

# LEAVES FROM A PSYCHIC NOTE-BOOK

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## PREFATORY NOTE

My friend, Miss H. A. Dallas, well known for her reasonable and thoughtful books on the relation between religious belief and the facts studied in psychical research, has now collected some essays of hers that have appeared from time to time on kindred topics; and I commend them all to the attention of readers and inquirers who wish for sane and helpful guidance in thinking over these somewhat difficult and controversial matters.

Those who are troubled with religious difficulties, as well as those persons in responsible authority who are consulted by others, and indeed all who feel doubtful about the wisdom of entertaining or countenancing the increasing testimony to the truth of these ancient experiences that the modern world is now beginning to accumulate, will be helped by these sober and sensible writings; for the author's own experience and long acquaintance with the work of the leaders in psychical investigations, and with the standard treatises on the subject, enable her to write with clearness and with some authority. It will be found that the author regards the facts as not only entirely consistent with religious faith in general, but as specially strengthening and confirming her lifelong belief in the essentials of Christianity.

OLIVER LODGE.

*March, 1927.*





"Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-wisdom . . . even ignorance is better than Head-learning with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it. . . . Seek, beginner, to blend the Mind and Soul! . . . Have patience . . . as one who fears no failure, courts no success. Fix thy soul's gaze upon the Star, whose ray thou art, the flaming Star that shines within the lightless depths of ever-being, the boundless fields of the Unknown. Have perseverance as one that doth for ever endure."

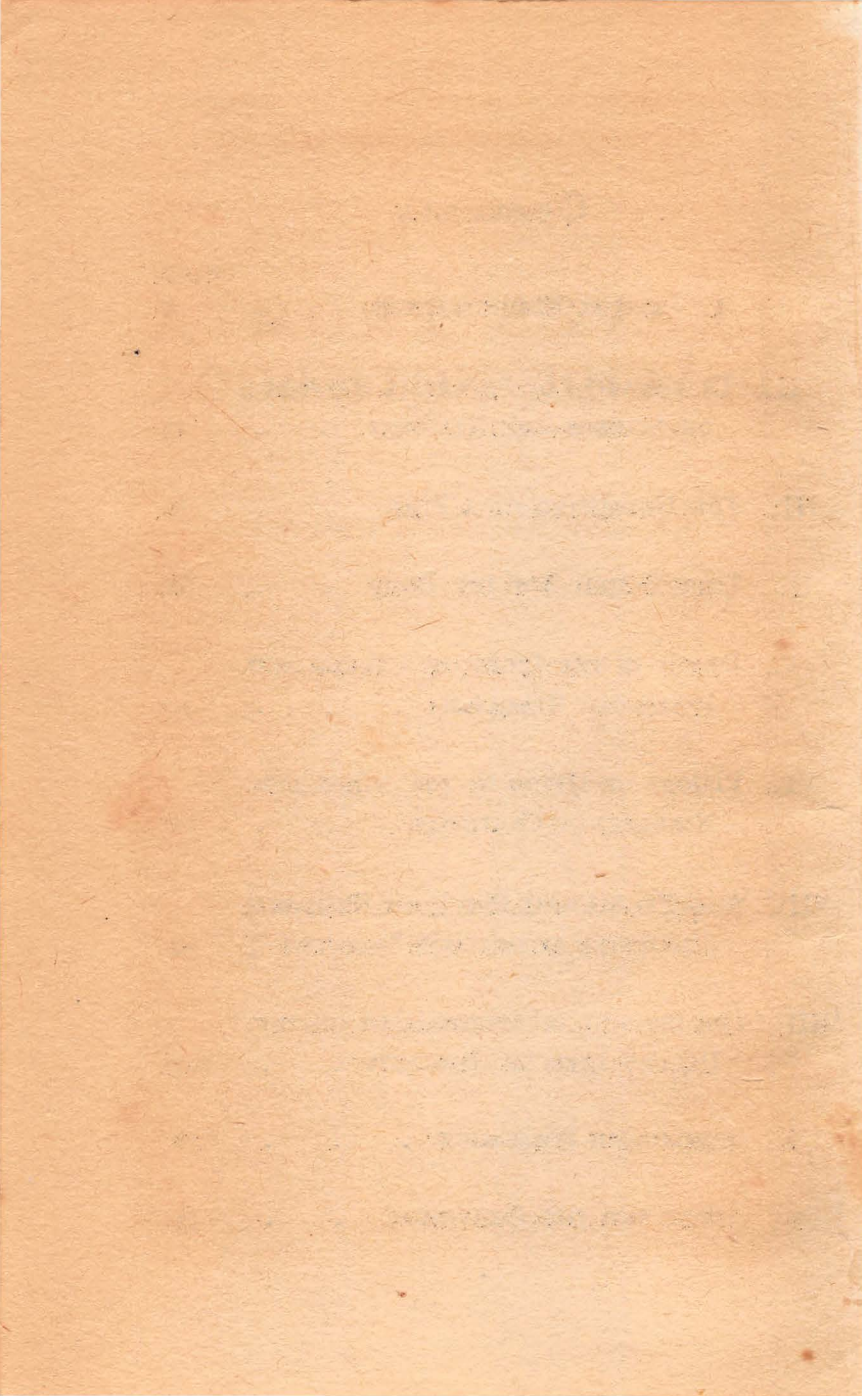
From "The Two Paths".





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# LEAVES FROM A PSYCHIC NOTE-BOOK

## I

### MY PSYCHIC REMINISCENCES

My excuse for writing the following reminiscences is that I have been asked what led me to take up the study of Psychical Research, and I think my experiences may be helpful to other students who are at the outset of this line of research.

My first attempt to get information about the work of the Society for Psychical Research was not encouraging. I was then about twenty-three years of age. When I asked a friend if she knew anything about its work, she replied that she understood that the testimony to apparitions of the departed obtained by the Society was never *first-hand* testimony. This erroneous statement sufficed to check my interest at the time and for long after. Looking back on my life I can see that it was better so. I had not yet learned enough of other subjects to be able to cope with this study. It would have disturbed me, and in so far as it did so, it would have hindered my development, and my fulfilment of the many duties which claimed me. I am thankful that my way in that direction was temporarily blocked. In order to form a balanced estimate of the facts and problem involved



in the term Psychical Research, it is important to have made careful studies along other lines.

About twelve years later, the Vicar of a neighbouring parish, who was a member of the S.P.R., gave me such an interesting account of the volume of Proceedings which he had just read, that I decided to become an Associate myself. That was about the year 1893.

I did not approach the subject, as many have done, in order to discover whether man survives bodily death. I valued the Christian faith deeply and I had, by careful study, taken trouble to assure myself that its historical basis is valid. Among many books which I read with close attention were Lord Balfour's "Foundations of Belief" and Dr. Salmon's work on the authenticity of the New Testament. I had travelled mentally along a difficult but educative way, which gradually led me out of the rather narrow (though devout) theology which I had passively accepted in my girlhood, and placed "my feet in a large room", where reason and intuition could work in harmony, and the eternal truths which underlie many crude expressions of doctrine discover themselves. I owe much to such teachers as Frederick Robertson, F. Denison Maurice, and many others, whose writings led me to realize that the character of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, is the standard by which *all* theological doctrines must be tested, and that doctrines inconsistent with the Nature of God, as a Father of infinite love and wisdom could not be true.

Having reached this standpoint I was ready for fresh discoveries; nevertheless, my introduction to Psychical Research was somewhat of a mental shock.

It obliged me to make room in my mind for so many new facts and ideas; and at first I did not see how to accommodate these without displacing other facts and ideas which experience had taught me to value. The result was mental perplexity. I have since learned to realize that mental perplexity is often the herald of clearer vision, but at that time I was not assured of this. One of the first volumes of the Society for Psychical Research Proceedings which I studied was the issue in which F. W. H. Myers dealt with the mediumship of Stainton Moses. The facts were startling to a novice to whom these supernormal phenomena were quite new. My diary shows how bewildering I found them to be. I was confronted with evidence which I recognized as thoroughly sound, but I was puzzled as to how to interpret the phenomena. I see from the comments which I jotted down that I tried to bring the new knowledge to the test of experience. A few lines will illustrate my meaning.

"Jan. 15th, 1894. I have been reading carefully Mr. Myers's papers on the Subliminal Consciousness. He says: 'The Self manifests through the organism but there is always some part of the Self unmanifested'. As I read, my mind asked, how can these things be? And I felt at the same time that thoughts were latent within me, but that I could not make the upper Self grasp them. It needed an effort, which I felt might not be successful, to think the *thought* out. This feeling is to me evidence of the truth of what he says. We are only aware of a certain part of ourselves. This seems to me essentially



true. We may become aware of more by exercise perhaps. Often I have felt the presence of latent thought—felt that I must bring it somehow into the field of mental vision, but I feel that the instrument I am working with in order to do this may not be adequate to the undertaking."

I make this quotation to show how I tried to deal with new ideas. With regard to the physical phenomena which occurred with Stainton Moses and others, however, I had no personal experiences which could assist my interpretation. In 1860 a scientific man wrote of Pasteur's discoveries: "The world into which you wish to take us is really too fantastic".\* I felt like that about these new facts.

At this stage I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Edward Bennett, who was then Secretary of the S.P.R. He lent me books from the library and helped me to select them. I remember standing before the bookcase in the office and saying: "Please do not give me anything to read which does not contain good evidence." I felt that I must first discover what facts were actually so well attested as to be practically assured, before I could form any opinion about other asserted facts which might be true. I found it difficult enough to assimilate the former, and I did not want to get bewildered by the latter. Mr. Bennett forwarded one of my letters to Mr. F. W. H. Myers in which I mentioned a small experiment by which I had tried to test a psychometrist. This brought me a kind and encouraging letter from Mr. Myers. It was one of several in which he gave me good advice. I was particularly

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\* "Science and Scientists of the Nineteenth Century", p. 241.



grateful for the considerate way in which he encouraged me; although my attempts to interpret the phenomena were obviously crude, he did not make me at once feel how worthless they were, but tactfully guided me into closer "attention to the canons of evidence". I have always remembered his kindness gratefully at a time when a smaller mind might, with justice, have treated with indifference my efforts to understand. F. W. H. Myers was himself learning all the time, and therefore was ready to encourage others who were at the outset of this study; I ventured to write to him several times.

I was slow in gaining my convictions; I dreaded the mental shock of discovering that I had given credence too readily; I preferred to advance slowly rather than risk having to retrace my steps. I can see that this method of approach, with all its doubts and difficulties and prolonged uncertainty, has enabled me to understand and help others who have sought the same kind of assurance and have experienced similar perplexity, so I do not regret it; at the same time I recognize that this very cautious attitude involves some serious disadvantages. I look back upon lost opportunities and realize my slowness to apprehend the significance of experiences. With quicker insight I should have harvested richer gains, and I cannot but regret these losses, for which I have only myself to blame.

In 1898 I read Dr. Richard Hodgson's report on Mrs. Piper (published that year).\* After the first reading I determined to put myself, so to speak, into a jury-box and re-read it, trying to form a fair estimate of each case, with the result that I was

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\*S.P.R. Proceedings. Part XXXIII.

finally convinced that the Spiritualist hypothesis was the only one that could account for the bulk of the facts. This being so I joined the London Spiritualist Alliance, that I might reap the benefit of its meetings and library; and I received kind and valuable advice from time to time from Mr. Edmund Dawson Rogers, who was President of the Alliance.

I remember the diffidence with which I ventured to send my first articles to "Light", which I signed with initials only. I felt that my knowledge of the subject was not mature enough or wide enough to enable me to estimate the worth of the ideas I expressed in these early articles, and I disliked the notion that I might be offering worthless matter. Mr. Dawson Rogers, the editor, kindly encouraged me; and I told him, later, that this experience had taught me how to write. I became a frequent contributor from 1898 onwards. I still have some articles I contributed in 1899 and 1900 on the subject of the Resurrection of Christ and the empty tomb; and a reply by "V. C. Desertis", i.e., Mr. Stanley De Brath, to a question I had raised on that subject.

In my diary I find the following note. "April 24, 1900. Mr. Rogers remarked that clairvoyants see emanations from both the physical and psychic organisms." This started a train of thought which I will condense and simplify as follows:—

What do we mean by emanations from the psychic organism? I assume that we mean vibrations in the ether started in the psychic body (which is probably ethereal). My theory is that these vibrations might persist even after death—after the withdrawal from the physical organism of the ego and its psychic or



spirit body, and that these vibrations, or emanations, act as an opposing force, preventing organic compounds (which are, of course, unstable) from immediately disintegrating, and that if these vibrations ceased suddenly the physical form would collapse. Also I suggest that spirits discarnate may be able voluntarily to attract to themselves the "bound ether" which is still vibrating in unison with their psychic organisms, and by so doing may hasten the disintegration of the physical body.

This theory which I find in my diary and which I have re-cast in clearer language, is perhaps inaccurately expressed, but the main idea is consistent with the vision of Andrew Jackson Davis in which he described the process he saw at a death-bed. He mentions a vital electrical element which by its presence in the corpse "prevented immediate decomposition". It is also in harmony with the teaching of Kapila, an Eastern Seer, who is said to have originated the Sankhya system of philosophy some centuries before our era. This sage asserted clearly the existence of "*ākasha*" or ether, as an imponderable fluid filling all space; and he taught that the soul at death is invested with a subtle body called the "*linga*", that it also has a grosser vehicle attached to it which he calls the "*linga sharira*", and that this vehicle enables the soul as long as it exists in a material life to *sustain its connection with matter*, even after it has divested itself of its earthly body.\* This also seems to be in agreement with some passages in Sir Oliver Lodge's book, "Ether and Reality". He asks: "How do we ourselves act on matter? . . .

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\* My authority for this statement will be found in a note by Cockburn Thomson in his translation of the "Bhagavad Gita".



What do we mean by contact?" His reply is that when we touch or move any object "we touch it only through the Ether. . . . I wish to make the hypothesis," he writes, "that it is the Ether that is really animated, and that this animated Ether interacts with matter; I suggest that the true vehicle of life and mind is Ether and not matter at all."

The Seeress of Prevost also spoke of an instrument by which the soul could operate in the external world, and said that this substance accompanies the soul at death: "By the aid of this substance they can make themselves seen, heard, and felt by man; they can excite sounds in the atmosphere of earth."\* As the spirit progresses it frees itself from this substance.

It seems worth while to compare these statements from different sources and to consider their import. In an article sent to "Light", I said:

We know of one occurrence of unparalleled importance and far-reaching results in the history of Christendom in which such a sudden dissipation of a human organism seems to have taken place. . . . Perhaps the science of this plane correlated to the science of the other may yet solve that problem for us, and enable us to understand how, without contravening any laws of His Father's Universe, but merely by adapting them . . . this Archetypal Man robbed death and the grave of their illusive terrors and revealed to His brethren their true life and destiny.

To these remarks Mr. De Brath replied at some

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\* "Guardian Spirits", quoted in "From Matter to Spirit" by Mrs. de Morgan, p. 132.

length, pointing out that whether or not an opposing force exists which may hinder decomposition, can be determined by experiment alone. He added that it is "rash to assume that we know more than the merest fringe of the laws which connect matter and ether. It may well be that the phenomena of the first Easter morning are readily capable of explanation by the dissolution of the material into the ethereal". I pursued this question further in a long article published fourteen years later (June 27th, 1914), and included in this volume.

In 1899 I had my first experience with a professional medium, Mrs. Bliss. I must have been a difficult sitter. She said my aura offered an opposing wall, and I understand, now, that it must have done so. I believed that communication from the other side was possible; but I did not feel at all sure that it was coming to me—I felt uncomfortable and incredulous. I had two sittings with her; re-reading my scanty notes I see that she was interesting and very correct in the statements she made, and I might have got much more if I had been more receptive.

On the first occasion she spoke of a male influence with me which she thought was my grandfather,\* and on the second occasion she gave a description which might well have been a description of him, and added that he would write through me. I now think it highly probable that my writings on religious subjects were influenced by him. Only on one other occasion was my grandfather mentioned by a medium I visited. Mr. Vango told me that he was interested in a lecture I was soon to give. I saw no particular

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\* His name was Rev. Alexander R. C. Dallas, for forty years Rector of Wonston, Hants.



reason why this lecture should interest him; but I was met at the station by Miss Ward, who had arranged the lecture, and when driving to the lecture hall she told me that her father was my grandfather's godson. I know that my grandfather would be likely never to forget his godchildren, so I understood the appropriateness of the previous communication.

Among other things, Mrs. Bliss said I should write a book, and added, "five books". When she came out of trance I told her what she had said, and I remarked that this was unlikely. If I omit the translation of M. Delanne's book, which I published under the title "Evidence for a Future Life", and "The Nurseries of Heaven", to which I contributed a few pages only, her statement is correct: I have written five books. The two on the subjects of the Creed and the New Testament I wrote under a strong sense of obligation. The title of the first was, "The Victory that Overcometh". If it has been useful, as I am told it has, I owe this to my teachers and helpers in the Seen and the Unseen life. Archdeacon Basil Wilberforce read it in type and kindly commended it. The second book I wrote with more difficulty, "Gospel Records interpreted by Human Experience". It deals more particularly with the bearing of Psychical Studies on the Gospels. Both these books are out of print.

Later, I published a series of articles in "Light" on, "Objections to Spiritualism". This series I wrote in response to the request of a friend whose objections I had tried to meet. It was subsequently published by the L.S.A., a second edition was issued by Bell & Sons, and an abbreviated third edition is to be published soon by the L.S.A. I have a



kind letter from Dr. Richard Hodgson, in which he expresses his emphatic agreement with most of the contents of this book.

The most difficult bit of work I have had to do as an author is the little book "*Mors Janua Vitæ?*" The publisher has told me that the title greatly interfered with the sale, as the Latin words are not intelligible to everyone. It was difficult, because I attempted to present some of the complex evidence by which F. W. H. Myers sought to prove to his colleagues, still incarnate, not only that he survived bodily death but that he retained his memory of the literature he formerly loved and, in fact, that his faculties were intact. This complex evidence is known as "Cross-correspondence". I had to abbreviate the verbatim records in the volumes of the S.P.R. Proceedings and at the same time to convey as forcibly as possible the quality and cogency of the evidence of identity which these communications contained. When I read one particularly difficult chapter to a friend, whose opinion I greatly valued, I was disappointed to find that she found it hard to follow, and therefore dull. I was in despair, and thought I must give up the task altogether. But when I awoke next morning I remembered a sentence which I had heard clearly in a dream. It was this: "Do not hesitate or be discouraged about any work you have undertaken." I regarded this as a message, and resolved to re-write the chapter and persist in my attempt.

A few weeks later I joined a circle at a private house; we had some rather disjointed communications through table-tilting. The letters F. R. E. were spelt out twice, and when I subsequently asked

the lady who was acting as medium to take a pencil, the following was written for me:—"We shall be with you in the work you are going to undertake . . . we want you to have more light." This was followed by M. Y. and a scrawl which was illegible. In my note-book I find this additional remark: "N.B.—Now, some hours later, I am surprised to recognize that this may be a message from Myers for me about the book concerning which I have been discouraged." The lady who acted as medium was a stranger to me; whether she knew that I was writing a book I cannot say, but she could not know that I had been discouraged. It is quite possible that this was an attempt to cheer me in the work by which I was trying to make the evidence for the survival of Mr. Myers more widely known. This is one of a class of experiences which cannot be regarded as "evidential", but which may be that which, taken at its face value, it seems to be. If, as we have good reason to believe, mental contact between those in the other life and in this life is frequent and natural, it is unreasonable to expect that to every wave of thought they will attach evidence of identity. When they are trying to prove identity, we may of course ask for, and expect, such evidence, but communication of mind with mind, if it is real intercourse, ought not to be trammelled *always* by the effort to meet the demands of doubting Thomases

I was too often in that attitude for my own comfort and my own incredulity helps me to understand the doubts of others. Also it has helped me to realize that experiences which have been personally very convincing and very cheering to myself are not always



suitable for passing on to others. There is a personal element—a personal touch, I might say—in some of these experiences which carry their own evidence and significance to one who participates in them, but which cannot have the same effect when recounted to another who is simply looking for proof, and for whom they were not originally intended. Having made the mistake of not realizing this several times, I have now learned to be more discriminating in the kind of episodes I speak of, and to keep for myself alone some intimate experiences which are not transferable.

The little book was published. Before it had been definitely accepted for publication I happened to have an interview with a medium (Nurse Graham) on May 11th, 1909. She mentioned someone called Robert, and said he was interested in my literary work; she referred to some work I "was doing", and said the first step would be taken in July; she gave number 7 in this connection. My great grandfather was the author of several books; his name was Robert, and it is not unlikely that he would be interested in the literary work of his great-granddaughter. He was a man with unusually strong family affections. The letter which I received from Mr. Shirley definitely undertaking on behalf of Messrs. Rider & Sons to publish "*Mors Janua Vitæ?*", was dated July 7th, 1909.

My fifth book, "*Across the Barrier*", is a record of experiences with a gifted medium, the mother of a sweet child called Monica. I published the record because it seemed to me that some of it carried undeniable evidence of the supernormal, and, moreover, the evidence for real communication from those



who have passed on was very strong. There were many other experiences which do not appear in this book; some of those which were too private for print were among the most personally convincing to me. I did not claim that the record was evidential throughout. I tried to make it as complete as I could whilst limiting myself in many ways. Others have had as remarkable experiences with this medium as I have. She has now passed out of her very tried and troubled life into happier conditions, in which I trust that her brave and loving spirit will find a satisfaction she never found in this life.

Before leaving the subject of my books I will refer to the book of prayers called "Communion and Fellowship", which I compiled (by request). Having failed to find a publisher willing to bear the cost, I had put the MS. aside, but the following circumstances led to its publication in 1921. At an interview with Mrs. Osborne Leonard, Freda described someone to me with careful details and gave his initial W., adding that he would remove material limitations (in some way I could not comprehend). She then spoke of a new effort to help and a new book. Shortly after this I saw a request in "Light" for a prayer to be used for those who have died, and I wrote offering to lend my MS. to anyone who applied for it. Among others I received a letter, signed Walter Jones\*, from a gentleman who offered to bear the cost of publication and to take the risks. When I saw him I recognized that his appearance corresponded in detail to the description given to me by

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\* Owing to an oversight when correcting the proof, this name is erroneously noted as a "pseudonym" in Proceedings Vol. XXXVI, p. 316.

Mrs. Leonard a few weeks before. The book has justified the venture.

During the first decade of this century I attended sittings with materializing mediums and witnessed interesting physical phenomena, sometimes under excellent conditions. I also had many personal sittings with clairvoyants and obtained very satisfactory evidence. Particularly fruitful were my sittings with Mr. Otto von Bourg. In "Objections to Spiritualism Answered", I have given a detailed account of one excellent test I received through him at a time when I was specially seeking evidence that would exclude telepathy. I had many other interesting sittings with this gifted medium. On one occasion he said to me: "You doubt." I replied: "I am sorry—I do." He answered: "You cannot help it; I doubt when I go to other mediums. But presently you will be convinced; then you will do good." I have also had very good experiences with Miss Maccreadie, Miss Bacon, Mr. J. J. Vango, Mrs. Brittain, Mrs. Osborne Leonard, Mrs. Elliott (Miss V. Ortner), Mr. Peters, and others, and more recently I have had very valuable written communications through my friend Miss Bazett. The letter I received from a friend through her mediumship is the most striking of the kind that I have ever had. The appropriate allusions could only be appreciated by one who knew her as intimately as I did. Miss Bazett had never seen her and knew very little about her.

The War brought me into contact with many bereaved persons. At such a time one realized that any knowledge and assurance concerning the life beyond which had been gained was a trust, to be used, if possible, as opportunity offered for the



comfort of broken hearts. It was with this object that I wrote a little pamphlet called, "The Bridge of Death".

The knowledge and conviction which by that time I possessed had come to me in many ways—partly by personal experience, partly by study and partly by the work I undertook for twenty months as Secretary for the English edition of "Annales Psychiques".

The French edition, under the auspices of Professor Richet, was ably edited by M. Caesar de Vesme, who I had the pleasure of meeting in Paris and introducing to the Professor. My task in connection with the English edition was not only to examine the proofs but also to translate many of the articles, and to write short notices of some of the books sent to the English office for review. I have since realized how much knowledge I gained in this way of the Psychical Research work on the Continent which I should not have had otherwise. It enabled me to help inquirers with firmer assurance and wider understanding, and I am very glad to have had the experience.

