There is no death:
there are no dead.
E. C. Randall.

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LIFE'S PROGRESSION

RESEARCH IN METAPSYCHICS

BY

EDWARD C. RANDALL

THE HENRY B. BROWN CO.
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TO THOSE SPLENDID MINDS IN THE SPHERES OF PROGRESSION, WHO, VOICE TO VOICE, HAVE TOLD ME TO WHAT LIFE LEADS, I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

"Whoever hesitates to utter that which he thinks the highest truth, lest it should be too much in advance of the time, may reassure himself by looking at his acts from an impersonal point of view. Let him duly realize the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself — that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency — is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes, and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction, leaving it to produce what effect it may."

HERBERT SPENCER.

FOREWORD

TO understand things as they are the world must have truth. While it has made gigantic strides in all the arts and sciences, hardly a step has been taken in the way that leads to a knowledge of man's ultimate end.

Belief will not change natural law; Faith will not save or condemn one; Ignorance will not excuse one; Traditions stay progression, while doubt is the dawn of reason. Why not find now, if possible, some solution of this problem and what this life leads to? Long ago I became satisfied that nothing ever dies, that those who in dissolution pass from this earth-plane still live, and that, if the conditions were made right, they could talk with us voice to voice. Now, after fifteen years' scientific research and experiment, I have made a condition so perfect that, with the aid of Mrs. Emily S. French (whose psychic powers have

been developed), I am able to carry on freely conversation with spirits out of the body.

Thousands who have passed through the change called Death, who live and labor in the world of thought around and about us, have told me something of the laws that govern all life beyond, what they find, how they live, have talked of their occupations and their progression. In this book I give instances of that which has thus been given to me, in many cases using their own words as marked in quotations. I have not given the names of the great men and women who have spoken, preferring at this time to let their teachings appeal to the reason of mankind.

I do not seek to prove that soul-life follows dissolution,—that is self-evident to all intelligent men and women,—but to give some information of the character and condition of that life among the spheres of progression. I would reach the thinkers, those who reason. Pearls of thought are for those who dive deep; in the shallows one finds only pebbles. These pages will not appeal to those who

fear damnation as the penalty of searching for truth. But there are many who, working in the fields of knowledge, will welcome a co-laborer. Such would I join, bringing with me these teachings from planes beyond.

It is time that men who know that those out of the body can and do talk to men, put away fear of the speech of people, and lend the weight of personality to this philosophy of truth. I know many who acknowledge this fact in private but who are silent in public, fearing the arrows of criticism, poison-tipped with prejudice. It takes courage to stem the tide of public opinion, but when one knows he ought to be brave enough to stand up and be counted—no one can do his duty and do less.

No one can realize more than I do how great is this task. In the beginning the way was blazed; but later I traveled along uncharted ways through a wilderness of information. It is with difficulty that I clothe the philosophy that has been given me; but I have this satisfaction, that every page has been reviewed by spirits who have given me this knowl-

edge, and that what is now given is true, —a message from the spirit to the material world.

I have no need of creeds nor use for faiths. Positive knowledge has displaced them both, and I have come to know there is no death: there are no dead. That change is one step only in life's progression, in the unceasing march of evolution, in which neither identity nor individuality is lost, and that life goes on and labor continues as the soul works toward perfection, for Progress is an absolute law that nothing can resist. I know that what to us seems space is filled with intelligent and comprehensive life, governed by laws more fixed and immutable than our own. I know that origin and destiny are no longer beyond the grasp of the human mind: that spirit which is life, when clothed with material, is visible to the physical eye; when separated, is invisible: that dissolution is not annihilation, but liberation and opportunity. I know that man has no Redeemer but himself; that God is universal good and dwells in the heart of all mankind.

Now we sail the intellectual seas, mak-

ing soundings and charts on the farther shore. We are coming to understand and master the blind forces of Nature, as we open the windows in the chamber of thought, and to comprehend the economy of natural law. The higher peaks are being climbed, and lips grow rich with words of truth.

EDWARD C. RANDALL.

August 10, 1905.

THE ANCIENT WOODS

WE speed so fast, the rush through life blows back the flame we carry. Leaving the heat and strenuous life of the city I have come far into the wilderness to a lodge in the forest, that I may get close to Nature and write of what I have learned of natural laws that control one's spirit, its journey and return.

During the summer days I leave the trail and the many waters to my guests. As they follow the shores, cross the lakes, and explore the rivers, I linger in and about the log cabin to fulfill a promise made long ago. About me on every side is the virgin forest. Mighty pines rear their heads, tall and majestic. Balsam and fir fill the air with aromatic odor. All the hills and the ridges are clothed with garments of green. The waters, nestling among the hills, know nothing of tempests and angry winds. Here

strife is unknown and all is quiet, save for the voices of the furtive folk whose domain we invade. Here, in the morning, the deer come down to drink, and at night the bull moose calls. The partridge rears her young, and, knowing no fear, flutters in the trail, protesting because her family is disturbed.

"Nature! Great, glorious Nature! "How one thrills with the keen joy of "her touch on a cool, bright morning, "after a night bath has given fresh bril- "liance to the green. The water smiles "and sparkles at my feet, and the sky "seems a deeper blue than that of yester- "day. On a still, white, radiant night, "when the moon touches everything with "a silvery glow, when the only sounds "are those of the gentle lapping of the "water and sometimes the cry of our wild "brothers in the woods, how peaceful "everything is! These are the times "when we are akin to Nature, when our "spirits are uplifted and strengthened, "and we feel the heart of the universe "beating close to us."

How magnificent are the white clouds along the border of the heavens these

summer days! Mountain peaks, blazing in the golden light, reach upwards to the concave sky, forming, rolling and blending one into another as they dissolve and pass beyond the vision. The sun rays speeding earthward woos the waters, which, responding in vapor, climb upward to form and wander in the sky, until some thirsty land shall win them back again. Nature is working to replenish, always taking from her abundance and distributing, that life may be nourished and made more perfect.

In this rude cabin in the woods one hears the voice of Nature as she speaks her various languages. There is not a cubic inch of space in all the universe that is not filled with life. All life is spirit; all spirit has soul when it has developed to the intellectual plane, that is, when it knows right from wrong. Life, then, has intelligence; all intelligence has language; all language, expression. The soughing of the wind among the branches is the language with which the trees speak. The wild flowers convey thoughts by action and by perfume. The wild creatures give alarm and tell

the approach of danger by sounds and scent.

Here, near to Nature's heart, there is much to learn. Great thoughts crowd for consideration and with them comes a desire for expression. By what law, one asks, are the stars held in place, the stars that, in this clear atmosphere, glow with such unusual splendor and seem so near? What relation are they to this Earth of ours? Have they life? Are they, too, a part of Nature, as we understand that term? What of the hills and valleys that roll away, league after league, like petrified waves on an ocean? Why do the wild ferns with their luxuriant growth fill the woods, fringe the waterways and cover the beaver meadows? Why do flowers grow in the wilderness with no hand to tend them? Why all this life, motion, and beauty far from the habitation of man? As one lives and breathes, sees and feels all this, there comes some appreciation of the immensity and grandeur of it all, and knowledge begins in wonder.

It is only in the forest primeval that one stands in awe before the problem of

his own life. Whence came this soul of ours? Where and what was it in the ages past? What is to be done with it? What was intended should be done with it? What mission have we on this earth? Was it planned by the Infinite Mind that designed all things, that man, the highest order of visible life, should spend his days making and hoarding money? Or is there something better that he has not yet found? Is this life all there is, and with the sleep we call Death is all ended? Go into the wilderness alone, amid surroundings that pulsate with energy, where Nature, in all its languages, is speaking to every sense, and consider the archaic and mediæval conceptions, the orthodox teachings of life, and try to brush away some of the relics of a dead past.

For many years I have been able to talk, and I have talked with thousands of those the world counts dead. Some of the greatest and truest men and women that have ever lived have been my teachers. I have been a student of this awakening philosophy. I have made no new discovery, but by years of earnest work I have made the conditions so harmonious

that I am told I enjoy as perfect and as complete speech with spirit as the world has ever known. No qualification follows this statement. The so-called dead still live, and live here among and about us, and if one will make the requisite conditions he can talk with those who have separated from the body just as satisfactorily as before. I know nothing of the so-called phenomena, which legerdemain and sleight-of-hand often imitate. When we appeal to reason, imitation cannot counterfeit and fraud cannot follow. Long ago I started, free from prejudice, to find the truth regarding the change called death. I heard a whisper from that land whence it is said no traveler returns, and with it a hope was born that has ever since been watered by desire and nourished with effort.

In the spheres beyond I have many friends. Some I knew before they went away, but the great majority I have come to know and love beyond this plane we call the earth. They have been co-workers, as friends and brothers, and together we have labored;—they to give and I to write the truth about the after life

that so many are searching for. They have said, "Go to your lodge in the forest, "away from the busy, crowding, hurry-"ing world. Go where Nature shows her "strength and splendor and, in the forest "fastness, write of the future life as we "have told you. We have worked hard "and waited long to give this understand-"ing to the world, and we know you will "give it as it was given you."

And now there comes appreciation of the task to crystallize this progressive philosophy. A great trust has been given me, to which I owe fidelity, and it can only be discharged by writing honestly of what I have learned of life's progression. There is only one merit I claim—it is absolutely truthful and deals with many of the elementary laws of the new science of "Metapsychics."

SPIRITUAL BONDAGE

I DO not desire to become identified with Spiritualism, Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism, Catholicism, Judaism, or any other of the many "isms" that have grown up among men. I am working among natural conditions, the same as geologists, biologists, chemists, and other scientists. They do not ally their work with denominational organizations; why should I mine, which differs only in character? Bound a philosophy with an "ism" and you limit its growth. No man preaching, teaching, or writing within proscribed limits ever does his best. The great thinkers of all times have repudiated "isms." They have worked with open eyes and clear brains, and, climbing the hills, have left all superstitions, faiths, and creeds far below.

Science has made some progress and declares: first, that there exist in nature certain unknown forces capable of acting

on matter; second, that we possess other means of mastery than those of reason or of the senses. In other words, science recognizes the existence of an invisible world wherein unknown forces act intelligently.

One fact has been fixed and immutable since the dawn of time. Mankind has always known that the span of earth life is pitifully short at the most, that to each the hour will come when he must make the change called death, that he must journey alone in the dark, shutting behind him death's mysterious door, and that he must leave the mortal form. Space cannot stay this flight, sorrow cannot delay it, and mere man cannot go one step along the way into the unknown spheres.

We know that the physical body is material, or composed of matter, and that, through dissolution, it goes back to mingle with the substances from which it was taken. We know likewise that it will be used again for other forms of animal and vegetable life. We know that the laws of dissolution have no exceptions, that the longest life is only a short jour-

ney, that the time will come when the brain will refuse its function, the mind will falter, the heart will cease to beat, and that man will leave the home built with infinite care, will leave all the gathered wealth of gold and, swifter than light, will speed beyond mortal vision. Is this oblivion? Is this the night that never finds the dawn?

Since the beginning of time, man has labored to solve the problems of the universe. He has searched the sky, named the stars and constellations, marked their course, timed their going and their coming, and even measured their distance in space. He has gone down into the earth itself and found in strata and rocks and stones, records of our planet's different evolutions. He has mastered the waves of the ocean and made the winds his servants. He has drawn from earth and air and sea and sky electric fluid to light the world and furnish motive power, to send the hitherto limited voice half across a continent, to speed messages through space at his command. With splendid courage he has tried to solve the workings of every natural law. He has faced fearlessly

every question except one,—*the problem of his own life.* When man witnesses the magnificence of nature, the birth and development of visible life, he feels a reverential awe, and in his heart there exists the hope of a consciousness beyond the grave and of eternal life. Every people on the globe has this faith and expresses it in one way or another. All men feel that back of natural law is reason, that back of effect is cause, that back of cause is good. They believe that the infinite spirit who planned all things had some object in view when he set time limit to existence in a single sphere. Few have ever tried to work out the plan; have ever tried to learn what follows dissolution. The church that assumes to guide the thought and conduct of people, and to prepare them for an unknown hereafter, has never made an effort to prove that life actually does follow dissolution; has no real conception of the condition of a spirit when out of the body, has no idea where it will go, knows nothing of the future, and sets its stamp of disapproval on anyone who tries to find out. When a man discovers a new material law the

world applauds the act; but should the same man try to prove that there is no death and that in another sphere spirit retains consciousness and individuality, and lives and labors on, what will happen? He will receive the censure of those who praised him but yesterday. The mastery and comprehension of this problem of life is less difficult than measuring the distance to the stars, the speed of light, the weight and course of the planets, the laws of gravitation, or of electric energy. Were only a fraction of the time and thought spent in modern discoveries and inventions devoted to this great problem the world would have some definite idea of the journey's end. That the great mass of people know practically nothing of this proposition is deplorable, and that they make little effort to find the truth is to many incomprehensible.

Below the heights lie the stagnant pools of ignorance and superstition. The time was when those who reasoned and had the courage of conviction were subjected to physical torture. When Copernicus demonstrated the movement of the earth and the stars according to fixed

laws, which were in violation of Biblical teaching, he was forced to live in practical isolation and exile, and Christians were forbidden to read his writings. Bruno, one of the great thinkers of his time, laid aside the frock of a Dominican monk, hoping to obtain freedom of thought and of speech. He wanted to know whether the sun revolved about the earth, as the priests taught, or the earth about the sun, as Copernicus claimed. For this research and for the expression of his opinion, he was branded as a heretic and burned alive in Rome. Cardinal Bellarmino said: "If the Copernican the-
"ory is true, it would be the absolute un-
"doing of the Bible and the destruction
"of the church. If the earth is only one
"of many planets and not the center of
"the universe, and other planets are in-
"habited, the whole plan of salvation
"fails, since the inhabitants of the other
"spheres are without the Bible and Christ
"did not die for them." Galileo discovered the isochronism of the pendulum and the hydrostatic balance, and invented the thermometer. With a telescope, or "magic tube," as it was called, he saw

Jupiter's satellites, and the moon's libation. He was charged with witchcraft and was condemned not only for daring to deny the accepted shape of the earth, but also for suggesting that the Bible did not contain the final facts of science. For these things the greatest thinker of his time was put in a dungeon by priests and kept there until, broken in spirit, he was forced to retract his statements in his own scientific discoveries.

People shudder involuntarily when they recall the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the suffering of the Huguenots, and the other wars waged in the name of religion. When men now have the courage to think for themselves and question theological teachings they remember the Inquisition, which was superior to all civil laws. They remember that its representatives, holding the power of life and death, went to all parts of the civilized world, hunting out thinkers, whom they called heretics, putting millions to torture and to death. They recall, too, that these practices were only entirely abolished seventy-one years ago,—that is, within the memory of men and women living to-day. While the loss

of temporal power was a great blow to Catholicism, the Inquisition is to this day maintained as a branch of the Papal College. It holds supervision over the spiritual life of the church, with power to censure such writings and speech as it considers dangerous. The attitude of the Catholic Church has changed since the time of Bruno, Bellarmino, and Galileo. The determination to maintain its theories, whether true or false, is yet strong, but it cannot enforce them by the rack, the thumb-screw, the dungeon, or the wheel. The orthodox world remains a mighty power. Though it has failed in its contests against science, it still fights against modern investigation of the spheres beyond. There was physical punishment in the past for liberal thought; there is social persecution in the present for those who strive to understand the problem of dissolution. In France, during the eighteenth century, it was a crime punishable by imprisonment to have in one's possession a volume of the writings of Voltaire. Thomas Paine was exiled from England for publishing the "Rights of Man," and censured by the Christian

world for writing the "Age of Reason." The churches, one and all, made common cause in fighting Robert Ingersoll, whose mission was to make men think. Unaided and alone, he waged relentless war on the whole orthodox world. His logic was unanswerable, his eloquence sublime, and he did more to free the world from spiritual bondage than any other man of modern times. He aroused the indifferent and, by his fearless example, encouraged independence. Alfred Russell Wallace, the foremost modern scientist of Europe, claims to have obtained positive evidence that life continues beyond the grave. His associates say he is fooled, cheated, duped. Sir William Crookes investigated natural conditions and found an influence which he named "Psychic force." He learned that there is an invisible world of spirit about us. His contemporaries accept his material discoveries and reject his spiritual ones. When any member of a community tries to solve a psychological question he is censured and condemned by the social world, as well as by the church; and no matter how well his propositions are demonstrated, few

publishers will print his conclusions, since the fear of censure is still strong. Only such fields of research are legitimate as do not undermine old paths, traditions, and belief. Nevertheless, man has made progress of recent years, and he is making search for evidence of life beyond. Writings on the subject are also received in a more liberal spirit than they were a few years ago. The time is near when the public will receive knowledge of this field without prejudice and will even welcome it. Because men and women have long lived in spiritual bondage, because many generations have been taught that the church was infallible and have been denied the right of private interpretation, and because the punishment for independence of thought has been so terrible, two conditions have imperceptibly been brought about: I. Indifference on the subject. II. Secret investigation. The result is that men of character and standing who have obtained evidence of the continuity of life and the conditions of life in the next sphere hesitate to speak. Many who know something of what follows so-called death are silent because

they fear the condemnation and disapproval that go close on the heels of public speech.

