke.

"Dad," he said, in a tone that caused Mr. Bramwell to put down his book.

"Yes, Harry? What's the matter?"

"I've been trying to read *Romeo and Juliet*, but I can't understand the meaning of these two big words at the beginning"—and Harry brought the book over to his father and pointed to the words *DRAMATIS PERSONÆ*. "What do they mean?"

"Oh," said Mr. Bramwell, preparing to start again on his book, "that's easy. It means the characters in the play."

Harry had heard of "drama" and "dramatic," so he could understand that "dramatis" might stand for "play;" but he couldn't see how "personæ" could stand for "characters"—and he said so.

"But, dad," he asked, "why does it say *personæ* if it means characters? I can't understand that."

With a sigh, Mr. Bramwell closed his book and took up a Dictionary.

"Come on," he said, "and we'll find out all about it"

He turned up *PERSON* in the Dictionary, and Harry, to his great surprise, found that our word "person" had been made from a foreign word, *PERSONA*, and that "persona" meant a MASK.

"But, dad," he exclaimed, "how can a mask be a person?"



Then his father explained that some words, in the course of time (hundreds of years), had changed their meanings—or rather that people had come to use them with different meanings—and that “*persona*” (or person) was one of these words.

“Two or three thousand years ago,” he said, “plays used to be performed in the open, without stages or scenery such as we have now; and the actor used to wear a mask, which was called *persona*. But the masks were not all alike, as each actor would wear a mask to show what character he was supposed to be acting; so after a while *persona* was used (just as Shakespeare used it) for the character acted, and not for the mask. Later the word was used to mean the actor (or person) who acted as a particular character—then it came to mean any actor, who acted as any character,—and now it has come to be used for any human being, and has been shortened to *person*.”

“Yes, dad,” said Harry, “I can understand most of that. But people would call you or mum or me a person, and yet we are not doing parts in a play.”

“Don’t be too sure,” replied his father. “Just think for a minute. When mum tells me that you’ve been a good boy, what does she mean?”

“She means that I’ve done everything she wanted,” said Harry.

“A little more than that, sonny. She also means that you haven’t been doing anything that she didn’t want you to do.”

“Yes,” said Harry, “I suppose so.”

“Well, then. Your mother has been judging whether you were a good boy or a bad boy, by what you did or didn’t do; and other people will judge your character by your actions (or acting), as they cannot see your thoughts of what you would *like* to do. Isn’t that so?”

" Yes, that's so," admitted Harry.

" Then, as you (and everybody else) are acting a part in life—everybody is an actor, and so everybody can be called a person."

Harry thought hard for a few minutes, then nodding his head he went back to the table, and Mr. Bramwell re-opened his book.

\* \* \* \* \*

So, when the Oral Grade Primer says—" You must remember that God is not a Person "—it means only that God must not be looked upon as a Human Being. God is the Spirit of Life and Love and Wisdom that works through everything we see and know, and it would be very foolish of us to think of Him as a Man, no matter how clever we thought Him. (See also Lesson IX., *The Mind Behind the Plan.*).

*Note.*—Oral Grade Leaders could point out to the children, as simply as possible, that—taking the early meaning of " Person " as " a character " (or merely " character ")—those who speak of a Personal God are not necessarily referring to God as a Glorified Human Being. They may be referring to the many ways in which we believe we can see the Spirit of God in manifestation. It could also be pointed out that, even at the present day, when we speak of a man's " personality " we refer more or less to the man's character and how it affects, influences or appeals to others.

\* \* \* \* \*

Leaders will appreciate this Lesson, and we trust it will make a special appeal to the children.

May we suggest that, after the whole Lesson has been read and discussed and amplified, the children (in, say, the following lesson) would enjoy reading it out as a dialogue, one taking the part of Mr. Bramwell; and one, of Harry.

## LESSON IX.

## THE MIND BEHIND THE PLAN.

(Note to Question 18).

Will Rogers was a very lucky boy. His father was an architect who made a lot of money by preparing plans for houses that were to be built; and when Will was old enough to leave school he was going to be taken into his father's office and taught the business.

One day Will went to the office, and watched some of his father's men working on plans. At first he could not understand what they were doing; but one of the men explained one of the plans, and Will, to his surprise, found that the plan was only the outline picture of the house, with a map of the ground on which the house was to be built. The map was called the ground plan, and he was told that the straight lines showed where the walls were to be, and that the parts of circles, with short lines running across them, were the doors. The "Pictures" showed where the windows, fireplaces, etc., were to be placed.

Will was delighted, and Mr. Smyth, the workman (they call him the draughtsman), was so pleased with the interest shown that he began to talk about other plans.

"You know Bellminster Church," he said. "Well, we prepared the plans for that. I wish you could have seen them—they were splendid, and everything worked out just as it had been planned."

"But," asked Will, "wouldn't a church be easier to plan than a house?"