My first public lecture was delivered to the members of the L.S.A. about the year 1911. Up to that time I shrank very much from so formidable a task. Perhaps it will help beginners who are as disposed to be nervous as I was, if I say what helped me most to overcome self-conscious nervousness. It occurred to me shortly before I gave my lecture that, provided I honestly did the best I could, it did not really signify much whether my lecture was a failure or whether it was not. Of course, it would be a pity if the audience was disappointed, but the universe

is too big to be affected by so small an incident. I looked at the stars and I said to myself: "If I fail it really does not matter. I will do my very best not to fail altogether, but if I do so, the result will not make any practical difference to the universe." Whether this was sound philosophy or not, I cannot say, but it enabled me to read my lecture without the nervous terrors which, on a previous occasion, when I had to make quite a short speech at a public meeting, had set my heart beating violently. After this I delivered many lectures, not without some nervousness but with growing confidence, and after a time I made notes only and talked to my audiences instead of reading a paper. The questions that followed often occupied a considerable time, and were perhaps the most useful part of the proceeding.

The work to which I have felt most urgently drawn is that of helping others to believe that those they think they have lost are not really out of reach. This has brought a rich reward, in so far as I have been able to direct them into channels which have revealed the truth to them. One vicar has repeatedly invited me to speak in his house; another arranged for me to address a gathering of clergy, with a rural dean in the chair. It is only right that I should mention this because the clergy are often blamed, sometimes with justice, for their indifference to this subject. On another occasion I was invited by the Rev. Dr. Cobb to speak in the parish room at St. Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate, on the subject of "The Resurrection in the Light of Psychical Research". The palmist "Cheiro" told me that I could speak in public long before I had either the inclination or the courage to do so.

I have never sought advice on material matters



through mediums. On one occasion such advice was voluntarily offered and influenced my action. It came unsought and I weighed it as I would the advice of a friend on earth; as it seemed to me to be wise, I took it, and had no cause afterwards to regret having done so. On another occasion a medium, having shown that she had correctly sensed my conditions, offered advice which I at once recognized as based on a misapprehension. The experience was valuable as an object-lesson. It was easy to perceive that although her insight was correct up to a certain point, her mind had involuntarily drawn a false conclusion from a true premise. This was obvious to me, but if it had not been so I might have been seriously misled. I am sure that it is not wise to take advice that comes in this way with blind acceptance. It should always be examined on its merits; we are not right if we surrender our judgement. It is better to make mistakes on our own responsibility and learn from them, than to let ourselves be led simply because we think we have had a message from the Other Side. Even if that be so, our unseen friends are not infallible, and the wisest of them would wish us to make our own decisions. On two other occasions unsought advice was given to me which may have, subconsciously, influenced my decision, although I was not aware that it did so.

On August 15th, 1903, I attended a circle at Mr. Von Bourg's flat at which the experiment was tried of each person writing a question on a piece of paper, folding it, and handing it to the medium to answer (unread). I wrote: "Will the publisher who now has my translation [M. Delanne's book, 'Evidence for a Future Life'] undertake to publish it?" When

he took my paper he put it to his forehead and said: "Granny [his control] says, 'Will not!' Do you understand?" I replied, "Yes, unfortunately, I do." He then continued: "You will have a disappointment with this, for I feel as if I went down. It will come all right, but not as you expect. It will be in October, you will be able to put it off your mind. It will be all right." [This proved to be correct. The publisher's first letter led me to think that the MS. would be returned, but it was off my mind by October, a satisfactory agreement having been made.] Mr. Von Bourg continued: "There will be a meeting of importance for you in about a month. [I think he connected this with my writing in some way.] It will be good for you. You will be going out of Town, but you must put off for a day or two on this account. You must accept it when it comes." I made a note of this on my return home and thought little more of it when I found that I did not have any meeting with the publisher, as I supposed the prediction applied to this. On September 13th, however, I added the following note in my book: "I have only to-day noted the fulfilment of a statement made to me on this occasion. A few days ago I had a note from Canon C——, a stranger to me, who had been reading, 'The Victory that Overcometh', saying he hoped to call and see me in October. [He was an old friend of my grandfather\*.] I replied that I had intended to leave London on the 6th September, but would postpone to the 9th in order to meet him. To-day I received his reply. . . . Only then did I recall what had

\* Already referred to in connection with my first experience with a medium.



been said by V. B. The meeting is being arranged just a month after he said this."

Something of importance did eventually ensue, for the Canon introduced me to a friend of his who had suffered a severe bereavement, and I was able to help him by leading him to study psychical works; it was "good for me", too, for I gained a lasting friendship. This experience is a good example of the confusion which may arise through the blending of impressions which refer to different episodes.

In 1913 I received an invitation to pay a visit in Holland which with reluctance I felt I must decline. It was posted on the 9th of October. On the 15th I received a note saying that a short message through little Monica's mother had come for me about the 10th; it was, "Don't go." The writer added, "we do not know what it means." It was *impossible* that the message could be understood by the senders. It confirmed my belief that I had made a wise decision.

As I write, the memory of many to whose friendship I owe so much crowds in upon me—men whose important work might well have excused them from attending to smaller claims have yet found time to extend to me the privilege of their friendship and help in this difficult study; for the help and kindness I have received from them the only return I can make is that of constant gratitude and unfailing remembrance. This world offers (as Sir Oliver Lodge has said) rich opportunities for making friends. And in the larger life such contacts will, I hope and believe, abide and become a more extended fellowship in knowledge and sympathy and service under conditions beyond anything of which we can at present conceive.

What effect have my psychic studies had on my faith as a Christian? This is a question which may interest some readers.

I cannot give a full answer in a few words but I can affirm that these studies have greatly strengthened my belief in the New Testament as a faithful record of events that really happened. Of course, one must recognize that the writers were subject to the limitations of other fallible men and to the errors of memory to which even eye-witnesses are liable; but the so-called miracles of the Gospels are in general not more difficult to accept than many well-attested psychic phenomena which are of comparatively recent occurrence. More particularly I can now whole-heartedly accept at their face value those important records of the appearances of Christ after death. The modern critic's tendency to explain away incidents which lie at the foundation of the faith of Christendom, because they seem miraculous, seems to me a grievous error resulting from the fact that they will not examine the evidence for experiences alleged by Spiritualists, and that prejudice closes their minds to what may be called a new science or a new revelation, according to the viewpoint from which it is approached. I am profoundly thankful that these avenues to knowledge were opened to me, and that the main facts of the faith of my childhood have thus become more firmly established in my convictions. Particularly, these studies have confirmed a belief which I had arrived at many years before I knew anything of Spiritualism, namely, the belief that the resurrection of the body occurs at the hour of death, that it is then that the spirit's new body emerges, the husk of matter being



left behind for ever. This idea, which dawned upon my mind in a moment of perplexed meditation more than forty years ago, has found abundant support in my study of psychical research and spiritualism. This research, moreover, has proved a valuable education, demanding the exercise of patient thought and impartial judgement, revealing a wider spiritual horizon, changing the aspect of life and death and involving an altered scale of values.

I have merely skimmed the surface of my reminiscences, and I have given no account of numerous séances at which I have witnessed various phases of physical phenomena, the most evidential being an experience in our own home with Mrs. Corner (*née* Florence Cook) during which a materialization occurred, visible to all present, by the light of the lamp which was burning all the time. What I saw myself was not, however, *more* convincing to me than the record which Sir William Crookes published of his wonderful experiences with the same medium. No one who reads that record with an open mind can doubt the reality of this phenomenon.

The intimate experiences which cannot be passed on to others, or scientifically proven, are often those which contain the most convincing and consoling facts, as anyone can testify who has been in contact with this subject for many years. Like other great subjects it should be approached reverently and with caution. There are pitfalls for the careless and unwary, but there are treasures for those who seek prayerfully, provided they never cease to use their judgement and are willing to be guided by pioneers who have already blazed the trail.

## II

### THE BEARING OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH ON SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Some years ago I was talking to a Doctor of Science about psychical phenomena. He said, in effect: "If we are to believe in these phenomena, we shall be back in the age of superstition, in Bedlam!—a condition in which there is no order in the universe."

I replied: "Not at all: these occurrences are as much under law as normal phenomena; only we do not yet understand what are the laws that govern them." He responded more favourably. I think he saw that from this point of view the recognition of the supernormal phenomena for which Psychical Research has accumulated evidence, does not involve anything inconsistent with the evidence for the Orderliness of the Universe amassed by the patient research of faithful students of Nature.

The first question to be determined is: Are these things so? Is the evidence for the Supernormal strong enough to justify men of science in examining it? So long, however, as men of science imagine the phenomena are incompatible with the principle of an ordered universe, so long as their recognition of them seems to imply the discrediting of reason or the abolition of law (i.e., a rational sequence



of cause and effect), so long will they hesitate to consider even the possibility that the phenomena may be genuine.

Scientific men are, of course, quite right to be cautious, to "guard the purity of our belief with a very fanaticism of jealous care, lest at any time it rest on anything unworthy" (Clifford). At the same time, those who have had the courage to become pioneers in this field of research, have a right to ask of men of science that they should be true to their own principle, that they should "follow fearlessly wherever truth may lead".

Sir William Crookes has said: "Having once satisfied himself that he is on the track of a new truth" (and this can be done only by an unbiased study of the evidence), "that single object should animate (the man of science) to pursue it, without regarding whether the facts which occur before his eyes are naturally possible or impossible."

It was this loyalty to truth which led many of the scientific experts of the last century to surrender some of their former convictions and most cherished hopes. I may cite two examples.

Professor George Romanes completely gave up his belief in God and in human survival, because it seemed to him that the conclusions he had reached as the result of his scientific studies, demanded this surrender. He wrote:

I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe has to me lost its soul of loveliness. . . . When I think of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it—at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible.

This was written about the year 1876. It is good to know that before his death, faith and hope were restored. ("Thoughts on Religion", by Romanes, edited by Dr. Gore.)

The other instance is F. W. H. Myers, who stated that it was a bitter sacrifice to surrender his faith in God and a spiritual world; but that he made that sacrifice in loyalty to what he then held to be the truth. This, which he called "disillusion", came to him, he says, from increased knowledge of history and science: "Sad it was and slow; a recognition of insufficiency of evidence fraught with growing pain." He wrote in his autobiography:

I have been one of the central group concerned in a great endeavour to pierce by scientific methods the world-old, never-penetrated veil, . . . to learn the actual truth as to the destiny of man. . . . No one more unreservedly than myself has staked his all upon that distant and growing hope.

Faith and hope were restored to him also; and assurance and joy renewed. Why? Because these candid souls *faced facts* and were utterly loyal to truth.

Guard thou the Fact, though clouds of doubt  
Down on thy watch-tower stoop,  
Though thou should'st see thy heart's desire  
Borne from thee by their swoop.

Absolute loyalty to truth brings its own great reward. If men and women will be courageous and loyal, and will keep, as Sir William Crookes has said, "a mind to let", new fields will open to them of unimagined interest and significance. Students of Psychical Research have nothing to fear from honest inquiry. We do not ask the acceptance of any hypothesis that is not amply justified by proven facts.



The facts fall into two classes: 1. Material phenomena; 2. Mental phenomena. The former have engaged the attention more particularly of the Italian, French and German groups of Psychical Researchers; the latter of the English group.

But already in this country quite fifty years ago Sir William Crookes was a pioneer in the first branch of the subject, when he faced the risk to his reputation and the scorn of his colleagues by publishing the result of his experiences and experiments with the medium Florence Cook. Very wonderful were the results obtained in his own house, and tested repeatedly with accurate scientific care. He affirmed that again and again he saw, touched, and talked with a being who was not the medium, and who vanished as mysteriously as she appeared. He saw her and the medium side by side; he photographed her; he felt her pulse and registered her heart-beats. The account was published in 1874. Twenty-five years later Professor Charles Richet, referring to this publication, said:

In my servile respect for the classic tradition I mocked at what was called Spiritism; and after reading the astounding statements which Mr. Crookes had published, I allowed myself—and here do I publicly beg his pardon for it—to laugh at them as heartily as almost everyone else was doing. But now . . . I beat my breast and cry *Pater, peccavi!* How could I suppose that the savant who has discovered thallium and the radiometer and foreshadowed the Röntgen rays, could commit gross and inexplicable blunders, or allow himself to be duped for years by tricks which a child could have exposed. (Proc. S.P.R., July, 1899.)

Later, before the British Association, Sir William Crookes reaffirmed his testimony, and said that he had nothing to retract.

Since that time many others have had similar

experiences. It is chiefly on the Continent, however, that these experiments have been carried out by scientific men with proper scientific tests. In our country the S.P.R. has, as we have already said, confined its attention almost entirely to the study of mental phenomena.

Before I attempt to illustrate these two phases of the subject by a few concrete instances, let us consider briefly what has been the trend of both lines of study, and the conclusion to which they both have led. It may be summed up in the words of Sir William Barrett:

I wish to emphasize the fact that the paramount importance of Psychical Research lies in its demonstration of the fact that the physical plane is not the whole of Nature, nor the outer conscious Self the whole of our *Human Personality*.

Again he says:

There is undeniable evidence that the human spirit can escape from the barrier of the brain and make its presence known to friends at a distance.

So also Dr. Gustave Geley, who devoted his attention mainly to the physical phenomena, wrote:

Supernormal facts prove that . . . psychic action may be developed outside the brain.

In 1894, F. W. H. Myers wrote:

I think that, if the testimony which points in this direction continues to flow in, . . . it will soon become a rare exception for a student who attaches importance to any part of our evidence, to refuse to admit the occasional occurrence of various forms of posthumous communication.

Here then we find three tremendous conclusions



to which Psychological Research leads serious and careful students:

(1) An enlarged conception of the scope of Nature and of Human Personality.

(2) That the Human Ego can escape from physical limitations (both before and after death), and act independently of the organism.

(3) That under suitable conditions intelligent communication may be received from those who have finally quitted the physical body.

With the first of these conclusions I do not propose to deal; not because I do not appreciate its great importance, but because in the limited space at my disposal it is impossible effectively to cover all the ground. I propose only to attempt, very inadequately I know, to give some typical experiences which will illustrate the kind of evidence on which conclusions (2) and (3) are based. I will ask the reader to bear in mind that, just because the evidence is abundant and its effect is cumulative, it is extremely difficult, even impossible, to do it justice in a few paragraphs.

G. K. Chesterton has truly said: "The more converging reasons [a man] finds pointing to (a) conviction, the more he is bewildered if asked suddenly to sum them up." I am not, however, going to attempt to sum them up; my aim is more modest and limited—namely, to attempt to indicate the *nature* of the evidence by citing a few typical cases.

"There is undeniable evidence," says Sir William Barrett, "that the Human Ego can escape from the barrier of the brain and make its presence known to friends at a distance."

More than thirty years ago a case illustrative of this affirmation was published by leading members

of the S.P.R. in a large work called "Phantasms of the Living". I quote verbatim from the account given by the agent in the following experience. The percipient was Mr. Stainton Moses. This case interests me particularly because I have within the last ten years become personally acquainted with the agent and heard the account again from her own lips.

One evening early I resolved to appear to Z. (i.e., Mr. S. Moses). I did not inform him beforehand of the intended experiment, but retired to rest shortly before midnight with thoughts intently fixed on Z., with whose rooms and surroundings, however, I was unacquainted. I soon fell asleep and awoke next morning unconscious of anything having taken place. On seeing Z. a few days afterwards, I inquired, "Did anything happen at your rooms on Saturday night?" "Yes," he replied, "a great deal happened. I had been sitting over the fire with M. . . . smoking and chatting. About 12.30 a.m. he rose to leave, and I let him out myself. I returned to the fire to finish my pipe, when I saw you sitting in the chair just vacated by him. I looked intently at you, and then took up a newspaper to assure myself that I was not dreaming, but on laying it down I saw you still there. While I gazed without speaking, you faded away. Though I imagined you must be fast asleep at that hour, yet you appeared dressed in your ordinary garments, such as you usually wear every day!"

"Then my experiment seems to have succeeded," I said. "Next time I come ask me what I want, as I had on my mind certain questions I intended to ask you, but I was probably waiting for an invitation to speak."

A few weeks later the experiment was repeated with equal success; I, as before, not informing Z. when it was to be made. On this occasion he not only questioned me on the subject that was at the time under very warm discussion between us, but detained me by the exercise of his will some time after I had intimated a desire to leave. This fact, when it came to be communicated to me, seemed to account for the violent and somewhat peculiar headache which marked the morning following the experiment; at least I remarked at the time that there was no apparent cause for the unusual headache, and, as on the former occasion, no recollection remained of the event, or seeming event, of the preceding night.

My friend added, when confirming this story, that



Mr. Stainton Moses advised her not to attempt a similar experiment again, as possibly it might be injurious to her health. I can affirm that my friend, the recorder, is a conscientious truthful person, and her word can be relied upon; moreover her story was confirmed by Mr. Stainton Moses himself to the authors of the volume in which it was reported.

Here is another case, recorded in "Light" some years ago and entitled "A Vision Experience".

My youngest brother had been in bed for many weeks, and was so seriously ill that the medical men who had been attending him held out little or no hope of his recovery. At the commencement of his illness I nursed him for some weeks, and, of course, did all that I could in the way of making him as comfortable as possible; but he became so ill and weak that it was necessary for him to have a nurse in the daytime. On the night of January 1st, after having seen that he had all he wanted, I said "Good night" to him and went upstairs to bed; but, late though it was, I felt that sleep was not coming to me, and I was still wide awake when the clocks were striking twelve. Presently, when all was quiet, my bedroom door opened slowly and noiselessly; I was lying looking towards the door, and quietly half-raised myself to see who was coming in, and my brother appeared—the one who was then lying ill in bed on the floor below. He walked on slowly, right into the room, and turning slightly towards me, he spoke these words to me quite clearly and distinctly: "I am going soon now, Maisie dear, and I have come to say good-bye and to thank you for nursing me." I was greatly surprised to see him in my room, knowing that he was utterly incapable of climbing the stairs, and, fearing disastrous consequences from over-exertion, I could only say "Oh! Frank!" He however walked further into the room, and, acting on my first impulse to help him back to bed as quickly as possible, I told him to "wait a moment", and threw back the bedclothes in order to get up, when I found that he had gone. Then it was that I *knew*—but not until that moment did I realize that it was my dear brother's spirit that came to tell me of his approaching departure for "the other side". I felt that he had also visited my mother and my other brother, who were in the house, although they had not been conscious of his presence. I remained awake for some time afterwards pondering over what I had seen, and a feeling of great peace came over me; for it seemed to speak of the future safety and happiness that my brother was shortly to

enjoy. I then saw what I can only imperfectly describe as white filmy clouds rolling one over another, and this strange phenomenon lasted quite half an hour. I watched it carefully, thinking and hoping that I might be shown still more. But in an hour's time I heard the clocks strike four, and shortly afterwards I dropped into a quiet sleep. My dear brother did not leave us for "the other side" until the 11th of the month, ten days *after* the vision appeared to me.

Yours, etc.,  
M. W. O.

Cases of this sort might be abundantly multiplied; but we will pass to another class of experience—namely communications after death. I am selecting instances which are not likely to be well known. I quote, therefore, the following from a pamphlet, now out of print, which I wrote during the Great War. The incident is taken from the "Annals of Psychical Science" (vol. iii, p. 398), which was published simultaneously in Paris and London in 1906.

The case is particularly well authenticated. The narrator, a magistrate, records matters that he received direct from Dr. and Mrs. Speakman, who were personally present when the communication came. He addresses his letter to Professor Charles Richet, telling him at the outset that he (the narrator) approached the subject in a cautious and, at first, incredulous state of mind. The real names of the persons concerned were given to Professor Richet in confidence. The facts are as follows:

Mme. Lancy died on April 4th, 1906, a month after the birth of a child. Four days later, at a place fifty-eight miles distant from the place of her death, Dr. and Mrs. Speakman and two ladies, called respectively Miss McCance and Miss Dobson, were together. Dr. and Mrs. Speakman knew Mme. Lancy and had corresponded with her, but they had not



seen her since 1901. The other two ladies had not personally known her.

Miss McCance and Miss Dobson placed their hands on the ouija-board and waited for communications, whilst Mrs. Speakman sat by and asked questions, taking notes of what occurred. These notes were handed to the narrator, who sent to Professor Richet the following extract:

- Q. Can Sara Lancy come or send tidings of herself?  
A. Hold always to your present faith.  
Q. Give your name.  
A. You called me; I am now free from pain.  
Q. Are you Sara Lancy?  
A. Yes.  
Q. Give us a message for your husband.  
A. I will soon come and speak to him; tell him that from his little Sara.  
Q. What is your child's name?  
A. My own; but to me she will always be my little "Well-beloved".  
Q. Give us some proof of your identity—for your husband.  
A. I will keep my promise to him. He will understand.  
Q. Try to give him a proof of your identity; mention something known only to you and him.  
A. (After a long silence) Remind him of my dream.  
Q. A recent dream?  
A. Yes.  
Q. Where did you have the dream?  
A. In my mother's house.  
Q. Since the birth of your baby?  
A. No, before.  
Q. Of whom did you dream?  
A. Of myself.  
Q. Give some details for a proof.  
A. All is much easier to understand now than it seemed to me in my dream. The separation was quite a false idea.  
Q. Are you still speaking of your dream?  
A. Yes, but the idea that we would be separated was quite false.

The communication suddenly ceased. All four persons signed an attestation testifying to the accuracy of the above notes, made, be it observed, *at the time*. The message was sent to M. Lancy, and a reply was

received by return of post (April 10th, 1906), as follows:

My kind friends, I have just received your letter and my emotion is very great. . . . . On my return from a two days' absence, Sara said to me: "I had last night a frightful, a most horrible dream, a fearful nightmare. Oh how I suffered! I dreamt that I was for ever separated from you; it seemed as if there was a vast gulf, an immense void, I know not what, between us, which was separating us for ever. Do not go away again, tell me you will not leave me again; I am too terrified; I have a dread of misfortune." You may imagine my emotion on reading your letter.

[Later he added:] "It was the day before the birth of the child that she told me her dream."

Here are the facts recorded by a magistrate, who received them directly from the person concerned, whose "perfect honour and sincerity" he guarantees. They are worthy of very thoughtful consideration. The communication carries with it a test of identity of a specially intimate kind, and it conveys an assurance full of consolation.

When Sara Lancy "awakened from the dream of life", she discovered that the notion that death "separates" those who love was an illusion. We live in the midst of illusions. The physical environment, the phenomenal world, is a school in which we gradually learn to recognize the difference between illusion and fact. For centuries men believed that the sun moved round the earth, that the earth was a flat plain, etc.; science has dissipated these illusions. But the mental environment is also illusory; things are not what they seem, and mental concepts need to be reconstructed as we gain further insight into truth; values also must be readjusted. Our conceptions of death are changing. The idea that it separates spirits that have been united is "quite false".



The bridge of death spans a narrow interval between two states of being; not only can thoughts traverse it easily but that more subtle energy that we call "influence", can make itself powerfully felt. The spiritual conditions of our friends affect us, they can make us partakers of their influence, and our conditions probably affect them in a similar way, in proportion to the closeness of the tie that binds one soul to another; it is profoundly true that "they without us shall not be made perfect". This fact lays upon us an urgent obligation to allow no morbid influence, no exaggerated melancholy, no preoccupation with the physical circumstances of their passing out of the body, to take possession of our minds. If we desire that those we love should pursue high aims and do noble service in their new surroundings, we must not drag them down to a lower level by contact with our depression.

The final example which I will quote belongs both to the class of physical phenomena and also of mental phenomena. The record is by Dr. Joseph Venzano, who is said to have been a distinguished doctor in Genoa, and is described by Professor Morselli as "an excellent observer". He writes as follows:

In spite of the dimness of the light I could distinctly see Mme. Paladino [the medium] and my fellow-sitters. Suddenly I perceived that behind me was a form, fairly tall, which was leaning its head on my left shoulder and sobbing violently, so that those present could hear its sobs: it kissed me repeatedly. I clearly perceived the outlines of this face, which touched my own, and I felt the very fine and abundant hair in contact with my left cheek, so that I could be quite sure that it was a woman. The table then began to move, and by typtology, gave the name of a family connection who was known to no one present except myself. She had died some time before, and on account of incompatibility of temperament there had been serious disagreements with her.