The church ought to welcome evidence that life, consciousness, and individuality continue after dissolution, and it would do so if the facts agreed with its teachings. It is only because the actual conditions do not harmonize with its theories that relentless persecution has for centuries followed the footsteps of individual effort. Such opposition has delayed the spiritual advance and development of many in the spheres of progression. What a mighty power for good the church might be if it would just solve the problem of death as individuals have done, if it would probe the conditions that one enters after dissolution, learn just how and where he lives, his occupation, his environment, and his evolution; trace the effect of conduct here on condition there, and then preach the simple, positive, forceful truth! Doubts, fears, dogmas, superstitions, theories, and beliefs would fade away, and truth, a new religion, would enrich the world and reach the heart of all mankind.

The dream of the Pilgrim Fathers was to build a nation free from religious persecution, yet they hunted those who had intercourse with spirits and burned them as witches. The Cambridge Synod found and spread on its early records eighty-two opinions: "Some blasphemous, others er-"roneous, and all unsafe, besides nine "unwholesome expressions, and dismissed "them to the devil in hell, from whence "they came."

The first amendment to our Constitution provided that "Congress shall make "no law respecting an establishment of "religion, or prohibit the free exercise "thereof, or abridge the freedom of "speech." The theory was that the people should have perfect freedom of thought and of speech in all religious matters, without fear or favor. The practical result of this provision, however, was to make the church supreme. It has sought ever since to maintain its autocracy, holding itself independent of the Constitution and superior to it. The United States Government, with its Constitution, with its army and navy, with its courts and officers, cannot even now

protect a citizen from religious censure when he experiments with psychic forces. For the thought of the people constitutes public opinion, one of the most potent factors in the world to-day. Officials fear it more than they do the law of the land. Governments are swept out of power by it and it holds kingdoms and monarchies in check. It is a force that one must contend with.

The churches do not want psychic investigation. They condemn all effort to understand the metapsychic laws. They fear that an understanding of natural laws will bring an explosion of many of their theories, will undermine faith, the corner stone of their structure.

Why should the priesthood and the clergy, why should the church, ridicule and condemn a man for trying to prove that there is an after-life? They themselves preach it. Why don't they join hands and say: "We will work with you. Let us "help and, if your way can be proved, "let us both serve as messengers to give "the glad tidings to the doubting world?"

The psychic sphere is still unknown, unmarked. Only the border lands have

been explored. The field is a mine of wealth, rich in material that man can gather for his uses. The unknown is greater than the known. The material forces that we knew not yesterday we utilize to-day, and so it will be with these spiritual ones. When one natural force is discovered it does not follow that there are no others. The time will never come in this life when we can say we possess all knowledge, we have discovered all forces, we know all natural law. The scientific world, to which we owe so much, has devoted its energies to matter rather than to the life that is in all matter. In seeking the material it has failed to recognize the spirit. Science, likewise, has fixed and determined the limits and boundaries of research and looks with disfavor on any forces outside of its field. To such these writings will have little evidential value.

Men, dissatisfied with the old theories of life, are studying the psychic world in secret. They are working behind closed doors with spiritual laws. The silent thought looks for evidence that the so-called dead live again, but only a few ever try to prove it. Men dread ridicule as

they do the pestilence. It is the weapon of ignorance, the whip of prejudice. Few of those who hold speech with individual spirits proclaim the fact unflinchingly. The weight of public opinion is against it. Millions of people, the bravest and best in all nations, are seeking knowledge of the after life in a practical way. With crude and undeveloped mediums they are striving to master the laws of metapsychics and to receive words and messages from those in the life beyond. All that has been accomplished, as yet, simply demonstrates the possibilities within the grasp of everyone. Men are coming more and more to form their own conclusions and to think for themselves in all matters pertaining to this philosophy. The darkness of superstition is passing, the teachings of years are failing in results. Public thought has begun to change within the last decade. The time is near when, without fear of abuse, men will openly seek knowledge of life in the world of spirit around and about us and will proclaim this Philosophy of Truth. The churches that shall teach these laws have already been built.

Happiness will then multiply, sorrow lessen, and fear find no lodgment in the human heart. The world of spirit, this so-called psychic sphere, offers to science greater opportunities for discoveries than the material world ever gave. Let this research become popular and the results will startle mankind. So great is the unconscious desire and longing for the truth that only a match is needed to start a conflagration in which the great mass of erroneous writings will burn to ashes, and out of these ashes will rise truth, the new religion, to aid mankind to an understanding of universal good.

"There are those who know that there "is truth in this philosophy and know that "it reaches where all else fails. They feel "its naturalness, its logic, its grandeur. "They have grown beyond the old teach-"ings and think about them with dissat-"isfaction and unrest. They would wel-"come the light of reason, but are afraid "of the world's judgment of bold thinkers "and pioneers. They are slaves bound "with chains of fear and of tradition. "Break the fetters, lift your faces to the "light, and with strong, willing hands,

"help to tear the bonds from other bur-
"dened souls! Men! stand forth! fear-
"less and powerful! A great, radiant
"happiness will be yours, and the censure
"of this little world will fail to sting."

SPEECH WITH SPIRITS

THUS far I have considered conditions and reasoned from material laws. Now, I want you to come with me, to draw aside the curtain, and to contemplate the spirit-world toward which we speed with unconscious steps. Let me preface this subject by saying that I am not a medium, and that I possess no greater ability than another. What I have done all can do. What has been given me, will be given all, if they seek it with honest endeavor. We get nothing in this world without effort. The fish that swim the waters must search for food, the wild animals that roam the forests must hunt or perish; man must labor. No life can exist without action. Animal life, like human life, must learn wisdom by individual effort. Happiness is the result of effort. Such is the natural law of being, and back of every natural law is reason.

For years I have traveled, following

the blazed trail—Nature's paths—in the forest of knowledge. The criticism, opposition, and ridicule that follow any pioneer may come to me. If one walks with the crowd in the broad thoroughfare he goes unnoticed, but if one leaves the throng and takes a step into the unknown, he hears the comment, the sneer, and the jeer of ignorance and prejudice. Before me have gone Flammarion, the great astronomer; Ruskin, the critic; Tolstoi, the humanitarian; Savage and Newton, great preachers, and thousands of other thinkers and brave men, bearing torches that have made the pathway light. What has come to me through spirit teaching illustrates what is within the reach of any citizen of the state, without detriment to his business or profession. The dawn of knowledge and understanding has touched the night of doubt, and mankind is coming to feel and appreciate the possibilities of spiritual advancement here on this terrestrial sphere, without waiting for the next life.

I recall the quiet village where I was born, and the procession of men and women going solemnly to the old Meth-

odist Church every Sunday. Dr. Hall, the pastor, was a grand man to look at, and each Sunday he told us what poor miserable sinners we were. "Repent, "Repent," was his cry. "Remember the "man in the horrible pit of miry clay, "who intended to acknowledge Jesus, but "didn't; remember that he went down in "the quicksand, that he went alone, with-"out hope, without God, to darkness and "despair. Confess your sins and acknowl-"edge the Saviour. Do it to-day, to-"morrow may be too late," he shrieked again and again. "Remember, the "man in the quicksand." We listened in silence, and the locusts buzzed in the trees outside. Then we went out into the sunshine again, the flowers opened to the sky, the robins, wooing and mating, sang merrily among the trees, and all the world seemed glad—all but I. I was thinking of the horrible pit of clay and going down to Hell. When I entered business and professional life, I was forced to analyze propositions, to reach conclusions from facts. I attended different churches and I heard many arguments. I read the Bible and the history of the time in which

it was written. I went among church people and found discord. I went into the wilderness and found harmony. I studied the books of many peoples and found that each had a Redeemer, that each had many "isms" and sects, that each claimed the road to Paradise ran through its creed. I was searching for truth, for an understanding of life, for the rights we possessed, for our duties to each other, and for the ultimate end. These questions troubled me. I was inclined to accept the Christian teaching, although the Vedantic philosophy appealed to me most; but both were unsatisfying. I read with satisfaction these words written by Omar Khayyam in the eleventh century:

"I sent my soul out into the infinite,
Some letter of the after life to spell,
And bye and bye my soul returned to me and answered,
I myself am heaven and hell."

My search for light was long and earnest, the pathway often lonely, dreary, and unsatisfactory. Any man, witnessing the splendor of Nature, feels a reverential awe, and the hope of after life comes into his heart,—but where the evidence, where the door into the sanctuary of truth? About the year 1890, a friend in whom I

had confidence, said to me, "Will you go "with me to-night to see Mrs. Emily "S. French? She possesses a strange "power, claims to get independent voices "and messages from the spirit world." This was an unexplored field to me. I went, and found there two others, both men of national reputation. We sat in a dark room for two hours, and heard what purported to be voices, though they were only faint whispers. We were not at all satisfied, but could not condemn, because we did not understand. We found Mrs. French far along in years, of rare refinement, a beautiful character, and, we were satisfied, a perfectly honest woman. We did not then believe that the whispers came from the great beyond, but, mystified, we determined to know what they were. To me there was a suggestion that offered great possibilities. Such was the prejudice, so unpopular the subject, and in such awe of the speech of people did I start that I conducted my investigations, night after night, and year after year, in secret and in silence. Baffled in my analysis, failing to understand or to comprehend by what law the so-called dead could

speak, my undertaking seemed at first an opportunity to demonstrate the falsity of this natural philosophy.

There is only *one* law governing *all* things spiritual and material. It is the law of Nature. I was told early in the work that there was no limit to progress if one would labor earnestly and honestly, and that it was possible, if I would aid in perfecting conditions, to get the independent metapsychic voices full and resonant; that, with such perfection, there would come teachings from the best minds that ever lived; that we could do a great work among those who, having crossed the borderland, now needed such aid as only those still in the body could give through material vibrations and conditions; that it was possible to work in harmony with natural law and with spirits who could and would labor with me, and to awake and bring to consciousness countless thousands. It was promised, too, that they would mingle mission-work with information as to the state that follows dissolution, and that they would give me knowledge of the next world as fast as I was able

to comprehend. The challenge was accepted. I promised, if convinced, satisfied and qualified, to give such spiritual enlightenment to mankind as I could.

Night after night Mrs. French and I sat and talked and listened in darkness. Why in darkness? do you ask. Because in light there is motion. In order that the spirit may talk with audible voice it must, for the moment, *be clothed with material. Motion disintegrates matter.* Everything that ever lived was born in the dark. In this condition, then, the whispers came more distinctly. Words were uttered, sentences formed, until in time, out of the darkness, in my own home, surrounded by conditions that I myself made, voices full and clear came, filling the room, reverberating through the whole house,—metapsychic voices which any could hear as well as I myself, and which many have heard. With these voices came splendid speech, great lectures, much knowledge. We were told that in space and from the beginning there have been *two elements.* One we call "spirit"; the other, "matter." Spirit lives and feels and never dies. It struggles constantly after knowledge, and uses

matter to aid its development. In our individual inception, according to natural law, an atom of life-force from the great universe, which is all life, is clothed with material, and thus becomes an individual conscious spirit, ever growing, ever changing, ever developing, according to the unwritten laws of evolution and progression. Death is but one of the natural changes in the march. It is no more radical than many others with which we are familiar, and no more to be feared. The body is but the temporary abiding place, the house of the spirit while here. Like the building of brick or wood, it wastes, decays, is repaired and renewed. When no longer fit for habitation it is abandoned.

The spirit from day to day and from year to year gathers knowledge, learns to walk and to express itself in language, grows in stature, greets the morning of manhood, knowns the noon of labor, and, growing old, as we count time, rests in the evening of life. This, I say, the "spirit" does. The body utilizes the food, which, converted into blood, courses through the arteries and veins, carrying infinitesimal particles, to replace the waste matter on

the framework of the spirit. The spirit form possesses and inhabits every material organ and limb of the so-called body, which is utilized as the outer garment. This changes constantly. The body that the spirit inhabited but a few years ago has already gone back to mingle with the elements. The important entity is the "spirit"; the secondary matter is the body; yet mankind, mistaking the relation, develops the latter at the expense of the former, forgetful that the spirit can hunger and thirst, and that it, too, must have the active mental food we call understanding.

The room in which we hold communication with the spirits was constructed as directed by our spirit band. It is consecrated to this work, and naught but harmony enters. In the day, the sun, so essential to life, floods it, and in the evening, when our labor begins, the curtains are drawn and darkness fills the room. Cloud-like substances form and change, evidence of gathering spirits. Magnetic and electric lights float and fall, but give forth no lumination. Then they greet us, and we them, with words of welcome

and fellowship, as do guests and host in any home. Usually, some one advanced in the other life is introduced, and he speaks on some special subject. In this manner, we are taught. We may ask for a lecture on any subject; and the same evening, or at a subsequent time, it will be given by a master mind. I have never heard such teachings and magnificent discourses in the material world. Our circle is known in that other life, and thousands are always waiting to come within the vibrations that have been formed. They seek to throw off the material conditions that still impede their progress. Our co-laborers bring those who are in a state of unconsciousness to awaken them beyond the grave through the material vibrations made. Hundreds in the same mental attitude are gathered at a time. One, two, or more, the best qualified, are selected, who, taking on the proper condition, talk with us and with the band working with us; while the many wait, watch, listen, and so obtain the same lesson and the same help that the spirit speaking does.

In this branch of the work, a voice

comes out of the darkness, in greeting, often bewildered. Many a spirit knows nothing of the flight of time. It grasps the thread where it was broken, and I have heard a sentence finished that was apparently started when dissolution came. The thought that was uppermost when the shadow fell is the dominating idea when the awakening comes. Then, with all gentleness and patience, we guide the thoughts to the new surroundings. The spirits tell us that death nearly always comes before they are ready. It seems that those who belong to *this class* are so material, that we who are in like condition alone can penetrate the wall of darkness that they have unknowingly built about their mentalities, and so, reach them. When this is done, and they realize what and where they are, they look about and see those long mourned. Then come the joyful greetings. Hands clasp hands, and many voices speak words of welcome and courage. I have heard a man, who, seeing the face of one whom he has wronged, cry out in agony and fear. I have heard words of happiness when a mother clasped a long-lost child;

or husband, a wife. I have heard the trembling language of old age and the prattle of little children. All that I have said is but a suggestion of what has come and is coming.

In twenty years one sees that progress has come on lightning's wings. Then we could not see through solid matter, but Radio-Active substances have changed the theory of sight and revolutionized the practice of surgery. Then the voice was limited to hailing distance; now it spans the continent. Then the utilization of electricity was in its infancy. Marconi, in violation of all acknowledged principles of science, now conveys messages without wires. The discovery of Radium has shattered the foundation on which the scientific world has worked. Were it not for prejudice and for church teaching, would you regard these facts of which I treat as any more marvelous? But for these hindrances would they not be accepted and adopted? The telephone is the medium of communication between man and man, and it is now almost necessary in business for speech. I, too, use a medium in my intercourse, but it is

human. She knows the wants and needs of those beyond; the thirst and hunger of mankind here, and gives her time and strength ungrudgingly for the elevation and the happiness of both.

THOUGHT BUILDING

IT is now conceded by all thinkers that "mind is matter," and that "thoughts are things." The questions may now properly be asked: What kind of matter makes mind? and, When do thoughts become things? Mind cannot be material, else it would be visible to the eye and tangible to the touch. As there is but one other possibility, it must be spirit-matter, like all life. Does the formation of words in the process of expressing a thought, create this matter? If so, in violation of all known law, something is made out of nothing. As this is impossible, the spirit-matter out of which thought-things are made, existed before. The mental process of thought building takes from Nature this substance, this unfashioned material—as invisible to the physical eye, as mind itself—moulds and models it into what we call thoughts, and they become ours. They

are just as much a part of us as our hands.

"These thoughts so builded, while not "necessarily expressed in words, do take "form, character, and shape. But in this "connection we distinguish moods and "feelings purely physical, and suggestions "caught and held by the brain that have "not been crystallized. It is only when "they have taken such definite form that "they become real. Until this time they "are embryonic."

When, then, we take spirit material and make of it a thought, it becomes ours, and never for a moment leaves us. The vibrations in the ethereal atmosphere set in motion at its birth are like the waves caused by a pebble thrown into the sea, they never cease. Such potential force is active for good or evil during all time. There are many planes in this life as well as in spirit-life. Some are very low in the scale of progression, but each is individual, now and always, and the character of all thought-building depends on the advance that has been made. The vicious do not have the same thoughts as the kind. The selfish do not

construct the same thoughts as the charitable. Immorality does not work along the path of virtue. So each builds according to his understanding, ambitions, and desires.

All labor hard that they may have and enjoy raiment and shelter. Every person desires to be well clothed, and spends some time in the selection and planning. Every one appreciates the comfort of a home, and works and saves that he may possess one. When the funds are accumulated, the house is designed with care, and erected to meet the taste and requirements of the owner. He wants it substantial and he wants the furnishings in keeping with the environment. It was designed and constructed in the brain first. More or less intelligent thought preceded all physical effort. This home is at best only a temporary abiding place. For this whole journey, which we call life, is at most only a day in eternity. Now, if the home on this material plane often costs such effort, and often takes the better part of a life to make comfortable and beautiful, what of the real home that we shall occupy down the ages, in the realm

of spirit? This, too, each is building of the thoughts of daily life. Will it be shapely and fair if erected without plan, without design, in ignorance, in superstition?