"Why should it be?" asked Mr. Smyth.

"Well," said Will, "in a church you wouldn't have any fireplaces or things to plan for."

"That's so," was the reply, "but there are worse things than fireplaces. The Church has a steeple and a peal of bells, and it was harder to plan for them than for a fireplace."

"Why?" asked Will.

"Because a fireplace is easy, if you see that the flue is all right. But in a belfry (that is what they call a steeple where they have bells) you have to allow for the weight of the bells and the vibration when they are being rung."

"What do you mean by vibration?" asked Will.

"Why," answered the draughtsman, "when the bells are ringing they make everything shake, and the walls have to be built so strong that the shaking won't make them fall down. Then," he continued, "you have to build the steeple such a size that it won't look odd, but will add to the beauty of the building—and you have to do the same with the windows. And you have to build the walls in such a way, and the roof to such a height that, although there is always plenty of fresh air, everybody will be able to hear everything that is said."

"O-o-oh," said Will, who had not thought that there could be so much in making plans.

"And you have to work out how much wood, and stones, and bricks and mortar you will need—and how much the building will cost. So the next time you see Bellminster Church, remember that a beautiful building like that was built from a plan drawn on sheets of paper."

"Isn't it wonderful!" said Will.

"What is wonderful?"

"Why, to think that anybody could sit at a desk and work out a plan like that."

"You've got it, my boy," said Mr. Smyth. "The plan is splendid; but what we have to wonder at most is the cleverness of the man who made it—the power of the mind behind the plan."

\* \* \* \* \*

Will was luckier than most investigators, He could see the plan, and had also seen how the plan had been worked out into actual being. The philosopher (one who loves wisdom so much that he is trying to find it) has only some of the Works of Nature to study. He knows and he sees various things, and (if a Spiritualist) he is examining these things in the light of Spiritualism, and trying to get some idea of the plan which seems to be working through them—in the hope that when he knows the Plan he will be able to build up an ideal of the Supreme Mind behind it.

*Note.*—Oral Group Leaders should bear constantly in mind that we may give any number of different names to a thing—and yet know no more about it than if we gave it only one. For instance, if we tell a child that a Rolls-Royce was an automobile, and then that a automobile was a motor car—he would be just as ignorant as ever of THE REAL NATURE of an automobile. In the same way, when we call GOD the Over Soul, or Infinite Spirit, or the Supreme Mind of the Universe, we are NOT EXPLAINING THE NATURE of God—we are only calling Him by other names. It is the task of philosophers, Spiritualist or otherwise, to find out as much as possible of the NATURE (that is, "*ALL the things that are true*") of the things we know and see; and THEN, *from what they find out*, try to build up an ideal of the nature of the Mind (or Power) which THEY BELIEVE (or think) they see in operation.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lesson IX. will be found most interesting and helpful; and can be taken with benefit in *any* Group, besides the one for children.

## LESSON X.

IDEAS AND IDEALS. (See Lesson IX.).

In the Lesson on *The Mind Behind the Plan*, the words IDEA and IDEAL have been used, and it is almost certain that some of the children will want to know how these two words differ in meaning. The following notes are given to enable the youngest and most inexperienced Leader to give a helpful reply.

There is a certain connection in meaning between the two words. They both mean mental images—that is to say, they both stand for pictures built up by us in our minds. But there is a great and real difference between the ways in which they are used. As an example, let us take the term MAN, and try first to form an idea and then an ideal of what the word means to us.

Our general IDEA of “a man” (as opposed to our idea of a dog, or a horse, or any other animal) is that he walks upright, on his hind legs; that he has feet, instead of paws or hoofs; that his head rises straight up from his shoulders, instead of hanging forward and down; that he can speak; that he can reason (think things out for himself); and that he has hands which he can use to do things he thinks of doing. . . . But we also have ideas of different men we know—and we have met or heard of tall men and short men; thin men and fat men; clever men and stupid men; good men and wicked men; men of different colours and habits; men who use their gift of language to help us—or to lead us astray; men who use their hands and brains to do useful work—or to steal what other men have earned; men who use their knowledge to help us, and men who use it to do us harm. All these ideas are built up from men we know—or from descriptions given by people who know these different kinds of men.

But when we try to form an IDEAL of a man, we do not form it from all that we know. Instead, we

examine all our ideas of "a man," and pick out those we like best; and we may even add ideas that we have thought out for ourselves—so that the mental picture we want to build up may be, in our opinion, perfect. Physically (that is as far as man's physical body is concerned), we should like a man of a certain size: not too tall and not too stout; "good-looking," strong, and graceful in his movements. Mentally, we should like him to be clever and well-educated, and able to reason (think) clearly about things he knows and sees. Morally, we should like him to be of such a nature that he would always be ready to use his size and strength and cleverness for the benefit of others; that he would never cheat nor tell a lie nor do any other mean thing, and that he would use his reason only to find out the very best and most useful way of living his life. Spiritually, we should expect him to have a high ideal of life and its purpose, and of his duty to God through his neighbours. . . . So our ideal would really be our opinion of what would be perfection.