I was so far from expecting this typtological response that

I at first thought that this was a case of coincidence of name. But while I was mentally forming this reflection, I felt a mouth with warm breath touch my left ear and whisper in a low voice *in Genoese dialect*, a succession of sentences, the murmur of which was audible to the sitters. These sentences were broken by bursts of weeping, and their gist was repeatedly to implore pardon for injuries done to me, with a fullness of detail connected with family affairs which could only be known to the person in question. [The medium was a *Neapolitan*.]

The phenomenon seemed so real that I felt compelled to reply to the excuses offered me with expressions of affection, and to ask pardon in my turn if my resentment of the wrongs referred to had been excessive. But I had scarcely uttered the first syllables when two hands, with exquisite delicacy, applied themselves to my lips and prevented my continuing. The form then said to me, "Thank you," embraced me, kissed me and disappeared.

I should state at this point that this extraordinary phenomenon did not for a moment rob me of calmness of observation, which was more than ever necessary under these circumstances, and that I did not cease to watch the medium, who was *quite awake and visible to all*, and remained motionless through the whole course of the phenomenon. ('Annals of Psychical Science, vol. vi, p. 164.)

I know that first-hand testimony is of value, so I will here repeat that I have myself seen materializations, and that on one occasion this occurred in our own drawing-room, in which a lamp was alight, the sitters being my family and acquaintances of my family. The medium, who was firmly tied to her chair, at her own desire, was the lady with whom Sir William Crookes had his notable experiences. Although she was then much older, and the results obtained were slight in comparison with his, a materialized form appeared and spoke; and the conditions under which this occurred were such as to leave no room for doubt in my mind as to the genuine character of the phenomenon.

A student of this subject (Mr. Dennis Taylor) wrote years ago:

Should these materializations be finally established as genuine in the minds of many scientific men . . . [there



will ensue] a radical revolution in biology and in the theory of variations in Evolution. . . . The reign of creative intelligence and of final causes . . . will be restored in our scheme of Nature to the discomfiture of the grosser materialism.

This sentence indicates very clearly the bearing of the subject on science and also on religion. Professor McBride, a biologist, in an article contributed recently to "The Modern Churchman", pointed out that when young men leave their homes and launch out into the world, they frequently lose faith in the spiritual order and in religion. He says that, in his opinion, if this process continues, not only may religion become practically extinct in the course of a few generations, but the foundations of morality also will be seriously shaken. He suggests the importance of seeking for evidence of survival of bodily death by studying human personality and alleged communications received from the "dead".

What mankind supremely needs is conviction that *purpose* appertains to the whole scheme of the universe, and that this purpose is beneficent. If men are assured, without reasonable doubt, that the Source of all the mighty scheme is infinite Wisdom, Justice, and Love, and that the whole is directed by a worthy purpose, then the mystery of "this unfathomable world", even with all its apparent tragedy, is not only endurable, but becomes an incentive to progress. If, in our efforts to right the wrong, to increase knowledge and to develop character, we are workers together with One who can be trusted, and if He is using us as His agents for the fulfilment of a far-reaching purpose of unimaginable good, then indeed life is worth living; and no effort is too great, and

no burden too heavy; and even seeming disaster cannot break our courage or quench our aspirations. But if man himself becomes extinct when his body dies, the purpose of the universe cannot concern us greatly; for in our secret hearts we feel that we are betrayed; desires, affections, loyalties have been awakened in us to be disappointed and wasted. God and the universe have failed us.

One wonderful "Spirit" came among us proclaiming that he had come to bear witness to the Truth, to assure mankind of our true relation to our Source and to the universe of spiritual beings. He bore this witness before death; he manifested after death to bear the same witness. Those who saw him were assured that God is Love and that death is only an incident in an endless and glorious existence. But that happened nearly 2,000 years ago; and Science has trained us to seek in observable facts of the present for corroborative evidence of past occurrences.

For instance, we corroborate the statements of geologists as to the manner in which this planet has been formed, by observing changes in the elevation of land and water, denudation of rocks, effects of ice, etc. We confirm the discoveries of the manner of evolution of animal life, by studying biology and the development of the embryo in the perfectly formed creature. Students who appreciate the importance of such evidence, have a right to ask: Are there any events occurring *now* which similarly corroborate the records of the New Testament, and justify us in believing that the witnesses were not dreaming, when they declared that they had seen and touched and conversed with Jesus after His death on the cross?



We can affirm that there is such evidence; and that it strongly supports our faith in the witness borne by the first disciples of Christ. Now, as then, there are some who mock; but we are bound to go on testifying to the Facts which we have known and seen. Great responsibility rests on those who know that these things are so; and great responsibility also rests upon those who might gain a similar assurance, but who refuse to examine the matter, and allow prejudice to blind their judgement.

On absolute loyalty to Truth the progress of humanity depends; but such loyalty is more difficult of attainment than is commonly realized. We should, therefore, greatly honour those men of science who have risked their scientific reputation and faced the unfavourable opinion of their colleagues rather than "let a truth slip".

### III

#### THE UNFOLDING OF A PLAN

I have chosen as my title "The Unfolding of a Plan", and I hope to justify this choice.

Mr. Gladstone said emphatically to Lord Balfour (then Mr. Balfour, and a member of the S.P.R.) that although he could not himself devote attention to this matter he regarded it as "*the* most important subject".

Many persons approach this subject from an entirely personal standpoint. Sometimes recent bereavement impels them to seek in some way to renew intercourse with those they love; sometimes disquieting doubts urge them to seek some reasons for belief in survival; sometimes less worthy motives, although legitimate ones, attract them to this study: they are urged by curiosity to witness phenomena which cannot be explained by known laws. These and other motives induce many to join the groups of Psychical Researchers or Spiritualists. Others are deterred from taking interest in the subject for reasons very different, but not less personal than those mentioned. They do not desire to get communication from those who have died; the possibilities of seeing apparitions is to them uncanny, or even alarming, or they may regard it as irreverent; they do not like physical manifestations; they would rather not think that



they occur, they dislike the subject; they find it disturbing to their opinions.

I want you to approach the subject from a different angle. Let us try to put aside the personal point of view whether it favours this Research or the reverse, and let us consider it impersonally. We may have to return to the personal standpoint before we close, simply because we are parts of the Great Whole and any event, or phenomenon, which affects the Universe, affects every member of it, and therefore our personal attitude is a factor of real importance.

I want to consider the subject from the point of view of the development and progress of the Human Race.

If the faculties with which the student of Psychical Research deals are real human faculties, and if intercourse between those in the flesh and discarnate spirits are actualities, they must have been latent faculties and possibilities in the race from the start. And if they were latent we should expect to find indications of this all through the history of human evolution. The question also arises: Were they equally conspicuous before the present time? and if not, why are they more so now? These questions we will consider presently.

All students of history know that there have been indications of the existence of what we now call psychic faculties, all down the centuries. We can hardly suppose that the Delphic oracle and other similar beliefs could have prevailed if there had been no substratum of truth in the alleged phenomena. This subject is dealt with by F. W. H. Myers in his volume of Classical Essays. With reference to one

of these oracles he says that the only intelligence to which the priestess could, "on any hypothesis, fairly lay claim, would be of the kind commonly described as 'second sight', a problem with which ethnologists have already to deal all over the world, from the Hebrides to the Coppermine River" (p. 41).

In Andrew Lang's interesting book, "The Making of Religion", we find instances of these faculties occurring among primitive tribes in Africa and elsewhere. The Zulus have a poetic term for clairvoyance; they speak of "opening the gates of distance". It is needless to enlarge on this point.

Among early Christians the whole gamut of what are now called mediumistic, or psychic, faculties are reported to have occurred. Sometimes they were associated with demonology and paganism, and then they were forbidden; but under Christian conditions they were encouraged and revered as Divine gifts.

In his book, "The Expansion of Christianity", Professor Harnack writes:

The amplest evidence for all these traits is to be found in the pages of early Christian literature, from its earliest record down to Irenaeus. The apologists allude to them as a familiar and admitted fact, and it is quite obvious that they were of primary importance for the mission and propaganda of the Christian religion. (Vol. I, p. 253.)

These facts he enumerates. Among the chief are the following:

God speaks in visions and dreams and ecstasy, revealing matters of moment, also trifles. Visions of dead martyrs appearing to their friends.

Some are inspired to explain and interpret and foretell. Others are filled with the spirit and lose consciousness [a trance state, apparently].

Others not merely speak but write.



The sick are healed.

Others perceive the presence of the Spirit with every sense; they see its brilliant light, they hear its voice, they smell the fragrance of immortality. They see celestial persons and hear them; they peer into what is hidden and distant, or to come; they are even rapt into the world to come.

When we turn to the Middle Ages we find, of course, abundant testimony to supernormal occurrences and the active exercise of psychic faculties.

These centuries are called the age of faith, but they might with equal truth be called the age of credulity and superstition. What is the difference between faith and superstition? How shall we define superstition? I should define it as belief based on insufficient reasons. According to this definition there was an immense amount of superstition in the Middle Ages: that is to say, persons accepted as facts alleged occurrences for which there was no reasonable evidence.

But there was also real faith: that is to say, faith based on *experience*. For instance, Joan of Arc believed in her mission and in its sacred origin because she had experience. She had heard voices and seen visions and these afforded her reasons for trust sufficient to sustain her in her troubled life and martyr death. Moreover, these were proved reliable by the event: she *actually freed* France from foreign domination. There were also many intimate inner experiences, due to pressure of the Divine Spirit upon the human soul which to the recipient justified faith.

It would be untrue and unjust to speak of the Middle Ages only as a period of credulity, and to ignore the real faith which was the spring of many noble lives and much splendid self-sacrificing work.

We must bear in mind, however, that mankind as a whole had little or no knowledge of the order and law of the universe. It was comparatively easy to believe in the occurrence of miracles, because the familiar phenomena of Nature were so little understood that the notion of an inexplicable breach in the occurrence of these phenomena presented no particular difficulty.

It was not until the study of science had taught mankind to see in Nature an orderly sequence of Cause and effect that the occurrence of what was called a "miracle" began to offer difficulty to the mind and prompted doubt.

Then began another age in human development—the age of Science and the age of doubt. In the eighteenth century scepticism became rife: in the nineteenth century it reached its zenith. The philosophy of the latter half of the nineteenth century was materialistic; earlier beliefs were shaken to their foundations; and in throwing over credulity and superstition, truths of great value were also thrown aside; the baby was thrown away with the bath-water!

The scepticism of the eighteenth century may be represented by a few quotations from David Hume whose history was a standard work in schools, sowing in the minds of the young principles which for intelligent and thoughtful students could only lead to profound scepticism. One or two quotations must suffice. Apropos of miracles, Hume wrote:

"No human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle," and he wrote: "In all the incidents of life we ought to preserve our scepticism." (Treatise I, iv, 7.)



And further:

"We may conclude that the Christian Religion was not only at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one . . . whoever is moved by faith to assent to it is conscious of a continual miracle in his own person which *subverts all the principles of the understanding* and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience." (See Maurice, "Metaphysical Philosophy", p. 575, Vol.II.)

This treatment of Religion as contrary to reason could but tend to the rejection of Religion.

The youth of that generation being educated in the principle that occurrences called "miracles" were contrary to Nature and to human reason were not slow to reach the conviction that they must choose between the use of reason and the acceptance of any Religion that claimed to be associated with miracles. Modern Scientific discoveries and theories tended to confirm this conviction, and about the middle of the nineteenth century we know that the tide of scepticism rose very high and remained at its full for a long time, producing the atrophy of many lofty hopes and ideals, resulting in widespread materialism and practically destroying belief in a future life and in spiritual causation.

The position may be summed up in the words of Professor Haeckel, published 1899:

"The monism of the cosmos which we establish . . . proclaims the absolute dominion of the great eternal iron laws throughout the universe. It thus shatters at the same time the three central dogmas . . . the personality of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will." ("The Riddle of the Universe".)

This was the trend of thought; but many earnest thinkers were unable to accept this conclusion with

the satisfaction which Haeckel seems to have felt. To F. W. H. Myers it brought a sense of terrible loss:

"Sad it was and slow," he wrote, "a recognition of insufficiency of evidence fraught with growing pain."

If this materialistic philosophy is not true—if there is a Spiritual World of beings who care for mankind; if there is a Divine Creative Spirit guiding Human Evolution, it is reasonable to expect that under such conditions as these something would be done to check the human race from drifting into sheer materialism and despair, and losing hold on fundamental truths which lie at the base of all religions.

In a recent article, Professor E. W. MacBride, F.R.S., wrote:

"We are brought to the dilemma that science seems to have undermined and destroyed the basis of our religious belief, and yet that religious belief forms a cement without which no form of society can long endure."

*(The Modern Churchman, December, 1924.)*

"The most stupendous benefits," he writes, "which could be conferred on this nation would be a readjustment of its religious beliefs." In the same article he points out that deeply ingrained ideas of right and duty are connected with religious beliefs, and if the very foundations of religion are undermined the social morality of the race is imperilled.

F. W. H. Myers, in his very candid Autobiography, wrote concerning the period when he lost all faith in the spiritual and hope of survival—"The effect of agnosticism upon me was wholly evil. During this phase only can I remember anything of deadness



and bitterness—of scorn of human life, of anger at destiny, of deliberate preference of the pleasures of the passing hour. ”

No doubt there are exceptional men who could retain their high ideals under such conditions, but the logical outcome of materialistic philosophy is, *Might is Right*.

Now let us take a flight of imagination. Let us imagine that we have died, and that we have not only discovered that after what we called death we are alive, but that all our faculties are intact and that we are conscious of the human race, and can watch its development. Let us suppose that we see it drifting into materialism and losing hold on ideals that make for progress. In these circumstances what would be the desire of all who love mankind and who in our earthly lives have worked for the human race? Should we not be eager to serve our fellows by convincing them that they are not merely material beings, but that they have spiritual natures and will survive bodily death?

Joseph Mazzini said:

“Prove to mankind that the earthly duties to be fulfilled here below are an essential portion of . . . Immortal Life, and all the calculations of the Present will vanish before the grandeur of the Future.”

I imagine that we should realize this and, if it were possible, we should direct our efforts towards giving mankind proof of our survival. We should seek to co-operate with all spirits willing to serve mankind in this way. Our aim would be to appeal to all sorts and conditions of men in the way in which they were most accessible. To those entangled in a mechanical theory of the Universe appeal must

be made through their physical organs of sense; no other mode of approach would be likely to be effective: raps, apparitions, voices, etc., and other manifestations would be tried, and in all the phenomena we might produce we should seek to exhibit the activity of independent intelligences.

Having taken this flight of fancy let us return to facts, and consider how far they justify the opinion that there is intelligent purpose in the abundant and varied phenomena which have occurred during the last 60 or 70 years, and which are still occurring.

It is commonly supposed that modern Spiritualism originated with the rappings which occurred in Hydesville, U.S.A., in 1848, which brought the Fox sisters into notoriety. It is true that these rappings attracted much attention; but raps of an intelligent kind had occurred before that. It is noteworthy that one of the earliest apparent attempts to attract attention to this subject was in connection with a great religious revivalist, John Wesley. The full account of the repeated rapping which occurred in his family will be found in a little book called, "The Epworth Phenomena", by Dudley Wright.

Until Science had developed its own methods of examining phenomena, such occurrences were not likely to produce much effect; *Psychical Research* was hardly possible: but with the development of Science it became not only possible, but an urgent duty to examine the alleged phenomena of what is called Spiritualism.

What are these phenomena?

Raps, lights, movement of objects without contact, recognized appearances, voices, communications given



by persons in deep trance, and so forth. But are these well authenticated? And do they show clear indications of the activity of independent intelligences?

If human testimony is worth anything, then surely the answer to both these questions should be in the affirmative. It is impossible to do more than touch on this testimony. I must limit myself to pointing out certain important features in the development of these phenomena.

To begin with, it is noteworthy that about the same period as the Rochester rappings in the Fox family which attracted so much attention in 1848, several remarkable men and women manifested extraordinary faculties. The manifestations which occurred with them generally began with, or were accompanied by, raps; but other more startling and impressive phenomena followed.

We note, also, that if these remarkable psychics had not been brought into contact with men of influence in the world they would have remained in comparative obscurity. For instance, the wonderful manifestations that occurred with D. D. Home would have been to a great extent wasted if he had not come into contact with Sir William Crookes (then Professor Crookes), one of the greatest scientific men of the age and not less distinguished for his courage and loyalty in the pursuit of truth at all costs.

Of the rappings which occurred in D. D. Home's presence Sir William Crookes has said: "With a full knowledge of the numerous theories which have been started . . . to explain these sounds I have tested them in every way that I could devise, until

there has been no escape from the conviction that they were true objective occurrences not produced by trickery or mechanical means."

Of the supernormal lights he has given the following record: "Under the strictest test conditions I have seen . . . luminous points of light darting about and settling on the heads of different persons; I have had questions answered by flashing of a bright light a desired number of times in front of my face. . . . *In the* light I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side-table, brush a sprig off and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand and carry small objects about."

Of David Dunglas Home himself Sir William Crookes has said that he was one of the "most lovable and upright of men who insisted on every precaution being taken to avoid deception."

When phenomena appear spontaneously it is obvious that they cannot usually be scientifically tested; the use of organized physical mediumship lies in the fact that apparitions in séances can be thus tested; and to convince a sceptical mind such tests are necessary.

Some persons may think that all these common physical phenomena are unworthy of departed spirits who ought to have more dignified and spiritual occupations. Did not Browning express a true principle when he wrote:

"All service ranks the same with God."

Anything that is done in the true spirit of service



is honourable action. A well-known poet has said:

“There lives  
No faculty within us which the soul  
Can spare; and humblest earthly weal demands  
*Zealous co-operation of all means*  
Given or acquired, to raise us from the mire  
And liberate our hearts from low pursuits.”

Although not intentionally referring to this subject, of course, Wordsworth has embodied in these lines the aim of psychical research, an aim with which some of us are convinced that unseen workers are co-operating. That aim is to *engage all human faculties*, including the psychical faculties which have been so long latent, and to use *all means*, however lowly, with “*zealous co-operation*” to promote the true “*weal*” of mankind and lift life to a higher and more spiritual level.

As to the reality of the materialized forms that appear in the séance room with genuine mediums, testimony is overwhelmingly strong. There are some who will not believe unless they have had personal experience, but there are others who are more capable of estimating the value of testimony, who will find in the published records of such men as Sir William Crookes, Professor Richet, Professor Lombroso, and others (too numerous to name) evidence for the facts which is quite irresistible.

In his valuable work, “Researches in Spiritualism”, Sir William Crookes relates some of his numerous experiences with D. D. Home and Florence Cook from which I will extract one incident, in which he describes the apparition called “Katie King”.

“I went cautiously into the room, it being dark, and felt about for Miss Cook. I found her on the floor, Kneeling down

I let air into the lamp, and by its light I saw the young lady dressed in black velvet, as she had been in the early part of the evening, and to all appearances perfectly senseless; she did not move when I took her hand and held the light quite close to her face, but continued quietly breathing. Raising the lamp I looked round and saw Katie standing close to Miss Cook. She was robed in flowing white drapery as we had seen her previously during the *séance*. Holding one of Miss Cook's hands in mine, and still kneeling, I passed the lamp up and down so as to illuminate Katie's whole figure, and satisfy myself thoroughly that I was really looking at the veritable Katie. . . . She did not speak but moved her head and smiled in recognition.

"Three separate times did I carefully examine Miss Cook . . . to be sure that the hand I held was that of a living woman and three separate times did I turn the lamp to Katie and examine her with steadfast scrutiny until I had no doubt whatever of her objective reality. . . ." pp. 106 and 107.

This was in 1874. In 1898, before the British Association, he referred to this record and said:

"I have nothing to retract. I adhere to my already published statements. Indeed, I might add much thereto."

In the book from which I have abstracted this account Crookes states that five complete sets of photographic apparatus were brought to bear upon the form of Katie.

"I have forty-five negatives," [he writes], "some inferior, some indifferent, and some excellent. . . . One of the most interesting of the pictures is one in which I am standing by the side of Katie. . . . Afterwards I dressed Miss Cook like Katie, placed her and myself in exactly the same position, and we were photographed by the same camera; placed exactly as in the other experiment and illuminated by the same light. When these two photographs were placed over each other the two photographs of myself coincided exactly as regards stature, etc., but Katie is half a head taller than Miss Cook and looks a big woman in comparison with her . . . and the photographs show several other points of difference. . . . I have the most absolute certainty that Miss Cook and Katie are two separate individuals as far as their bodies are concerned." ("Researches in Spiritualism", pp. 109 and 110.)



And in 1916 he wrote with reference to investigations in Psychical Research:

"They point to the existence of another order of human life continuous with this, and demonstrate the possibility in certain circumstances of communication between this world and the next."

Professor Hans Driesch, M.D., and LL.D., also Professor of Philosophy in the University of Leipsic, wrote in "The Quest", July, 1924:

"The actuality of psychical phenomena is doubted to-day only by the incorrigible dogmatist."

There are distinguished names, constituting a *catena* of evidence from 1850 to 1924.

Another notable psychic, a contemporary of Home, was Stainton Moses, a lecturer at University College, London. In his case also the effect of his remarkable experiences would, to some extent, have been wasted if he had not been brought into touch with F. W. H. Myers, a man whose influence would carry weight in a wide circle.

Although Stainton Moses's experiences had profoundly changed his own conceptions of life, he was not in a position to influence so wide a circle as that which Frederic Myers has reached. Are we not justified in believing that it was no mere coincidence that brought these two men together? Myers writes that "it may be that by such experiences as those of Stainton Moses our race is being obscurely guided into an avenue of eternal hope," and he adds: "who of mortals need ask for better than to be made, whether by chance or merit, a landmark on such a way."

In his case as in that of D. D. Home physical phenomena occurred startlingly at the outset, but the tokens of intelligent agency were obvious, and the physical experiences were accompanied by intellectual phenomena of a very impressive kind. The raps, levitations, lights, etc., were apparently intended only to convince him and his friends of the objective reality of the agencies who undertook to instruct him. Stainton Moses's effect upon Myers was to make him a veritable prophet. His literary gift made him able to reach and impress thousands, his grasp of the rationale of the subject and his zeal in spreading the knowledge he had gained fitted him to be an apostle in the field. He was one of the most active founders of the Society for Psychical Research.

The phenomena, which as I have already pointed out have occurred at intervals in all ages, have of late become much more abundant, and have been of a character adapted to the present time. Now that there is no danger of psychics being burnt as witches (although they are subject to other forms of persecution) many develop their faculties who would not have dared to do so in former times. It has been interesting to observe the enlarged scope of the movement through the past quarter of a century, and to note that doctors of science and medicine, archæologists, artists, literary men, and all sorts of professional men, even journalists and the clergy, are being drawn into it. I might mention photographers, for what is called "psychic photography" has lately attracted much attention.

On the subject of psychic photography Sir William Barrett published a statement in "Proceedings", December, 1924. "With regard to the so-called



'spirit photographs', I have been extremely sceptical of their genuineness until quite lately. Recently, however, experiments conducted by my friend, Mr. De Brath, in one of which he kindly allowed me to take part, appear to afford *indubitable* evidence of supernormal photography. This conclusion confirms the opinion held by some expert and critical experimenters who have discussed their results with me."

Spiritualists have been the pioneers who blazed a trail which is now thronged by a constantly increasing number of students. Those who have hesitated to endorse their conclusions have yet borne testimony to their courage and to the importance of the facts they have attested.

Professor De Morgan said half a century ago:

"The Spiritualists beyond a doubt are on the track that leads to all advancement in spiritual science; they have the spirit and the method of the grand time when paths had to be cut through the uncleared forest in which it is now the daily routine to walk. Their spirit was that of universal examination, wholly unchecked by fear of being discovered in the investigation of nonsense."

It should be clearly understood that the physical phenomena have been entirely subsidiary to the most important phases of experience, i.e., to the mental phenomena. These have always been the most important feature in the movement and it was apparent that the physical occurrences were organized in order to attract attention, as means to an end, not at all as an end in themselves. It is the communications which have accompanied these occurrences which have led to the conviction that they

are the work of intelligent agents, and to the recognition that these agents are *human*, and in some cases can be identified, as those who once lived on earth.