Spirit is thought, and thought is individual spirit. Individual spirits are not alike. Our bodies are material; the earth is material; but they differ. On this plane, we surround and clothe spirit with material matter. In the next life spirit is surrounded and clothed with spirit-matter, differing also in quality. In the change called death, this individual spirit of ours is separated from the matter which clothed it and with which it worked, and then has only to do with spirit material. When we say that mind is matter, we mean it is tangible, substantial, individual. When we say that thoughts are things, we mean that in spirit they appear and are as solids, fashioned as we have made them. In dissolution many things, broadly speaking, are reversed. What was material, or solid matter, is no longer so. Spirit can actually pass through it as easily as we apparently think through it. What with

us has no tangible solidity, becomes to spirit as material as mountains and hills are to us. This is what we mean when we say thoughts are things. As we clothe our bodies with garments each day, so we are clothing our spirit with our daily thoughts. As this is so, how important it is that thought be clean! We can cast away our clothing when soiled, but soiled thoughts cling to the spirit. Good thoughts and good acts go with the spirit and light the way. By the life he leads and the thoughts he individualizes and solidifies, each one is to-day building a condition, a home, into which he must enter in the moment of dissolution. Every thought adds to the house of the spirit, characterizing, typifying, and picturing the deed, be it good or bad. It is just the same as if each brick in a material house could give a history of the secret thought and motive of the inhabitant so all passers-by could read and understand. The spirit of man is individualized thought, surrounded and clothed by spirit-matter that he has gathered. Whether it be what he desires depends on how he has lived and the thoughts that he has

gathered and taken with him into the after life. All that came from spirit he takes. All that came from material he leaves behind. The latter includes all moneys, lands, and houses. So those the world calls rich may be poor in the life that follows and may there live in a hovel. And the poor here may find a home of beauty and splendor in the world to come. This is the only wealth we carry with us, when we are permitted to progress. This we cannot inherit. It cannot be builded for us. The character and effect of thoughts can best be shown by quoting the exact words given me by a spirit on this subject:

"Thought is a wonderful force and "even we cannot grasp its magnitude, "nor understand all its power. It is a liv-"ing, vital thing. A thought born in "your mind is for good or evil, a thing to "be reckoned with again, when it will "confront you face to face and claim you "as its author. The best thoughts are "those born of Nature in its beauty, "rather than those that have had the "touch of material hands. I would like "to say something, too, about the beauty

"of pure thought, how it returns to one
"after earth life, laden with sweetness
"and intensified tenfold. You cannot re-
"alize all each good, generous, noble
"thought will mean to you some day,
"even if it never grows into an act. Evil
"thoughts breed darkness and despair,
"cling to the soul, go with you into the
"after life, and become your close famil-
"iar friends. You are never rid of them
"a moment until you have taken them
"up one by one and lived them over
"again. The power of suffering for evil is
"increased on this side of the vale, just as
"joy is intensified beyond anything you
"can feel. Such joy you have from your
"good thoughts and deeds. A thought
"can have many branches, but the parent
"stem is planted deep in your own soul,
"and only your hand can remove it in
"the future. If it be good it will bear
"richer fruit each year. When you have
"traveled and especially enjoyed any
"scene, you have a picture of it in your
"spirit home, just as books you own are
"found on the shelves. Music will fill
"the home of the sensitive, and so on in-
"definitely. This is the home of which

"spirits speak. It practically becomes
"your house. Your thoughts do not look
"to us like anything in a material sense.
"They are felt. They create an atmos-
"phere that is like a cloud around you,
"and this condition is easily discernible
"by us and felt by sensitive spirits in the
"body. All thoughts are not necessarily
"known until the spirit himself is con-
"fronted by them. Then they stand out
"prominently to him. But even then
"others may be only conscious of his
"character by the conditions he is forced
"to undergo before he can overcome the
"evil ones. We may know the thought
"when it is formed, and then, again, we
"may know it by the conditions made in
"spirit-life. Thoughts are around the
"persons who create them, but they are
"not confined there, for they go as well
"to build the home in the spirit-world.
"While it is true that they are stored in
"millions of brain cells, they are also all
"about one, forming an aura. This is
"the influence one feels when he comes
"into the near presence of strong mental-
"ities. Sometimes it is pleasant, often,
"not. This is the spiritual part of the

"thought. What is in the brain is more
"material,—of a consistency that is easier
"for man to use, if he desires to retain
"knowledge of any kind. These ideas
"are hard to put into words. They are
"subtle. There is a color, a note of
"music, a perfume, a spirit all in each
"close harmonious thought. A chord of
"music will cause the color vibration that
"belongs to it; the perfume that belongs
"to that same vibration can cause the
"same color, and the perfume can cause
"the harmonious thought. You can
"truthfully say that thoughts are dif-
"ferent notes of sound."

LIFE DOES NOT END

MY instruction has been splendid. Among the teachers have been such spirits as Channing, Beecher, Talmage, Ingersoll, Hough, Dr. Hossack, Segoyewatha, and hundreds of others. Lectures from such men, speaking in their own independent voices, materialized for the time, leaves no doubt as to what follows death. I have never heard such matchless oratory, such sermons, such thought expressed by the living as I have from the so-called dead. They tell me that we are as much spirit to-day as we ever will be. We are not all that we can become; but there will be no sudden acquisition. Death itself will add little to present knowledge; nor will it enlarge our opportunities to any marked degree. Opportunities are just as great with us here as they ever will be. Here and there all depends upon individual effort. Labor is endless. The goal

recedes as we approach. There was no beginning, there is no end, and on through eternity there will be something for us to do. There will be greater heights to climb, greater knowledge to acquire, greater charity, greater love, greater perfection. If there is a point at which there is no knowledge to acquire, or work to do, we might then, in the interpretation of the Church, become gods.

According to my instruction, death is a moving out, a vacating of the earthly habitation, a separation of the spirit from the body. As it is, then, a natural incident, it is painless, sometimes conscious; but more often unconscious, and the awakening is like the coming from bewildered sleep. We were the same last night before sleep as we are this morning, and we have the same surroundings. We shall be the same after dissolution as before, and probably we shall be in the same place. Where would you go, except to the home you have made, except to those you love, to those who, because they are ignorant of your presence, mourn your absence?

Death is like birth, with this exception: In death one takes with him the knowledge

and development acquired in this *material existence*, which we are told is a period of preparation for eternity, as we call it, the preface to the book of life. There is no break. There is only progression to greater possibilities. If, then, this stage was intended for preparation and development, what effort has been made to understand the laws of life? What spiritual understanding has come? One has labored here for the accumulation of money for old age, but what wealth has he accumulated for his support and maintenance down the pathway of eternity? How is he prepared to journey into the unknown? I blame the Church for the ignorance of the world, and I pity those who accept its teachings without question.

Reasoning from material laws, it is hard to comprehend what spirit is. I am taught that it is conscious, visible thought—soul-life, freed from the confines of the body—that spirit appears to spirit as material as does man to man. Assuming that he passes consciously, he may stand beside his body in the same room, see and feel himself as in life, move his arms, walk, think, and act, just

as before. His old body is before him. He may see the falling tears of the loved ones, hear their cries, and feel the anguish that fills their hearts. He speaks, they do not hear. He cries aloud that he is not dead. His arms are about them; but they cannot feel. Then a great fear falls upon him. Why don't they hear? Why don't they answer? What has happened? This cannot be death. There is no Saviour here, no God. He is still at home, though his body lies in its winding-sheet, calm and still. Monstrous is the institution that assumes to prepare man for this change without any conception of what it really is! Terrible that men with splendid mentalities let the Church think, act, and guide in a matter so important! Would you take a day's journey without preparation and thought of your needs and requirements? What, then, of this journey, into the dark beyond? Would you accept the statements or opinions of the Church if a dollar was involved? Yet, viewed broadly, how insignificant is all the wealth of the world compared with the preparation for this time!

If this life has been lived in harmony with natural law, if one has done right, and, hearing the voice, followed the dictates of conscience (which is the spirit of God), if he has been just and considerate among men, and has done the best according to his understanding, then those who have gone before are able to reach and greet him with words of comfort and consolation. He sees and recognizes old friends, and they explain to him the laws and conditions that henceforth must govern him, under which he must live and work. They become his teachers. He comes to himself. He appreciates and sees that all solids here possess life and conscious individuality. He learns that all life, like man, has language, or means of communication. He learns that the rocks, the trees, the flowers and growing grain, all animal and vegetable matter, continue to live, and in the spirit-world there is the conscious spirit of everything that we have and much that we know not of, that dissolution is not the end. The spirit freed from material can climb the heights, like our thoughts, can speed over mountains of ice and snow, through the valleys, over

oceans, through foreign lands, can circle the globe, and in time, in ethereal regions, go to the other planets, can soar through unfathomable heights to the stars; for in spirit, as in thought, there is no space or time. No limit can be placed on what is accomplished there. Here the spirit is confined to the body and, until such time as it is separated, it is limited in movement. The body forms the swaddling clothes of the soul, to be worn until it *can* live independent of material.

So, then, all is well with one who has lived in harmony and gone from among us rich in good deeds. Over the border, there is great rejoicing. With the spirit the day of dissolution, like our day of birth, is one of gladness; for it means advancement, progress, greater advantages, greater development, and the love and companionship of friends. That is what all the world is seeking. This is Heaven, as I understand it,—a condition not a place; a state of being, not a locality.

FEAR OF DISSOLUTION

THE outer covering or visible body must decay, in order that the inner, or life-principle, may develop and germinate new power; man's physical body must pass away before his soul can mount toward its perfections; the acorn must fall to the ground, in order that the germ within may spring up into the oak, since within the acorn is the possibility of the perfect tree,—every limb, branch, twig, and leaf,—yet with the most perfect microscope one can no more find that germ of life than he can discern with it the spirit of man, because we see only the outward expression of the inward light; these are accepted statements.

However, the spirit, or life-germ, is the God-principle in every living thing. Often in misshapen bodies we find the noblest souls. The weak body gives the spirit greater opportunity for expansion. In

losing the use of one faculty, the power of another is increased. Nature is wise in her provisions. For every seeming injustice there is an adequate compensation. All spirits were once mortal men and women who lived in corporal organisms, walked this planet or some other one, and experienced the joys and sorrows of incipient existence. When we are far enough advanced, these rules will become as simple as the laws of gravitation.

I can conceive of nothing more horrible than to be compelled to live on this plane always, to be denied advancement to another sphere. We can see in many ways the misfortune of early dissolution; when eager wind fills all the sails; when one is making and enjoying friends; when ambition fills every heart; when the mentality is broadening and we know the joys of success. Death at such a time is filled with sadness. Our work is not done. Many may need our protection. But as the years pass, ambition is satisfied or physical energy is exhausted. Mentality reaches the limit of expansion on this plane and fails in expression. One by one the friends have grown weary and

fallen by the way. Children have grown to man and womanhood, married and taken separate homes. The old body grows feeble, loses its suppleness, and fails to respond to the will. The shadows lengthen as the days grow long, and one grows lonely. Strange fancies, dark forebodings and false teachings have made mankind tremble at the approach of death. In some households the word is never mentioned. Death has been pictured and described with every detail of horror. It is headless and shapeless; it stands grinning beside the bed of pain; it is crowned with skull and crossbones, or speeds through the air carrying a scythe or great spear ready to strike its possible victims. As generally understood, it means pain, separation, darkness, and decay, and from these ideas men and women shrink.

Why do so many dread death, as it is called? Why does old age pray to live a little longer? Because of such teaching and because people have not confidence in the orthodox hereafter; because they do not know what follows this life. If Nature so permitted, would perpetual

existence here bring happiness? Has not Nature planned all things well and set a limit of time, and decreed what may be accomplished in that time? The saddest spectacle one can see is a very old person, helpless, dependent, and alone, supported ofttimes in public institutions, still praying for life. The master intelligence has provided what was best, and the genius of man has failed to improve upon it. Then, would it not be good to pass into greater possibilities with a knowledge of what awaits in the beyond? Should not dissolution be welcome, and, in the evening of life, sought after? Should not the desire come to be freed from the old body that impedes progress? Should not ambition long to leave old conditions, and take up anew, in the fields of eternal life, the work it is no longer able to do here?

Because of orthodox teaching the world awaits this progression with abject terror. Does not the Bible, on which so many rely, say that the Saviour on the Cross, when nearing dissolution, cried out, "My "God, my God, why hast thou forsaken "me?" If God would so forsake His own Son, what can the average Christian

expect? How much better it would be if all knew the law and appreciated that the life we now lead merely prefaced that to come, and that no God of vengeance waited to get even. One cannot blame the Christians because they so fear the God they worship. Why should they not? The Bible says that He is a God of vengeance, that there is no escape from the wrath to come. Such doctrines and such teachings have filled the world with doubts and fears. Has Nature blundered in this second birth? Has it made a mistake? If death is a misfortune and to be feared, the Infinite Mind that planned it did not know what was best for the children of earth. If death, as it is called, is good, is natural, then why should any fear its approach? Do you not think that the great spirit that planned millions of worlds and made them move with perfect harmony and precision, that peopled them, that fixed and marked each course, and lighted its pathway in infinite space, knows what is best? Some of us know that these natural changes are good, and, in spite of theologians, we await their coming with tranquillity.

OUR ABANDONED DEAD

HOW the so-called dead are abandoned when they leave this plane! Who inquires of their journey, or their needs when they have reached the next condition? All people hope, and nearly all believe, that in some place or plane they still live. A few know they do, but the great majority make no effort to find out, send no message and receive no word, and let the dead care for the dead. If they still live they are left to meet the new conditions without the aid, counsel, or assistance of all those they have loved and looked to, whether they passed out in infancy or old age.

If what the spirits tell us is true, if death is just a moment of unconscious change, if the last world-thought is the first spirit-thought, if identity is the same, and if one may be in the same place and usually is when the awakening

comes, and if the new place is just the old place with changed conditions, how bewildered the new-born spirit must be! So real are they, and so familiar are the surroundings ofttimes, that while the new-born spirit knows conditions are different, it seldom realizes at once what the difference is. It feels, perhaps, a sensation of returning strength, the mind quickens, and then comes the hope of physical recovery. It sees the home and the familiar faces; hears strange words of death and dissolution. It walks about the house, speaks to those there, but receives no answer. The situation becomes serious and perplexing, and it asks itself what has happened. This is not death as it was understood. Such a change does not at first enter the mind. When it does come and the spirit appreciates its condition and the place it occupies, what can it do, ignorant as it is of the simplest laws that govern all spirit? It is as helpless as an infant coming into this world of ours.

If, as I claim, thoughts are things, substantial and real to spirit, has it occurred to any that we can help those

who have journeyed on? Has it come to any that we can also harm them? As mind is substance to spirits, we can send them *thoughts*, like *words*, of consolation, courage, and good cheer, and aid their understanding and progress as they learn the new laws of adjustment. We may even speak to them just as if they had not made the change, and they will hear. Their sadness in the first hours of separation, and before they appreciate what death is, must be greater than ours, for their condition is changed while ours is the same. As they occupy their spirit-body, which takes on solidity, they see the faces of loved ones, they try to touch them, they speak, but receive no answer. So their sorrow is multiplied. Why should not the separation be as sad to them as to us? We can do much to help them. Little is done to make their departure easier. They are near us and need us just as before, and they sorrow because of the seeming neglect and indifference. No one would intentionally injure or stay the progress of the so-called dead, but it is done time and again. Fashion has decreed the wearing of black,

the badge of mourning. This in itself creates a condition of darkness. Our own sorrow draws the departed spirits to us, and they are held prisoners among mental shadows. Our happiness is their happiness; our sorrow, their sorrow; our hope, their joy. The thoughts of sadness hold them, for they no more understand evolution than this world understands dissolution. It is not just to abandon the so-called dead as soon as the last shovel of earth falls upon the casket. True, the spirit is not there, but it is somewhere, and, owing to erroneous teaching, it needs all the suggestion, companionship, and love in the new life that it can possibly receive. If man knew that such help could be given, and knew, too, how to give it, he would be eager to do what he could.

How many who read this statement ever thought it possible? And of those who have accepted it, how many have made the effort? I have helped many, whom I have known, to realize their condition in the spirit-world, and I have aided them by suggestion to learn how to live and what to do. This I accomplish

by talking to them, by bringing to them the friends who have preceded them and who are more advanced. The world owes those who have passed out of the body a duty, and that duty cannot be fulfilled until all understand that death is only change, progression, and evolution. This cannot be understood until prejudice is eradicated, and until mankind desires to know the natural law. When it learns the truth it will know what spirits need and what the world can give. Then each will contribute abundantly. Those here will be happier, and those who have gone before will see the shadows lift. Our speeding thought will go to them like a ray of light, and they will find help to reach the knowledge that will lead them to the beauties of the next sphere of life. Thus they will more quickly reach the splendor of Spirituality.