\* \* \* \* \*

We can now see the difference between an idea and an ideal. About an idea we (or at least some of us) can say—"If I close my eyes I can see it." About an ideal the most any of us can say is—"What a grand thing it would be, if we could have it."

And that is why we can form some IDEAS about the Plan of Nature—we can see Nature at work before our eyes. But we can only form an IDEAL of the Mind behind the Plan which we think we can see in operation—we have to examine all our ideas about how the plan works (or is being worked) and from them try to imagine what kind of Mind or Power could and would adopt such a Plan, and work it as we think it is being worked.

We can also see that different people, either through having different ideas or from putting the same ideas together in different ways, would form different ideals

from their examination of the ideas—and in the Lyceum Movement, knowing this, we are not asked, nor should we ask, that any one particular ideal should be accepted by everybody as the only correct one. Instead, each individual Lyceumist is not only allowed, but is encouraged, to use his own thinking powers to examine his own knowledge, and from his own ideas to build his own ideal of the Supreme Mind of the Universe—GOD.

---

## THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

### LESSON XI.

“WE ARE ALL BROTHERS AND SISTERS.”

(Question 31.).

We all know how much we love our own brothers and sisters. If we are decent boys and girls, we share our sweets and our toys with them; when they are in trouble we do our best to help them; if they want anything we do our best to help them to get it—and we do all in our power to make them happy. They, also, love us, and would do as much for us as we would do for them. But sometimes we are not nice boys and girls; and sometimes it is our brothers and sisters who are not nice. But no matter how nasty we may be—or they may be—it is their duty to love us, and our duty to love them, just the same as if we were all always good.

We know that God is the Parent of us all, and loves us all. We are all God's children and are all brothers and sisters in God's Family, which means everybody in the whole world. So we must love ALL boys and girls, even if they are not British. French, German, Spanish, American, and all other children are God's children; and coloured children are just the same in God's eyes as white children are; so we must treat them all just as nicely and as kindly as we treat each other. The little boys and girls who live up the street, or in another street, or in



another town, or in another country, or even in another world—(we know there are children in the Spirit World)—all these are our brothers and sisters, and we must love them, whether they are nice or nasty. We must not hate them, nor say nasty things to them or about them; we must just try to love them. This does not mean that we should play with nasty boys or girls, or make companions of them. But we can be sorry for them, and be nice to them when we have to meet them or speak to them; and we must do our best to show them, by our example, how easy it is to be decent and nice. This is our duty to ALL our brothers and sisters.

And when we grow up to be men and women, the boys and girls of other towns and other countries will also be men and women—and if we keep on loving and helping each other, we shall bring about what we in the Oral Grade mean by The Brotherhood of Man.

---

## LESSON XII.

### AN EXEMPLAR (Question 11.).

When a boy, Alfred Kitson never had a really good chance of going to school and learning to read and write and do sums. His father and mother were very poor, because his father was always in bad health; and as his mother had to go out to work, little Alfred had to keep house instead of going to school. But he learned to read and write at Sunday School, and, when old enough to have some money of his own, he bought good books and tried hard to learn all that they told him. As soon as he knew the things himself he tried to teach them to others. He worked very hard for the Lyceum he belonged to, and when the Lyceum was closed—because of the parent Society being broken up—he went to a private house every Thursday evening and taught a class of boys and girls until another Lyceum was opened. He helped to start a number of Lyceums—and if the Lyceums

were so far away that he could not attend to help in that way, he sent copies of Silver Chains, Golden Chains and Musical Readings, so that those who attended the Lyceums should be properly taught; and he described, also, how the marching and calisthenics should be done.

Later, he wrote a book called "Outlines of Spiritualism for the Young," in which he told how the Modern Spiritualist Movement had begun; showed how the Bible really supported Spiritualism; and described the homes and lives of children in the Summerland (the children's home in the Spirit World)—finishing with an address in which he showed that all Spiritualist parents, who really loved children, would send their boys and girls to the Lyceum to have their minds trained under the Lyceum system. When he found that the book was popular (that is, that everybody liked it, and thought it very good) he gave it to the Lyceum Movement, so that the Lyceums would get all the benefit of the book being sold; and when the Lyceums formed themselves into a Union (that is, banded themselves together to help each other in the work) he did all the Secretary-work for nothing until there was so much Lyceum work to do that he could not do it all in the evenings, and had to stay away from his own work as a coal miner so that the Union's work should be done.

Now he is growing old; but, as a result of the work he did when he was young, the Lyceum Movement is now very strong, and able to do things (such as this Education Scheme for children under twelve) that could not be done when the Union was first started. In doing this he set an example which every Lyceumist should try to follow—and that is why we call him the Father of the British Spiritualist Lyceum Movement and say that he is a noble exemplar to Lyceumists.