The implications involved in this fact are tremendous, and it is, of course, only right that the evidence for its genuineness should be thoroughly examined and sifted. It is those who have devoted the most earnest care to so doing who have become absolutely convinced both that survival is proven and that under certain circumstances communication after death actually occurs.

To this general statement there are some exceptions. Professor Charles Richet says he is still unconvinced as to human survival; he cannot believe in human existence without a physical brain; and yet he has said (I quote his printed words):

“However improbable it may appear at first sight it is possible, without plunging into absurdities, to conceive of an intelligence which has not a brain as a substratum. . . . The material substratum is the habitual phenomenon, it is not the necessary phenomenon, and there is nothing to indicate that it is so. When the time comes for the reverse to be proved true—and why should it not come?—it will be regarded as surprising that we should ever have denied the existence of an order of things different from the common order, not contradicting it, but in juxtaposition with it.” (“Should Spiritism be Seriously Studied?” pp. 9 and 10.)

The International Metaphysical Institute in Paris, of which Professor Richet is the Hon. President, has been founded solely for the study of Psychical Phenomena. Its committee includes names of distinguished men, and its most active member was the late Dr. Gustave Geley, laureate of the French medical faculty, recently killed when travelling by air. Summing up the result of his investigations Dr. Geley wrote: that the facts necessitate “the



complete overthrow of materialistic philosophy"; and that "the materialistic conception of the universe and of the individual is false, and cannot be reconciled with our present biological knowledge."

In Dr. Geley, as well as in Myers, we have the constructive, philosophic mind—a most important element towards the understanding and co-ordination of psychical phenomena.

Professor Herschel wrote in 1785, in connection with scientific discoveries:

"If we add observation to observation without attempting to draw conclusions, and also conjectural views from them, we offend against the very end for which only observations ought to be made."

Dr. Geley was not guilty of this offence. He deduced from his prolonged and careful scientific study of these phenomena that human beings consist of:

1st. Immanent Intelligences in close contact with the vast Immanent Intelligence in Nature.

2ndly. A soul-energy with both physical and mental aspects.

3rdly. A representation of these in material form.

As the pioneers in this Research have passed one by one to the great majority, manifestations have occurred, not only in greater abundance, but with *novel characteristics*; they seem to indicate intelligent devices with the purpose of eliminating the various hypotheses with which investigators have tried to explain the phenomena by interpretations which might exclude discarnate agency. Cross-correspondence is one of these devices; the book test is another.

It often happens that very little attention is paid

to the mass of evidence which has accumulated during the last 70 years, until some personal event occurs which arouses interest. Those who have an unbroken home circle and find the joys and the work of life engrossing are apt to put aside a study which forces upon the mind the consideration of death and what comes after death. But when the angel of death breaks in upon the security of the home life then the subject gains new importance.

The question: "If a man die shall he live again?" clamours for an answer. In proportion to the earnestness and honesty of the questioner will be his care in examining the evidence; he will not be contented to trust it because it meets his desire; rather will the keenness of his desires make him the more inclined to sift the evidence so that he may know the truth at all costs.

When we encounter startling and unusual facts we must not, like children, just wonder and pass on, we must meditate on them until their relation to history past and present becomes manifest to us and they are seen as part of the whole unfolding will of God in relation to the Race. Unless they are understood in connection with life as a whole they will seem meaningless and purposeless. In order to understand thus, "not merely the intellect, but also the will has to come into play in the process of knowledge," so says Professor Ramsay, and he adds:

"The moral quality is at least as important as the intellectual in the making of the true scholar. He must struggle from stage to stage. . . . At every step in the path of knowledge one eliminates and does away the old and remakes one's vision of the world . . . one sees facts in a new correlation: something of what had been dark in the world around becomes illuminated and clear." ("The Teaching of St. Paul in Terms of the Present Day", pp. 234, 244.)



In order thus to understand the evolutionary process we need intuition, what Professor Ramsay calls "sympathetic insight" and "the operation of the Divine element in man grasping the Divine unity and plan that rules in the world."

The undermining of materialism as a philosophy seems to be a part of the Divine Purpose and plan in this development; and another very important part seems to be the enlargement of the scope of Human capacity for fellowship and co-operation. From the amoeba up to Man evolution has tended in this direction. The struggle for individual survival has been one factor in the scheme, but it is not the only factor, not even the principal factor. The other factor is Co-operation; without co-operation and mutual assistance the higher forms of living creatures could not have existed. It is a conspicuous feature in the development of both floral and animal life. It is entirely in line with the evolutionary process that the event of death should widen the capacity for such fellowship and afford further scope for co-operation.

It seems unthinkable that in a rational Universe the inevitable experience of death should stultify for every single individual the obvious trend and apparent purpose of the whole process of becoming.

We are therefore led to anticipate that when we enter upon the next stage we shall have extended opportunities for interaction with our fellows and increased faculties for responding to our environment. The communications that purport to come from the Other Side of death bear out this anticipation.

No one apprehended this aspect of the subject more clearly than did Frederic Myers.

"This new scientific temper," [he wrote], "is not confined, as I believe, to the denizens of earth. The spiritual world meets it, as I think our evidence has shown, with eager and strenuous response. But that response is made and must be made along the lines of our normal evolution. . . . We have no longer to deal with some isolated series of events . . . but rather with a world-wide and actual condition of things, recognizable every year in greater clearness." ("Human Personality", Vol. II, p. 284.)

And further as the outcome of this study, he says:

"Evolution will no longer appear as a truncated process, an ever arrested movement upon an unknown goal." (Ibid., p. 290.)

So entirely had his profound study convinced him of the reality of the co-operation between the two states that he says:

"It is not we who are in reality the discoverers here. The experiments which are being made are not the work of earthly skill. . . . The true discoverers, however, show no wish to be thus sharply distinguished from ourselves. Their aim is a collaboration with us, as close as may be possible." (Ibid., p. 271.)

The prospect is a glorious one, but we must never forget that the individual human will is an important element in the scheme. We may co-operate with higher intelligences in carrying out the Divine Purpose, but there is no compulsion so to do. It is not the incident of death, so obviously a part of the scheme of things, which can hinder the fulfilment of Human Destiny. But it may be hindered by wilful blindness to facts and obstinate self-seeking. Egotism of this kind is a cosmic crime, since it opposes the funda-



mental principle of the Universe, the principle of Fellowship—apart from which it would not be a *Uni-verse* at all.

Blind, of course, we all are more or less, but men of goodwill who wish to see the Truth and to co-operate, will be used to further the Purpose of God whether they apprehend the significance of life or whether they do not.

Marcus Aurelius has said truly:

“All people work in some measure towards the ends of Providence—some with knowledge and design, while others are not sensible of it. . . . The grand design is carried on by different hands and different means.”

## IV

### THEY FOUND NOT THE BODY

Some persons object to the statement, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," which they consider affirms merely the resuscitation of the flesh. It is true that for the most part those who framed the Apostles' Creed and those who have used it have understood the words in this material sense; but behind the materialistic ideas of an unscientific age lies a fundamentally true principle, a principle to which the affirmation, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," has borne witness throughout the Christian era, and to which it still bears witness, however crudely it may be interpreted.

That principle is the essential nature of man as an *embodied* spirit. Those who speak of "disembodied spirits", implying the possibility of the survival of the human spirit in an altogether bodiless condition, are employing language for which they can find no support in Nature or in Scripture. Nowhere in the Universe have we any examples of disembodied existence; it is a gratuitous assumption. For what is a body? It is an instrument whereby intelligent beings are able to manifest themselves and to relate themselves with their environment, and it is inconceivable that in any individualized state of existence spirits should be without some such organ of



expression. The more developed the spirit the finer we should expect the organ of expression to be; but we cannot conceive of a spirit entirely without a body of any sort.

M. Gabriel Delanne in his interesting book, "L'âme est immortelle",\* has pointed out that many of the early Fathers of the Church recognized that spirits are never bodiless. St. Paul's statement that man has another body not made of flesh is familiar to us all. "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body" (I Cor. xv. 44); but it is not so well known that Origen and other Fathers of the School of Alexandria held that the bodies of the elect are incorruptible.

In an interesting article by Mr. G. R. S. Mead in "The Quest" he makes the following quotation from Origen, who, he says, called those who held a materialistic interpretation of the resurrection "flesh-lovers":

Another body, a spiritual and ethereal one, is promised us; a body which is not subject to physical touch, nor seen by physical eyes, nor burdened with weight, and which shall be metamorphosed according to the variety of regions in which it shall be.

Origen calls this body the *seminarium*, or "seed-plot", and, as Mr. Mead suggests, he seems to regard it as being not so much "a body in immediate sequence with the physical body" as "the source of every possibility of embodiment—the germ-ground, or *seminarium*, from which all such bodies could be produced." Mr. Mead also states that the term "light emanation" was used symbolically by Gnostic

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\* Translated by myself under the title "Evidence for a Future Life". (Rider & Sons.)

schools for the germ of the spiritual man; and that the literal translation of the term *spiniherismos*, used symbolically in Greek for the spermatic principle, would be "emission of sparks". The whole of this interesting article deserves careful attention. ("The Quest", January, 1910.)

St. Hilary says that there is nothing in the creation, visible or invisible, which is disembodied, that souls possess a corporal substance inherent in their nature. St. Cyril taught that God alone is without body. St. Bernard said that God's nature alone requires "neither for its own sake nor that of others, the assistance of a bodily instrument." St. Ambrose of Milan spoke in a similar manner: We must not suppose that any being is wholly immaterial in its composition, with One only exception." Tertullian and St. Augustine believed that angels have bodies. ("Evidence for a Future Life", pp. 15, 16.) All these statements seem to imply that death makes no break in the continuity of embodied existence.

There are facts which justify us in taking another step and venturing to speculate further as to the nature of the body which will be our future instrument. These facts are too numerous to be quoted fully, but a few examples may be given. They seem to indicate that our future bodies will be luminous.

Perhaps science will eventually confirm this, and the beautiful idea set forth in the Kabbalah will be actually verified. There we are told that just as the soul, when sent to earth, "puts on an earthly garment to preserve herself here, so she receives above a shining garment in order to be able to look without injury into the mirror whose light proceeds from the Lord of light" (Sohar I, 65). Here the idea is clothed in the



language of poetry; but it is well to remember that poetry need not be mere fancy, it may be prophetic intuition. Science can be poetry, too, and the mysteries it reveals are wonderful enough to warrant the loftiest imaginations and the most splendid hopes.

All matter, we are told, is built up of electrons and is electrical in origin. It is therefore in line with what we know of the constructive forces of Nature to surmise that the new body will be electrical also in its origin, that the forces which will manifest in bodily form when this "earthly tabernacle is dissolved" are latent within us and that their luminous effects are arrested only by the materiality of our present organism. Dr. Ochorowicz's experiments led him to conclude that the forces of his medium, which were used to effect materializations, were the same forces which at other times manifested as light, and that this is why he did not obtain luminous phenomena and materializations simultaneously.

The traditional representation of saints with aureoles has probably some foundation in psychic manifestations. The following interesting account, given by a sensitive of her own experience in a night vision, has been corroborated by other experiences.

I thought myself to be suspended in the air without material form, but all vapour and all light. . . . Then gradually that light which I felt to be myself approached the corpse, entered it as I recovered my senses, exhausted as after a long, trying magnetic sleep. ("Evidence for a Future Life", by Gabriel Delanne, p. 38.)

Here is another experience:

At every pass you make I see little columns of fire-dust emanate from the tips of your fingers and incorporate themselves in me . . . I am almost surrounded by an atmosphere glowing with this same fire-dust.

The writer from whom the above is quoted also

reports the statements made by the same somnambulist as to an experience during natural sleep:

As to myself I appear like a luminous vapour, and I feel myself thinking apart from the body; in this condition I understand and I see many things as in somnambulism, when the thinking faculty is operating without my being separated from my organism; but after a few minutes have passed, a quarter of an hour or more, the luminous vapour approaches to my body nearer and nearer; I lose consciousness and the ecstatic state is over. (Ibid., p. 37.)

Colonel de Rochas's experiments corroborate the conclusions we may draw from these quotations. He has said that the emanations given off from the body of his subject "spread themselves in a manner analogous to light". He recounts an experiment in which he employed a clairvoyante to observe the condition of a mesmerized subject. She was able to perceive round this subject a luminous enswathement before she was mesmerized, and from the moment when her normal sensibility began to disappear this seemed to dissolve into the atmosphere, then reappeared at the end of a short time as a light mist which little by little condensed, becoming more and more brilliant until it definitely took "the appearance of a very thin layer following, at the distance of three or four inches from the skin, all the contours of the body."—Quoted in "Evidence for a Future Life", p. 137.

Let us now consider the bearing of the above remarks on the events recorded in the Gospels connected with the Resurrection. In Mr. Theobald's book, "Spirit Workers in the Home Circle" (now out of print), he relates the following conversation which took place with Mrs. Everitt, a gifted medium (not professional), whilst she was in a state of



trance, the "control" speaking with the direct voice.

Question. Was it true that Christ died?

Answer. His body died.

Q. Then I suppose the body He rose with was a different one—it could do as you do and come through material substance?

A. Matter is nothing to us.

Q. But what became of the body?

A. Part of His material body—the grosser part—evaporated on the Cross; the remnant when the linen cloths were left in the sepulchre. The body He rose with was entirely spiritual.

Q. Then during those three days a change went on, which in our case will take many years to accomplish?

A. Yes; it was an acceleration of chemical power (p. 50).

With this it is interesting to compare a description by Andrew Jackson Davis of what he saw clairvoyantly at a deathbed. After describing a bright stream of "vital electricity" which seemed to play energetically between the feet of the elevated spirit body and the head of the prostrate physical form he adds:

Here I perceived what I had never before obtained a knowledge of, that a small portion of this vital electrical element returned to the deserted body immediately subsequent to the separation of the umbilical thread (i. e., this electrical current); and that that portion of this element which passed back into the earthly organism instantly diffused itself through the entire structure and *thus prevented immediate decomposition*. (See "The Philosophy of Death", by Andrew Jackson Davis. The italics are my own.)

In this description we may, perhaps, find a clue to the immediate cause of the acceleration of chemical processes referred to by Mrs. Everitt's spirit control.

If it is a fact that the subtle forces radiating from the physical body form a connecting link between it and the finer spirit body, and if it is also true that,

under *ordinary* circumstances, some portion of this subtle force lingers in the corpse after the spirit has quitted it and by so doing prevents immediate decomposition, then it seems obvious that if, under *extraordinary* circumstances the whole of this force were to be withdrawn rapidly (although perhaps gradually) the result would be a very speedy disintegration of the body. If this is what occurred in the case of the Lord Jesus we can understand why the grave clothes lay apparently undisturbed, and yet had completely collapsed, and why the disciples "found not the body".

Certain experiences and researches give support to this hypothesis, but before considering these more in detail the questions may be asked: Is there any reason to believe that the withdrawal of psychic force from the body of the Lord Jesus would be exceptionally complete? And are we justified in supposing that this complete withdrawal might be effected by will power alone? We will consider the questions in rotation.

In relation to the first question, we must bear in mind that Christ purposed to manifest to His disciples in a material manner and to continue and repeat these manifestations during a considerable period of time, and under very various conditions; it seems quite reasonable to conclude that for this prolonged and complete materialization it would be necessary to concentrate all the psychic force available. The account of the manifestation towards the close of the forty days seems to show that this force was almost spent; the appearance seems to have been more shadowy. We are told that "when they saw Him they worshipped Him, but some doubted". The



form was not as unmistakably objective as at first, when seeing Him brought immediate conviction.

If we admit that there were good reasons for the withdrawal of the whole of the force which otherwise would have remained in the body and would have hindered, for a while, the process of decomposition, we still want to know whether this withdrawal could have been effected by will power or whether we must suppose some other unknown agency was at work.\*

In Mr. Hereward Carrington's recent work, "Problems of Psychological Research", when discussing Dr. Ochorowicz's experiments with Mlle. Tomczyk and the photographs taken by means of the radiations from her body, he says: "These rays may be centred and concentrated by the action of the will of the subject" (page 57).

There is plenty of evidence to substantiate this statement. It is, therefore, an experimentally attested fact that these radiations are *controllable by the will*; and it is reasonable to assume that, without any contravention of the laws which govern human development, He whose whole life on earth had been a victory of spirit over matter, He who overcame the world and the flesh by the power of a will attuned to God, could exert this same will power over the psychic forces attached to His physical body.

The late Dr. Paul Gibier (director of the Bacteriological Institute in New York), a man who had the courage of his opinions, and who satisfied himself by

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\* "Matter it may be said is an illusive term. There may be nothing of the sort, but only forces; "Substances" may be a congeries of centres of attraction. Volition may be a force of higher order. A supreme volition might disperse these coherent centres of force, and when they flew apart what would become of the substance then?" ("The Risen Master", p. 25, Dr. Latham, published 1901.)

investigation that materializations and other psychical phenomena are facts, has expressed the following opinion in a book called "Psychism", published towards the close of last century. After referring to an apparition coincident with a death, he says :

We will endeavour to explain how manifestations like the one just related occur, more especially at the time of death. According to the theory which we deduce from our observations, it is because the intelligence may dispose immediately after death of a certain amount of free animic energy, which abandons the body little by little after what we have termed the intellectual secession. ("Psychism", p. 247.)

Earlier in this work he wrote that he believed that, at death :

a certain part of the animic energy is dissipated and in a gradual way re-enters the common storehouse of universal energy. Another part of this force remains bound to the spirit . . . but it is later that the animic force definitely leaves the body, provided it (the body) has not been destroyed by fire or any other destructive cause immediately after death (p. 233).

He further goes on to state that he thinks it probable that the "animic energy" lingering in the cells of the physical body is gradually attracted again to the spirit.

One wishes that Dr. Paul Gibier had explained more fully what were the observations which led him to this opinion; it is clear, however, that his views were the result of his studies. What he calls "animic energy" is evidently the same force which is used for materialization, and this again seems to be identical with the radiations observed by Dr. Ochorowicz in his experiments with Mlle. Tomczyk; by these rays, sometimes visible and sometimes invisible, he obtained photographs. He states that he could not obtain



materialization phenomena and the lights simultaneously, and he attributed this to the fact that the force *could not* be used for both manifestations at once. We are justified in assuming that the "vital electrical element" described by Andrew Jackson Davis was a manifestation of the same force.

On the basis of these experiences we may provisionally formulate the following hypothesis.

A force radiates from all human bodies, of which under ordinary circumstances the greater part is liberated at death; if the whole were liberated at once the physical form would immediately and rapidly disintegrate, the residuum lingering in the cells of the body for a while opposes the action of chemical forces which would otherwise come at once into operation.

This force when radiated can be used to produce materializations, if it is sufficiently concentrated and circumstances are favourable.

Very reverently we may apply this hypothesis to the events recorded in the Gospels. He whose will was potent over His own body during His earthly life was able to withdraw the whole of the psychic force from the physical form He had quitted and to control and concentrate it in order to manifest materially to His disciples and thus to convince them of His triumph over death. These proofs He continued to give during forty days, during which period He was Himself, probably, passing through a process of ascension and progressive exaltation, His *spiritual* body becoming perfectly adapted to His exalted state. If we accept the Scriptural teaching that He was in "all things made like unto His brethren" gradual progress rather than sudden transformation

must have been His experience, as it is ours. It was, apparently, during this transition stage that He used the quasi-material force which seems to serve as the nexus between earthly matter and spiritual substance.

Dr. Werner, pastor of Becklesberg, has recorded a series of discourses between himself and a "sensitive" in which there occurs a passage of interest in this connection. It is quoted in "From Matter to Spirit", a book by Mrs. De Morgan, now out of print. He was told that "there is an exceedingly fine substance" which "pervades the body in all parts", and this is "the soul's instrument for operating in the external world. And when the soul parts from the body this fine substance accompanies it; for it is as well a part of the soul as of the body." It is destined at last, as to "what is more gross and corporeal, to be entirely removed, and the soul to assume the nature of the eternal light of the spirit." Further he was told that by aid of this substance spirits can make themselves seen, heard, and felt by man, "they can excite sounds in the atmosphere of earth". ("From Matter to Spirit", page 132. Dr. Werner's book was written in 1847.)\*

The Seeress of Prevorst, also quoted in Mrs. De Morgan's book, said that by means of this "nervous principle of vitality the soul was united with the body and the body with the world." It enables spirits to "make themselves heard and felt by man"; spirits to whom this force is no longer attached appear no more on earth.

With this it is interesting to compare an account

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\* Souls quite earthly wrap themselves gladly in it and give thereby the characteristic form to their spirits. By the aid of this substance they can make themselves seen, heard, or felt by man—they can excite sounds in the atmosphere of earth (Ibid.).



of the teachings of Kapila, already referred to as a philosopher who lived in India some centuries B.C. He proclaimed the existence of a universal medium pervading all space. This prophetic insight has been corroborated by the discoveries of modern science, and the medium is called "the ether of space". He also declared that the soul is accompanied by a subtle body, called the *linga sharira*, which it only abandons at its final emancipation; and he said that this subtle body enables the soul to maintain its connection with matter, even when divested of a gross body. "It is material, although imperceptible." Modern research has done something to verify Kapila's teaching concerning this also.

Since writing the above I have read an article by Mr. Hereward Carrington in the June issue of "The Occult Review", in which he discusses some experiments conducted by Drs. L. Clarac and B. Llaquet, of Bordeaux, with a Madame X. These experiments were reported in "Annales Psychiques". They show that Madame X. is able, by extending her hands over dead plants and animals, to arrest decomposition. Mr. Carrington says:

The facts they present are most startling, and the conclusions they are driven to accept remarkable. Life, they say, may be preserved in animals and plants, and they may be prevented from decomposing in the regular manner by means of the human "fluid", which is said to exist in all of us in a more or less marked degree . . . decomposition has been prevented—a fact of extreme scientific interest, if true. The doctors who issue this report are well-known and cautious observers who have only published the results of their experiments after months of patient work.

Further on Mr. Hereward Carrington asks:

Is there a vital fluid within the body, preserving it during life, as that of Madame X. seemed to preserve inanimate

objects? Is it because of this that we do not disintegrate during life? It would seem so.

The bearing of these more recent experiments on the subject of this paper will readily be appreciated. If the force radiated by Mme. X. can be concentrated so as to prevent decomposition we have here demonstrative evidence of the existence of the "vital element" clairvoyantly seen by Andrew Jackson Davis which he said hindered the decomposition of the body, and we are justified in assuming that if this force were entirely abstracted disintegration would be rapid.

The result of such abstraction might be just such a collapse of the grave clothes as we are told the disciples observed when they visited the tomb of their Master and "found not the body".

I shall be very sorry if the above suggestions seem to be merely ingenious; ingenuity is often misleading, and in connection with so sacred a subject would be most unfitting. I have made the suggestions with the hope that they may help some others, as they have helped me, to discern in the life of Christ as presented in the New Testament, the "working of immutable psychic law which stretches all through the ages", and that this discernment may support the convictions of those who believe that in the experience of Christ we have a supreme example of the power of spirit over forces physical and psychical, and at the same time of the fact that God never contradicts His own order; that He "over-rules it and diverts it from its original direction, but never breaks the proper sequence of cause and effect" (see Dr. Sanday's reply to Bishop Gore's Open Letter, p. 23).



## V

### DEATH IN THE LIGHT OF SCIENCE AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

We live in a world in which we are being trained to apprehend Reality. The process is slow; the desire to know the Truth is instinctive in all thoughtful persons, but at present we are, for the most part, subject to illusions. Illusions are not *delusions*. To be subject to delusions indicates an unsound mind; but to live in the midst of illusion is no token of insanity. It only implies that we have not yet realized that things are not what they seem to be. Mankind has had to learn through illusions; it is not desirable to be rid of all illusions until the lessons have been learned which the illusions of our present state are meant to teach; only gradually by study, reasoning and experience may we learn the Truth which liberates, and thus obtain *relative* freedom from illusions. For instance, the notion that the sun moves round the earth is an illusion, not a delusion; it was a reasonable deduction from experience, until further study proved it to be incorrect. The impression that atoms of matter are in immediate contact is another reasonable deduction from experience. Science teaches, however, that this also is an illusion, that no atom absolutely touches another. It remains true *relative to our senses* and for all

practical purpose; but mentally we know that it is an illusion.