"Spirits are held by thoughts of sad-
"ness sent out by those in earth-life.
"They cannot go away while those in
"earth-life are sorrowing. They can be
"held by evil thoughts. If these are
"strong enough, they hold the spirit until
"it becomes spiritually developed and

"can break away to better conditions.
"Our helpful loving thought is a stairway
"by which they mount to better things.
"We can, by thought, lift them as upon
"strong wings and send them into a con-
"genial atmosphere."

Mind holds dominion over matter and over the great forces which become slaves to man's brain. Man makes the wind labor and the seas carry. He harnesses the waters which turn the wheels of industry and uses the instruments of his genius, and gathers electric fluid from earth and sea and air, to make light and heat and do work for him. He plants, and the soil itself pays tribute. All that is in this planet and upon it is subject to his will. The potential thought that moulds all material to its uses is not limited to the things of earth, but is a mighty factor in and among those who have gone from our vision, but who still live among us. We can send out into the invisible world about us this thought of ours, so vital and so strong; we can send it to those who are weak and who hunger for words of encouragement, and we can cheer them on to labor. It is to them a current more

powerful than electricity. It quickens their thought-function and aids their understanding.

It may be that some of those who have preceded us are still so material and are still in such a dense condition that others in the sphere of consciousness cannot reach them. In this case our thought is the only source of help, and if we deny them this aid, their progress is impeded. Our duty to the dead is not ended when we lay their bodies beneath the sod. This mind of ours, that holds mastery over earth and sea and air, should go with spirits and be about them and with them, explaining, teaching, encouraging, and showing the way of life. All this we can do in some degree; according as we ourselves know how to use the psychic force that we call Mind.

SPIRIT PASSAGE

EVERY particle of matter that goes to make up this visible body of ours came from the ground, and it must go back to the ground. Nature in her wisdom has provided on some part of the earth's surface all that mankind requires to make his natural growth, to maintain the waste that is going on from day to day. Consider for a moment the construction of the body, consider what it uses, and the widely different parts of the world from which its needs are supplied. The water that runs in streams, flows in brooks, and falls as rain comes to us in every form of vegetable life we use. Wheat, born in the dark, like all life, shoots upward to the light, clothed in garments of green, reaches maturity, and, waving in yellow fields, awaits the reaper's scythe in many lands. Tea comes from China, coffee from Java, spices from the island of Ceylon, meats

from the grazing lands of the West; and the blood is purified and made red by the winds that sweep through great forests and over the bosom of the waters. The whole world contributes to this earthly habitation of ours, which wastes and is repaired day by day, changing completely once in seven years. We do not wear the clothing now that we did seven years ago; neither do we inhabit nor wear the same body. Why, then, is the last moving out any more to be feared than any previous change?

We are only tenants in this house of the body for a limited time, and when it becomes unfit for habitation, through disease or accident, we move out, we separate from it, and the material body, that cannot hold its force without nourishment, decays and mingles with the earth from which it was borrowed. So far as I know, no man has ever attempted to describe the final separation of the spirit from the body, in the change called Death. Indeed, such a description from this material plane is impossible. With the ability to talk with those beyond, I have been able to obtain descriptions of the separation of

the spirit from this temporary home. Not long ago an eminent judge, about six o'clock one evening, while at work, passed away. At nine o'clock the same night he was brought to me in his spirit-body and I talked with him with the same freedom and satisfaction as I had only a a few days before. I asked the one who brought him, how he was able to come so soon. He replied, "I met a "friend this afternoon and he told me "that the judge was coming, and sug-"gested that we go down and witness the "separation. We did so, and brought "him here that he might the more "quickly appreciate his condition."

Among the stenographic notes taken eight years ago, I find the following description of a spirit-passage, given by a spirit who with his company of spirit-workers aids in the great change to the after life:

"But a few hours ago we were called "to help in the separation of the spirit "from the body. Lying before us was a "young woman. When we say 'young,' "we mean in maturity. Bodily pains and "sickness had been hers, and now dis-

"solution was taking place. The one
"who should have given her words of
"encouragement and help was on his
"knees praying to the God of mercy to
"give her strength to pass through the
"terrors of death. About her on every
"side were weeping friends. She knew
"they were grieving because she was
"leaving the body and it made the passage
"darker and harder. Then the first
"bodily chill touched the feet. Slowly,
"little by little, it was creeping upward
"until it reached the knees. A light
"began to rise, a clouded substance,
"gradually increasing in size. Closer
"approached the loved ones who had
"gone before. They were waiting and
"watching and giving her strength, that
"she should not feel herself alone and
"that she should not think all was dark-
"ness and terror. We saw her face
"brighten, her lips part in a smile. She
"saw us close about her. Her hand raised
"slowly and she whispered, 'They are com-
"ing.' 'I see them all.' 'They are waiting
"for me.' The light from the body rose
"higher, slowly creeping up, just as a
"white fleecy cloud settles before a storm

"over the earth. She did not appreciate
"that a change was coming over her, she
"only realized that friends were standing
"near. She did not see the weeping ones
"as it grew brighter. She heard a faint
"echo, as of music, a song of gladness
"coming to her in this cloud of change.
"It took definite form just above her.
"The brain weakened, the eyes drooped,
"she slept with the loving voices speak-
"ing. The music was not heard by
"mortal.

"The spirit was taken out, was held
"just above the body, with gentle hands,
"and then she met the loving friends.
"Her eyelids were lifted, she saw one who
"had waited for her, whose world was to
"live for her, whose every thought was
"in unison with her own. How was it
"that she, just released from the body,
"could see all this? Because she had lived
"a life according to her light and under-
"standing. She will not have to go back
"to earth and take up a consciousness that
"would have been compulsory had her life
"been one of lying and deceit. When she
"touched the hand of the mother who
"had gone ahead, she realized that there

"was a condition between them, but that "little by little it would be removed and "that she would enter into the home that "awaits her.

"She wept, not as you weep, but "through happiness, through joy in the "fact that she had met the mother-love, "that they had come together again where "all the conditions of earth are swept "aside. She saw herself as she is and as "she was. She realized that at times in "the earth-life she was human. She "regretted and asked her soul to forgive. "As she advances farther into this realm "of thought, into this new condition, into "this perfect life, she will see no darkness, "and all shall be well."

By the destruction of matter, life multiplies. Through decay of material, the life force increases. Through separation the spirit is liberated. Released from the confines of an earthly body, it finds greater scope, more opportunities, better advantages, continual progression. This spirit-passage is natural. It comes to all living things. Every step on growing grasses crushes life into life, separates it and forces it from its temporary abode, from the

material covering it has gathered. Through such seeming destruction vegetable life, like human life, is liberated. The journey of evolution is hastened, and the perfect life is more quickly reached.

THE AWAKENING

WHEN the journey is done and the night is passed, all must awake and open eyes in another world. What happens and what thoughts speed with them through the brain? I asked a spirit, well known in this life, to describe the awakening. This was his answer:

"It is usually hard for a spirit to get "its breath in the different atmosphere; "the earth conditions cling to it; this it "must shake off and it must then adjust "itself to the new surroundings. So the "first condition is purely physical, or, "rather, mental. A spirit feels this "change, yet does not understand why it "is different. It gasps and struggles. "This is soon over and forgotten. Then it "is taken to the home it has built,— its "own,— and left to realize things a little. "Some spirits are in a condition that "admit of immediate help and counsel,

"but others are dazed and must have
"quiet and time in which to be alone.
"When a spirit is able to comprehend,
"its past life comes before it like a pano-
"rama. The good thoughts and their
"results are arranged on the one side;
"the evil thoughts and their results, on
"the other. Then begin heaven and hell.
"The poor soul realizes, perhaps for the
"first time, how much evil he has wrought,
"and his spirit is in torment, for he thinks
"there is no reparation. When this phase
"of his punishment is over, he is shown
"how, by influencing thought in earth-life,
"he may wipe out the consequences of
"each sin. Then comes peace from the
"torture of remorse. I am speaking of
"the average man, with the average con-
"science. Some there are who have led
"lives that need very little of this punish-
"ment. Others must wallow for a long
"time in the mire of their own sad sins,—
"too vile or too timid to find a way out.

"There is another phase. One who has
"strong earth ties will be held by them,
"so that spirit-friends cannot get it away
"at first. The ties may be of different
"kinds,— family, business, or simply self-

"ish, animal ones; in any such case pro-
"gression is slower. One who is thor-
"oughly bad, who is surrounded by his
"own sin, sees nothing else.

"These, as I understand, are earth-
"bound; that is, they cannot sunder the
"material conditions which made up their
"lives. In earth-life, they never lived on
"the higher planes; they had little, if
"any, spiritual development, and so across
"the frontier they practically live on this
"material plane although in another way.
"It will take a long time, and some un-
"usual incident, to awaken these to their
"true condition. Some men are blind to
"all but material interests, and the spirits
"of these are blind to all interests ex-
"cept those embraced within their limited
"plane. One can no more see beyond
"this condition than we can see beyond
"ours. There is no advancement for such
"men, or for any man, until the desire
"comes from within. We can catch
"glimpses of the next plane and hear
"voices. So can they, but progression
"will not be given fully until they are
"prepared to receive it. It may be said
"that many, many in this life are to-day

"more progressed than some who have
"gone to the lowest plane of spirituality;
"for in the change they unconsciously
"pass directly to the next condition
"beyond. Those who pass the lower
"sphere of the earth condition may at first
"only reach the second plane of the same
"sphere. They cannot reach the higher
"planes, because they are not fitted. They
"must go among those of like character
"to themselves, in a like condition with
"themselves. The unclean cannot go
"into a pure atmosphere, because they
"would contaminate it. These will find
"themselves surrounded with the thought-
"matter they have taken with them, to
"the home they have made, and all the
"other homes and all the other people
"they see will have similar conditions and
"like homes. This may be called the
"first conscious sphere, the plane of resti-
"tution."

"When the soul awakens here and sees
"about him the wrongs he has committed
"and those that others have committed,
"the effect of these wrongs and the con-
"ditions produced by them, great remorse
"will come."

This condition of awakening has been described, perhaps unconsciously, by Theodosia Garrison in stronger words than I can use:

The three ghosts on the lonesome road
Spake each to one another,
"Whence came that stain about your mouth
No lifted hand may cover?"
"From eating of forbidden fruit,
Brother, my brother."

The three ghosts on the sunless road
Spake each to one another,
"Whence came that red burn on your feet
No dust or ash may cover?"
"I stamped a neighbor's hearth-flame out,
Brother, my brother."

The three ghosts on the windless road
Spake each to one another,
"Whence came that blood upon your hand
No other hand may cover?"
"From breaking of a woman's heart,
Brother, my brother."

"Yet on the earth clean men we walked,
Glutton and Thief and Lover;
White flesh and fair it hid our stains
That no man might discover,"
"Naked the soul goes up to God,
Brother, my brother."

These stains must be washed away; these unsightly burns healed before the pathway shall cease to be lonely, before peace and happiness shall come to the suffering, wandering soul. Such wrongs, such crimes, are the burdens one carries. The sunless way is long and the journey is weary; joy is not a companion; but

there is a way that leads to spiritual health, a way, called reparation.

There are those who lived so close to Nature, who were so true to neighbors and to themselves, who developed the spirit and clothed it in garments of harmony, that in dissolution they awake in the sphere of understanding, beyond these earth conditions. Nature takes them to the most advanced condition they are qualified to enter. It works on the same principle as a school here below. A child ignorant of the multiplication table does not go into higher mathematics. It is graded according to qualification. This next life is Nature's University and in it she teaches morality and spirituality. It, too, has many grades, and one is classified according to progress and development. No one possesses perfect character; but those who have done their best, who have listened to the voice of conscience, feel the touch of loving hands and hear words of welcome as they unconsciously speed through the planes of darkness and despair. They had builded on the high land where the sunlight always touches and the shadows never fall. These, too, in their quiet hours of

contemplation see conduct in its true light, and will not be content to go on, even if they could, until acts that were harsh are softened, words that were unkind, recalled. The way will be shown to these, and they will be anxious to cheer mortal and spirit whose burden they have increased. The weary will know who is helping, and will bless the hands that help.

What joy will fill the hearts of those who have lived honest lives, when they awaken as peacefully as dawn touches the morning, and find death behind them and its terror gone; when they see those whom they mourned coming with radiant faces, in eager greeting; mother, wife, children, all there to show the love that has been waiting. Words are meaningless in any attempt to describe such joy! If the world only understood this law, men would strive so to live that they might reach this condition at once. Knowledge is always a ray of light. The sun touches the mountain tops before it does the valleys. It never penetrates the caves, where ignorance and prejudice dwell.

If these writings awake and call only

one man from the cavern of doubt, and show him the path that leads to the heights of understanding, I shall be repaid for all my labors.

MISSION WORK

THERE is a part of our work equal, if not greater, in importance than any heretofore mentioned. This we term mission work, and we conduct it among earth-bound spirits who are unable in the next sphere to go beyond the first conditions, or who lie dormant in the darkness of their own gathering. Each night, when we are thus engaged, the time is divided by those in charge—a portion is given to our instruction, and at least an equal part is given to helping those who need aid, suggestion, and direction. Remember, that in the spirit-world the principal occupation is that of giving help, through which means spirits aid their own progression. In earth-life the ambition of the great majority is to help themselves regardless of others. Here, each one is for himself. There, each is for all and all are for each other.

It is my experience that nearly all,

whether they are educated or uneducated, have little, if any, conception of the condition and state which immediately follow dissolution. Education, as that term is used, does not necessarily aid the primal condition, though it may further one's progress, by enabling him to grasp more quickly the principles which govern progression. One may have learning without spiritual development; one uneducated in the sciences, may have so developed his spirit that he is more advanced than the other when the new day dawns.

There are many who in that new life are helpless, who are like new-born infants in this world of ours, except that they possess all the knowledge gained on the earth-plane, and know the joy that comes of good and the burden that comes of wrong. Though they are like children, and enter consciously, they must be taught to walk, to take sustenance, to labor, to work, and to know the laws that control spirit. For where on this earth can such instruction be obtained? Assuming that one has lived a good life and is conscious of his surroundings, he

must learn all these lessons from those who have gone before, and there are many eager and ready to help. We labor largely among those who have not awakened, or who fail to understand their condition. Those who lie dormant, who are surrounded by darkness ofttimes cannot be aroused by other spirits any more than human beings can touch the mentality of an idiot within asylum walls. They stay in this condition until Nature restores and strengthens the mind, or until they are brought into the material vibrations made by mortal and spirit working together. When we work we throw out material vibrations, into which the group bring many, sometimes hundreds, at a time, all in practically the same mental attitude. One spirit is clothed with material, is awakened, is selected to talk. The others there assembled listen to the speech and appreciate all benefits. This chosen one may be heard to gasp as he takes the first breath of our atmosphere. Since voice is produced by the organs of respiration, they must be clothed with material. I do not know all the laws that control this pro-

duction of sound among spirits ; but the production itself is a fact that permits no argument.

Those spirits who greet us on such evenings usually know nothing of the flight of time, or even know that they have separated from the old body. They awaken from a dreamless sleep, as it were, with the old thought dominant, with individuality the same, but with strange surroundings. Imagine, if you can, the varied thoughts that flash through the mind as consciousness comes. Never are two alike, any more than any two persons. When I say that I have talked with a few who have not had one intelligent thought or seen a ray of light for seventy-five or one hundred years, and that they speak of the world as it was when they left it, you may at least gain an impression of what it is possible to make for ourselves in the sphere beyond. True, these are unusual cases, but one can create such a condition, and some people have created it. Few have no spiritual clouds on the horizon of thought.

The speaker is clothed for the time like us; but the condition that holds the

material on the spirit-form is sensitive, and any sudden fright or mental shock will disintegrate the atoms and cause them to fall. Then the spirit loses the power of speech. The first question is often one of inquiry. The spirits are astonished at the strange faces and the new surroundings, and are anxious to know where they are. Few of them even know what has happened. Our first effort is to calm them, and when they are more quiet and reasonable, the thought that was strongest in mind when the change came is expressed and retold. Often that thought was of approaching death, and they tell of the awful fear that filled their hearts and of their seemingly fortunate escape. We then bring them to a discussion of what death is, and make them realize fully that they are alive and in possession of every natural faculty; we teach them by degrees that there is no death, and that the change they so feared is passed. No matter how cautiously this information is imparted it is always followed by a great shock, and often the material clothing them disintegrates. Then, with a cry of fear and

alarm, they lose the power of speech. If possible they are restored to a vocal condition, and our efforts are continued. Our work is not finished when they are brought to a conscious state. They must next be taught what spirit is and how it may learn the new laws that will thenceforth govern and control all their thoughts and actions. When one finds that he is out of the body, the thoughts of those left behind crystallizes,—anxious the inquiry, great the sorrow! Why should not the separation be as hard for him as for those left behind? Then, again, the change may have come before he was ready, when he was needed by friends or family, and many a cry has gone out: "What will they do; how will they "live; who will care for them now?"