*Note.*—Oral Grade Leaders can add to the above lesson similar stories of the lives of local men and women who are known to the children, and whose public work

is not done for hope of reward but from realisation of duty—always laying stress on the main teaching that an Exemplar is *one whose example should be followed*.

---

### LESSON XIII.

#### THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AND ITS PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

The Soul.—When we say “I want to be good,” or “I love God,” or “I believe in Spiritualism,” we do not speak of the physical body when we say “I.” We are speaking of the Soul—*the real SELF*.

Immortality.—Things that are immortal *cannot die*. The Soul (or Spirit) will live on for ever and ever.

Personal.—Each one of us is a person. Anything that belongs to us is *our personal property*.

Characteristics.—These are things that *mark us out* as being different from other people. If we are in the habit of telling lies, or of always telling the truth, or of being good or bad tempered, or of being kind or rude to others—other people will speak of all or any of these as *our personal characteristics*.

When we die—that is, when we get free from our physical bodies and are able to live in the Spirit World—we shall still be the same persons as we were in this earth life. Willie Jones would still be Willie Jones—and if he has been a good boy who was in the habit of doing all his work as well as he could, if he was in the habit of always telling the truth, and of being a decent boy who was always kind and good tempered—or if he was a nasty tempered boy who never was kind to anyone,

or who did his work badly, or was greedy and selfish, or told lies,—he would take all these habits (his personal characteristics) with him. If he did not—he would not be Willie Jones.

But Spirit Willie Jones can *change* all his habits, good or bad, and still be himself. While still in Earth life he (if a bad boy) could stop telling lies, and get into the habit of telling the truth; he could stop being lazy, and begin to do all his work really well; he could be kind to animals instead of being cruel, and he could change into a decent boy whom everybody would like—and he would still be Willie Jones. It is just the same in Spirit life. The Soul (or Spirit) that is Willie Jones could never be any other person, no matter how long he lived in the Spirit World or how he changed his habits.

We claim that the Soul or Spirit is immortal, because the death of the physical body does not make IT die—but, instead, allows it to live on in another world (the Spirit World). And when we say that the personal characteristics of the Soul are immortal, we mean that they do not stop or change suddenly at physical death. They go on with the Soul into Spirit life, and do not change until the Soul decides to change them.

---

## SPIRIT COMMUNION.

### LESSON XIV.

#### THE PROVEN FACTS OF COMMUNION BETWEEN DEPARTED HUMAN SPIRITS AND MORTALS.

(Question 31.).

“ Departed Human Spirits ” . . . . our friends who have passed through the change called DEATH—into Spirit LIFE.

“ Mortals ” . . . . those of us who have not yet passed through the change, and who still “ wear ” physical bodies.

“ Proven ” . . . . another way of spelling **PROVED**.

When we are older, and allowed to join and sit in Circles, and to attend seances, we shall learn that the friends who have passed into Spirit Life are not cut off from us, but are able to come back and show us that they still love us as much as ever, and still take an interest in us and the things in which we are interested. This has been proved over and over again, by “ dead ” friends who have “ returned ” through mediums (See Lesson XV., “ What is a Medium? ”), and proved that they are “ very much alive.” They tell us stories of life in the Spirit World, and describe to us the beautiful homes where Spirit children live, and grow up to be Spirit men and women. They also tell us that we are each in the care of Guardian Angels (some call them “ Guides ”) : beautiful Spirit Friends who love us so much that they try to guard and guide us through our life here on Earth—and that these angels are men and women, or boys and girls, who have lived on this Earth in physical bodies, but who now live in the Spirit World, coming to Earth only when they can see that we are in need of their help or advice, or when we are in some trouble or danger out of which they can show us a way. So we should be very happy in knowing that they are Human Beings just the same as we are, and can help us in our troubles and sorrows because they have had the same troubles and sorrows and know what would have helped them ; and in knowing that we can get into such harmony with them that we shall be able to send our thoughts to them, or receive the thoughts they send to us—although not a word has been spoken ! This is Communion : and this great truth that our friends can return from Spirit Life and communicate with us (together with the “ proven ” fact that they do) is the firm rock on which our Spiritualism has been built.

---

## LESSON XV.

## WHAT IS A MEDIUM? (Question 29.).

Seated in my office one day, I remembered that I wished to speak to a friend whose office was five or six miles away. My voice is clear, and his hearing good—but he couldn't have heard me, because of the distance between us. What was I to do? Why, I "called him up" on the telephone.