Lord Balfour, referring to experiences through our physical senses, has said:

What are we to say about these same experiences when we discover not only that they may be wholly false, but that they are never wholly true?

Absolute freedom from illusion is impossible of attainment in this life, and it would be unreasonable to imagine that there will be no illusions in the life Beyond. Illusions are due to imperfect interpretation of experience; it is unlikely that interpretation will be perfect in the next stage to this. Sir Oliver Lodge says:

A nerve centre interprets or presents to the mind each stimulus in the specific way to which it has become accustomed. . . . So, it may be (immediately after death), we shall be unable to interpret things save in a more or less customary manner.\*

In a general way, however, it is true that the mind corrects illusions of the senses. This is a fact in this world and will no doubt be true in another world. But when we are convinced that sense impressions are misleading they still hold sway over our imagination. We must bear this in mind when we consider the event of death.

What does Science teach us about death? In the first place it teaches that death is a natural event, as natural as birth; it is part of the order of Nature. Biology teaches that death is not a *necessity* for all living beings, however. There are unicellular organisms which, if not interfered with, do not die. They

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\* "Raymond Revised", p. 191.



experience neither death nor birth, they propagate by subdivision. Why are higher organisms subject to this apparent catastrophe from which the lower are immune? For what reason was death introduced into the scheme of the Universe? We may surmise that it was introduced because mortality is serviceable to evolution, a benefit to the Universe; and had it not been introduced the various forms of higher life would have been impossible, the lower would have filled all available space. The Universe would be full of immortal amœba! In a book called "The Death in Evolution" the writer (Mr. Newman Smith) says:

"Death enters, as far as is known, in connection with alternations between two methods of reproduction . . . it occurs naturally in the course of the change from the a-sexual method of simple cell-division, to the method of fertilization." It is this latter method which gives to Nature variety, richness, and the plastic power of adaptation to different environments; with the entrance of the new method, "for the enrichment of life through sex, enters also the law of decay and death." Further he adds: "Biology furnishes thus to philosophy a suggestion of profound truth and of far-reaching significance. . . . It means that death, in the course of Nature, is not to be regarded as a disaster . . . Death . . . in the Divine economy of Nature is introduced as a means of life, of ever-increasing and happier life" (p. 32).

The fact that death is a benefit to the race does not solve the problem of its effect on the individual. Tennyson has voiced the question which has tormented many when he asks:

“Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?”

—“In Memoriam”.

Of course it is radically impossible that God and Nature can be at strife. If we believe in a Creative Spirit at all we must believe that Nature is a part of His self-manifestation. And if there is a higher manifestation than the material universe we must expect to find traces of One and the Same Mind in both, and to find that the various manifestations help us to interpret the whole. The fact that death serves a beneficent purpose in the scheme of evolution takes us a step further towards the solution of the mystery of death for the individual as well as for the race. It looks like disaster, but science emphatically negatives that conclusion as far as the race is concerned; this supplies us with grounds for hope that the same principle may apply to the individual, and that the apparently disastrous character of death may prove to be an illusion in both cases. Some instinct within us (not an unreasonable one, surely) rebels against the conclusion that the welfare of the Race as a whole is won at the cost of catastrophe for every single individual that builds up the Race. In order to ascertain whether this apparent disharmony is an illusion, and whether the impulse to reject it is justifiable, we must turn to other sources of knowledge, and include in our survey a wider range of experiences; but before we do so there is one other illusion connected with death which medical science corrects. What is called the last “agony” is obviously misnamed. There are, no doubt, painful diseases which cause suffering as long as there is consciousness, but medical men assure us that the struggle



with which life quits the body is not, under normal conditions, painful to the dying, however distressing it may be to the watcher; the dying person is usually unconscious and does not suffer. Archbishop Tait remarked when dying: "I did not know that dying was so pleasant."

What light does Psychical Research shed on this event? It is impossible in so limited a space to do more than indicate briefly what should be the answer to that question. The lines of study are many, but a general conclusion may be arrived at by careful consideration of the various aspects of the subject. The general conclusion to which they point is that the incident of death is not a terminus, but a "covered way" to further experiences, "that there is no discontinuity at death." (See "Report on the Census Proceedings S.P.R.", Vol. X, p. 401.)

A very momentous consideration is involved in the quoted words: "No discontinuity"—implies that the dying person carries into changed conditions all that has become an integral part of his individuality. His affections, his aspirations, his hopes, and, perchance, his fears (if he has them), his character, in fact, as it has been moulded on the wheel of life.

In 1894 the Society for Psychical Research published a census of cases, carefully sifted and verified, of spontaneous appearances at and after death, the percipient being in some cases unaware of the death of the person seen; since that date a vast number of corroborative instances have been published. One example drawn from this census may here be briefly summarized, although it thus necessarily loses some of its value and should be studied with full details in the volume itself, or in F. W. H. Myers's book,

"Human Personality", where it will also be found (Vol. II, p. 21). Certain points in this narrative are particularly well adapted to illustrate the deductions which may be fairly made from these kind of experiences in general.

The recorder is Mr. E. Mamtchitch, a Russian gentleman; he had befriended the sister of a friend of his, an orphan girl, called "Palladia". She was very delicate in health and, at the age of 15, she died suddenly, whilst M. Mamtchitch was reading aloud to her and her sister. About two years later he was experimenting in his own room to find out by repeating the alphabet whether he could get intelligent raps; Palladia's name was indicated. This startled and almost frightened him. He asked if she had anything to say to him. The response was, "Replace the angel, it is falling." He did not for a moment know to what this might refer. He had not seen her grave and did not know what kind of monument had been erected on it. Early the next morning he went to the cemetery and searched for her grave, which he found surmounted by an angel and a cross; the monument had slipped and was standing quite crooked. The impression this experience made on him was very great, and gave him the conviction of the reality of another life.

A year later he saw her whilst he was playing the piano in his room; a friend was working in the same apartment whom he at once informed of what he had seen and who testified to the fact, but did not himself see any figure. Three years later she again appeared to him at 9 p.m. when he was busy finishing some work. She appeared to be seated in an arm-chair in front of him, her elbow on the table



and her head resting on her hand. Although startled he soon recovered his presence of mind and, taking up his watch, steadily observed the movement of the seconds-hand; then, assured that he was in full possession of his senses, he looked up, noting that Palladia was in the same position. She returned his gaze calmly and joyously; then he resolved to speak to her. "*Que sentez-vous à présent?*" he asked. (How do you feel now?) He saw no movement of her lips, but he distinctly heard a voice reply: "*Quiétude*" (tranquillity). He replied: "I understand." "At that moment," he wrote, "I did understand all the significance which she had put into that word." Once more he looked at his watch, and noted the motion of the hands, and when he again raised his eyes the image of Palladia was fading. "If I had thought of noting immediately the significance of the word *Quiétude* I should have remembered," he said, "all the new strange meaning of it. But as soon as I had quitted the table to go upstairs and join my friend I could relate nothing further than I have now stated." Nine years later he saw her again, and heard her speak. The occasion was a memorable one. He had met, for the first time, a lady who subsequently became his wife; at that time, however, he had not any such idea in view. She was paying a visit to his parents with whom he was then residing. Shortly after her arrival, having awaked at an early hour, he saw Palladia at a distance of about five feet from his bed; she was looking at him with a happy smile, and he heard a voice say: "*J'ai été et j'ai vu.*" (I have been, and I have seen.) He did not understand what these words might mean. A setter was

in his bedroom; when Palladia appeared the dog's hair stood on end and he sprang upon his bed; the creature looked towards Palladia; he did not bark but pressed close against his master, as if for protection. Mr. Mamtchitch said nothing about the experience, but that evening the young lady visitor told him that she had had a strange experience. Having awaked early she felt as if someone was standing at the head of her bed and she distinctly heard a voice say: "Do not fear me, I am kind and loving"; turning to see the speaker, she saw no one.

Five years later his child, then two years old, was standing near his chair when Palladia again appeared. Turning to his father, he pointed at her with his little finger and said: "Auntie". This occurred eighteen years after her death.

Certain points in this narrative suggest an answer to questions often raised in connection with the subject of survival. The question is asked: If communication after death is possible why do the communicators so often speak of trifles? The fact that the monument on Palladia's grave had fallen on one side was a mere trifle. It could not be important to her, but it was very important from the point of view of convincing M. Mamtchitch that an intelligence, independent of his own mind, was in correspondence with him. Again it is asked: Do they know after death what befalls their friends on earth? The answer to that question is very explicitly conveyed in this narrative. Surprise is often expressed that they do not tell us more concerning their present condition. We note that when M. Mamtchitch passed out of the condition in which Palladia was visible and audible to him, he ceased to retain the real



significance of the word he remembered to have heard; it became more or less unintelligible; he knew that a sense had been conveyed to his *mind* which, when it was again in its normal contact with the material environment, he could no longer grasp. In this circumstance we may find the clue to the fact that we are told so little about the conditions of life in the Beyond; the ordinary use of words cannot at all adequately express those conditions; probably it is only in some transcendental mood that those still in these clay bodies can apprehend them; not by words, but by some direct action of spirit on spirit it may be possible for some, at rare moments, to apprehend partially a state of being which is super-material.

Although this narrative is unusual in the frequency of the appearances, the conclusions to which it leads are corroborated by innumerable other cases, some published and some unpublished, which very clearly indicate that the so-called Dead are very much alive in their faithful affections and interest in their friends, and that they know more about us than we know about them; that, although the conditions and environment in which they live are different from ours, they are unchanged in character, and hold those they love in constant remembrance. Fellowship which is an essential ingredient in all progressive life on earth is no less essentially a part of life Beyond.

Death has been represented as a lonely experience, and one in which separation is the main factor, separation from friends, and separation from the body; this isolation is an appalling thought, for loneliness is an abnormal condition, we were born

for fellowship. If the very numerous instances of visions of the dying and of watchers by the bed of death are rightly understood, death is robbed of this dread; the notion that it is a lonely process is an illusion; there is no break in fellowship for those who have already enjoyed fellowship.

It must not be assumed, however, that death will be an equally happy event for everyone. The communications which claim to have come from the Other Side of death show that this is not so. We are citizens of a *just* universe in which cause and effect are inevitably linked. Selfishness is an isolating process; those who have lived for self may be terribly lonely in a condition in which they may not have made friends. "Make to yourselves friends," said Jesus Christ, "that they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." (St. Luke xvi. 9.) Friends can only be made in one way, that is by *being* friendly; we create our future by what we *are* more than by what we do. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor . . . and have not love it profiteth me nothing." (I Corinth. xiii. 3.)

Those whose interests are exclusively connected with material wealth and earthly ambitions, cannot be otherwise than impoverished when they lose these mundane things. The event of dying is the entry into open conditions in which there is "nothing secret but it shall come to light". In that fact lies a veritable judgement day; only sincere souls will desire to be known as they really are, to others the fact that "there is nothing hid that shall not be known" is terrible.

But God's judgement days are meant to be salutary; the light of truth is also the light of love. There



are infinite possibilities of progress in the infinite Spirit Universe of which our present condition is a tiny fragment.

There is yet another point on which both physical science and psychical science throw some light. Death *seems* to deprive the spirit of a body; most persons shrink from the prospect of being bodiless. But is not this idea also an illusion?

There is no scientific man who has devoted more time to the study of the ether of space than Sir Oliver Lodge. In a recent work he says:

The Ether is now believed to be a very substantial substance, far more substantial\* than any form of matter. . . . Not only is there a matter body there is also an Ether body; the two are co-existent.

This he states as a scientific conclusion of which he is personally convinced, and he continues:

"We may be sure the Ether body does not wear out: that is contrary to all we know about the Ether and its properties." He adds that when life quits the material body it *may* cease to animate the ether body. "It may, we cannot assert either way; it is a question of fact, and the fact is not yet certainly known." ("The Ether of Space", pp. 155, 162.)

This cautious statement of a man of science should be carefully considered with all its implications. The assertion that there *is* an Ether body which is not liable to wear out harmonizes with the inspired utterance of St. Paul when he says: "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." (I Corinth. xv. 44.) And again, "I know that if this earthly tent of mine is taken down I get a home from God,

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\* It should be noted that the word substantial as used in science does *not* signify *material*.

made by no human hands, eternal in the heavens. It makes me sigh indeed, this yearning to be under the cover of my heavenly habitation since I am sure that once being covered I shall not be naked at the hour of death . . . not that I want to be stripped—no, but to be under the cover of the other, to have my mortal element absorbed by life. I am prepared for this change by God." (II Corinth. v. 1-5, Dr. Moffat's Translation.)

The intuitions of philosophers have apprehended the same truth. Johannes Scotus, a Celtic metaphysician of the ninth century, taught that "the form of the body, its primary spiritual constitution is . . . to remain amidst all the changes that it has undergone from its connection with matter, and from subjection to the accidents of matter. Its outward material vesture will fall off, and be mixed with the elements out of which it is formed. But the true native form, the proper body, will be preserved, and recover its relation to the soul which inhabits it." (See "Metaphysical Philosophy", by Frederick Maurice, Vol. 1, pp. 495, 496.)

This teaching is in harmony with messages which claim to come from the Departed, affirming that they are *not* bodiless. They say that they possess a more subtle organism when they quit the material body. If we believe this, and realize that death is not the entrance into a bodiless state (a condition unimaginable), but rather that it is a fresh adventure upon which we enter duly equipped with a body adapted to our new condition, and companioned by those who love us, who wait to welcome us, then death loses its horror, and we may surely "greet the Unseen with a cheer".



This was the attitude of Christ in the presence of death. His sympathy moved Him to tears for those who, subject to illusion, were blind to the Truth, but He was fully aware that so-called death is "a step onwards to the fullness of immortality". This fullness can, indeed, be only gradually attained; but on the upward way, He assured His friends, that there are many "abodes" in which they would find that their coming was prepared for and that there was no cause to let their "hearts be troubled" at the prospect, either for themselves, or for those they love.

After His own death He gave again the same assurance of "Peace" and pledged Himself to be actively sharing in their work on earth, companioning with them "all the days" until their time came to be with Him in the fuller condition of life Beyond.

## VI

### VISIONS OF DYING IN THE NINTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

It is commonly supposed that it is "orthodox" to speak of "disembodied spirits", in other words to assume that after death the soul has no body, but awaits the restoration of the embodied state at some future day. But this was not the belief of some of the great saints whose "orthodoxy" has never been questioned. In the "Life of Anskar", the great "apostle of the north", who faced hardships and perils in the fulfilment of his mission to Denmark and Sweden in the ninth century, we may read the account of a vision granted to him at the season of Pentecost. In this vision he seemed to be about to encounter sudden death, and, as his soul was in the act of leaving his body, it was "taking to itself another and very beautiful kind of body which was no longer subject to death and from which all disquiet was absent." ("Anskar", translated by Charles H. Robinson, D.D., p. 30.) The vision continues, "As his soul left his body he seemed to be surrounded by an unending light which filled the whole world." He was then gently led into purgatorial darkness, and after brief suffering—although it seemed long to him at the time—he was again led "through great and ineffable



brightness, progressing without motion and by no material path." Further we are told:

In the East, where the light rises, was a marvellous brightness, an unapproachable light of unlimited and excessive brilliance, in which was included every splendid colour and everything delightful to the eye. All the ranks of the saints who stood round rejoicing derived their happiness therefrom. The brightness was of so great extent that I could see neither beginning nor end thereof. When I was able to look round both far and near amidst the unending light, I could not see what was within, but saw only the outer edge; nevertheless I believed that He was there concerning whom St. Peter said, "on whom the angels desire to look." From Him proceeded unlimited brightness whereby the saints far and near were illuminated. He, too, was, in a sense, in all of them, and they in Him. He surrounded everything from outside. He controlled and met the needs of all; He protected them from above and sustained them from beneath. . . . There was nothing material there, nothing possessed any body, although there was an appearance as of a body which I cannot describe. The beautiful light round those who were sitting proceeded from God Himself and extended like a rainbow. . . . Although I seem to have told something of the greatest of all delights, I confess that the pen can in no way express all of which the mind is conscious. Nor is the mind conscious of what actually existed, for that was revealed to me which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man.

It is interesting to note that Anskar was fully aware that what he "saw" in this vision was symbolic, not that which "actually existed", but that nevertheless *Truth* was revealed to him, *Reality* was revealed to him thus; and it is also interesting to note his effort to convey the dual fact that no "material" body was possessed by the beings in that state, and yet that he and they truly manifested through "a very beautiful kind of body".

If we compare this vision with the vivid experience of the process of dying recorded by D. D. Home in his autobiography, we shall find some strikingly analogous points. He, also, passed through an

experience of dense darkness and fear, and (like Anskar) he realized the presence of unseen helpers, and found that "surrounding the obscurity lay an ocean of silver-toned light". Then he saw the whole of his nervous system "as it were composed of thousands of electrical scintillations," then "the finer membranes surrounding the brain became as it were glowing, and," he says, "I felt that thought and action were no longer connected with the earthly tenement, but that they were in a spirit body, in every respect similar to the body which I knew to have been mine."

The message which he heard at this point was beautiful, but it told him that his lack of faith had caused the experience of darkness. After this it seemed to him that he awoke "from a dream of darkness to a sense of light; but such a glorious light. Never did earthly sun shed such rays, strong in beauty, soft in love, warm in life-giving glow, and as my last idea of earthly light had been the reflex of my own body, so now this heavenly light came from those I saw standing about me. Yet the light was not of their creating, but was shed on them from a higher and purer source, which only seemed the more adorably beautiful in the invisibility of its holy love and mercy—thus to shower every blessing on the creatures of its creation; and now I was bathed in light, and about me were those for whom I sorrowed, for although I well knew that they existed, and loved, and cared for me, nevertheless their earthly presence was not visible."

("Incidents in My Life", by D. D. Home, pp. 45, 46.)

Anskar says at the close of his vision that a voice bade him: "Go and return to Me crowned with martyrdom," and that after hearing the Voice he "became sad" because he was "compelled to return to earth". (After this he hoped for martyrdom, but he was not actually put to death, although he endured many sufferings, and, as his friend and biographer says, "his whole life was like a martyrdom.") D. D. Home also heard a voice which bade him,



"Return to earth, love your fellow creatures, and in so doing you will serve the God of Infinite Love, who careth for and loveth all." He adds, "Nothing could ever convince me that this [vision] was an illusion or delusion, and the remembrance of those hours is as fresh in my mind now, as at the moment they took place."

For convenience I have been obliged to omit many interesting details in both visions; what has been quoted, however, shows that both these servants of God were prepared for their life's work early in their career by very similar visions. The story of Anskar's visions and life was recorded by a disciple, Rimbert by name, and was then lost for 500 years. The translation by Dr. Charles Robinson was made in 1921. It is a beautiful record. D. D. Home's autobiography is a valuable record of pioneer work of a different nature, but both have served their generation by bearing witness to the supreme value of the spirit over the flesh, and used their gifts for the benefit of mankind. They found by experience the truth of the saying of Phillips Brooks, "Happiness is a great love and much serving."

In this connection the following incidents are worth recording. Referring to the death of a cousin, a friend wrote to me as follows:

"My cousin became very ill and, being a Roman Catholic, a Priest was sent for, and he came and administered 'extreme unction' and the sacrament. She was all the time unconscious, and when she recovered consciousness asked what had been happening and was surprised to hear she had been given the Sacrament while unconscious and said it ought not to have been done. Both Doctor and Priest

considered she could not live through the night and were astonished next morning to find her alive. Her body had become quite cold and her breathing extremely feeble. But then she seemed to be having a quiet natural sleep and when she woke up seemed better. She could hardly speak but asked to be given food to make her stronger so that she could speak, as she had something she wanted very much to say. This was done and she was able to tell her sister first and then her daughter that she had been dead; she said she felt herself gradually drawing away from her body and coming out at her feet. Then she stood at the foot of the bed and looked down on her body and saw her heart inside like a tiny flickering little flame. She felt herself like a shining light, like an electric lamp. She felt strong and very happy and knew that everything was 'quite all right' and they must not cry and sob about her, for she was so glad to be released, and soon they would all be happy together again.

"One curious thing she said: that things were not measured by *time* but by *light*. She wanted to impress upon them (she said the same things over again to her daughter afterwards) that it was she—herself who was out of her body not a part of her—she repeated several times: 'It was just *me*—myself, my own character, *just me*.' She said she knew everything would be all right for her daughter who she was leaving *alone* (a parish nurse). She then said: 'Tell everybody—I want everybody to know'—and she said she would like what she had told them to be published.

"She lived for about twenty-four hours afterwards and talked about their affairs."



There are many records of visions seen by the dying, but experiences like those of Anskar and D. D. Home are rarer. There are also fewer incidents on record of the visions observed by watchers by dying beds. The following account was given to me personally by a friend who at my request wrote it down for me some years ago:

"On March 6th, 1881, my mother, who had been ill, was sitting by her bed, when she asked me and a friend to assist her into bed. We did so, when suddenly a bright light came upon her face, so intense that for a moment I had to cover my eyes. The friend said: 'Your mother is going.' We watched her a few minutes, then she repeated slowly: 'They shall hunger no more,' etc. (Rev. vii. 15-16); then large tears rolled down her cheeks and she said: 'Oh, this going back to earth again.' The light gradually faded but had not quite passed from her face until some time during the night, when, for the first time, she opened her eyes. She then told me she remembered our helping her into bed, when a form seemed to guide her up until she saw into Heaven, and upon looking at the many people she saw there she repeated the verses we had heard; she also said she saw much she could not tell me, and then she came back to earth again. I may say, she died after a week of most terrible suffering, but she never failed to realize, as she so often said, that 'underneath are the everlasting arms'."

(Signed) M. A. PETHER.

There is a beautiful account of the passing of the

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wife of William Makepeace Thackeray, written by her daughter Anne Thackeray Ritchie, and published in a volume by Hester Ritchie. She writes:

My dearest mother did not suffer; she was speaking of Billy and his school when she fainted. They carried her to her room and she rallied for a very little and then became once more unconscious. She did not know me when I got there, but I could sit by her bed and hold her hand, and feel it was her and me still.

And in the morning after that long strange night, something came into her face, something great and wise and beautiful beyond words or even remembrance. I thought the sun had broken through the clouds, but when I looked at the window it was dull twilight, and this great distinct light and beauty was in her face.

It is by comparing these spontaneous experiences of diverse but concordant nature that we may gain some glimpse of the process of death in its true spiritual aspect. Sir William Barrett's last book "Deathbed Visions" (Methuen & Co.), should be read by those who wish to study this subject further.



## VII

### SOME PROBLEMS IN PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

(SUGGESTED BY THE BOOK "RAYMOND")

It is too soon to estimate what will be the permanent effect of the publication of Sir Oliver Lodge's book "Raymond", but we may already take account of the immediate effect. It is not too much to say that no book on psychical matters has ever had such a wide influence in so short a time. It has arrested the attention of many who have hitherto passed the subject by; it has broken down doubts which yielded to no other evidence; it has comforted sorrowful hearts; it has strengthened conviction among the already convinced; it has encouraged to fresh efforts those who have been striving for years in an unpopular cause. To have accomplished this is a privilege for which, we may be sure, the author of the book willingly pays the price—a heavy one, for the first item was the sacrifice of a dearly loved son; the smaller items, doubtless, being many vexatious circumstances and petty criticisms.

There is, of course, another side to the matter. The book has caused perplexity and, perhaps, some distress. The opposition with which it has been met in some quarters is not always and wholly factious. Those who are prepared to admit the evidential

value of many incidents recorded, who would gladly welcome the conclusion to which these incidents lead, are set back by some details which, in their opinion, lower their conception of a future life. For readers who feel thus one should have much sympathy. They do not know how to estimate the relative value of the "verifiable" and "unverifiable" matter; if the former justifies the belief that Raymond Lodge was actually in communication they do not quite see why Sir Oliver Lodge should seem so uncertain about the value of the unverifiable statements. He explains his reason for so doing on p. 192, but it is probably only those who have given some study to the subject of mediumship and the difficulties of communication who will understand altogether what he means by the phrase "some statements are peculiarly liable to unintentional sophistication by the medium." Footnotes on pp. 196 and 199 show that he does not accept at their face value many things which Feda, the "control", says; and it is probably just these things which offer the greatest stumbling block to an untrained reader, who hesitates to commit himself to the conclusion to which the evidential incidents point because he thinks that to accept these may involve the acceptance of other statements which repel him and which seem to him derogatory and absurd.