Those religiously inclined at once want to find the Saviour. Many who had been taught that they could be saved only with His help, say they must find Him? and when we tell them that He was only the symbol of a perfect man, and that one has no redeemer but himself, they hesitate to accept our statements. Often only the words of personal friends who

have gone before bring conviction. Many give up the idea of a Saviour very reluctantly. We next try to bring these spirits to an understanding of what life in the spirit-sphere is. Those controlling the conditions usually take up the discussion, and spirit talks to spirit. All of us take part in trying to demonstrate and convey to the new-comer ideas of the life he has entered. The spirit-company are able, by laws that have not been explained, to make him see every act and deed that made up the sum total of his former life. As the scenes passed one by one, like a flowing stream, I have heard them shout with joy and shriek with fear. Little can be done except to bring the spirit to a sense of realization, and to point out the avenue called restitution. When the desire to live again the deeds of earth life comes from the heart, others in spirit there show how the acts of selfishness and wrong which created the darkness and which surrounds them may be relieved. But each spirit must carry his own burden; he must go his own way; he must perform his own labor, and no hand may lift the weight from his soul. Each act

lived over and lived aright will dispel the darkness that it caused, and so the home and the surroundings will grow lighter and more beautiful. How long the way is, and how unnecessary! If only mankind were taught the truth here! We may sin in ignorance, but this brings sorrow,—not so much for the condition it makes for us, as for the misery it causes others. When we appreciate what our wrong-doing has brought to others, and what is denied us for that reason, our grief is great. Remorse is ours, and misery and unhappiness become our close companions. With the knowledge that men have no Saviour but themselves, spirits usually assume the responsibility of their own acts readily, and are eager to commence the undoing, through which they shall reach higher planes. Sometimes many spirits in practically the same mental attitude are brought in, and I am asked to take up the discussion of some subject in which all are interested and in which all need knowledge. It seems that my thought and voice vibrate so keenly that their attention is attracted. They become interested and gather close about.

I am told that sometimes thousands in a single evening come and listen. When I have interested them and one is, perhaps, talking with me, and many are talking with each other, teachers from other spheres take up the work and carry it on.

This, then, is a suggestion of what our mission work is, and how with the help of an intelligent and powerful group of spirits we labor to aid progression and to dispel the darkness that holds a soul prisoner in the dungeon of despair. But our work is not confined to those in trouble. Others come who have never known that condition. They live among those they love, and work with songs of joy and gladness in their hearts, radiant and happy, climbing the hills of knowledge. These tell me that when the first sphere is passed they know the intensity of life; they are free and understand the joy of freedom. Then they find that popes, bishops, priests, and kings are dead; that the aristocracy of this world has perished; that the personal God whom mankind worshiped, never existed; that truth is a religion that sheds joy on all the spirit-spheres. Beyond the plane of restitution

they find a world at peace, where honest effort meets its true reward. They find spheres, bright and clear, the married harmony of form and function, where there is no disease of flesh or brain. Then their conception of Nature broadens, happiness unknown before fills every heart, fear is dead, and ignorance and prejudice are left far below.

LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

I THINK that, possibly, more comprehensive knowledge of the first conditions in the after life has come to us from our mission work than from any other source. We are better able to comprehend the actual situation here than life in the more advanced spheres. Perhaps I can convey a better idea by describing a few actual experiences.

I recall one of the early cases in which I gave help. In my own city there lived a man who commenced life with only his hands as aid to work. By saving and great self-denial, he accumulated a large fortune. He loved money and his only thought was to make it. He was honest, held a position of trust in the financial world, and passed out in advanced years, honored among them. I knew this man well, and some years afterward he was brought into our working room for help. He was on the verge of awaking and

needed material vibrations to make him appreciate his condition and be brought to a realizing sense. At first he did not even know where he was. This spirit, accustomed to command, found himself imprisoned within a wall built of money, as it appeared to him. It was cold and dark; the chill of death was in his soul; he could not understand what had happened, why he was in that situation, though five years had elapsed since he left his earthly habitation. He begged for help, said he had not seen a ray of light for years, and cried that it was cold, so cold. We explained the change that had taken place, cautiously, so that he would not be startled and lose the material necessary for producing voice. At the suggestion of those in spirit, who were working with me, I told him to look once more for light. He saw just a point. "It is "coming," he said. "It is a barren high-"way, without life." "Look again," I said. "Yes," he replied, "I now see sign-"boards on both sides, as far as my eyes "can reach." "Can you read them?" I asked. "The first only," he answered, "and there are many." "How do they

"read?" He replied, "I can only read "the first, and it says 'Charity'." Then I understood his condition,—his had been a selfish life,—and the lesson intended, and I told him to go with those who were coming and to practice "charity," that when he should come truly to appreciate its meaning from experience, he would be able to read the second sign. I told him, too, that this would go on, sign after sign, one by one, year by year, until that barren highway should some day lead him to happiness.

One evening, we of the earth, who had gathered in my working room, were greeted by a minister who had been one of the leading preachers of his time. His voice was strong, his manner, imperious, his speech, autocratic. He had no conscious appreciation of the change that had come to him. He was still, in his imagination, in his old body, still controlling his church, still the thought-leader and guide of his congregation. It took the combined efforts of our group and many of his old parishioners, in spirit, to bring him to understand that he was out of the material body. They came—those spirits

—some with imprecations, because, while they had looked to him for guidance, he had deceived them, and they were suffering because they had accepted his word. Others, with more kindness, talked with him in a pacific strain and excused him, because he, too, had accepted blindly the word claimed to be of God, and had as blindly given it to them. Remorse and disappointment were his, when he found that his life-teaching had been a mistake. He wanted to find truths as he said they were, and eagerly questioned those in spirit to know if the Redeemer liveth. It was hard for him to believe that each must help himself. He would not accept this statement at first. He excused his false teaching by saying his father had taught him so, that he had been educated for the ministry; that he had learned to believe what the alleged inspired Book said, and that he only gave what he had received. When pressed by one who had accepted his teaching without question, he at last acknowledged that he had not fully believed all that he had taught; that what he taught was popular and what his people wanted; that to have

questioned the Scripture openly would have lost him his position. Thus he showed that the love for gold was greater than the love of truth, and that without considering the wrong he might do to others he had guided them among old traditions, while he himself half doubted, only half believed. So the wrong he did came back, and he was told that his progress would be stayed, until, standing in the portals of that new life, he should meet each one that came after him, call back those who had gone before, and bring each and every one he had deceived into the fields of true understanding before he would be able to advance.

In times of great disaster, when strong souls are torn from healthy bodies, there is much for us to do. They come trooping in with cries of fear and anguish, and I have heard better descriptions of great accidents from those who went out of the body in that way than were ever published in the daily press. With returning consciousness they feel at first that they have escaped from a terrible danger, and words of thanks fall from spirit lips. Then our task grows hard as

we undertake to tell and to prove that they have passed the border line. The screams of terror and words of sorrow expressed in those first moments fill some of the sad pages of memory; but these are brightened sometimes by the joy of a father or mother, long mourned as dead, greeting them with words of tenderness and welcome.

One of the most beautiful experiences that I recall was the awakening of a young girl who left this world just at the dawn of womanhood. She was the joy and sunshine of a splendid home, loved by a devoted father, and idolized by a great circle of friends. Life seemed to promise all that she could hope. She was one of the finest characters I have ever known, but almost in a day she sank into that dreamless sleep the world calls death. When we were at work that evening I heard the voice of one of our spirit-band speaking with great gentleness words of encouragement. I was told that this young girl was coming and I was asked to add my welcome. Others seemed to be with her, upon whom she leaned. She was much excited and bewildered, and

greeted me anxiously. She said she had been sick and had suffered great pain in her head; that she had heard her father's words of anguish and had heard others say she was dying; that at the same time there had come to her sweet music and she thought she saw angels with radiant faces; that she was so glad she had not died. My task was hard,—to tell this beautiful spirit that was in love with life and enraptured with the world, that she was no more in earth-life; that the music that came to her with such sweetness was from the spheres beyond, and that the faces she saw were just those of other pure girls like herself who came to welcome her into the new life. With gentleness and with such words as I could command, I told her what was necessary, and as the realizing thought came home to her, a cry went out to the stricken father from that young girl's heart. It was with difficulty that she was calmed. Then, beautiful souls, in harmony with her own, crowded about her, speaking tender words of consolation, and she was comforted. She saw with clearer vision; and there came again the music, the same melody she had heard

as her spirit was leaving the body,—sweeter, she said, than anything she had ever known. Then she was taken away. She had been brought fully to understand the change. When she left she was surrounded by beautiful characters who would teach her the way of that life and help her to find that joy and understanding which await the pure in spirit. After she was gone I asked of my teachers who remained, why I could not hear the music she described as well as the spoken words. The answer was that the spoken words were of matter and vibrated on material ears; that the music was of spirit, and could be heard only by those already in spirit.

Much of our understanding of the next life and the conditions existing there have come from such experiences, and so we appreciate, although in a limited way, what life is in the spheres beyond.

Is there life beyond the grave? Can any ask when such things as I have described are possible? But this is not the question I seek to solve. It is, rather, what is that life and whither does it lead?

WHAT IS THE NEXT LIFE?

NEITHER the Old nor the New Testament makes any suggestion that in the after life there is further advancement to be made or any work to be done. On the contrary, according to its promises, we find rest through death, an eternity without labor. We find that as we are, so shall we ever be, that there is no further opportunity to do, undo, add to, subtract from, or improve; that death ends all growth or progression; that we are weighed and our account is balanced. For argument only, assume this to be correct, and consider the result. The infant prematurely born must remain in ignorance and in helplessness. The child that had only commenced to form its words would never learn to convey its wants, necessities, or desires in language, or reach the splendor of manhood or womanhood; those suffering mental disease, must remain idiots or lunatics; cripples

must always be cripples; old age must totter through all time. Those who were ignorant at the time of dissolution must always be ignorant; the vicious, always vicious; the selfish, always selfish; the good, always good. Education and improvement have an ending with this life. As we go out, so shall we remain for time and eternity. As the tree falls, so shall it lie.

I cannot subscribe to this doctrine. Around and about us Nature is always progressing, always developing, always becoming more beautiful. There is no time, according to natural law, when Nature ceases to progress. If this is conceded, should Man, a part of Nature, be denied what is allowed vegetable life? If life is endless, the time spent in the body, even though the years pass the Scriptural three score and ten, is infinitesimal compared to eternity, and the opportunity for progression and preparation, according to orthodox teaching, is far from fair. "We are just as much "spirit now as we ever shall be." These words have been often spoken, and I repeat them, that we may fully compre-

hend their import. If we are spirit in the life to come, we are spirit now, always have been, and ever will be. In the change of death, nothing is lost but the outer shell, termed the body. The spirit was no more visible to the human eye before death than it is after, yet it exists the same in each instance. The physical eye cannot see thought, yet it is seated in the brain. The soul is invisible to mortals, yet it is within us. This being accepted, is it wonderful that we do not see spirit out of the body when we did not see it in the body? In each instance we have evidence of spirit without seeing the thing itself. We do not see the magnetic forces, but the effect is visible. We do not see electric fluid, but evidence of its existence is found in the lightning's bolt, and in instruments which utilize its energy. In converting water into steam, or even in separating it into gases, we do not change its component parts. By utilizing magnetic forces we do not annihilate them. Harnessing the electrical current, and, thereby turning the wheels of industry, does not destroy it.

So the individual spirit of man at the

moment of separating from the body is identically the same, has the same thoughts, the same ideas, the same knowledge, the same ties, and possesses the same spirit that he had a moment before. The infant is an infant; manhood is still manhood; old age, still old age; the vicious, still vicious; selfish, still selfish; virtuous, still virtuous; the good, still good. But they do not remain so for ever and ever, any more than they would have done on earth. There is no more stagnation in the spirit-world than here. Neither does that simple step in Nature give spirit wings or make angels. If angelic, the spirit became so before going. Death does not immediately add to character nor detract from it. In death, the spiritual body steps out of the old garment which loving hands take to its resting-place, and cover with earth from which it was made, that it may mingle with material and be used again to clothe other life. The spirit did not come from material and does not go back to material, but, in splendor and in spiritual strength, faces the new conditions into which it has entered. We are taught

that progress and evolution have never stopped, and never will stop. They are a part of this and all other worlds, and a part of the spirit-world. This is a fundamental principle, has always existed and always will exist. All the so-called dead that in the ages past have lived on this and other planets still live and labor. Education, like time, is without limit; opportunity, without boundaries. Spirits come to know and appreciate the new laws under which they live and work on and on; they feel the companionship of friends, the joy of more intensified life, and feel the inspiration that comes with knowledge.

In the spirit condition the spirits have, first, all that we have here; or, perhaps, I should say that we have here the counterpart of some phases of the spirit-world. Then they must have homes. Not having material, these homes cannot be builded of brick and wood, but are made of thoughts, which, in spirit become things. This home is being builded by every one of us from day to day, thought after thought, act after act, is building in spirit a structure that will await our com-

ing. These homes can be made, I am told, beautiful beyond our comprehension. Indeed, all material building here is fashioned in imitation of those homes in the world to come, for suggestion comes from spirit that aids our designs. Aided by spirit-thought, we are unconsciously imitating that higher world both in building and in living. It differs only in beauty and in substance. That home may be large and have many rooms, richly furnished, peopled with love and happiness; or it may be a hovel, cold, cheerless, and lonely. Every one is his own architect and builder. Every act of charity, kindness, tenderness, and love adds to its beauty and comfort; while every act of selfishness, cruelty, and oppression casts a shadow; so that when one opens the door of his spirit-house he faces the deeds of the earth-life. The walls are hung with mental pictures depicting the record made from day to day. A little act of kindness, a word of sympathy, a tender touch, are reproduced, framed in harmony. Selfishness, unkindness, immorality, wickedness, and dishonor are also pictured and hung on the walls

of that home, there to remain until individual restitution shall cover or remove them. We are building a home of some character, and furnishing it with the thoughts and deeds of daily life. It is the only place to which we can go, the place to which we must go, when the material existence is ended. If this thought could be brought home to all mankind, how it would fill the world with joy! How it would lessen the ages of suffering and unhappiness caused by wrongs done in ignorance, an ignorance fostered by orthodox teaching! Natural law is immutable, and ignorance is no more excusable than violation of the civil law. Both are established, and it becomes our duty to know and understand both.

We are told that in the spirit-world there are colleges and universities of learning, teachers and students, all working and striving to comprehend the philosophy of Nature. Chemists are experimenting with the action of chemicals and making discoveries; naturalists labor to know more of Nature; astronomers are studying the planetary systems; scientists are aim-

ing to utilize forces, and a great army is working to bring all spirit-kind to understand what life is. Mental hospitals are maintained, where the idiot and lunatic may be taken, where the darkness overshadowing their lives is dispelled, and their spirits quickened, that they may take up life where it was suspended. Women who never knew motherhood gather unborn babes that have been murdered, infants who pass in tender years, indeed, all children, they still their cries, nourish, comfort, teach, and rear them, taking the mother's place and doing the mother's part. Art studies abound in the spirit-world. Those who stood foremost in the art ranks on earth are taught by others more advanced, to paint through will-power alone; they, in turn, are teaching those not so far advanced as themselves. When a picture is perfect, art spirits endeavor to impress it upon the mind of some artist on this,—a lower,—plane. Ideal pictures are the result of such impressions. All inventions are perfected in the next sphere by spirits interested in that work before they are impressed on some sensitive mind still

living on this earth-plane. If those impressions are received as they are transmitted, we have a perfect invention ; if the impression is faulty, the invention is imperfect. Those who are gifted musicians and composers do not change occupation or pursuits, but, like the artists, are taught greater harmony, are perfected in execution, and then coming close to a sensitive brain interested in the same thought, aid in the composition of a masterpiece. Does it seem natural or right that composers, men of letters, scientists, musicians, and all those who have spent a lifetime here in developing themselves, should have no use for such learning after dissolution? If this were so, is it worth while to make an effort ?

Here, the ear is limited to a few vibrations. We hear only a small number of the many sounds that fill the air. There, the sense is developed, and where seemed silence are really many voices. Here, the eye focuses on only few objects that fill space. There, the lenses are clearer and they comprehend that all space is filled with intelligent and comprehensive life. Harmony predominates in the higher

spheres, and permeates every condition. The melodies and songs that we produce appear to spirit as the rolling ocean wave to us. All occupations which have to do with mind are continued. Physicians study that they may learn what remedies are required to assist Nature in its effort to restore natural conditions, and as they are able to see clearly and to diagnose disease, impress upon the doctors of the earth diagnoses and treatments. Thus the inhabitants of spirit-land work, on and on, acquiring understanding and perfection in those fields of labor for which they are best fitted. They know the joy that comes from time well spent.

How do spirits subsist? Do they require food? We answer, yes. In the lower sphere they absorb the essence, just as mortals take the substance. We inhale the invisible perfume of flowers; they the essence. So close are they about us that ofttimes their thought and suggestions are our desires. As we take food and drink, they find their sustenance in the essence. But as they progress, they absorb spiritual food and spiritual fruits. In time, they can live on these alone.