Now, you all know about the telephone. There is a part you speak into (the "transmitter") and there is a part that the person you are speaking to holds to his ear (the "receiver.") Connecting these two there is an electric wire—but it does not run straight between the two offices. There is a big central office (called the Exchange), and half of the wire runs from my office, and half from my friend's office (and halves from hundreds of other offices) to the Exchange. When I want to speak to my friend, I ask the young lady at the Exchange to join my half to my friend's half; and WHEN SHE HAS DONE SO, he and I can talk as easily as if we were in the same office. The telephone—and especially the Exchange office—acts as A MEDIUM between us.

We might say, then, that the psychic power of a medium is the Exchange office of the "telephone service" between ourselves and our Spirit Friends. As a rule, we cannot hear them when they speak, because, they being in the spirit state and we in the material, we are separated just as much as my friend and I were in our separate offices. But the medium puts us in connection, and with his brain as the "transmitter" and his lips as our "receiver," we are able to hear and speak to our Spirit Friends as easily as if they were in physical bodies. (There are other kinds of mediums, and other forms of mediumship, but these must be left to a later course of study).

But there is one thing we must keep in mind ; and that is, that both with the telephone and with mediumship we cannot ALWAYS get into immediate communication with our friends, no matter how eagerly we may desire it. Very often, when we ask to have our half joined up to our friend's half, the telephone operator informs us that our friend's half is joined up with someone else—or that there is " No Reply " ; and we have to wait until our friend is disengaged again, or until he returns to his office or his home.

In the same way (though we may have a medium present) if our Spirit Friends are engaged in some task in the spirit World—or in any other part of THIS world—they may not be either able or willing to reply to our call, and we must wait until they are free to attend to us. Our Spirit Friends are very busy people, with work of their own to do, and with no time to waste in satisfying idle curiosity. So we must not be selfish enough or foolish enough to try to " call up the Spirits " every time we happen to be in the company of a medium. We must give our Friends a fair chance to do their own work ; and so we must not ask for them unless we have some end in view which can be made even more useful by having the Spirit Folks as helpers and advisers. And really, we DO NOT and CAN NOT " call " our Spirit Friends. We need them, and they GET TO KNOW that we need them—and they come to help and advise us or to give us the comfort of their presence and their love.

So let us make up our minds that we shall never call for our Spirit Friends unless we need their help or their advice. Let us make it clearly understood that we should not try to use the Spiritual Telephone unless for a wise and useful purpose ; and that Mediumship should be looked upon as a sacred thing far too precious to be used as a pastime, or as the selfish toy of an idle hour.

---

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, WITH COMPENSATION AND RETRIBUTION HEREAFTER FOR ALL GOOD OR EVIL DEEDS DONE HERE.

LESSON XVI.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY (Question 31.).

It was the Sunday after the declaration of the District Shield result, and every member of Rokerby Lyceum was in a bad temper. And no wonder; for Rokerby Lyceum was at the bottom of the results table, with only 70 per cent. marks—and most of the missing 30 per cent. had been lost on Marching and Calisthenics. The delegates to the District Council were even more angry than the rest; for they had had to listen to the Adjudicator's remarks—and according to him the Calisthenics display at Rokerby was the worst he had ever seen. So we can imagine how the delegates must have felt as they listened—and why they were so very much annoyed.

Now Rokerby had worked very hard to win the Shield, and in fact had rather fancied its chances of getting full marks for Drill. Yet the Adjudicator had said that although the various calisthenics movements were all according to the *Physical Exercises* book, the method of making the movements was all wrong, and that therefore he had been compelled to take off marks. Had it not been for their drill, he continued, Rokerby would have had a very good chance of winning the Shield. So, of course, everybody was very angry with the Drill Conductor, because they said he was to blame—and he was angry with them because they blamed him!

"I don't see why you should all get on to me," he said. "I didn't make myself your Drill Conductor—you all elected me."

"Of course we did," was the reply; "but we thought you knew the drill when you offered to stand for election."



" Well, you shouldn't have elected me."

" We know that now," was the retort—" but it is too late. You've let us down by taking on a big responsibility, without making yourself fit to carry it out properly, and we all have to suffer for your high opinion of yourself. But it serves us right for not being more careful in selecting our Leader."

Thus the angry quarrelling continued—and young Harry Westall went home greatly puzzled. He seemed to be able to agree with both sides. The Drill Conductor seemed to be to blame for not teaching the correct calisthenics—but then, the Lyceumists were to blame for appointing him without finding out whether he knew how the drill should be done. *It was a puzzle.*

After tea Harry explained the position to his father, and Mr. Westall placed all the blame for the failure on the Drill Conductor.

" You see," he explained, " he took on the Personal Responsibility of making the Lyceumists perfect in their drilling, and it was up to him to see that he did it. But he seems to have done absolutely nothing to make sure that he knew how to do correctly the work he had undertaken. If he even read the instructions, he must have done it so carelessly that he got a wrong idea of how the movements should be made, and he does not seem to have asked anybody for an opinion. He was conceited enough to think that he knew all about it without having to learn or ask for advice, and so he went wrong through the worst kind of ignorance—the ignorance that will not try to find out. He was given, and accepted, full authority in carrying out his task, and as he would have got all the credit if the Lyceum had won, he must accept all the blame for the failure. It seems plain enough, to me."