To a student, of course, the matter presents itself in a different aspect. For he has learned to understand that communication through a medium is a more complex matter than the inexperienced often suppose, that it is not an easy mode of intercourse, but subject to all sorts of impediments. To begin with, the communicator is *thinking*, not talking.



One who communicated through Mrs. Piper (in trance) said: "I cannot tell just how you hear me. . . . How do you hear me speak when we speak by thought only?" Sometimes a word is exactly conveyed, but more often it is the *idea* which reaches the mind of the medium, or the "control", and there takes shape in any language which the medium finds easiest. The idea may be misunderstood, mistranslated, so to speak, and the conditions in another life being unfamiliar to the medium, these ideas may be expressed in language suited only to material things. Therefore such descriptions are very likely to be misleading and no great value can be attached to them, and any attempt to treat them as authoritative and accurate is likely, as Sir Oliver Lodge has said, "to retard the development of the subject in the minds of critical persons" (p. 192).

In a helpful book (now unfortunately out of print) "From Matter to Spirit", by Mrs. De Morgan, the following communication is quoted:

"Heaven has its couches, its rests, its coverings, its comforts; none need mourn for those of earth; but attempt to name them with the equivalent of earth the resemblance dies away . . . the words fail as well as the ideas" (p. 204).

Similarly, Mrs. Underwood, in a book called "Automatic Writing", tells us that, in answer to a question put by her husband, "What can you tell us as to the locality of your sphere?" this reply was received, "There are no words in your language which we can make useful. Verbal words of expression are inadequate to express that of which there is no equivalent on your plane." These and other communications of the same nature seem quite reasonable,

but those who have not studied other writings on this subject have no means of making comparisons which assist interpretation.

Another cause of confusion with which students of Psychical Research are familiar is that marginal thoughts are liable to intervene, that is to say, thoughts present in the mind of the medium, or fugitive thoughts in the mind of the communicating intelligence. In one of the communications received by that careful investigator, Professor Hyslop, this sentence occurs: "It is almost impossible to let nothing but the pure present expression come. Try it yourself in the ordinary conversation of life and see how the fugitive drops in and is constantly bringing misunderstanding of the idea you are trying to express."\*

It may be impossible to correct mistakes made in this way, for the communicator may not even be aware of how much of his message has reached, or in what form it was transmitted. Moreover, in many cases only fragments of the idea sent really reach; we must allow for the fact that the *untransmitted* portions might elucidate the messages. In a communication claiming to come from Frederic Myers (through Mrs. Holland, well known to Psychical Researchers) he says: "Then we feel as if only one sentence reached of twenty we try to send." (S.P.R. Pro., Part LV, p. 248.)

To these and other causes of confusion must be added the questions asked by the friend who is waiting for a message and who is perhaps eager to get a reply

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\*Some of the points here discussed will be found fully dealt with in papers by Professor James H. Hyslop in the U.S.A. Journal of Psychical Research, Jan. and Feb., 1917.



on some particular point. We have to picture to ourselves the unseen intelligence striving to concentrate thought so that it may reach the incarnate mind and be clearly received, and then we shall easily see that questions may introduce a very disturbing element. Professor Hyslop tells us that, "Every question may more or less disturb the equilibrium established by the communicator." One of these communicators expresses the difficulty thus:

"Every word from another sets a train of thought in motion." That train of thought may be started in the mind of the medium with the result that passivity is lost and the message from the unseen is not received at all, or it may start the imagination of the "control", or it may prevent concentration on the part of the communicating mind. Sometimes it may be desirable to risk all this for a purpose. Both Sir Oliver Lodge and Professor Hyslop occasionally ask questions quite deliberately; but we must reckon with the disturbance likely to ensue and discount the answers to that extent.

George Pelham, one of the clearest communicators through Mrs. Piper, evidently found interruptions very trying. He says:

"Why do you confuse me so, why don't you let me go on and tell you what she says, without interrupting me so often?"

It may be only by concentration that the one who sends the message can keep in touch, or keep "hold", on the receiving medium. Loss of contact is referred to by communicators as an explanation of confusion, thus: "Then I began to lose my grasp of the light."\*

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\*A medium is called a "light" by some of those who communicate.

"I lost my hold on the light, that is where the trouble began." When concentration flags wandering thoughts and fancies are liable to intervene; and thoughts from other minds may intrude and be received by the medium. What occurs at a telephone when bits of other conversations are intercepted may illustrate this cause of confusion in mediumistic experiences. These considerations should make it clear why anyone who has made no study of mediumship will find stumbling-blocks where, with more experience, a student can pick his way.

This does not imply that we are justified in discarding *wholesale* such descriptions as we find in "Raymond" and other books concerning conditions on the other side of death. We should be careful not to "throw away the baby with the bath-water". There must be an originating impulse, or stimulus, for the elaborate details which are given in "Raymond" and elsewhere. The stimulus may be of mundane origin. Sir Oliver Lodge intimates that he thinks so when he writes, "I confess I think that Feda may have got a great deal of this, perhaps all of it, from people who have read or written some of the books referred to in my introductory remarks" (p. 198). And again: "I have not traced the source of all this supposed information" (p. 199).

But when there are evidential tokens of contact with Raymond in the same interview we must admit that it is at least possible that the stimulus came from him, that the descriptive talk contains certain ideas which he wished to convey, although in transmission they may have become much altered and distorted.

By what method can we discriminate between the



true idea and the fictitious or misleading setting? First we should seek to discover the idea underlying the discursive descriptions and, if we think we have recognized it, then we should compare it with other statements coming through mediumistic channels, not excluding those which seem at first sight contradictory; these may perhaps supply some illuminating clue. If we find that these ideas, on the whole, corroborate one another we should further consider the matter in the light of analogies in our own experience. For the oneness of the universe is manifested most emphatically in the universality of the principles or laws which govern it. We have no reason to suppose that the event of death makes a real break in the continuity of life, so that the same fundamental principles which govern life and mind on earth no longer govern life and mind in another state of existence. To illustrate this point I will take one of the paragraphs which have proved most difficult and even repelling in "Raymond". I refer to p. 197.

Bearing in mind the considerations set forth in the preceding pages, let us examine the statements made on the subject of physical cravings felt and satisfied in the next life, and discover what are the main ideas which these statements seem intended to convey.

"Feda" (Mrs. Leonard's "control") says, "He (Raymond) says he does not want to eat now, but he sees some who do; he says they have to be given something which has all the appearance of an earth food. People here try to provide everything that is wanted. A chap came over the other day would have a cigar." After stating that all sorts of things can

be manufactured, Feda continues: "It's not the same as on the earth plane, but they were able to manufacture what looked like a cigar. . . . But when he began to smoke it, he didn't think so much of it; he had four altogether, and now he does not look at one. They don't seem to get the same satisfaction out of it, so gradually it seems to drop from them. But when they first come they do want things. . . . He wants people to realize that it's just as natural as on the earth plane."

The main idea lies in the last sentence, "No sudden Heaven or hell" waits man on the other side of death. Life seems *natural* over there, *because the same principles which govern life here prevail and control conditions there also*; this surely is implied in the fact Raymond is so anxious to impress that "it's just as natural as on the earth plane."

One of the principles which we find at work in this life is the power of habit. It is a dominating principle in all evolution; it is by habit that creatures climb or fall in the scale of being. A British Tommy shot out of his earthly body, is not instantaneously liberated from this principle. Perhaps he passed over with his pipe in his mouth, and *if he was the slave of the tobacco habit*, is it likely that he would suddenly lose all desire for "a smoke"? There is no reason to expect this miracle to happen; it is contrary to all experience. Comparison with other mediumistic statements abundantly corroborates the belief that habits formed in this life continue until the spirit learns to cast them off.

That this is true of mental habits would probably be readily admitted; the puzzle is, how can it apply after death to physical habits? This is conceivable



when we remember that science teaches us that physical sensations are really, in the last resort, *mental* experiences. It is the mind that is conscious of sensations, not the molecules of the body, not even the nerves, which are merely the channels through which vibrations are transmitted to the brain, there to produce changes which, in some inexplicable way, are interpreted by the mind, as sensations.

When we have grasped the fact that it is the mind, not the body, which experiences pleasure or pain we should find no difficulty in believing that ministering spirits *can*, if need be, produce sensations in those under their care who have passed out of the body.

George Herbert, realizing the power of thought, wrote:

There is a rare outlandish root,  
Which when I could not get, I thought it here;  
That apprehension cured so well my foot,  
That I can walk to Heaven well near.

Experience and science fully endorse the idea here expressed. But still the question remains: Why should ministering spirits pander to these earthly desires? An analogy may suggest the answer. In homes for the cure of inebriates it is, I believe, customary to provide a harmless beverage to administer when the alcohol craving comes on. After the habit has been broken off the patient may be subject to this craving from time to time, and as a help in such moments of trial the method is obviously wise. Thus patients are gradually assisted, as by a crutch, until they can dispense with the support. There must be very many who, when they enter the new life, need to be gradually weaned from the

cravings of physical sensations. Comparison with other mediumistic statements abundantly corroborates the view that those who, up to the hour of death, have identified their conscious life with the physical body and its environment, after death still feel as if they were possessed of a physical body, and their thoughts naturally turn to physical things.

An analogous experience frequently occurs when a limb has been amputated; the man who has lost his leg still feels as if he had it. A sudden shock may amputate (so to speak) the whole physical organism and yet the man may still feel as if he had it because he retains sensations which have become a mental habit. It ought to comfort us to believe that tender sympathy is at hand to supply the needs of a spirit when under such conditions, and that he is cared for not less wisely and skilfully than he would be in a convalescent home on earth, and is gradually weaned from things physical, the severance being made as easy as may be.

Feda says, "*When he began to smoke it, he did not think so much of it.*" It seems that *thought concentration* on the craving was diverted by the supply of the desired sensation. "They don't seem to get the same satisfaction out of it, so gradually it drops from them. But when they first come they do want things." The naturalness and common sense in this remark are obvious.

I do not wish to intimate that the effect is only produced by mental suggestion, the record distinctly implies that means are used which are as real and objective for those in that life as external objects are to us in this. One might say a good deal on that point, but it is sufficient for my present purpose to illustrate



the general principle of interpretation by this single instance. I cannot, however, leave this illustration without pointing out its ethical bearings. If it is true that physical habits and sensations become part of our mental make-up and have a persistence which may last after the physical body has been left for ever, how careful everyone should be to be master of all habits, to be able to break with them at will. It is a matter of practice; it is only those who have become the slave of habits in this life, and who have identified their consciousness with the body and its physical environment who will be still earth-bound in thought and sensation when the door of the next world opens to them and they are called to pass in.

The ideal condition for those who wish to claim self-possession and the freedom of spiritual beings has hardly been better expressed than by the slave-philosopher, Epictetus.

"We also are His offspring. Every one of us may call himself a son of God. Just as our bodies are linked to the material universe, subject while we live to the same forces, resolved when we die into the same elements, so by virtue of reason our souls are linked and continuous with Him, being in reality parts and offshoots of Him. . . . If we realize this kinship no mean or unworthy thought of ourselves can enter our souls. The sense of it forms a rule and standard for our lives. . . . He has given us freedom of will; there is no power in Heaven or earth that can bar our freedom. . . . We are God's athletes to whom He has given an opportunity to show of what stuff we are made."

## VIII

### THE BEARING OF SPIRITUALISM ON THE DEEPER LIFE OF HUMANITY

The purpose in the following chapter is to consider the bearings of the truths proclaimed by Spiritualists upon life.

Assuming that what they assert is true, in what way should these truths affect our aims and conduct? As the Editor of "Light" has said: "Spiritualism in its small phenomenal aspects should lead to Spiritualism in its high forms of a truly spiritual life and vision." ("Light", April 1st, 1916.)

A short time ago I heard an able speaker maintain that the *first* test to be applied to alleged facts is: Are they helpful? I do not agree that this is the *first* question to be asked. The first question, surely, is: *Is this true? Is it a fact at all?* But the second question may well be: Is it helpful? What is its relation to life? If we cannot discover its helpfulness it does not follow that it is not true, or that its helpfulness may not be discoverable. But if we can discover its helpfulness, we are better able to appreciate its importance and value. This question is undoubtedly one that ought to be put, not as a *test* of truth, but as a means of appreciating its value. Facts are dry and sterile until they are related to life and practice.



First, then, let us ask what should be the immediate bearing of the fact of survival of bodily death upon our aims and practice.

To begin with we must realize that that which survives is this "I", this "Ego". There is no escape from self, the character we are building up now is the character we shall bear when we pass out of our physical bodies. Are we contented to have this companionship? Shall we be happy in our own society?

If we are convinced that death will not miraculously change us although it may open to us fresh opportunities, it must concern us very much to know what sort of characters we are building up. Character is formed by thoughts, and habits; that which we habitually think and do is making us to become, from moment to moment, that which we *are*.

When men and women really believe this the fundamental values of life are changed. Everything that tends to enrich our characters, everything that helps to form them on lines which we wish to persist, is held to be of primary value. And those circumstances which do not have this effect are unimportant.

I said habits make character. Let us come down to details. The worrying habit, gloominess, discontent, the readiness to look on the dark side, suspicion of others, self-centredness, the tendency to make our likes and dislikes take a foremost place in our estimate of ideas, or of things, or of men—all these habits tend to ossify, i.e., they become, if indulged, a fixed part in our characters. And when we leave the body we carry these habits with us: I do not say that they may not be broken off after death; but the only way to break a habit is by effort, and the longer

the habit has been indulged the more painful and difficult is the effort.

The habit of shutting our eyes to truth in novel forms is one which may produce spiritual blindness. Swedenborg relates that in one of his visionary states he saw some people in a room in which all blinds were drawn and, asking why they lived thus in semi-darkness, they told him that the *light* blinded them so that they could not see. Which things are a parable! We may imagine that the truth itself is depriving us of vision. If the light itself is mistaken for darkness how terribly unprogressive our state will be.

If the formation of character is really of primary importance can we understand why spiritual beings are enclosed in a material environment, in flesh bodies, shut in, as it seems to us, under conditions in which difficulty encounters us continually? If Spirit is really *the* Self why are we compelled to devote our attention constantly to Matter? Most of our time is spent in providing for our material bodies, or making the material environment better fitted to supply bodily needs; even the intellectual and spiritual members of our race are compelled either to attend to these things themselves, or to hire others to do so for them. Can we apprehend why this should be?

If we grasp the truth that we are Spirits and that Spirits are related to the Eternal Spirit, that we are His offspring, then we know that we are brought forth in His image, and that we are destined to realize that image in ourselves—"we shall be like Him". He is the macrocosm, the Infinite Creator and Ruler, we are the microcosm; we, too, are



capable of creating and ruling; but this Divine capacity is latent in us, and it has to be developed.

It is for this, I think, that the Divine Wisdom has sent us forth into Matter, embodied in flesh, surrounded by difficulties, which test us at every moment. Development of latent powers is only possible by overcoming, by effort. We have to *learn* to create and to rule: we are destined for this in the future. A hint of this was given by Christ when He said to His friends: "Ye shall sit on thrones"; that was symbolic language implying dominion. But before we can create, or rule, we must learn to control, first Matter, then Thought, or perhaps I should say, matter by thought.

Frederic Myers once said that by studying the difficulty which Spirits seem to have in communicating by controlling the organisms of mediums we can understand in some degree the difficulty which we (who are Spirits) have in controlling each his own body. It is easier to control inorganic substances, such as metal, clay, etc.; it is easier, even, to bring under control mechanical forces, than to control organic matter and the forces in our own bodies, and *because* this is the most difficult experience *therefore* we Spirits have become incarnate. We are to learn in relation to our own material bodies, how to create, to re-create, to control, to subdue, to rule, and to use matter and force.

When we realize this purpose in our incarnation we shall not be daunted by difficulties, for we shall recognize that if the task were not difficult, it would fail to serve for our education. We have to *become* not only characters that can persist without shame in the Eternal Light, but masters of faculty, creative

artists, and rulers of matter, or whatever we may call the substance which will be our environment and instrument in future conditions of being.

When we look at the multitudes of mankind we see that human misery is in the main due to lack of control, primarily to lack of self-control. And we see that the lack of control is in large measure due to wrong thought, or to uncontrolled minds.

Spirits are beings endowed with capacity to direct and control thought by will power. Evil spirits are beings whose thoughts are misdirected because their wills are misdirected. And persons whose wills are weak are liable to be directed by other personalities incarnate or discarnate whose wills are stronger. Weak-willed persons are in danger whether they practise spiritualism or whether they avoid such practices, because thoughts are constantly passing between Spirits both in the flesh and discarnate, and if anyone does not cultivate will power which enables a man or woman to direct their thoughts in healthy channels, then other minds may become the directing forces, and the weak-willed person may become obsessed. A materialist who does not believe in spirit is as liable to this danger as anyone else; there are various degrees of obsession from the individual who is easily influenced to the individual who loses all self-determination.

When we realize that we are here to acquire complete self-control, we have learned a most important fact both in relation to our own lives and in relation to our social aims.

It shows us what should be the fundamental principle and aim of social legislation. It is often said that it is impossible to make persons good by



right laws; that is true, but right laws may either foster self-control in the community or the reverse. Legal enactments may make self-control easier or more difficult. Here is a test whereby we may try the efficacy of legal measures on social conditions. In applying it we must remember the object for which self-control is to be fostered, namely, to make the individual strong in character. Legal enactments may promote abstinence from crime and enforce good habits by making certain kinds of wrong-doing impossible, but this is hardly the best way to strengthen the character. Our social work even here is creative; we have to take our part in re-creating society by working to bring into force such laws as will *both* encourage the development of the best in individual characters and assist individual self-control.

The creative faculty which belongs to us as spirits has a distinct bearing on the question of disease and health. For by this faculty it is possible to re-create the tissues of the body and to control its functions. Can we form any hypothesis as to how this re-creation may be effected, as to methods?

We are told by scientific men that a jet of water moving very rapidly becomes so solid that it cannot be cut with a sword. The effect of solidity is produced by the rate of vibration. Ether in vortex motion (that is the theory) becomes what we call matter. Atoms of matter are in constant movement: the vibration and motion of the atoms in our own bodies are not under the complete control of the individual mind possessing this organism. If the control were complete there would be no disease. This is one cause of dis-ease—dis-harmony, in the body, viz., the fact that its atoms and molecules are not under

the perfect control of the mind and will. Another cause may be found in the action of other individuals, who are similarly unable to control the molecular movements in their bodies. Disturbing vibrations are often set up by other embodied personalities. For Humanity is closely bound in one, and being really a unity the various members of the Human Race necessarily feel the effects of the imperfect control of each and all. Moreover, Heredity is a fact: our bodies are largely the product of our ancestry; ancestors who, like ourselves, did not have complete control over their material organisms. We inherit, therefore, bodies which are not *altogether* our own. What then should be our aim in connection with our bodies? Everyone should strive to gain by thought, directed by will, the mastery over the body; and should realize that it is possible to alter the vibration of its molecules and so to produce a greater harmony in the body by right direction of thought. It may in some cases be very difficult; and perfect control may not be attainable in this life. I am not one who believes that it is possible for everyone to be in perfect health under present material conditions; but I believe that much may be done towards the cure of disease by this method.

I also believe that the conditions which make this conquest over matter so difficult are not unnecessary, they are a part of our education, they are the factors by which our Characters may become truly God-like: "To him that overcometh," said Christ, "will I grant to sit with Me on My throne." That implies that dominion and mastery over the lower elements in the Universe and in ourselves can only be attained by effort, by encountering obstacles and overcoming them.



By *overcoming* the ascendancy of Spirit over all phenomenal conditions becomes manifest. Our struggle here in the lower planes of the Universe is an education for Spirits of higher degrees; they watch and assist us in our warfare; they realize better than we do how much is involved for the Spiritual Universe, how its denizens may be affected by the issue of our struggle; their interest is probably intense. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was not indulging in fancy, but spoke the literal truth when he said that we are "compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses" and when he urged us therefore to run "the race set before us" stimulated by the recognized presence of the multitudes of spectators, and looking continually towards our great Forerunner whose heroism and faith should be our inspiration. "They apart from us shall not be made perfect."

Professor William James has expressed this fact in his own way. He says:

"For my part I do not know what the sweat and blood and tragedy of this life means if they mean anything short of this. If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But it feels like a real fight—as if there were something really wild in the Universe which we with all our idealities and faithfulnesses were needed to redeem, and first of all to redeem our own hearts from atheism and fears. For such a half-wild, half-saved universe our nature is adapted." —("The Will to Believe".)

And *because* our nature is adapted to this task we are set here to do it—we, Spirits, are incarnated and are born with animal instincts and inherited tendencies which impel us either to fight or to surrender, neutrality is impossible.

The communicator whose messages are recorded in "Letters from the Other Side", says:

"Human experience is a most valuable spiritual training. No one should wish to leave the school of life before due time. I see from here how sadly people undervalue this opportunity of education offered by the resistance of matter, and the strength engendered by the force necessary to overcome it."  
—(p. 1.)

Complete control of spirit over matter would mean freedom from disease and sin, for it will not be possible to gain perfect control over the physical molecules except by directing the thought and will in harmony with the *Divine Mind and Will*; to antagonize that Will involves ultimate failure. We can only work effectually in accordance with the laws of life, and that means in accordance with the Purpose of God for His offspring and the Universe. When we are thus workers together with God the Power of the Highest flows into us, and His strength is perfected in our imperfection.

Let us not be discouraged by the fear that we cannot gain *complete* control—approximate control and ever-increasing control should be our present aim; for (1) our previous wrong mental vibration may have so disturbed the relations of mind and body as to make adjustment very hard; (2) other people's vibrations may increase this difficulty; (3) and we may have inherited an organism enfeebled by the faulty thoughts and actions of ancestors. But even if entire success is out of our reach results may follow the action of our Wills in mental directions which may largely improve conditions, and it is our bounden duty to improve them both for ourselves and others. We are each centres of force and



we may radiate healthy forces or the reverse, harmony or disharmony.

If we have begun to create harmony in our own bodies we may also produce harmony in others; and this is surely the rationale of mental healing. It is mental and it is Spiritual, for Spirit acts by mind on matter.

When reading a book on the subject of the Siege of the Legations at Peking during the Boxer movement I came upon two passages which illustrate the subject we have been considering. The author of the book was chaplain to the British Legation. He speaks of the mental relief afforded by the library, accessible to the besieged who were confined in this congested area, and adds:

“No one was idle for want of something to do, or melancholy for want of something to think about. This was probably not one of the weakest of the causes which tended to preserve us from disease, a preservation so remarkable under the circumstances, that when every possible cause has been allowed full weight it can only be accounted for as the work of God’s Good Providence.”

God works through His laws: it was not less the operation of His “Good Providence”, because it is possible to attribute the freedom from disease under very unhealthy conditions to the fact that the thoughts of the besieged were directed in such a manner as conduces to health. Morbidity, sadness, anxiety, set up wrong inharmonious conditions in the physical organism, and had these conditions prevailed there would have been greater distress in that sorely tried community.

The other passage in this book which I should like to quote brings us back to the point at which we started, namely, that the training of the mind

and character here and now determines its bent when we pass out of the body.

The writer says:

“It is a most unpleasant truth, but one to which all history bears witness that imminent danger of death does not in any way lessen a man’s desire to grasp at the possessions and joys of this world, unless he has previously trained his mind to hold them lightly.”—(p. 184.)

This statement was prompted by what he observed in Peking; he noted the desire for loot was not arrested by the immediate fact that death, from the Chinese assailants, was imminent and the probability that the besieged might all be massacred, before relief could come. If the danger of death has so little effect why should we suppose that the event of death would rob a man of desires which have dominated him up to that moment? There are no short cuts to the heavenly goal. If we aspire to attain union with that Divine Beauty and Perfection whom we call God there is no other way than by self-mastery; and thoughts and aims directed and controlled by the will in accordance with the law of our being, which is the Will of God. This is the most urgent and immediate consequence of belief in the main truth for which Spiritualists stand.