With many people the earthly life is one great masquerade. They live behind the mask of material, and are never really known. In the spirit-world, we appear as we really are. On earth, all are free to choose place of habitation, surroundings, associates, and to wander where desire leads. Suppose that here and now the secret thoughts, motives, selfishness, greed, and desires of men could be photographed, suppose a camera would make character visible, how startled the world would be! How many would hide! In dissolution this mask falls from the face. Men are seen, and for the first time, in the mirror of Nature, they see themselves as they really are. Thoughts and desires, the record of every act done in the body, are visible to all the spirit-world even as it was before, for they have always known the deeds and understood the thoughts and desires of our daily life. Even now we hide nothing from spirits. The spirit, then, comes to fully appreciate that his life has always been an open book. Here, there is hypocrisy and doubt; there, hypocrisy is unknown and deceit is impossible. The language of spirit is thought,

and thought is visible. The spirit freed from material shows what it is, and all that great beautiful world knows how opportunities have been improved, how character has been developed. How many around and about us would be willing that the spirit-world should know every thought and witness every act, with the motive actuating it? This is a fact, whether we would have it so or not. In that life, each one will be drawn into that condition and into that society for which he is fitted. Harmony is Nature's first law,—universal, fixed, determined, inimitable,—and it draws one into the condition for which he has qualified himself. It may be among beautiful characters, in happy homes surrounded by the loved ones who have gone before. It may be among the selfish and ignorant, with strangers, in darkness and sorrow. The freedom to select society or residence is no longer possessed. Nature's irresistible power, that can no more be changed than the path of a constellation, draws individual spirit to its own.

No good ever came or can come from teaching falsehood, but bad comes and

must always come. It is the duty of everyone to teach and speak what he knows to be true. Having this knowledge, if mine were the only voice in the land, I would raise it. Into the dull face of superstition I would throw the shining lance of reason; into the darkened room of prejudice, I would light a single torch. But I am not working alone. Men are no longer satisfied with Christian teaching. They are thinking, and orthodox teaching and thinking along those lines do not harmonize with each other. When one begins to think he begins to doubt, and doubt is the dawn of reason. Around and about us are great forces of occult power. Vast influences are continually at play upon the well-being of man. Research is making this field classic. It is no feverish excitement or vain ambition that leads men to this thought. It is a higher feeling, a holier motive, a desire to understand and to comprehend the economy of Nature, and to grow wiser and better through that knowledge.

NATURE'S REVELATION

I CANNOT accept such a God or such a hereafter as the Bible describes. I cannot believe in a God of vengeance. I never could believe that men, women, and children will suffer eternally for not acknowledging a religious system of which, perhaps, they have never heard. I never could assent to the thought that all progression stops with dissolution, or that men and women do right only through fear of God's wrath. I fail to understand how anyone can suppose that a man-God sits on a throne, surrounded with elders, beasts, and birds, or that a spirit adores a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes. Do any actually credit such teaching? I doubt it.

Are not these comments fair and reasonable? And is not mankind entitled to ask such questions? If we do not reason from experience and from natural conditions, is there any safe basis? What

was the object of Revelations, the concluding book of the Bible? Was it not to advise the world what to expect beyond the grave, to the end that men should so live as to inherit that Kingdom? "And he said unto me these "things are faithful and true," said St. John. If this instruction is false, what will happen? Has any one thought? Shall a man be sent to hell for thinking honestly? Revelations, if true, is one of the most important books of the New Testament, for the reason that all ought to know what follows this material existence, that they may go to it understandingly and intelligently. How can we fit ourselves for it unless we know something of the place and its conditions? Nothing should be undertaken without preparation. The youth going to college is taught by one who knows the requirements of the institution. To enter one of the learned professions, one must have certain qualifications and training. To go into any branch of business, one must first learn the duties of the position, and where and under what conditions he is to assume responsibility. The more impor-

tant the undertaking, the more careful must be the preparation. One who goes to a strange land makes a careful investigation. He studies the geography of the place, the way to travel there, the natural and political conditions, his possible duties, and his ability to meet them. We are all journeying to a strange country, and each of these questions is again pertinent. The Christian Church, without any definite knowledge on the subject, assumes to answer them, and to prepare us all for that life. "Falsus in uno, falsus "in omnibus"—false in one thing, false in everything—is a maxim of the common law. We are not bound to credit in any particular a witness who is untruthful in one material statement. So, if we, applying this rule, find that if Revelations are false the whole Bible is unsafe, and the orthodox world is stranded.

It is not possible, here, to learn and appreciate all that the next life will bring. But one can accomplish much. The question is asked: How do we know that Revelations are false, and how dare we question it? Our answer is simple: By talking with those who are living in

the next world. Each of us has known many good men and women in whom we had perfect confidence; have known the works and writings of others who held high position while on earth. These have now gone on, or, as the orthodox say, are dead. If it is possible to converse with them from day to day, if they speak with their own voices, if they speak with as great intelligence and freedom as before, if they explain just what they found and are still finding, and all this appeals to reason, to what conclusion must one come? The question may be properly asked: Do we pretend to know all about Heaven? We answer: No. If life in the next world is endless, if knowledge, opportunity, and progression are without limit, how little could one learn there, say, in fifteen years! Then how much less must one learn here, encumbered with material conditions, in that same short space of time? But from those who are already there we have learned something.

Then, where is Heaven? We answer: It is here around and about us. It surrounds this planet. It surrounds, as well,

the millions of other stars and planets where there is life and joy. This I am told by those in that other world, and I believe them. I have talked with great men and good women, with the learned and the ignorant, with the righteous and the wicked, with the rich and the poor. All tell the same story. All agree on what they find there. If life follows dissolution and if speech with the dead is possible, those who have gone must be better able to describe that condition than St. John. When I say that I can and do talk with those in the after life, I know the statement will be questioned. Many who have gone from among us knew of my metapsychical research before their dissolution. When they reached the after condition, some whom I knew personally and some who were strangers have come and told me of their unkind thought and bitter speech before their change. They have further said, "Why do you not give "this knowledge to the world?" They have asked me to carry messages to those they left behind. This last I have often refused, and have answered, "Were you "not so prejudiced in the earthly life that

"you would have rejected a message from "a departed one?"

Most people believe that their life continues beyond the grave. If this be so, why should they not work with us and among us, when out of this body? One may possess in this material existence the confidence of the courts; his word may be accepted in business affairs, and among his friends be unquestioned. Now, with this record, let him make statements of fact of what he is doing from day to day in the unseen world, let him tell of what years of study and research in this field have accomplished, and he is doubted. Why? Because of the orthodox teaching and prejudice that exist; because mankind is not free. How many of those who decry the possibility of spirit communication ever spent one day in actual metapsychical research, or made any personal effort to know what follows this life? Is it not a fact that orthodox people go to church, let the priests do the thinking, accept their assertion that it is wrong to question God's word as they themselves have recorded and interpreted it? Is it wise to condemn those things we do not

understand? Is not the statement of one who has spent years of research on a subject entitled to some consideration?

I have no monopoly in speech with the other sphere. The avenues that I have traveled are open to all. Any can have what is given to me from day to day. All can enjoy it by mastering the simple laws of Nature and by creating the conditions. Do any want this knowledge enough to try? I stand ready to demonstrate the fact, at any time, in any place, to any fair man, that, given natural conditions, it is possible to talk with spirits, to talk with those out of the body, just as we talk to each other here. I know of no words that will carry greater conviction than those I have used. I am earnest in my desire to spread this knowledge, because I know its needs, because I know that with it mankind may not only live a better life here, but go on into the next life better prepared to live that life as it must be lived. Let me illustrate. One who has implicitly followed orthodox teaching leaves the body with only such ideas of Heaven as the Church gives. He has but one idea, one thought,—to find

a personal God, Jesus, in the City of Heaven. He wants to join the multitude within the walls worshiping God and the Lamb. Spirit is conscious, individual thought, and this spirit, knowing nothing of what really follows dissolution or of natural laws, has in mind what he has been taught. He knows nothing of the laws that continue to govern, nor how to utilize the first principle. Then where is he and what is he? Assuming there is such a place as St. John describes, how is he going to get there? His trouble must commence; he is a living, conscious spirit, that is about all, and he goes on and on, blindly seeking that Heaven that does not exist. It has never been found by any to whom I have talked, and I have talked with those I want to be with in the next life. In this after life the search for the orthodox Heaven is often long and lonely, and ages may elapse before one comes to realize that Heaven is within one's self. Those who are in the next life tell me that Heaven is here; that with the change they do not go away, that they may do so in time, but that until they progress they are around and

about us, in the home, on the streets, in our offices and workshops, in the fields and forests, just as before. The only difference is that they are invisible to our sight. As they are no longer material, they no longer handle material. As they are spirit, they deal only with spirit. As money is material, they no longer strive for it. They journey with us from day to day. They give us thought and suggestion whenever they can, and stay those acts that are unjust, selfish, or wrong. They do not always succeed, but they try.

I am told that death is natural; that in the change we only work along new lines, learning new laws and how to apply them; that the condition there is a perfectly natural one, just one step beyond. It is good-night and good-morning. There is no place set apart, no personal God, no Saviour called Jesus, no throne, no lamb to worship, no bowing down for the gratification of anyone. It is a great, beautiful, natural world, the world of spirit, where men and women love and labor. When they come into understanding and reach the higher planes they find that

Nature has always been revealing herself, not through a single book, but through grandeur and beauty. In every tree that grows and fruits, in every seed that flowers, and in every birth, there is a Revelation. Nature speaks in all languages and to all our senses.

THE FIRST CONDITION

THE first step in progression is so earth-like it is at first difficult of comprehension. We have been so long taught that the death change is so marvelous, a spirit is reluctant to accept the simple situation. It has been compared to the going from one room into another. While surroudings are changed they are similar; like, yet unlike; but the thought and individuality are in nowise altered. These are identical; the mode of expression and the touch only are different. This is not what is ordinarily expected, therefore it is ofttimes reluctantly accepted.

I speak now of those who have lived a fairly good life. The inability to touch the bodies of those in earth-life, or to speak so they can hear, together with the meeting with those who have gone before, bring them to appreciate the natural change that has come to them. Then

comes the thought of what and where they are. The vision is enlarged, and while they see all that was visible to their material eyes, a mental curtain is parted, and there comes a conception of sights and sounds not possessed before. They find, not a walled city with guarded gates and streets of gold; not a judgment-throne before which they must appear like criminals at the bar of justice; but a simple, natural world, this world spiritualized. They are helpless then, but they soon learn the first principles, and are able, in a measure, to act for themselves. They must learn to seek the truth and know self. These cannot be found in searching for falsehood. Where one has all this life been taught error he clings tenaciously to old beliefs,—more in fear of punishment than anything else. In time, when he does not find the condition he was told he would meet, and when he finds instead that friends who braved damnation and accepted truth are not burned, courage comes, and old doctrines, faiths, and dogmas are abandoned. Then grows the desire to know the law as it is. There is no real awakening until the earnest wish

crystallizes. Then the spiritual vision broadens, and, first of all, he sees himself. The thoughts of earth-life crowd for recognition. Every act awaits reënactment. The only throne he finds is of his own building; the only judge, himself. He is told that God is universal good, and that only through good shall he find advancement or changed environment, and that good must be of his own gathering. He is taken to the home that his life-work has builded. He is left among those surroundings for reflection, left to think over again the thoughts and deeds of his former daily life. One by one they come, more real than his imagination ever pictured, each claiming his authorship. Little acts of kindness, words of sympathy or encouragement, possibly performed or spoken half unconsciously, return in peace. The vibrations set in motion by some deed of charity are gathered, and in them the spirit is uplifted. He hears again words of thanks for some good done, like distant music. On the walls of this new home, more real than artist can paint, are pictured in many colors, every kind act, deed, and thought, and in retrospection, the heart is

filled with unknown joy. The happiness that one gives to others in every-day life is only loaned, and in the hour of awakening it comes back to him who gave it, laden with the joy it carried. One may sow happiness broadcast, like wheat, and, like wheat, it will find fertile soil. The great harvest comes in this hour of need, returning good for good many fold. The doorway will be open, and those who have gone before, who have been helped and aided by the new spirit, come with eager words of thanks and welcome, and in this joy and greeting the material world is for a moment forgotten. This is the home of a good man, a true man, a natural man, one who lived close to the heart of Nature, and did good because he loved it. In this new life his heart is full, his joy unspeakable. The good he did lives and Heaven is about him. But no man's life was all good. This is not possible in the material existence.

If good multiples and brings much happiness, why should wrong not follow and be intensified, laden with despair? Bad thoughts help to build the same as good. They enter into and become a part of the

structure, and are visible to the awakening soul, side by side. Both are to be met; both to be dealt with. The good at some time, in some place, will overcome evil and predominate; but this will be in the spheres beyond. Here, among the beautiful mental pictures that adorn the walls and enter into the substance of the structure, are evil thoughts which show with equal distinctness the record of a man's life. Here, in startling detail, the spirit sees the wrecks he has made, feels the sorrow and hears the words of anguish wrung from lips of suffering because of his cruelty or oppression. Those in spirit whom he has injured appear before his vision, and the evil he has done returns to claim him as its own. He finds he cannot put this burden on another's shoulders, that he must face it and have it always before him, and his soul cries out in agony, "This is Hell." This is the first plane. The home of the spirit,—in part beautiful and in part horrible, in part good and in part bad,—he soon learns it is just as his thoughts builded; that if he would take one unsightly picture from memory's wall he must live the act over, must undo

the wrong, and, in living again, must live it right; when he makes compensation for the injury, he finds the act no longer visible to him. And so, one by one, he must live each evil thought or act over, and make it this time in harmony with all that is good. The way will be shown, but the labor is his, and the journey is ofttimes long.

Out of these trials, that which was weakness becomes strength; hard natures become softened, and the spirit, through remorse and suffering, finds greater development. When every harsh word has been recalled, every evil eradicated, each wrong undone, each vile thought made clean, new conditions will surround the spirit. The unsightly pictures and memories will pass away, and this first home of the spirit will become filled with happiness, a place fair to look upon, and one he may proudly call home. This first condition is the lowest plane of the spirit-spheres, and the saddest one. In it the conscience is awakened, and all the wrong, all the evil, ever wrought in knowledge, or wrought in ignorance, must be lived again ere the soul can take one step on the road of eternal progression.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

A CELEBRATED French writer died in Paris in 1817. She was the daughter of a Minister of Finance under Louis XVI., enjoyed the friendship of Rousseau, Buffon, Gibbon, and other men of letters, and was exiled by Napoleon in 1812. One evening she gave the following talk to a company, which I had invited, on the subject of the early mental training of children and of our duties to them:

"There are many things I want to say "to you. I was the woman Napoleon "feared and hated. I tried many things "when on earth and made my brain a "brilliant, polished receptacle. I was "without a particle of affection or gentle-"ness. I was proud of my wit and clev-"erness. I have had to spend much time "here trying to make a few bright flow-"ers bloom in the hard soil, and to tear "up the flaming, flaunting ones that had

"taken deep root there. It will help "women very much to understand this "philosophy. They are, as a rule, help-"less and undeveloped souls. It is pa-"thetic to see the way they follow blindly "where they are taught to go, without "once considering the wisdom of the teach-"ing. I think this philosophy will teach "them self-reliance, and will help them "to understand themselves. Their chil-"dren will profit largely from it and will "make splendid new types. I am in "earnest on this subject. It is my especial "work now to bring understanding to "woman. I am above all things a "worker, and so I find intense joy in "thus making my weak sex understand "what really great spirits they are. "Sometimes I believe it is a mistake to "think they are more spiritual than "men. They have not such large vices, "as a rule, but their souls are small and "petty, and few rise above sordid, every-"day duties, and see the great, beautiful, "wonderful world waiting for them to "enjoy.

"Many mothers are selfish and lazy. "They either leave their children with

"servants, or let them grow up self-indul-
"gent, uncontrolled men and women,
"simply because it is too much trouble
"to govern and correct. The poor chil-
"dren suffer for this all their earth-lives,
"and then progress is much harder. If
"women could be made to understand
"the great responsibility that rests with
"every human being, just within herself,
"they certainly would teach the little
"faltering feet the way to walk the path
"of life. Children must learn early to
"govern themselves, must learn to be
"generous, and, above all, must learn to
"think. Stop thinking for your children,
"you mothers, you stunt them! Teach
"them they must think in every little
"thing. Let them decide for themselves
"when it can possibly be done, and do
"not make little machines of the poor
"little souls. If you do they will grow
"into larger machines. The brain can
"be trained from babyhood, and must be
"so trained to have the best results.
"Teach the children to see the beautiful
"in life and to appreciate with their
"souls. Pour into them all the great
"thoughts of wise men, simplified for

"their understanding. Remember that "you are responsible for their lives. In-"deed, early training can develop a small "virtue and kill a vice which might in "after years grow large enough to make "a man miserable. Never think it too "much trouble to work for your child "and with it. Your reward will be great "and your joy unbounded when you see "the splendid spirits of your children. "You will remember that you developed "them and watched them through child-"hood with intelligent eyes. They will "be unblinded by the dead superstitions "of ignorant men. They will be made "keen and self-reliant through this new "enlightening philosophy. It sheds a "light on all the dark places, and can "easily be likened to that modern inven-"tion—the searchlight,—which clears "and brightens all it touches."