" Yes, dad, I know ; but the Lyceum——"

"Oh, I agree—but theirs is quite another responsibility, and we'll leave that over for another chat. Just you keep your mind on the Individual who was appointed to a task and did not do it properly, and we'll tackle the responsibility of the Lyceumists next week."

So we shall leave Harry to think over what his dad said—and perhaps we might think it over for ourselves; and next time we may be told what was said about the responsibility of the Lyceum and the Lyceumists.

---

## LESSON XVII.

### COMPENSATION AND RETRIBUTION.

(Question 31).

If Mr. Westall thought that, by putting it off for a week, he was going to escape having to give Harry the promised explanation of the responsibility of Rokerby Lyceumists for the failure in the District Shield Competition, he made a great mistake; for, after tea on the following Sunday, Harry brought up the subject.

"Will you explain that to me now, dad?" he asked.

"Explain what?" asked his father, who knew that he had a hard job on his hands, and was not over keen about starting on it.

"Explain why our Lyceum and Lyceumists are to blame for electing the Drill Leader, and yet not to blame for the loss of the Shield."

"Well, I think it is plain enough and easy enough to see. The Drill Leader undertook to train the Lyceum to the Standard that would obtain full marks for drill—and failed; and as it was through his failure that the Lyceum lost enough marks to make them lose the Shield, he was the only one who deserved to be blamed for that."

" Yes, dad, you told me that last Sunday ; but why are the other Lyceumists not as much to blame as the Drill Leader ? "

" Because they did not undertake to secure the winning of the Shield. They elected several Leaders, and put them in charge of the preparation work ; and are only responsible in so far as they chose their Leaders carefully or carelessly. Their fault is that they were content to elect this particular Leader, and to allow him to take on a very important responsibility, without making any inquiry as to his knowledge or his fitness for the post ; and they are to blame for making a careless and wrong choice—but not for anything else. "

" But if they are not all equally guilty, why is it that they have all been equally punished in losing the Shield ? "

" They have not been punished, sonny. Had they obtained most marks and then had the Shield denied them because of their bad drill, you might be able to claim that they had been punished. But they got least marks, and the Shield was given to the Lyceum with most marks, so none of them can say that they were PUNISHED. "

" But the marks they lost — "

" Through its mistake in electing an incompetent Leader, who did not know his work, the Lyceum was only able to reach the 70 per cent. standard ; and as it was awarded 70 per cent., and did not have any marks taken off what it had earned, it obtained what it was worth—nothing more and nothing less—and the Lyceumists are very foolish if they look on themselves as having been punished in any way. No person can complain about having been punished just because he does not receive a reward of more than he has earned. "

This seemed to be all right, but it left Harry, if anything, more puzzled than ever. Everybody was to blame, but nobody had been punished. And everybody had got what he had earned, or at any rate not more nor less than he deserved. It was all mixed up. Where was the Compensation and Retribution of which the Principles taught? The Lyceum did not get rewarded for its members having worked hard and done their best to win. And—yes—what about the Lyceum Slogan that “The Workers Win”? Rokerby had worked very hard, but yet they had lost, and lost badly! It was all very easy for his father to talk about nobody having been punished. For once, he could not accept his father’s ruling.

“But, dad,” he tried once more, “I always thought that Compensation and Retribution meant that we were rewarded for doing right and punished for doing wrong?”

“Quite right, my son; they do mean that and nothing else. But that does not mean that any person is set up, or allowed to set himself up, to reward or punish other people.”

“How are we punished or rewarded, then?”

“We must not forget that Retribution is a paying-back of something that we have paid-out, and may be repayment for either good or bad deeds—although some people always speak of retribution as if it were a form of punishment. The Lyceum that received most marks in the Shield Competition was paid back for the work it had put in by being declared the winner; Rokerby was paid back for carelessness in choosing a Leader by losing so many marks that it had no chance of winning. Both received the retribution due to them; one in the shape of success, the other in the shape of failure. So you will see that reward or punishment lies in ourselves: in our expectations, and our opinion of what has happened to us as a result of our actions—compared with what we had wished or expected to happen.”

“ What does Compensation mean, then?”

“ It means something given to us to make up for something we have lost, or that may have been taken from us or destroyed. But it rests with us whether we get compensation for anything—for we have to find it out for ourselves. And even failure may bring its own compensation along with its retribution, if we are only wise enough to find it—as I hope the Rokerby Drill Leader and Lyceumists will.”

“ Why, dad, what compensation have they got?”

“ Well, the Drill Leader, if he is wise, will have learned two lessons; the first, that if we are not sure of anything it is always worth while to ask for advice or assistance; the second, that no matter how hard we may work for success, success will not come unless we work along correct lines. If he has learned these lessons, the failure will have done him good.”