Man is a Spirit, a member of a Spiritual Universe, capable of endless progress, and destined, if he follows the light vouchsafed to him, to attain to the realization of Divine capacities, as creative, directive, and ruling minister of the Eternal God, Who is both over all and in all.

This is the ideal for us to keep in view. It has been well said: “Ideals are the very soul of life. The vision of the Ideal guards monotony of work from becoming monotony of Life.” (Westcott.)



There are other aspects of Spiritualism which have important bearings on human development; let us consider some of these. The value of the material body is both lessened and enhanced by the light thus thrown on our relation to it. In so far as we recognize that it is not the Self, we set less value upon it, but its value is enhanced when we realize that it is not merely a husk, but a seed, containing within itself the potentiality of Body; that is to say, the potential embodiment of spirit in its future existence. Seeds are precious. To injure a seed may involve crippling the future manifestation of life. This is true, whether the kind of life to be manifested is plant life, or animal life, or the life of the spirit of man. The quality of the manifestation will depend on the care taken of the seed. Christ taught His disciples to honour the body as a sanctuary in which the Divine Spirit is at work, and as the seed of a more glorious Body. This has been ignored and misunderstood, but it is the teaching of the New Testament, which Spiritualistic records strongly endorse.

The recognition that the body is a seed should rob death of terror; the incident of death is the cracking of the husk to liberate the vital essence in a new and better form. Mankind in general has been too sense-bound to understand this; therefore death has been constantly represented as a penalty for sin, an awful experience, which people speak of with bated breath. This is not consistent with the belief that death has "lost its sting". St. Paul said that the body "is sown a natural body, and is raised a spiritual body." What does this imply? Surely he was not alluding to the detail of burial,

which does not always occur? No, we were sown in matter when the infant ego became incarnate. Here and now the natural body, the seed, is developing in the soil of earth substance. This seed-body grows and matures until the age of about thirty years, when it begins to decay, until, at death, the husk breaks away and is cast off, and a new body clothes the living spirit, rising at death into a different environment. "As the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day." This has been supposed to refer only to spiritual character. But why so? Man is a threefold being: spirit, the Divine essence; soul, with its manifest faculties; and body, the organ of manifestation. It is unwarrantable to assume that this tri-unity is to be broken up by the incident of death, or that spirit and soul can ever dispense with an organ for manifestation. We know Spirit here as it manifests through form. The Eternal Spirit uses the physical universe for the purpose of manifesting Divine Power and Beauty. We may use our imagination as much as we can, but we shall never succeed in realizing pure spirit, entirely unembodied and without any form or organ for manifestation. The reason for this inability is that the human mind is not constituted so as to be capable of realizing that which is not in any sense a reality or similar to reality. If unembodied spirit is non-existent it will not be possible to imagine it. The conception eludes us because there is no such existence. Even the Divine Spirit manifests through the created universe and through humanity. God, indeed, is infinite, and His manifestations are necessarily finite, but He who is above all, is also through all, and in all.



“ Know thou thyself: as thou hast learned of Me:  
I made thee three in one and one in three—  
Spirit and Mind and Form, immortal Whole,  
Divine and undivided Trinity.  
Seek not to break the triple bond assigned.  
Mind sees by Spirit: Body moves by Mind.”

Thus wrote James Rhoades.

Psychical Research and Spiritualism have changed the aspect of death for many. We no longer think of our friends as bodiless phantoms, or believe that at our own deaths we shall become formless. We believe that we shall have bodies fitted to whatever environment we may be in. St. Paul did not wish to be unclothed at death but clothed upon, and our studies lead us to the happy assurance that just as the plant form is more elaborate and beautiful than the seed, so will our new bodies excel those we at present possess. But we must bear in mind that the analogy may hold in other respects also. It may be possible to hurt or cripple the spiritual body, not by mere external damage to the husk of matter, but by wrong thinking and by any feelings that can injure the inner self.

Dr. Géley's psychic studies have led him to the conclusion that there are three factors in all living things. (1) There is matter. (2) This is moulded into shape by an invisible force which gives it coherence and persistence. (3) Over and above this psychic force there is what he calls “l'Idée directrice”. This directing idea is the most important factor of all, for it is this which guides the psychic force and co-ordinates various kinds of matter to function in accordance with the purpose to be fulfilled. It is this highest factor which, no doubt, will determine our future embodiment. Are we not right in identifying

this "Idée directrice" with the Spirit, the Spirit operative in all nature, but supremely manifest in the human conscious Self?

Our study of this subject has shown us that this Self is now making character, and that the character it is making will be carried over into the next life. The bodies which will be formed by this Self, this "Idée directrice", will inevitably express our character. We must realize now that we are making or marring our future embodiments. In this life our bodies are largely affected by character, but also they are largely not our *own*, but the product of heredity. How far heredity may affect our future bodies we cannot, of course, say with certainty; but it seems likely that we shall escape from this handicap, or advantage (as the case may be), and that we shall have reached a stage at which individual responsibility will dominate our conditions. Tennyson reminds us that now is our opportunity to gain ascendancy:

"Hold the sceptre, human soul, and rule thy province of the brute."

The extent to which we succeed will decide whether or not we shall be able to say in the future:

"I hear no yelp of the beast, and the man is quiet at last,  
As he stands on the heights of his life, with a glimpse of the heights  
that are higher."

Another important factor in preparation for the future is the fact that we are accumulating memories. One of the best attested facts in psychology is that memory is continuous. Although it may not be possible to recall at a specific moment some



particular incident that we require, everything that befalls us is really recoverable. Nothing is absolutely obliterated. In moments of crisis details of the past are sometimes recalled with astounding vividness. Our larger consciousness retains the memories of the past. What sort of memories are we storing in that great reservoir? Are they such as we wish to *live* with in a future state?

It seems probable that many cases of haunting are due to vivid memories associated with certain places. These vivid memories produce effects—auditory, tactile, or visual—on minds capable of receiving them. It is easy to see that memory may supply the just penalty for wrong-doing, and may also have a purifying effect. I do not doubt that painful or evil memories may be controlled and put away (not obliterated) by Wills which have become strong under the healing influences of ministering spirits, which have thus been brought into harmony with the Supreme Divine Will; but until this direction has been given to the will, there may be many memory pictures in the minds of discarnate spirits which they desire to rid themselves of, but cannot. It is in our power here and now to store up memories of beauty and joy, of service and sacrifice, of friendship, and love, and generous forgiveness, which will abide with us continually.

Let us examine the matter of memory more closely. Psychologists tell us that they are able to effect cures in their patients by tracking the trouble to its source, and under hypnosis, or by some other method, causing the memory to give up its secrets. When this is done the troubled mind throws off its burden, and is free. Here we have a clue to the

comfort which may be derived in certain cases from private confession and absolution. It would be a terrible nightmare, indeed, if we were compelled to believe that painful memories must for ever be present, even in the life beyond. No! Man is not intended to be for ever looking back on sins and sorrows which are past. That would be a morbid condition. Salvation means *health*, and morbidity is a form of *disease*. A man or woman may have to look back until the lesson of the past has been learned, but as soon as the will is in harmony with Right, and is loyal to Truth and Love, that is, to God, evil memories will have no further use. They will become latent; that is to say, they may still be *recoverable*, but unless there is any object in recovering them they will probably be forgotten. The healed and freed spirit will "forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to the things that are before." I want to make this very clear, because, whilst I believe that the memories which we are storing now may make for us a future environment of joy or sorrow, may be our paradise or our purgatory, I think it would be most misleading to give the impression that these memories are not, like other faculties, subject to the control of the will. In measure as our wills attain to the God-like supremacy which is our ordained destiny, that control will be complete, and sorrowful experiences will haunt us no more, or if recalled at all, will be remembered only as factors in our education. Thus sorrow will be "turned into joy".

If those who love us have carried into their present life beautiful memories of affection and work done together, of stimulating, dear companionship, it is



our part so to live that these happy memories may not be clouded for them or for us. A man once asked: "Do you think the departed may see and know our doings?" On being answered in the affirmative, he sighed, and said, "I kept straight as long as my mother lived." It is easy to understand what was in his mind. He knew that he had marred the memories which the mother he loved had carried with her into the unseen life.

Here is one of the incentives to high thinking and high living which we find in the teachings of Spiritualism. Loyalty to our friends unseen, to those who love us and are loved by us, demands of us effort and striving towards the pure, the true, and the beautiful. The loyalty of those unseen helpers and lovers towards us is immeasurable, but how poor and weak, sometimes, is our loyalty towards them! It is often nothing more than self-centred sentiment, and shows more regard for our own feelings than for their well-being. If we were to consecrate ourselves for their sakes to the highest life we can reach, resolving that neither life nor death, things present nor things to come, should cause us to swerve from our fidelity to the best memories we have shared together, our sense of fellowship with them would become increasingly real, and the benediction of their gratitude would cheer and hallow our lives.

A correspondent who, through great sorrow, has come to the realization of the livingness of those who are called "the Dead", now writes: "I am an entirely different woman. I very often lapse into petty thinking when people say unkind things, as they are apt to do; but then the knowledge that my darling knows my thoughts quickly alters my

trend of thought." Thus may we uplift our unseen friends as they may uplift us.

Much has been written concerning conditions which await us after death. Those conditions will doubtless vary enormously, and descriptions which may convey some impression of the experiences and environment of one spirit may be wholly inapplicable to another. I must confess that descriptions of the Other Side do not greatly interest me, partly for the reason just stated, and partly because I think that the inevitable necessity to translate the unknown in terms of the known militates against any clear knowledge being conveyed of the actual environment of discarnate spirits, and may lead us to form very erroneous impressions. Moreover, it seems to me that much allowance should be made for the operation of the imagination and preconceptions of the mind of the medium through whom these descriptions are given.

The following sonnet, obtained by "influenced" writing and attributed to the inspiration of F. W. H. Myers, may be fittingly quoted here:

To all who wait blindfolded by the flesh,  
Upon the stammered promise that we give,  
Tangling ourselves in the material mesh  
A moment, while we tell you that we live,  
Greeting, and reassurance; never doubt  
That the slow tidings of our joyful state,  
So hardly given, so haltingly made out,  
Are but the creaking hinges of the gate . . .  
Beyond, the garden lies; and as we turn,  
Wond'ring how much you hear, how much you guess,  
Once more the roses of glad service burn  
With hues of loving thought and thankfulness;  
Once more we move among them, strong and free,  
Marvelling yet in our felicity.

There is, however, a question of far greater



importance than that concerning environment, and that is : How can we best equip ourselves for fullness of life when we pass out of the present state? If we are equipped for a full life, we may be sure that our environment will be of a kind to enable us to make full use of our faculties. It is a recognized principle in evolution that faculty and environment correspond. We find this exemplified in the universe as we know it here and now. The developed eye finds exercise by means of the environing ether waves; the ear, by air waves, and so forth. The physical universe never fails of adjustment to the growing faculties of man; environment and faculty are correlated. The faithfulness of our Father, God, may be relied upon to supply our need far beyond our uttermost expectations.

As development of faculty and discovery of the powers of the environment are gradual here, so should we expect them to be gradual in the next stage. Those who have passed on are at a higher point on the great spiral of evolution. They are doubtless as eager to explore the universe as we are here, and it is more than likely that many of our discoveries are made in co-operation with them, and that as they receive fresh knowledge they impart it to those on earth who have the open mind and the ready will.

There is another consideration to which attention should be called. As we study the trend of evolution we cannot fail to note that it has been largely by means of social relations in *groups* that advance has been made. The lower creatures are entirely individualistic. As the higher orders appear, however, the individual becomes subordinate to the group or herd. In some cases the individual seems to be

actually merged in the swarm or group; but in the higher types we find the balance is better maintained between the individualistic and the social life.

When man appears on earth, his relation to the family or tribe is for many ages the dominant factor; but as he develops the individual gradually becomes more prominent, and the claims of the individual assert themselves more strongly. We have now reached a stage at which we recognize that if humanity is to continue to exist on this earth at all, the value of both these factors in evolution must be better appreciated, and the cultivation of a growing sense of social obligation, together with increased regard for the rights of the individual, is imperative. This ideal is prompted by common sense. It is also the ideal set forth in the New Testament. Christianity and common sense are more closely related than is ordinarily realized. When faced with the disaster of the Great War, Bernard Shaw is reported to have said: "Why not try Christianity?" Why not? Because it can only be successfully tried by men and women who are convinced that they are *spiritual beings*, related to one Divine Parent Spirit, essentially one in nature, and destined to survive bodily death. This conviction will lead to the recognition that the good of the individual is inextricably bound up with the welfare of the whole of humanity and *vice versa*.

So we come back to this: (1) Our task, if we are convinced of the fundamental truth of Spiritualism, is to establish that truth on an indisputable basis of facts. We cannot have too many really well-evidenced facts. We shall never cease to need the testimony of facts so long as there remains anyone



who rejects belief in the Spirit Universe; and (2) we must seek to prepare both ourselves and others for participation in the fuller life of the next stage by loyalty to the claims both of individuals and of society in the groups in which we now find ourselves. These groups are largely the result of circumstances. We belong to a nation, a Church, a town, or a family, without any necessary affinity. The *affinity* may exist or it may not; but the *claims* most surely exist. In measure as we respond to these claims shall we fit ourselves for the larger group to which we belong by affinity, and in which we shall find our place when we leave this earth life. As spirits we belong now to this larger group. Communications received from the Other Side constantly allude to Bands, or Groups, and indicate that everyone belongs by affinity to such a group. One of these communications says: "Bonds of sympathetic being are stronger than relationship over here. . . . True lines of being are drawn over here. Blood relations are often hurtful, but soul relations will ever assert themselves and give joy when recognized." The recipient of this message, Sara Underwood, was told that the association of spirits in groups accounts sometimes for the introduction of celebrated names into communications. This does not necessarily imply that the person named is the sender of the message, but that it comes from the group in which that person is a leading influence. The same person received another message bearing on this group idea. It was given in connection with the name of Jacob Boehme (the German mystic), a name she did not recognize, as she had never read his works. In this communication she was told that "when what mankind calls death comes . . . all

circumscribed relations to banded universalities become clear". Obscure language is characteristic of Jacob Boehme, but the term is suggestive. The word "banded" suggests a limited group, while "universality" suggests that every group exists in a larger relation with the universal whole.

When we realize that there is an orderly law by which all spirits gravitate to their own group, we have a fresh incentive to higher aspiration and effort. It rests with ourselves to determine in what group we shall find ourselves. Not arbitrary choice, but what we are, our qualities and our affinities—our characters, in fact—will determine our associations. In this sense every one of us must go to his own place, as we are told Judas Iscariot went to his place.

The working out of this law may give us joy, but it need not necessarily do so. That will depend on the group to which we gravitate. It does not follow that this association is fixed unalterably. Progress is always insisted upon as possible in the future state; and progress will bring us into higher fellowships as we become fitted for them. Sara Underwood tells us in her book that the one thing necessary to spiritual development is "ignoring the self-mind". In reply to the question whether the "beastly warring tendency" would be outgrown as the spirit advances, she was told: "Crucifixion of animal nature is the test of spiritual evolution, and growth towards the light." She then asked: "Is it not true that men may outgrow the more brute-like qualities, and yet be hard and harsh, mercenary and æsthetically selfish?" The reply was: "Surely, you do not understand what animalism means, or spirituality. To



forgo merely beastly enjoyments does not by any means show the power of spiritual progress. The innate spiritual man shown through selfish yet æsthetic tests, only panders to the animalism that is yet rampant within."\*

The communicators whose messages are recorded in this very interesting book constantly insist that "the only short cut towards the highest, is the way of Love and desire for truth." "Slay not your spiritual opportunity by carping self-conceit." "Love towards all, even the meanest of your kind, is the highest truth." These are some of their pithy remarks.

But we must not suppose that to cultivate Love is sufficient and that we may without loss neglect the cultivation of the intellectual and artistic faculties. That is not so. The realization that we are members of a group whose fellowship is in the unseen as well as in the seen world, and which is not limited by age, or condition, or time, should impel us to cultivate our powers to the utmost, so that we may contribute to the group our share of enriching knowledge and experience, just as the group contributes to the enrichment of the whole. That whole is the Eternal City, the Kingdom of God. As we believe that individuality will not be completely merged in the perfection of that Unity, so we may also believe that neither will groups be obliterated, but that the affinities which are manifested in all nature, even among the atomic elements, will still be potent factors of life, and increase the variations without which unity would become uniformity. The members of a group, we may suppose, will know each other

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\*"Automatic or Spirit Writing", by Sara Underwood, p. 161, 172.

in a more intimate degree than they will know others. "The dead shall look me through and through," wrote Tennyson in "In Memoriam". In that future state we shall know each other and be known. This thought may well prompt the prayer of Plato: "Give me beauty in my inward soul, and may the outward and the inward man be at one."



## IX

### DEMONIACAL POSSESSION

The subject of this chapter is one which presents great difficulties. There are those who hold that at the time of Christ a quite exceptional manifestation of evil powers occurred, that the "possession" referred to in the Gospels by which men became the victims of "dæmons" is unlike anything which has since been observed. This view leaves it unexplained why there should have been such an exceptional outbreak of evil at that period; we can only surmise that Christ's advent to earth may have stimulated His spiritual adversaries to greater activity.

Another opinion is that neither then nor at any other time did "dæmons" really "possess" human beings, but that Christ found the belief that they did so already prevalent, and simply adopted the language of His contemporaries when dealing with the malady, accommodating His speech to the ideas which already prevailed in the minds of the sufferers.

Although this explanation may not be quite inadmissible, it is not satisfactory, since there is certainly no hint in the Gospels that Christ did not Himself share the current belief.

A third view remains to be considered, viz., that demoniacal possession actually occurred as recorded, and that it was not a phenomenon confined wholly

to that period of history, but that both antecedently to and since that time there have been similar cases.

It would not be possible within the limits of this chapter to prove the correctness of this view. To do so exhaustively would require a separate volume and the knowledge of an expert. All that can be attempted is to show the reasonableness of this interpretation—that it harmonizes both with the Gospel records and with facts of experience.

It will be well at the outset to indicate the meaning we attach to the two terms “dæmon” and “possession”.

The word *δαίμωνιον* (dæmon) occurs frequently in the New Testament, and, as there used, almost exclusively denotes evil spirits. In Deut. xxxii. 17 the sentence occurs, “they sacrificed to dæmons, and not to God, to gods whom they knew not”; and in 1 Cor. x. 20 St. Paul brings the same charge against the Gentiles; this shows that a quasi-divine character was attributed to them in the popular belief of Jews and Gentiles, or, at least, that they were regarded as superhuman powers to be propitiated.

Hesiod uses the term *δαίμων*\* to denote the benignant souls of heroes. Plato uses it for an evil apparition, and the Greek tragedians for gloomy genii of misfortune, often attached to families and individuals. The word *δαίμωνιον*, as used by Philo, represents intermediary things between God and the world, “some blessed, and others profane, incorporeal souls, hovering in the air, which was full of them, some of them, however, descending into bodies, so becoming impure.” Josephus speaks of them as

\*The word in this form occurs once only in the New Testament, in the account of the healing of the Gerasene.



spirits of the wicked dead. Epictetus held that all things were full of gods and dæmons.\*

The great Socrates claimed that he was guided by a dæmon. Xenophon, in the "Memorabilia", says of him: "He sacrificed constantly, and obviously used the art of divination; for it was matter of notoriety that Socrates said that the Divine Providence gave him indications; and this indeed was the principal reason for accusing him of introducing new gods."

In an essay on these indications of supernormal phenomena, the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers says that "the warning voice gave proof of a sagacity at least equal to that of the waking Socrates, and decides him to action, or to abstention from action, which he professes always to have recognized as right and wise."†

It is evident, therefore, that the word "dæmon" is not used universally as an equivalent to the word "demon" in our language, but that it is used to denote discarnate spirits both of good and bad character.

Assuming, for the sake of argument, that such dæmons, or discarnate spirits, exist, whether they be men who have lived on earth and passed out of the body or intelligences who never were incarnated at all, what connection between them and men still in the flesh is implied by the term "possession"?

This term does not *necessarily* imply anything more than mental influence of a very strong kind. We have abundant opportunities in everyday life of observing the kind of possession which one mind will assume of another. We know that by suggestion

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\*See article on "Demoniacal Possession" in the "Encyclopædia Biblica", from which the above references are derived.

†See an article entitled "The Dæmon of Socrates", "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research", Part xix.

a strong personality can attain ascendancy, and even despotic control, over a weaker one. The power may be used for good or for evil, but its existence is no longer open to dispute. It is not necessary to have recourse to hypnotism in order to exercise this extraordinary power. It can be gained by mental suggestion acting from one mind to another.

Although this sort of mental influence is not to be confounded with the condition denoted by the term "possession", as if it were identical with it, yet it is by the operation of this law of mental influence that "possession" becomes possible. For if the influence of suggestion becomes irresistible, and the recipient can no longer use his own judgment upon the suggestion, but feels impelled to involuntary obedience, then the term "possession" may be fairly applied to his case. If, however, this is only a temporary state, and self-possession is speedily restored, it may be harmless, or even in certain cases beneficial.

As, for instance, when a wise physician or parent exercises this suggestive influence to remedy some unhealthy or defective condition, or in order to strengthen a weak will for right purposes. In this case the will is not overridden, but strengthened at its roots, and though the result may be an automatic obedience to suggestion, it is an obedience to which the moral assent of the will has previously been gained.\*

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\*See an interesting article, "What is Hypnotism?" by Dr. Milne Bramwell, published in the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research", Part xxxi. (20, Hanover Square, W.). Dr. Bramwell contends that hypnotic suggestion, as he uses it, does not override the will, but strengthens it. He believes, in common with other experts, that suggestions which are in direct opposition to the will of the subject do not take effect.



This power should always be used with caution, however. It can never be healthy for anyone to become permanently and habitually dependent, thus automatically, on the mental suggestions of other minds. A crutch may be a necessity at times, but it betokens disease, and should be dispensed with as soon as possible.

We are all open to suggestion, though some minds are more pervious to it than others. Socrates is an instance of a man who was psychically open to suggestion, but his obedience was voluntary. He was not dominated and possessed by the directing intelligence.

It is alleged by experts in spiritistic investigations that the higher spirits always respect the individual freedom of those they would influence. And, indeed, experience in this life teaches us to expect that they should do so. For friendship of the noblest kind precludes all domination of one mind over another; the integrity of the will and individual liberty of self-realization are matters of first importance. However superior one mind may be to another, the influence of the higher over the lower would weaken, not strengthen, would retard, not hasten, its development, if it became a domination, habitually usurping possession of the springs of will and action. We are incarnated in this strange vortex of earthly life in order that we may each develop self-conscious individuality; for this end we are placed amid circumstances often extremely difficult, and demanding the most strenuous self-control, that we may work out our own salvation,\* and experimentally

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\*"Salvation", we would remind the reader, is here used in its original sense of "wholeness".

gain a complete grip of ourselves, that we may *possess ourselves*, physically, mentally, and spiritually.\* Whilst it is a great mistake to suppose that we have already attained to this complete self-possession, it is an even more fatal mistake to imagine that it is unattainable. This is a mistake frequently made in dealing both with ourselves and others. We often allow ourselves to regard lack of self-control as a light and unavoidable offence. We do not recognize that to fail in this respect is to miss one of the main purposes for which we are sent into this life; therefore that to condone slackness in this particular is to act both foolishly and culpably.

It cannot be too often or too earnestly insisted upon that the acquirement of entire self-possession is essential to the establishment of our complete individuality. It is only possible to realize this completeness, this becoming in actual experience that which potentially and in God's idea we ARE, by repeated struggles and through many failures. These failures, either in ourselves or in others, should never surprise or discourage us, but on the other hand we should never permit ourselves to regard them as of no consequence, and as if self-command

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\*"This is an absurd position for a man, the heir of all the ages, to be in: hag-ridden by the flimsy creation of his own brain. . . . It should be as easy to expel an obnoxious thought from your mind as it is to shake a stone out of your shoe; and until a man can do that it is just nonsense to talk about his ascendancy over nature. . . . Naturally the art requires practice, . . . and it is worth practice. It may, indeed, fairly be said that life only begins when this art has been acquired. For obviously, when, instead of being ruled by individual thoughts, the whole flock of them in their immense multitude and variety and capacity is ours to direct and despatch and employ where we list, life becomes a thing so vast and grand compared with what it was before that its former condition may well appear almost antenatal" ("A Visit to a Gnāni", by Mr. Edwards).



were unattainable. This attitude towards failure in the matter of self-control tends to weaken character, and to postpone indefinitely the achievement of one of the main purposes of our earthly sojourn, namely, the gain of that entire self-possession which is essential to progress both here and hereafter.