Another said: "Children coming here "in infancy are given experiences as near-"ly those of earth-life as possible, given "those experiences that are needed, as it "were, to form the soil for the plant to "grow. Then they are taken to the "Second Sphere, where they remain a

"long time. They make our best teachers,
"having nothing to unlearn, and they
"progress rapidly through all the Spheres.
"They need some earth-life, but naturally
"they are more nearly spirit when young,
"and easily take up the life and con-
"ditions here. I do not think early
"dissolution is unfortunate, unless the
"parents grieve very much. If they do,
"they act as a weight on the little spirit
"and chain it to them. The sweetest
"sound a good woman knows is the first
"appealing cry of her helpless child. Each
"day it grows more dear, and when the
"little lips respond and the tiny arms are
"raised, in confident love, the mother's
"heart grows rich with joy. Can you
"imagine the anguish of that heart when
"the child looks coldly into her eager eyes
"and turns from her aching arms without
"a sign of love or recognition? This is the
"anguish of the mother who deliberately
"destroys her unborn babe. That little
"embryo life must live, and it is cared
"for by tender spirits. When that mother
"enters into the new life, she feels the
"hungry, unsatisfied love of years beating
"in her heart, and every year the pain is

"deeper. She knows her child, but it sees
"only a stranger at whose door when
"helpless it had knocked in vain, and it
"turns away. The awakened mother's
"heart must endure intense agony before
"she can win the love she cast away. It
"is one of the saddest lessons in spirit-life."

THE SPHERES OF LIFE

EARLY in my work I understood that life continued beyond the grave; that personality was in no way lost; that when the spirit had compensated for all wrongs and made them right he would progress; but it has taken many years to reach these advanced spirits, and from them learn just what was beyond the first sphere, where our work had hitherto largely been confined. We have often asked what was beyond, or to what progression led, and have as often been told to have patience, that when we were prepared to receive and to understand, the knowledge would be given.

At last the knowledge that has long been desired has been revealed, and we find that the future life has seven spheres, each containing many planes; they are as follows:

1. Restitution.
2. Preparation.

3. Instruction.
4. Trial and Temptation.
5. Truth.
6. Harmony.
7. Exaltation.

I have written of the conditions in the first sphere as I know them from work done there and general information given me by spirit people; but in taking up the spheres beyond the first, I am now able to give the language of those who live in them and who describe them. One said:

"I know what we all know,—that there "are seven spheres. I have just reached "the third. Sometimes a spirit can speak "from his sphere to the next higher, as "you do while in the body, but only in "the same way. I mean that there is no "mingling together. When a spirit goes "from one sphere to another it is quite "unlike dissolution in earth-life. He is "warned that the change is near and has "time to put his spirit into a higher "plane of thought so that he will be pre-"pared to meet the new life. He says "farewell to all his friends. They join in "a general thanksgiving and celebration, "all congratulating and helping him on

"his way by strong uplifting thoughts. "When the time comes he is put quietly "to sleep, with the thought dominant in "his mind that he is to make the change. "When he awakes he is in his new home "in the next higher sphere. He has dis- "appeared from the old. There is no old "body to bury and decay. Each change "is for a higher and better life, and the "home awaiting is more beautiful, as he "builds with a surer, wiser hand, or, "rather, spirit. His home ceases to be "among his former friends when this "change comes. Thought has fitted him "to progress, and when that thought "which held him to the lower plane has "ceased, the embodiment of the spirit, "which is held together by his thought, "is visible no longer.

"Each new change is more difficult to "explain to you than the one preceding. "It is simply a higher life and a busy one "in which to develop ourselves along all "lines, especially the ones suitable to the "individual's taste. In this way, each "spirit becomes better fitted to be a teacher "and helper. It is a very active, pleasant "life, and sometimes seems like a big

"university town or country, with busy "students hurrying from lecture to lecture "and class to class. All are congenial "and light-hearted there.

"In the lower sphere one sees much "suffering among those still earth-bound. "They, too, are busy working out past "faults and they are often heavy-hearted. "Generally speaking, the first sphere is "the one where restitution must be made, "and where the final wrenching away "from earth conditions takes place. The "second is one of instruction, is a period "of study, during which the spirit gains "knowledge of self and natural law. The "third is one of teaching those in the "lower spheres, as I have said. The "fourth sphere is one of trial and temp-"tation. The fifth is truth, where error "and falsehood are unknown. In the "sixth, all is harmony. In the seventh, "the spirits reach the plane of exaltation "and become one with the great spirit "that rules the universe. There are "others, more advanced than I, who can "better tell you of the spheres beyond "this than I can. I have not been to the "fourth, and only know of it as you do,

"by the teaching of those who are there.
"We are told the spirits in the sphere of
"exaltation do not even there lose indi-
"viduality. They are embodied in all
"the beauty and good of the universe. I
"do not know that I can make my mean-
"ing clear. Although they keep individ-
"uality they permeate the universe. They
"have become so great and universal, we
"sometimes think they go beyond and
"must lose their personality; but we have
"no definite knowledge, and it is generally
"accepted they do not. It is difficult to
"understand or appreciate what this last
"sphere is, the development is so beyond
"our comprehension. Those in the second
"sphere do little, except to fit themselves
"for a broader and better work. Before
"reaching this condition they have freed
"their spirit from the burden of wrong
"done in the body, repaid every debt due
"mankind, dispelled the darkness of the
"first sphere. They work with open eyes
"and clear spiritual vision, and are at
"peace with all. This must precede the
"sphere of study and development. I
"have classes on purity, beauty, and
"patience, and there are classes on every

"conceivable subject,— music, chemistry,
"everything. They are different from
"those in earth-life, and one has to adopt
"different ideas. One of our engineers
"magnetizes your room each time you
"hear our voices. It is easier for those
"who have advanced to higher life to
"reach us than for us to reach you; there
"are not so many barriers. Yes, we
"always have places that resemble homes.
"Thought is not indefinite, and that
"makes our homes, and while we keep
"that thought our homes are permanent.
"You ask where is that home located. I
"would say to you that all that is space
"is peopled by spirits."

This lecture gave to us the spheres of progression. As you see, we were told not only their names, but something of the occupations that are pursued in the higher life. Not much can be told, I assume, but possibly all that a finite mind can grasp. I believe what I have written, not only because I know the one who talked, but because it appeals to reason, and is in harmony with natural law, as I understand it.

True, it is hard to understand where

these spheres are, but there are many things quite as difficult of comprehension. Astronomical instruments have shown that it is ninety-three millions of miles to the sun, but this really conveys nothing to the mind, because one cannot comprehend such a distance. We know that light travels at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second, but what that rate of speed is we cannot understand, for there is nothing tangible with which to compare it. Our actual knowledge of the electricity, of magnetism, or even of gravitation is limited, as are all of Nature's laws. Then, is it strange that one finds difficulty in appreciating what space is and how it is peopled? This thought of ours is even now free and can pass through space, but it goes with closed eyes, hears no sounds, and feels no touch. At dissolution, each sense is quickened, and all life that fills space is visible to the spiritual senses and tangible to spiritual touch and brain. Space must then take form, substance, and reality,—in a world of thought, boundless and endless.

"THERE is much to be considered "in putting this knowledge of the "future before earth minds. The "incredulous and ignorant will only jeer. "Remember," said one who has been in spirit-life nearly four hundred years, "the "world in which you live is in a very low "order of development. In many of the "other planets this philosophy of life is "universally taught, but you have com- "paratively only a few minds high enough "out of the slough of materialism to "comprehend it. In the Fourth Sphere, "where I am, that of trial, we are fitted "for a higher order of life. Here, any "weakness a spirit may still hold becomes "doubly alluring and seemingly irresisti- "ble. We finally overcome this by "throwing it out of our spirit. Some- "times it is a long, hard task. We are "made to do anything we do not like to "do, or, rather, we must learn to like to

"do it. Often when we help others, the "task is irksome and we long to keep "ourselves free for spiritual develop- "ment, forgetting that each deed for "others helps our own growth. In the "Sphere of Truth the spirits learn all "about the other planets and become "wise and uplifted, so that they can en- "ter into perfect harmony with the uni- "verse. Of course, this needs special "preparation and a high degree of devel- "opment. There, they are not taught by "contact with teachers from the higher "spheres—in fact, in my sphere we see "no teachers, everything comes through "suggestion. Our minds are receptive "enough to be taught and guided in that "way. Each sphere makes *suggestion* "just a little clearer and easier to grasp "than the one before, and so we are fitted "for the last, where we are able to throw "our individuality into the dominating "forces of the universe.

"The Sphere of Harmony is a prepara- "tion for the last great sphere, that of "Exaltation, where all the universe be- "comes one. There, they mingle with "all in the universe, and are helped and

"encouraged by them until they are
"ready to enter into a glorious com-
"munion of spirit. This means becoming
"an inseparable part of all the great
"forces of the universe. I have never
"heard of any spirits coming back to the
"lower planes from the Seventh, except
"through suggestion and influence. But
"through these, they are very near all
"spiritual natures. They really consti-
"tute the dominating force for good that
"is in and around everyone. The spirit
"of good in the universe is not individual,
"but universal. In the last sphere each
"spirit keeps his individuality, but each
"has by then become so great and mag-
"nificent that it can mingle with other
"spirits in harmony, making one grand,
"wonderful whole. If the spirits in the
"Plane of Exaltation could by any pos-
"sible chance become out of harmony,
"the universe would be obliterated and
"cease to exist. But this cannot be. I
"simply say this to show how they gov-
"ern and dominate everything. You ask
"if any from your earth have ever reached
"the Seventh Sphere. I am not sure.
"Your world is young compared with

"almost all the others and so there could
"be comparatively but few.

"Some of the planets do not have as
"many as seven spheres to perfection.
"They begin with a higher order. There
"is not much more that you can grasp,
"my friend. You have learned the essen-
"tials of each sphere, and the minor
"details are so vast and varied that you
"would have to write a book on each one.
"Besides, as I have said, it would be hard
"to convey the knowledge to material
"minds. Yet it is simple, and on the
"same lines as the rest that I have told
"you."

No voice from the Seventh Sphere ever spoke to human ears. Spirits from this do not return and speak to those on the lower planes. Their work is done through suggestion. In this way they come close to us all, but only the conscience hears.

One from the Fifth Sphere told me a little of the life there and of the conditions prevailing. He said:

"I am told that you have never had
"anyone before from this sphere. Here,
"we are taught all knowledge and how to
"use it for our individual good. We are

"brought face to face with the great "problems of life, the reason for all "things, and the ultimate result. These "are vast questions and are not yet fully "comprehended by us, but they must be "understood before we can enter into "Harmony, where we are taught how to "attune ourselves to the universe. There, "we will be taken into the life of the "worlds, but not until the last sphere are "we able to merge our individualities into "the creative dominant force. In the "Fifth we are taught all there is to know, "but in the Sixth we learn by actual "contact, and how to adapt ourselves "to all conditions of the universe. We "are all working toward perfection, and "labor to gain the last great Sphere of "Exaltation. My friend, I cannot explain "our life to you, because you would not "comprehend it at all. We are all "tending toward one great harmonious "whole, and each day brings us nearer "that state of harmony we desire. In "these last spheres our home life is almost "lost sight of. We are bands of con-"genial people, of course, but we are "separate, individual beings. Man no

"longer, like the animals, chooses a mate
"and carries her off to his lair. Here,
"there is something much higher and
"better, a universal brotherhood and
"companionship, always growing closer
"and higher until complete blending is
"formed. It is hard to put this into
"words, because it is so vast and wonder-
"ful and I doubt if you could grasp the
"whole beauty and force of it.

"There is life on many planets. Some
"are more advanced than yours; a few
"are even newer. Each is striving toward
"the same end and must reach it through
"many spheres of spiritual development,
"just as you will, until all are one. Life
"on the different planets varies, of course.
"On some the people are stronger, both
"physically and spiritually. Some have
"a first sphere that corresponds to yours.
"Others combine into one sphere what
"we do in three. When a planet is pre-
"pared, the life-force of the universe is
"clothed and individualized. When the
"soil is ready, the seed is planted. Other
"planets than the earth teem with life.
"I have not been to them, but have been
"taught of them by suggestion and know

"something of each and what degree of "development each has attained. I will "not be able to visit them until I gain "the Sixth Sphere. I lived in England "during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, so "you see my progress has been rapid. "Fortunately, I was a good man and had "no prejudices to start with."

From this I conclude that in the last sphere the soul of man reaches perfection and becomes a part of the great spirit that rules the world. Some idea of what this is may be obtained by considering the power of man's mind over matter, in the material sense. By the power of his intellect on this earth-plane man makes matter, in a limited way, subject to his will. This mind through ages of development and change grows in strength and power, becomes pure in thought and uses itself for good. When one possesses all that is to be gained in the lower spiritual spheres he will enter into that last sphere of strength, beauty, power, and splendor. His mind, which has gathered much power in its journey, mingles with all others that have ever lived, and that have reached perfection. This spirit-thought from all

the worlds, blending as one, makes the force that is called God—or universal good.

SPIRITUAL CONCEPTION OF GOD

IN order that one may have some idea of the character of my work, I give in this chapter a report, word for word, of a discourse given me on God. The spirit who gave it has aided me much by his teaching of the higher life. He said:

"I have some ability and am given "much thought. I was interested in meta-"psychic philosophy, and naturally I was "in very bad repute among those who "thought they knew life and its problems. "I could and did receive inspired writ-"ings, but they were destroyed after my "death by a sister. I knew something of "spiritual law, and I practiced it to the "best of my ability. I appreciated the "need of helping others. This led me to "establish a harbor for the sick." (Heriot Hospital, Edinburgh.) "Some one sent "me the thought that I was needed here,—

"I do not know who it was, but it was my "desire to be with you. I am interested "in your work, because my own life was "so much given to this thought. I did not "have much enlightenment save from phe-"nomena, but it was enough to make me "ready for the change. Yet I was dazed "at first, it was all so beautiful. I found "a dear younger sister waiting for me, "and together we have climbed to great "heights.

"Progression is unlimited. It stretches "away into the vast future. One may "climb and soar, but never reach the end "of all that can be done to make one's self "a perfect being. I understand that there "are seven spheres. I am in the Fourth, "but the last is without limit. Each plane "is more ideally beautiful than the preced-"ing; each, harder to tell about to earth's "ears. I cannot describe the wonderful "sounds we call music; they are so rich, so "harmonious; they find an echo in the "deepest places of the heart; they create "beautiful thoughts, and help one's devel-"opment in every way. The fields are "blazing with posies, and filled with song-"birds of brilliant plumage. Everything

"the heart or eye can desire is there, only "enhanced in beauty beyond our compre- "hension, and as we pass from plane to "plane we are always astounded. It be- "comes sublime. When one is away from "the earth-plane there is no more mixing "with the lower classes, except as your "work takes you among them when they "need help; but you live among your own "kind and often meet them as neighbors "through many planes, if your progression "is about the same.

"In coming back to you we pass through "all the planes below us, taking on their "different conditions as we come, taking "on a little more material in each one. "I can explain it only in this way, al- "though, of course, it is not material, a "little less spiritual would be a more cor- "rect expression. It is not difficult to "come back, but it is a little strange. "To go into the lower spheres seems like "taking a plunge into muddy water. As "a rule, each plane helps those directly "below it, except in special cases like this. "I think many of your friends have not "progressed as far as I have, and I was "sent for because it was thought that I

"could explain further. Those in the "lowest plane have only to come near, for "that is the earth-plane. Spirits in the "earth condition are on the first plane. "You are on the material plane, which is "lower still, and does not count among "the spirit ones. Our home may be said "to be space and what thought makes it. "We simply create the different condi-"tions about us by thought. A spirit in "the earth-condition, can, by his better "thought, change the conditions that "exist where he is, and be able to see "different good spirits about him.

"I would give this message to the world: "Be clean, faithful, and strong, and your "progression here will be rapid. I would "add to this: Be tender of the weak, and, "even if you understand nothing of the "future life, your progress will be good. "You ask me who and what is God? I "answer, *God is universal good.* I mean "the spirit of good that is in every man's "heart, tho' it is sometimes covered with "dust and dirt. I said universal, because "I know it is there. Sometime it will "grow and blossom. There will come a "time when man will know he is a part

"of the great scheme of the universe, and
"will realize that this scheme is good.
"More of God will come into his heart,
"the dust will scatter, and the bud will
"grow. God is the life, the spirit entity
"of each man, all the better part of him.
"God is the spirit that permeates all the
"best in man and matter. The word
"God is used by us. It is the thought-
"term of good. The Christian Saviour
"was simply a type such as all religions
"have,—a symbol of a perfect man.
"Each one should lead a good life, the
"best his conception suggests; then he
"will know that good is a blessing, more
"lasting than riches and renown. One
"cannot talk to the Church, my friend,
"but to individuals, and through them
"hope to reach the Church itself. Through
"the shepherd, you reach the flock. The
"change is very disappointing to many.
"They expect to find something very dif-
"ferent, and cannot make up their minds
"that they are not to throw all their bur-
"dens upon someone else. As I have
"said, when people have been conscien-
"tiously good, they are very easily taken
"into their right place. Sometimes they

" are stubborn for a while, but it all comes
" right in time.