“ And have the Lyceumists any lessons they can learn?”

“ They have, my boy. The serious effects of their carelessness should teach them to be more careful in future. And they can learn this useful lesson, that it is unwise, as well as unfair, to shift our share of responsibility on to the shoulders of others: because we lose control of our own destiny; and that a movement careless or incompetent in its choice of its Leaders (of all kinds) is laying up a store of possibilities of disappointment and failure, or even of trouble, danger and disaster. If these lessons are learned, it will have been worth while losing the District Shield. But the greatest lesson of all is that what has happened to Rokerby is not reward or punishment, but simply the unavoidable results of what they themselves have done; and the lesson can be applied to life in general, and to everything we do or try to do. Do you follow me now?”

" Yes, dad, I think I do. Compensation and Retribution are the price we have to pay for being in complete charge of our own lives and our own destinies ; and while we must suffer for our mistakes, yet, if we are wise enough, we can always find a lesson that will help us to do better next time, thus getting real good out of apparent evil."

" That's it. And if we have only a fair supply of pluck and commonsense we shall never lose heart over failures. We shall look on all experiences as fitting us to take full advantage of our Personal Responsibility ; and we shall be able to gather up and examine all our failures, and build them into a ladder that will enable us to climb over all obstacles to success."

---

## ETERNAL PROGRESSION.

### LESSON XVIII.

#### A PATH OF ETERNAL PROGRESS. (Question 31.).

For several weeks young Will Rawlins, Oral Group Leader at South Street Lyceum, had been looking forward to the Sunday when he must deal with " A Path of Eternal Progress . . ."—and to be quite truthful, he was not looking forward to it with any great feelings of pleasure. He himself had a fairly clear general grasp of what it meant, but how to make it clear to a Group of Oral Graders was a task that began to seem far beyond his powers. But at last the fatal Sunday fell due, and in desperation Will went to an old friend, a former Group Leader, and, explaining the position, asked for advice and assistance.

Mr. Laiban did not believe in doing other people's work for them ; but he was always ready to advise them or show them how to do it for themselves. Accordingly, he replied to Will's request by asking him what he had done

or thought of doing towards getting an explanation of the Principle.

"Well," said Will, "I had thought of taking Evolution, and working up from a floating log to an ocean liner; or from a rolling log to a high-class motor car—or something like that. But the only lesson I could make up would have needed as much explanation as the Principle itself; and I want something that the Group will be able to see for themselves, as an explanation of Eternal Progression."

"What about the Object Lessons in the *Banner*?" asked Mr. Laiban.

"We haven't had one on Progression yet," was the despondent reply. "I have been hoping that one would appear before I needed it, but I have had no luck. I wish sometimes that I had never taken on this Education Scheme work. The more you do, the more it seems to make for you to do; and the more you get to know, the more you seem able to see of what you don't know and yet feel that you ought to know."

"Eternal Progression," murmured Mr. Laiban.

For a moment Will's eyes gleamed, but then he shook his head.

"I don't follow you," he said. "Far from being able to see any eternal progression in it, I don't seem to be making any progress at all."

"That is a good sign of progress," asserted Mr. Laiban. "And look here—seeing that you are working for the Education Scheme, why not take Education as the subject of your Object Lesson on Eternal Progression?"

"How can that be done?" asked Will.

" Well, you are young enough to remember when you started going to school. What was the first thing they taught you, there?"

" Why, to read and write and count."

" Not so fast. Let's start at the beginning. The first things you were taught were the names of the letters and the value of the figures. What did they do next?"

" They taught me how to read easy words and add up easy numbers."

" Just so. And then they taught you how to take numbers away from other numbers; and after that they showed you how you could add and subtract and multiply and divide, not only numbers, but weights and measures, and lengths and sizes, and money—by using the same general rules."

" Yes, they did. And I think I can see, now, what you mean."

" Well, test yourself. What did they do with the letters and the easy words? Did they let you stop at just knowing them when you saw them?"

" No. They taught me how to put the words together into sentences; and how the sentences were put together to make lessons or stories. And by degrees they taught me how to put words and sentences together so as to make (or write) a story or a letter for myself."

Mr. Laiban was highly pleased. His favourite maxim—that " all an intelligent chap needs is a wise hint or two, and he'll find out the rest for himself "—was being proved to be absolutely correct. He patted Will on the shoulder, and pushed him back into the chair from which he had risen in the enthusiasm of his realisation.



"Sit down, laddie," he said; "and let me hear the rest of your Object Lesson for Sunday."

"That will be easy now, thanks to you. I shall just tell them the history of my school life, and how each step I took in every subject led from a step I had just taken to a step I was just about to take, and made me ready and able to take further steps."

"What exactly do you mean by that?"