Our theory of "possession" is this. We consider every spiritual being in the undeveloped stage of this incarnate existence as in a state which we may describe as one of unstable equilibrium. The spirit, whilst incarnate in a physical organism and associated with an animal nature, has only a tentative and precarious hold over the faculties appertaining to this lower organism and life.\* It is quite in line with the course of evolution that this should be so. The most recently evolved faculties in the race are necessarily, on that account, the least firmly established. The mental faculties are more liable to

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\* Those who care to think out these ideas under scientific terms may be interested in the following hypothesis. Sir Oliver Lodge and other scientists tell us that what we call matter is simply the all-pervading ether which has, to our senses, the attribute of solidarity because it has been impressed into vortex motion. "The modern theory of the elementary atom put forward by high authority in the scientific world as the most probable one is of a ring of impalpable ether which becomes perceptible to the senses by its motion. Some of this ether is entangled, as it were, in the atoms of matter, and is, so to speak, 'bound' up with it" ("Psychic Philosophy", by V. C. Deseris, p. 152). The ether which is thus "bound" is not perceptible by us as a solid, but its presence is attested by the fact that light can travel through solid bodies, light being a vibration in the ether. From this we may deduce the following hypothesis:—The psychic organism (called by St. Paul the "spiritual body") may be composed of this "bound ether", and if it is vibrating at a different rate from the ether, which appears to ourselves as solid by virtue of its vortex motion, we may have here a scientific explanation of the unstable equilibrium of the relation between the psyche and the physical organism, since each is vibrating at a different rate. It must not be supposed that the scientific men to whom I have referred are responsible for the suggestion I have here ventured to make.

disturbance, more sensitive to shock, than the more automatic processes, whose orderly operations have become established by long ages of prehuman evolution. This applies also to the evolution of the yet higher spiritual faculties of the Ego, and of their relation to the lower physical nature. If we believe that the manifestation of spirit faculties is the latest product of the evolutionary process, we shall expect to find that the adjustment between these and the physical nature is subtle and delicate, and liable to be easily dislocated.

Any physical derangement would tend—and, as a matter of experience, we know it does tend—to disturb this adjustment between the controlling spirit and the organism through which it expresses itself. The instrument then becomes out of tune, and the music is jarred; it becomes much more difficult for the spirit to possess and rule the physical nature. The derangement may be in the physical body, or in the psychical constitution, or in both, the result being psychical nervous disorder.

In such a condition the organism with its physical forces might be peculiarly liable to be invaded by suggestions emanating from entities other than its own spirit, and it might become impossible for the rightful owner to evict these foreign suggestions and prevent their operating; self-control would in this case pass out of the power of the Ego. No blame ought, under these circumstances, to attach to the spirit who thus becomes dissociated from the organism it should govern, except in so far as it may have been responsible for producing the diseased condition which leads to this result. In cases of delirium tremens, for instance, although in that condition



the spirit is no longer capable of self-control or responsible for what may be said or done, it may have been entirely responsible for contracting the habits which led to this condition.

The hypothesis which seems to offer the best interpretation of the facts in general, and of particular cases which otherwise are extremely perplexing, is that when through sudden shock, through physical weakness, or through lack of the habit of self-control, the spirit has become partially dissociated from the physical side of its dual nature, the brain-centres which govern the nervous system are liable to be invaded by suggestions from other spirits, with the result that things foreign to usual behaviour and to the desire of the rightful possessor are said and done through his organism. It is a common expression to say, "This person is not himself!" It is in all probability the literal truth.

The following recently-expressed opinion of a medical man who is also a student of psychic phenomena is worthy of careful consideration, because it is the result of the personal observation of one whose profession would naturally incline him to hold a more physical theory.\*

"While studying dreams and the disturbances of the diseased mind, I have often had a vivid impression that in some instances they could only be the result of evil influences working from the outside, like dæmons with diabolical scheming and provision.

"It must have struck every observer how often it appears as if a wicked spirit takes advantage of the weak and ill-balanced condition of a human mind to assail it with all sorts of dreadful, grotesque, or weird ideas or fantasies."

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\* Dr. F. van Eeden, an M.D. of Bossum, Holland, and member of the S.P.R. See "Proceedings", June, 1902, Part xlv.

Dr. Nevius, for forty years a missionary in China, in a work entitled "Demon Possession and Allied Themes", argues that Chinese demonism corresponds point to point with that described in the Bible. He differentiates demon possession from all other diseases in three particulars.

(1) The automatic presentation and consistent acting out of a new personality.

(2) The evidence afforded of knowledge and intellectual powers not possessed by the subject, the most striking being the ability to speak languages unknown to the subject in the normal state.

(3) With the change of personality there is a complete change of moral character.

It is not necessary, however, to have recourse to China to find cases which to all appearance are analogous to the demon-possession of the New Testament. Any student of psychism knows that the characteristics which Dr. Nevius associates with "possession" are by no means limited to the Chinese race.

A reviewer (Mr. Newbold), commenting on Dr. Nevius's work,\* makes the following remark:—

"It must be remembered that the infection is psychic. It is not a concrete micro-organism limited in its activity by time and space. It consists of ideas which are planted in the patient's mind or in his subconsciousness, which sooner or later, therefore, invade or supplant the upper consciousness."

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\* Mr. Newbold opposes the spiritistic theory of "possession". Nevertheless, his remarks appear to the present writer rather to support than to invalidate it. His article bears the same title as Dr. Nevius's book, and was published in the *New World*, 1897.



Mr. Newbold says that these "ideas" are not "*limited in their activity by time and space*". If they are not limited in their activity either by time or space, there is absolutely no reason why they should not emanate from the discarnate. When we are once assured that a mind can be invaded by suggestions from other minds, and are also convinced that discarnate intelligences are in close mental contact with those in the flesh, there is no logical reason for precluding discarnate minds from thus operating; and the hypothesis concerning "possession" here propounded has a reasonable claim to a fair hearing; that hypothesis is briefly: *That "possession" is the result of an usurped control over the organism (more particularly over the brain-centres) produced by mental suggestions emanating both from incarnate and discarnate beings.*

If the entity who thus governs by suggestion is foolish, he prompts to folly; if wicked, he prompts to wickedness; if neither foolish nor wicked, but simply ignorant, he may be persuaded to realize that his control is injurious, and to relinquish it. If the spirit is malicious, a stronger will alone can evict him. Christ released men from bondage to evil dæmons (or spirits) by the force of His will; and by the virtue that went out of Him He reinforced the will and the power of self-control of those He had delivered. But we observe that He did not suffer the liberated man from whom He had evicted "the legion of spirits" to cling permanently to His bodily presence. He urged him rather to stand on his own feet. He refused to usurp the function of the man's own will; it was in order to set it free and restore it to health, not to supersede it, that He exercised

His power.\* When the man begged to be allowed to be with Him, feeling doubtless as if he could not rule himself in His absence, Jesus "suffered him not".†

Who, then, may these discarnate intelligences be, who thus act upon men's minds? And what object can they have in so doing?

When we remember that at every tick of the clock some soul is passing into the discarnate state, and that a large number of these are morally, as well as mentally, very undeveloped, with characters unformed, or perverted by evil purposes, or without purpose at all, with low instincts and earthly desires, it is not difficult to surmise whence some, at least, of the suggestions may emanate which produce such unhealthy effect; neither is it hard to understand that spirits of this description may find a certain advantage of their own in exercising tyrannical control over the minds of those still embodied, and that they may gain thereby contact with the conditions they have just quitted which may afford them some satisfaction. Those who care to tyrannize in this life (and how many they are!) will not be cured of the propensity by the act of dying. The

\* In the Platonic dialogue of Theages, Aristeides thus describes the magnetic effect which the influence of Socrates had upon him when he was in his immediate physical neighbourhood. "I never learnt from you anything at all; you yourself well know this. But I always made progress when I was along with you, even if I were in the same house, but not in the same room; yet most when I got in the same room; and even in the same room I got on better if I looked at you when you were speaking than if I looked anywhere else. But I got on far the best when I was sitting near you and holding or touching you. But now," said he, "all my then character has dribbled out of me." (Quoted by Mr. F. W. H. Myers in an article on the "Dæmon of Socrates", "Proceedings of Society for Psychical Research", Part xiv.)

† St. Mark v. 19.



love of power for its own sake is a widespread ambition. Those who have entertained it are hourly passing into the unseen sphere, carrying with them the instincts and habits which they have built into their natures here. There are also many who are simply foolish and thoughtless, who do not consider the welfare of others, or the possible consequences of their actions, sufficiently to abstain from exerting the power of control which they possess. Perhaps, just as children often play the "willing-game" thoughtlessly in this life, meaning no particular harm, many thoughtless souls exert the same "willing" power in the unseen. It is also probable that in some cases the "possessing" spirit is unaware of the effect produced on the organism through his contact with the mind he controls.\*

The practical bearing of all this is obvious. If we are thus compassed about by spirits—not only of the pure and good, whose blessed influence helps and raises us, but by those less advanced in spirituality than ourselves—by the many who have passed out of the body still loving the earth, and still seeking contact with it, not for service, but for pleasure or mischief, our responsibility is profound and wide. The duty of self-control is a duty not only to ourselves and to those still in the flesh; it is a duty to those in the unseen also. By gripping ourselves, by resisting evil suggestions as they arise in the mind, we are exerting an influence which radiates to all minds in connection with us in the unseen sphere as well as in the seen. An evil suggestion repelled, a noble aspiration breathed forth, may be

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\*This statement is based upon facts known to the writer which strongly suggest that there is sometimes ignorance on the part of the unseen intelligence of the effect his suggestions produce.

the means of untold blessing to these discarnate beings. They, too, are open to suggestion; and we, here and now, are spirits capable of exercising, by suggestion, spiritual influence.

The spirit-universe is a unity vibrating with thought. Just as in the physical atmosphere each spoken word creates a sound-wave which must act and react, modifying in some incalculably minute degree the condition of the whole atmosphere; so a thought propelled into the mental atmosphere of the spirit-world cannot be lost. It impinges as a suggestion upon other minds, affecting them for good or for evil, helping or hindering their evolution, and becomes a factor (although, perhaps, a minute one) in the great cosmic struggle through which the eternal purpose of the ages is striving to realize itself. That purpose, as far as we can discern it, seems to be the evolution of spirits who shall be individually mirrors of the Divine character, who, having known good and evil, shall have learned to choose the good by voluntary preference, and to hold it in eternal and conscious self-possession.

In this struggle our thoughts are factors. "He that is not with Me," says our Lord, "is against Me. He that gathereth not with Me scattereth."

### NOTE

In the above chapter it was stated that higher spirits never seek to usurp dominion over the will and so to "possess" the organism of anyone. But there is a possible misconception of this statement which must be guarded against. There is a clear distinction between usurping control over the will and controlling the organism *with the consent* of the will. When a patient submits to medical treatment by a hypnotist, he consents to temporary control, and there is no unjust usurpation involved. His action is voluntary; he makes a sort of temporary loan of his brain centres.



Similarly, when a "sensitive" voluntarily submits to be entranced and allows other intelligences to speak and write through him, this again is not an usurpation, but a temporary loan for a purpose.

The conditions should, of course, be carefully guarded. Study, experience, watchfulness, and prayer, should accompany all such experiments. They should never be heedlessly and lightly entered upon. But the condition of trance is one which ought certainly not to be confounded with the unhealthy and mischievous over-riding of the will which is denoted by the term "possession".

Of the value of spirit-control, in the state of trance, Mr. F. W. H. Myers wrote, not long before his decease, as follows:—\*

"I claim that this substitution of personality or spirit-control, or possession, or pneumaturgy, is a normal step forward in the evolution of the race. I claim that a spirit exists in man, and that it is healthy and desirable that this spirit should be thus capable of partial or temporary dissociation from the organism;—itself then enjoying an increased freedom and vision, and also thereby allowing some departed spirit to make use of the partially vacated organism for the sake of communication with other spirits still incarnate on earth. I claim that much knowledge has already been acquired, while much more is likely to follow."

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\* See "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research", published June, 1902, vol. xvii.

## X

### CHRIST AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Professor William James, in an essay on "Human Immortality", has pointed out that one of the obstacles which hinder belief in man's immortality lies in the inability of the human mind to grasp so vast a conception.

"Having myself," (he says,) "as a recipient of modern scientific culture, gone through a subjective experience like this, I feel sure that it must have been the experience of many."

He then proceeds to expose the "tremendous fallacy" which he believes to lie at the base of the sense of difficulty.

"It is absurd to suppose, simply because our private power of sympathetic vibration with other lives gives out so soon, that in the heart of Infinite Being itself there can be such a thing as plethora, or glut, or supersaturation. . . . He (God) can never faint or grow weary as we should under the increasing supply. . . . His scale is infinite in all things. . . . The heart of Being can have no exclusions akin to those which our little hearts set up. The inner significance of other lives exceeds all our powers of sympathy and insight." \*

The same obstacle to which Professor James refers hampers the mind in more than one direction. Our consciousness of limitation makes it wellnigh impossible to conceive a state of being in which no such limitation exists. When we contemplate Nature, we

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\* "Two Essays on Human Immortality", by Professor W. James.



are overwhelmed by a sense of its profusion, and we are tempted to lose consciousness of the value of the individual in the presence of the prodigality of living energy displayed in all directions. When we appreciate most profoundly the marvellous exuberance of this living energy, then we are often saddened by feeling that individuals are as nothing, being merged and lost in the great whole. This is a subjective experience which daunts the imagination and blunts feeling. It is perceived rather than reasoned about. A state of being in which universality of operation can co-exist with purposeful consciousness of every fractional energy and every breathing individuality in this vast palpitating cosmos, is a conception which eludes our grasp. Yet we recognize with Professor James that it is folly to suppose that our capacities of apprehension set any limit to the possibilities of the Infinite Life. Indeed, our reason, when we apply it, recognizes that an "Infinite Being must fill all things, and that He *must* be conscious at every part of His Being."\*

If we turn to Nature herself for some hint which may assist our apprehension, we find that attentive

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\* The following quotation from a correspondent will be read with interest in this connection:—"If you have any difficulty in conceiving of that (i.e., the relation of an Infinite Being with every creature to which He gives being), it is because you don't make Him infinite *enough* in your conception of Him. You think He is not large enough for this enormous detail. You stagger at a thought so stupendous as infinitude. It is a staggering thought, but it is the only conceivable one! An Infinite Being must fill all things, and He must be conscious at every part of His Being. We cannot conceive of Him as being otherwise. The idea of 'blind force' is wholly inadequate to cover the ground. If anyone were to try to live on a belief in blind force, and apply it throughout a lifetime of thought to the problems of experience, he would soon find it would not cover the facts. He would have to think out for himself a Being who could be the origin of spirits, and he would see that it would have to be a spirit, and an infinite one: a force indeed,—*the* force in fact,—but anything and everything that is not blind."

observation reveals indications which confirm the conclusion to which reason would lead us. For we trace in the evolutionary process an ever-increasing care for the individual. As life evolves from lower to higher forms, it assumes more individual characters, and there is a marked tendency towards specialization and towards the development of individual preferences and affections.\*

When the process reaches the human stage, this individualizing tendency becomes more emphatically pronounced; and among human races the most progressive nations are characterized by having the largest recognition of individual rights, and affording the widest scope for the self-realization of each member of the community.† Moreover, the noblest types of men are always those in whom the personal affections and the individualizing tendencies predominate.

This intimation Nature‡ gives to the student who considers the evolutionary process as a great whole, the teleological significance of which can only be understood as interpreted by its later stages.§ Any

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\* See a little volume, "Through Nature to God", by J. Fiske, in which this point is ably worked out.

† In this connection we may contrast the estimate put upon infant life among the Greeks and Romans, and the legislation which has been carried out during the reign of Queen Victoria for the protection of the young.

‡ Including in the term "Nature", Nature's highest product, mankind.

§ "What comes first in science comes last in metaphysics. It is in the higher and subsequent that the explanation of the lower and anterior is to be sought. And instead of being simpler and more susceptible of explanation, the lower stages of the process are really the obscurer and more unintelligible, because they do not so clearly exhibit the drift of the process. Hence their explanation comes last just because in the historical process they came first. . . . The basis, in other words, for a teleological interpretation of Nature will not be found in sciences like physics and mechanics, but in sciences like sociology and ethics" ("Riddles of the Sphinx: A Study in the Philosophy of Evolution", by A. Troglodyte, pp. 205, 206).



other way of interpreting Nature is as unfair as it would be to pass judgement on the moral tendency of a literary work after mere disconnected perusal of certain chapters.

If anyone desires to gain a glimpse of the Divine purpose in the great drama of life which we call Nature, he can only hope to do so by patiently and reverently contemplating the process as a great unity and seeking to discern the ends towards which the process is moving. If we can discern this, we shall surely discover the desire and will of God Himself. And the desire and will of God must reveal His essential character.

Now, the evolutionary process culminates in the development of individuality, and in an ever-increasing consciousness of the value of the individual, and this object in which the process ultimates finds its largest expression in the personality of the noblest specimen of the race, "the Man Christ Jesus". "For how many so ever be the promises of God" (written in the evolutionary process), "in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen."

The mission of Christ introduced into the world a further revelation of the value of the individual, bringing to us a fuller manifestation of the nature and character of the Infinite Spirit. He, in whose all-embracing consciousness our personal fragmentary consciousnesses exist, would have us know our individual preciousness to the heart of Being. And since we find it hard to conceive of an Infinite Being as having individual knowledge of us and individual care for us, He limits Himself to reveal it. He incarnates Himself to reveal it, so that we may be able to say: "That which was from the beginning,

we have seen with our eyes: we beheld, and our hands have handled."

In Jesus, as the Gospels portray Him, there is no difficulty in recognizing the individualizing character which we find to be a constituent of the most highly developed natures. He knew men and women with a personal and discriminating knowledge. We never feel in His treatment of His friends that they belong to a class. They are very distinct entities; He Himself says that, He calls His own by name. "I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me, as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father."

In the revelation in Christ some, however, are conscious of being confronted by the same sort of difficulty—the difficulty, that is, of realizing how One who has passed beyond the limitations of earthly existence can yet maintain the personal relations with individual souls which He so markedly exercised whilst in the flesh, and by which He brought within our grasp the individual love of the Universal Spirit.

The difficulty may be stated in some such way as this: "Granted, that the universal operation of the Infinite Soul has come under limitations, and become manifest and conceivable in the tender human sympathies of Jesus of Nazareth, is not this advantage lost to us by Christ's Ascension? Since Jesus is now no longer under the limitations of His Incarnation, has He not passed into a condition as inconceivable in its universality as that of the Eternal Father?"

Let us consider this point. It is true that the Son of man has put off the limitations of the flesh, but we should bear in mind that He has not put off the human nature which His title, "Son of man", denotes.



He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." This being so, we may still interpret His relation with us by the principle which we have applied to the words and actions of His earthly life as recorded in the Gospels; that is to say, we may interpret it in the terms of human experience. In doing so we are conceiving of Him still *under limitations*—not the limitations of flesh, but the limitations of human nature. This we are abundantly justified in doing, for the very purpose of God in giving us this human image of Himself is that we may gain *under limitations* such a conception as is possible to us of the God who must otherwise remain inconceivable.\*

It is inconceivable that the glorification of the Son of man can be in any sense a loss to the race with which He is identified; yet it must surely be a serious loss if His Ascension should necessitate our being unable to conceive of His relations with individuals as still as definitely human and personal as they were when He walked in Galilee. Are there, then, any facts of human experience which can throw light for us on the present relation of our unseen Lord with His friends and disciples on earth? There are: all through the centuries there have not been lacking those who, like St. Paul, Ananias, St. John, and St. Stephen, have claimed to have seen or heard or felt His personal Presence.

And these manifestations seem to be closely related to certain facts which have in recent years come under scientific observation. They are not *new* facts: they have always been incidental to human history so

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\* In 1 Cor. xv. 24-28 we have a hint given that in the consummation, the reign of the Son, i.e., the revelation under limitations, will come to an end, its purpose having been accomplished.

far as it can be traced; but until lately they have not been scientifically observed and recorded. They afford us the "experience" by which we may realize how Christ, now ascended to the Right Hand of Power, communicates His thoughts and manifests His Presence to those who love Him and who are still imprisoned in the flesh.

The law which governs these facts is at present but little understood, but it is a law inherent in the human nature which He shares with us, and in its operation we may recognize, without intellectual confusion, that the exaltation of Jesus offers no obstacle to His immediate personal communication with His own, that the individuality of His intercourse with His brethren is not only unhindered, but is enlarged by the perfect development of His humanity to which He has attained.

The facts to which I refer have been grouped under the name of telepathy—a term which, although of recent introduction into our language, is already widely understood as denoting a faculty, inherent in human nature, by which thought can pass from one mind to another without the intermediary of words or any known agency. This thought-transference is a fact for which there is so much evidence that many scientific men accept it as proven, although at present they are unable to explain by what means this mental impact takes place. The facts show that persons locally apart are sometimes aware, even in detail, of events which befall each other; and that thoughts in the mind of one individual become known to another with no recognized means of transit. Thoughts, images, even words and sentences, may be thus transmitted. Sometimes these images are



so apparently solid as to be taken for physical objects; sometimes they are vivid mental impressions of a peculiarly arresting character; sometimes they are apprehended as audible words; sometimes events present to the consciousness of the agent are revealed in sleep to the recipient.

If spirits still trammelled by physical limitations can thus manifest by apparently non-physical methods—methods which seem to ignore the normal limitations of time and space—what may not the spiritual faculties effect when freed from these limitations? In a more ethereal condition, where no hindrance obstructs the psychic powers, what shall prevent the instantaneous operation of mind upon mind?

The one condition needful seems to be that two minds shall be in mental *rappport*, i.e., attuned to each other. It is quite conceivable that as our faculties expand, and points of contact with other minds multiply, everyone will become capable of exercising this telepathic power at will; that as the soul becomes more intimately united to the Source of all power, its mental and spiritual capacities will increasingly reflect the infinite Divine Nature in whose image man is made, with which human nature claims kinship; and that the emancipated soul, when able to enter into its true heritage, will have the power to flash into self-manifestation in any direction according to the promptings of a perfected will.

If so, in a spirit which is perfected, the only limit to the effectual operation of this faculty would be found in the condition of the recipient to whom the spirit's thought is directed.

For whilst the capacity to communicate telepathically may be fully developed, the communication

requires for its recognition a mind attuned to perceive it.

The Son of man, by whom all human powers are fully possessed, must be capable of this universal self-manifestation, yet He says: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man *hear* My voice and open the door, I will come in."

Our capacity to receive sets limits to His manifestation of Himself. The condition of each soul will determine the degree and character of the manifestation received. With one He may communicate by visions, as He did with St. John in Patmos, or by a voice or a sense of physical touch; with another by inward perception and guidance without phenomenal expression.

The *essential* condition seems to be that there should be the open door—that a true *rapproch* should exist between minds which are to communicate telepathically. In view of this fact, we apprehend more profoundly the significance of certain injunctions of Christ and His apostles. We remember that He said: "*If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you;*" that the one ordinance He enjoined upon His disciples was an act by which their thought should be focused upon Him: "*Do this in remembrance of Me*"; also that the apostles urged their converts to do all things "*in His Name*".

God forbid that anyone should limit the operations of the Universal Father, or deny His effectual working through all kinds of channels. He is the God of the Buddhist and the Mohammedan, of the Hindu and the Fijian. Those to whom Jesus Christ is unknown are accessible to the Spirit which filled Him without



measure—that Spirit lighteneth every man coming into the world; but in the Humanity of Jesus we are given an inestimable benefit, through which, as our spirits become attuned to His, we may enjoy access to God by a “new and living way”,\* which is opened up through our telepathic *rapproch* with the Elder Brother in whom God’s fullness dwells.

THE END

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\* Heb. x. 20; compare St. John xvii. 23.