"The best any can do is to try to make
" the world realize that the best in every-
" thing is most desirable, and that every-
" thing filled with good is best and lives on
" when evil is found despicable. One is
" happy when good; fearful and miserable
" when bad. *Nature is God*, is always
" good, always smiling even in her storms.
" Nature is but fulfilling her promise of
" future plenty, as a mother goes through
" the storm of childbirth that she may
" replenish the earth. Be not wiser than
" Nature. Follow her as closely as you
" can. Nature is natural in all her changes.
" The God-spirit is breathing through
" every fold of the rose, every leaf and ear
" of corn. Let the sunshine pour into
" your heart, and be generous, natural,
" and abundant with your good-will and
" cheerfulness. The rains will come when
" they are timed. They will replenish
" the green of the harvest and make it
" richer. The storms of life may beat
" upon you, but you will find they only
" break down the dead branches and you
" will be more straight and fair for their

"passing. God is in all this, and if you
"but open your heart and let into it all
"the good there is, you will find peace
"and exaltation. I will come again.
"Good night."

This is what is now coming to me from a little beginning, and I give these words to you as I received them, unaltered and unchanged.

ORIGIN OF MAN

THE subject next in importance to the future condition or state is the origin of the spirit or soul of man. Darwin, Huxley, and many other great naturalists, biologists, and scholars, have reasoned and speculated on this theme with great force and logic. They do not claim to be authoritative, and they offer to the expectant world no definite, tangible facts. All is theory. Their reasoning from a material standpoint is unanswerable, and if my authority is no better than theirs these words ought not to be weighed in the balance against the others that have been written on this subject. Certainly, I would not assume to treat of a subject so vast without definite information from splendid minds in the higher spheres of the great beyond. I know of no source in this material world where any positive knowledge on the subject can be obtained. Anything definite must,

therefore, come from the more advanced planes. If life continues and greater knowledge is acquired, life at some time in its progress will come to know something of the inception or origin of the spirit that is on the earth for a little time to develop character and individuality, and to fit it for the next plane. Some who have obtained such knowledge in their progression have talked to me on this subject.

I do not try to grasp and comprehend the Infinite Mind or the spirit-force that holds the universe in place and guides the stars, planets, and constellations in their courses, for I know that it takes ages and ages of development and work among the spheres of progression before minds become broad and receptive enough to grasp and to comprehend such teaching. So we in the lowest sphere can at best but touch the outer garment of spiritual knowledge and understanding. This Earth is yet young. When it came into being and was first peopled, millions of other stars and planets, teeming with life, were growing old. Those who had lived on them since the dawn of time

had long before met the change and mounted upward, through the spheres of progression surrounding their planets, on the journey to the Sphere of Exaltation. When a spirit enters the Seventh Sphere he throws into the dominant life-force all the knowledge and good that he has gathered in his journey toward perfection, and his perfect soul becomes a part and parcel of that power we call universal good. This spirit of good that radiates and permeates around, about, and through every terrestrial body, this life-force that is here and everywhere, is the combined souls of the exalted, and has power to speed embryo life.

"When matter, according to natural "law, becomes receptive, it is impreg- "nated with this life-force of the uni- "verse, and with the help of material "nature develops a soul. This overpow- "ering spirit-force, so strong and har- "monious with Nature, is able to enter "into the seed and give the power to live. "It is like the touch of a hand that starts "a machine into motion. The great "spirit of life, called God, is the match "to light the fire. Material must be laid

"ready, for spirit cannot create in earth "planes. It is not reincarnation, because "individual spirit does not enter. Only "the touch that germinates life in the "material seed is given."

Before occupation, this life-force was universal. The moment it is clothed, it becomes forever individual. This spirit of man comes from the Sphere of God, or Universal Good, and it returns sometime, enriched and glorified, through the spheres and planes of progression. So it completes the circle and adds its dominant force to the universal spirit that speeds embryo life and holds dominion over all worlds. Little understanding we have of the strength and power of mortal mind. No one here can have much appreciation of the power of one earth-mind after it has developed for ages. Little will any man ever know in this material world of the power of all the minds that have ever lived in this and all the other worlds, working in perfect harmony as one in the Sphere of Exaltation. Yet to this mighty force in and about us and all the other worlds we give the indefinite name of God. This

spirit-force, universal in character, this life that is not visible until clothed, enters, when material is receptive, and substance closes about it. What it becomes, whether vegetable or human, depends on the character of the matter that it inhabits, depends, also, on how much spirituality has entered. Gross matter will not receive as much of the spirit of God as refined material. What further becomes of it depends on the environment, teaching, and effort as it comes to maturity. Children of the base do not receive in the beginning as much of God as the children of those who have developed and who live spiritual lives. The more spirituality one takes on in embryo life the better life he will lead, the nearer to Nature he will come.

Spirit may enter matter and start it on the journey, but does not dominate it. This spirit that is clothed with a body becomes individual, is free to act and free to think. If filled with spirituality, the labor will be easier than for one on the lower planes. But all starting with what Nature was able to give and with what they were able to receive, must work

with what was given them; for it is only by labor and trials that character is made and the germ of spirituality increased. Little can be given in the beginning to anyone. All can make much of it, and must, in this or some other sphere, bring it to perfection by gradual growth. Spirit is a seed planted by Nature in each material body. Let the soil be fertile and kept clean, and spirit will develop, adding to the beauty of this and all the worlds to come; but without care or effort, spirit will not radiate; the weeds of vice and wrong will choke and smother, and it will lie dormant within the confines of the unclean substance that does not nourish or aid its development. Without culture and help it will not grow; it will not die; its progress will be stayed by mankind and it will be held in darkness. This spirit within us must have the light shed by kindness, and be watered by tears of sympathy and sorrow for the suffering world. The hand that does good unconsciously cultivates the soil and the hungering soul is nourished. It grows with wonderful speed with such aid, and vibrates within the body it inhabits, drawn

outward and upward by the dominant force of good from whence it came. This is the longing, the desire, the hope, the ambition of mankind for better things that speeds men to higher life.

This soul of ours was first a part, then, of the universal spirit of the exalted, which man calls God. It was an atom which in the instant of conception impregnated and entered receptive matter, which clothed with material became individual and commenced its journey on this earth of ours. It must go back through this and the other spheres of evolution and progression to God, whence it came. This is not done in the moment of dissolution, but must be reached by ages of labor in developing and perfecting the soul according to immutable laws. Not one step can be taken until it is earned. No wings will aid this progression to the higher spheres ; only honest, earnest work will avail. This is the watchword of future life.

GREAT PROBLEMS

THOUGH we talk freely, when all conditions are at their best, with men and women after they have passed through change called death, though we find that they retain consciousness and individuality, and are told much of their occupation and environment, many problems still remain. The spirits do not solve them, because they know little more of the solution than we do. They, like mortals, know what they have been taught only.

One who has worked with the American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research and its great thinkers, who has himself made this thought the study of a life-time, read some of these chapters, and asked me pertinent questions, which I submitted to spirit-intelligence. In answering, I use the words given me by spirits as are included within marks of quotation.

What of the Creation?

"The beginning of things was brought "about long before this world existed. "The universe was in a chaotic state for "many centuries, while this solar system "was gradually forming and becoming "perfected. The great forces were very "slowly evolved. The original propel-"ling force came from a mere atom "of good, that permeated seething, mass-"ing material. This held the tiny ele-"ment of upliftment. Very slowly light "came where there was darkness. Worlds "were gradually fashioned. Finally, life "began to take on form,—first, in vege-"table; second, in the lower animal; "third, in man. All these simply came "from an element of progress, impossible "to understand or to resist."

Many seem to think that one out of the body must know all about the universe. My own impression is that if he possessed the information a complete answer requires he would have advanced so far that he would return only with difficulty.

What of the personality of God?

"We have tried to explain the person-"ality of God to you before. We have "said we do not know absolutely. Many

"spirits think that God has personality;
"others, that God is but the combined
"souls of men, risen to the sublime height
"that makes them one with the universe.
"Spirits, just as minds on earth, form
"ideas from experience. I, myself, do not
"think there is a God other than this
"great united force of good."

I cannot conceive of a man-God, with personality. The universe is so vast, and this earth and all thereon so small in comparison, that I cannot understand how such a conception could be possible. But, comprehending in some little way the power of one man's mind over matter, I can appreciate the power and force of all minds in the universe working in perfect harmony. I can see God as a principle working universal good. I do not know what God is beyond what is told me. I cannot grasp the infinite; neither can spirits, until they become one with it.

What of the Christian Saviour?

"Christ was a wonderfully spiritual be-
"ing. His communion with spirits was
"unlimited, and He lived His life in an
"exalted state, which made Him seem
"different from other men—that is, of

"course, believing His life was not a
"mere legend. If He did live, He could,
"since He was so spiritual, have risen
"rapidly to the highest sphere and min-
"gled with those other exalted souls—
"exalted through gradual purification,—
"and so fulfilled His inspired promise
"to mankind. From time to time
"you have such unusual spirits among
"men. Religions have been evolved
"from their lives, all tending to uplift
"men. Christ was the highest type
"that has come to us, and the influ-
"ence for good in the story of His life is
"still unlimited. I have never seen the
"so-called Redeemer, nor any one who
"had; nor have any whom I know ever
"found any evidence here that He lived
"among men."

Why, then, is there conflict between spirit revelations?

Why ask a spirit to tell us now that which he himself may not learn for a thousand years? Spirits do not know what is beyond them any more than we know what is beyond us. If life is endless progression, how can they? From actually living in the next spheres, they

form opinions, based on such information as they have obtained, just as we do on economic questions. Those ideas may be honest, but may differ in conclusions.

I have positive knowledge that there is no death ; that it is instead a continuation of the earth-life. My neighbor has positive evidence of his present life, but no information as to any beyond, and he denies that life continues beyond the grave. He and I are both honest and each maintains his own opinions. So it is with spirit-people. All there know that life goes on. They know that they live, and think, and act. They see and feel their environment and learn something of the new laws. But it is absurd to expect them to tell us all about the universe, or to what progression leads. They know positively only the conditions that immediately follow earth-life. In this belief all spirits agree. They can only form an opinion based on their knowledge as to life in the further spheres of progression. Therefore, many spirits differ about the creation, about the personality of God, whom they have not seen, about the divinity of the

Redeemer they have not found. A conclusion based on an unknown hypothesis is pure conjecture.

It is not necessary or possible at this time for mankind to have positive information concerning the creation or the personality of God. It takes ages of labor and development to reach the sphere where dwells Universal Good. We ask too much of spirits. They know but little more of the Creation, of God, and of the Redeemer than we do, and one should not expect their opinions to agree regarding life and its conditions in spheres unknown to them.

Those in the same sphere may disagree as to future progression, and still be honest. One may believe that individuality is lost in the Seventh Sphere, while another may believe it continues. These questions are too vast for human comprehension, and are not necessary for human welfare. What we want to know is, Does life continue ? If so, in what form ? Truth is always in harmony with truth, but this does not mean either spirit's or man's understanding or expression of it. I condemn the teachings of no honest

spirit concerning life beyond his progression, for he can only express his opinion, as those spirit-intelligences working with me express theirs. They do not differ regarding the lower spirit-conditions, about matters they know as facts. Many mortals, not content to wait until individual development shall enable them to comprehend the answer, ask to know the Infinite, to find God, to see His face, to find a personality, to call Him, Father.

I see good in every act of kindness, in all the words of tenderness that fall from human lips, and to me the universal sum of all the good in all this world is God.

A short time ago I saw a strong man die. Throwing aside the dust that once it wore, a human soul went forth into the night, swift as an arrow sent from the bowstring, leaving no footprint on the trail. His own people were gathered about him, and with aching hearts and tear-dimmed eyes they saw the shadow fall. They did not know how or in what unfamiliar guise the soul left the world of men,—only knew that love and their restraining hands could not cause one hour's delay. Time

lost its power and even space could not hold the spirit back. The spirit sped out from the sight of those once held dear. Only thought could follow. Looking upon the mystery of death, we did not see the spirit rise above the clay and mount to a higher sphere, but who can say that it did not? If so, where and in what plane is the splendid mind that held dominion over the body, now lying inert, senseless, and useless? Is death the end? Is that sleep so deep it never finds its day? This has been a problem of life ever since men came out of savagery, of greater importance than all the aims, ambitions, and desires combined. We fear the mysterious, but fear is lost when understanding comes. All that is natural is good, and all that is good is for mankind.

A great wave of thought is sweeping over the civilized world. Men are not content to remain in ignorance. They are seeking to solve this mystery. They are working in secret. They are hungering for knowledge. They want to know where and in what sphere those they love and hold most dear live and labor. And to those who yearn for definite information regard-

ing the condition of the so-called dead they have lost and mourn, I send this greeting: There is no death, there are no dead. Those who have lived their time and passed from sight, still live and love and labor in the fields of everlasting life. Make the condition that Nature requires, and their voices will speak to you and greet you as of old. Make the condition, and they will write with the old legibility. Make the condition, and the hand of spirit, clothed for the moment with material, will clasp your hand. Make the condition, and you will see their faces. All these possibilities have been realized by me, as year by year I have made our conditions more perfect.

I want to emphasize this fact, that each one possesses latent psychic qualities which are subject to development in some degree; that in almost every family ordinary investigation will demonstrate that some member will be found who, in harmony with these laws, can get intelligent movement of solids, do automatic writing, see the form, and hear psychically the voice of spirit; and, in rare instances, contribute those qualities and conditions in which

spirit-people may clothe their vocal organs and speak with independent voice, vibrating in our material atmosphere, so that any one can hear just as I do. When such research is carried on in the home and results are obtained, they will aid understanding of these laws, because the source cannot be questioned. I have made the experiment in five well-known families and succeeded in four of them. While many others working quietly communicate with their friends out of the body with great freedom, and some I know who, having developed their psychic sight, see members of their family who have gone on, and other spirits, as distinctly as we see mortal.

These laws are all simple and natural. Those things that to mortal minds are mysterious in this philosophy, are called phenomena. But Nature never made anything phenomenal. Things seem so to the undeveloped mentally. Mastery of these laws does not require the labors of the scientist, who is a materialist and only dealing with material, has no comprehension of the laws that govern life. This understanding is within the grasp of

the family in any household, and it is from this source that knowledge of these laws must come.

Many great problems cannot be solved by mortal, but the primary question of continuity of life beyond this physical condition and the environment in the first spheres of progression may be learned by almost any household in the world to-day, by developing those psychic forces there possessed.

THE JOURNEY'S END

THE canoe rocks idly at the landing and my splendid Canadian guide, a child of Nature, who has for many years taught me woodlore, who has never been beyond the forest fastness, patiently waits, with paddle ready, to take the homeward trail across the lakes, over the portages, and down the rivers to the big water. The timid gulls that we have taught to come daily for food, and who know no fear, soar with graceful poise in the clear sky, uttering their plaintive cries, like a farewell. Standing at the water's edge looking at the little islands grouped about us, like sentinels guarding our cabin, and at the great trees which fringe the impenetrable forest, one feels a sense of companionship—they have been my friends these summer days. Here in the forest deep, Nature's mirror of the waters reflects the forms of rocks and trees, the glorious shine of sun

and stars and journeying clouds only less divine than man. And, now, with the first fallen leaf my task is ended—not completed, but finished to the best of my limited ability,—and I gather up the written pages and make ready to return to the noise and struggle of the city.

The woods are brilliant with red and the first kiss of winter is felt. The hunters are coming, and I long to be away before they have killed any one of the wild things I have lived amongst and learned to hold dear, because of their nearness to the Nature I love.

"We are leaves tossed on the broad "river of life, sometimes lying in the "small dark shallows near the shore until "a breeze or ripple quickens us to action, "and then we are carried toward the ulti- "mate end of all, the great Ocean of Ex- "altation. Wise are they who seek the "faster current, avoiding all stagnant "pools. The great force of the universe "sweeps us on and on, and in the end we "become a part of the power that speeds "all life."

If thinking men and women find reason and food for thought in these chapters on

Truth, I shall feel compensated. That they will do so, I cannot doubt, for I have had the knowledge brought so clearly and forcibly to me that to question would be to doubt my own reason. If man would only grasp the real meaning of life, if he would open the gates into the garden of thought, and plant therein seeds of understanding and truth, they would grow and bear blossoms that would fill his life with good. He would find flowers of happiness in every walk. Believe me, this is a cry from the hearts of many who have gone before, who have urged me to give the truth so that others might in time learn and avoid many mistakes.

The span of earth-life is pitifully short, and one's deeds are mighty in comparison. Let this truth reach you. Do not close the book with prejudice, but ask yourself if there is not reason and logic in what I have tried to tell you in this plain way. Any teaching that points to a good, upright life cannot be false.

"God is love and permeates every con-
"dition of Nature, love yields to the
"higher, turns the bad to good, and it is
"good because love has touched it."

"How few think justly of the thinking few,
How many never think who think they do."

Schopenhauer.