"I shall explain that, as soon as I had learned the various tables, I was taught how to use them in doing sums; and how, by doing these sums, I was able to gain fresh knowledge—as, for instance, finding the distance *through* the Earth from being told the distance *around* it: that the sums led up from the tables, and made the new knowledge possible."

"But arithmetic is not the only thing in education."

"I know that; but I cannot deal with everything in a short lesson. I can mention other branches, and may find time for one or two brief examples. And I shall finish up by trying to point out that education is a phase of eternal progression—that everything we learn makes us fit to go forward to greater knowledge, and makes us want to go forward; and that the more we know the more we want to know, and the better are we able to learn it. And I shall apply the lesson to our own Education Scheme, showing how the Oral Grade leads to Grade One and through Two, Three and Four to Grade Five and a College Degree; that a true Lyceumist who has reached that height will not be satisfied until he has passed through the Advanced Course and obtained his Diploma; and that even then he will not be satisfied, but will be looking for further Courses of Study, having realised that in education progress can have no end."

\* \* \* \*

The Object Lesson was a great success, and it is in the hope that others as keen as Will Rawlins may profit by Mr. Laiban's hints that the story is being published.

---

## LESSON XIX.

WE LIVE TO LEARN, AND LEARN TO LIVE.

(Question 31.).

At a first glance the statement that we live to learn, and learn to live, seems not only obvious but commonplace. It is only when the statement is given due thought that we realise its great importance—that, in fact, it is the essence of our Principle of Eternal Progression. The Principle teaches that there is a path of eternal progress open to every soul that is willing to tread it. And from our common experience of life we know that only those who are willing to learn can hope to make any progress—and even then only by acting up to the fullest possible extent of our powers and knowledge.

We often hear of those who refuse to learn; but really, when we come to think of it (if we use the word *learn* with its meaning of *getting to know*) there is no such thing as refusing to learn. We may avoid getting to know what others are trying to teach us; but, in the act of avoiding, we are getting to know how to shirk duty if or when it is not pleasant; we are learning to be lazy and careless—we are working into our natures tendencies which sooner or later will play their part in influencing our lives in thought, word and action. Life, as far as we are able to see, is one long process of learning.

The child born in the mansion, and the child born in the slum, each starts its earthly education in the cradle and only ends it in the grave. There is no Education Board which allows us to leave the School of Nature at any

given age. But the environment in which each child is reared decides the class of teaching. Each will be absorbing knowledge, registering experiences and copying examples—consciously or unconsciously each will be learning, whether the teacher be a Fagan or an Arnold. The rich man's son may learn things which, perhaps, it would be just as well that he did not know—but he will (in normal cases) be spared the degrading lessons that will curse the slum boy from his earliest days. These are the extremes, but, in all the degrees that lie between, the child concerned will surely be influenced by the environment which consists of home life, teachers and playmates. Whatever we do, or wherever we turn, we add to our experiences—we learn.

To those of us who realise this truth it would seem unnecessary to point out that, as we cannot help learning, we might as well learn something that will be useful to us—either in developing our mental, psychic or spiritual powers, or in helping us to control our words and actions. If we cannot help storing up tendencies, we might as well do our best to secure that these tendencies will be helpful in our lives—for just as surely as we must learn, equally surely what we learn will influence us in all that we say, think or do. The boy brought up in a decent home will, as a rule, reject with scorn actions which the slum boy will regard as not only justifiable, but even praiseworthy. For instance, most normal healthy, imaginative boys have at some time longed to be a robber or pirate captain—but few normal boys would be proud of being a clever pickpocket. The boy who has to knock at the door before entering a room; to speak politely; to “be man-nerly”; to control his tongue and his temper—this boy is being taught so that in after life he will be a decent citizen; in algebra he is learning to deal with abstract ideas; in geometry he is learning to reason by well tested steps from what he knows to what he hadn't known, and to be able to prove that his reasoning is correct. And what he learns will be absorbed into his subconscious self

and will influence his future life. Let us, then, do all our learning with the intention that it shall be helpful, not only to us but to all with whom we come in contact.

In the Lyceum Movement the necessity for a real education—one that will develop the minds and widen the outlook of the students—has been realised, and the realisation has been applied in the planning of the Education Scheme. The student who works through the Associate and Graduate sections of the Scheme is not merely laying in a stock of knowledge about Spiritualism. The truths taught have to be studied and examined and discussed in such a way that they become part of the student's mental and psychic equipment; and the reward for this study is much greater than the winning of a Graduate or Diplomist Degree. The knowledge itself, and the method of regarding not only that but all other knowledge, will influence the life of the individual who has worked to secure it. The acquisition of knowledge on sound lines will become habitual, and will be a safeguard as well as a help; and the knowledge will lead to wise decisions and actions. In the same way, those who refused to take advantage of learning useful things will have been learning to shirk, and will remain shirkers even on entry into Spirit Life. For as we live so shall we learn, and as we have learned so shall we live.

