

We are a story-telling species. Henry Hamblin's story, is a model of a life worth reading about, a role-model. I am grateful for his life and for his books. Henry Hamblin, wherever you may be, thank you! God has truly made you a blessing for everyone.

HENRY THOMAS HAMBLIN

MY SEARCH FOR TRUTH

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EARLIEST IMPRESSIONS

I come of a deeply religious family. My father was the youngest son of the Rev. Joseph Hamblin, one-time Baptist minister at Foots Cray, Kent, who lies buried in the little churchyard in front of Foots Cray Chapel.

Father was the only one in his family who followed the religious life. Why his two brothers and sister did not do so, I cannot say. Yet my father, although religious, never followed in his father's footsteps by entering the ministry.

He was not without talent, and had he possessed more self-assurance he might have done as well as some ministers whom I have known. But Father was too gentle and timid to take a leading part in the church, so he never got beyond serving as a deacon.

Mother was of quite different calibre; she was capable of holding her own in any situation. She it was who ruled our home, but although she used a cane to some effect at times, hers was a reign of love. We children loved her more than we did Father, although he did not cane us and was terribly upset whenever we were punished.

My earliest recollections carry me back to the time when I was being prompted by Mother as I stumblingly said the child's prayer 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child, pity my simplicity, suffer me to come to Thee'.

I also remember my father taking me for walks and shewing me various wild flowers, and telling me how to recognize the songs of the different birds,

for being a countryman he knew them all. He used to tell me about God and how that not a sparrow could fall to the ground without our Heavenly Father knowing about it. He told me stories about Jesus and what He did and said while on earth. He taught me, too, to sing the hymn: 'When mothers of Salem, their children brought to Jesus'. I used to think a lot about Jesus.

He was very real to me and I greatly wished that I could see Him, and be like the children of Salem whom He took in His arms and blessed. It would have been lovely, I thought.

I had one brother and one sister, both older than myself, and Father used to gather us children around him and teach us to sing various hymns, such as children could understand. On Sunday evenings we had family worship. Father read from the Bible, after which we all knelt down (I can still recall how hard the floor was !) while he prayed for us long and earnestly, each one individually by name.

I also remember being alone with Mother, sitting on a little stool beside her chair. She would hold my hand while she talked to me about Jesus, who was the friend of little boys like me. She said that when I did things which were wrong I made Jesus very sad and unhappy. I could not understand how this could be, for Jesus was not there, having gone to Heaven to sit on a throne at God's right hand, but I was willing to take Mother's word for it.

Father spent a lot of time in prayer for us children. We could hear his moans and groans all over the house, although we could not distinguish

his actual words. But once, when I was near the door of his room, I did hear enough to know that he was pleading with God to save us children from perishing before it was too late.

Of course we children went to Sunday-school. I, being the youngest, went in the Infants' Class and was taught by a melancholy man whose voice was cast in such mournful tones that he might have been the angel mentioned in Revelation 8 which flew through the midst of heaven, saying in a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth.' In appearance my teacher looked like a funeral mute, and when he spoke it was as though the much-dreaded end of the world had come and that the whole population was sliding downwards into the rake of fire and brimstone, while he shouted out 'Woe Woe', just as a parting shot. Those indeed were dreadful days as regards theology and doctrine.

However, as soon as I could read fairly well I was transferred to the big school and put in a class presided over by a very likeable young man. We grew quite fond of our teacher, for he did not cry 'Woe, Woe', but told us all sorts of interesting things which he illustrated by means of rough sketches which he made on pieces of paper.

One day however the Superintendent came along and caught our teacher during one of his demonstrations and severely censured him for not using the stereotyped lessons which were issued by the Sunday-school Union. The young man refused to be regimented and thus turned into a mere pawn, so he left.

In his place we had the son of a baking-powder

manufacturer, one of the two well-to-do or comparatively rich men of our church.

He was however quite a different type of teacher and was evidently tarred with the same brush as was the Infants' Class leader, for he told us that evil was the reality.

He said that if you put a bad plum in with a basket of good plums, they will all be made bad; never would the good plums make the bad plum good. No, the bad plum will always cause the good ones to rot. So he said that God demanded that a sacrifice should be made, a human sacrifice which would put everything right and appease His anger, thus preventing Him from punishing us for our sins which we had committed, owing to this principle of evil.

The teacher did not point out however that we could not possibly have been responsible, seeing that his so-called principle of evil existed long before we were born. There was a boy in the class named Thomas, and he and I together delighted in asking our teacher awkward questions.

For instance, we asked him how it was possible that plums still went bad, if what he said was true. That was a poser for him, and I cannot remember that he ever answered it.

On another occasion he spent a lot of time trying to explain the doctrine of the Trinity. Thomas, bluntly telling him that such a thing was impossible, demanded, 'How can one person be three persons, and how can three persons be one person? The teacher could not answer the question; quite obviously, he did not know. Thomas was triumphant.

Looking back on these and similar incidents, it seems incredible that an untrained Sunday-school teacher should have been entrusted with the responsible task of instructing little boys in such a difficult doctrine as that of the Trinity—especially as he knew nothing about it himself. If the authorities considered it advisable to teach such abstruse theological tenets to children, one would have thought that they would have entrusted the work to well-trained theologians, not to raw, unlearned men who were quite ignorant of the subject. But perhaps there were not many boys of Thomas's calibre.

I do not, however, think that any of our ministers would have been capable of training the Sunday-school teachers in the mystery of the Trinity, simply because they did not understand it themselves. I have never met anyone who did.

Actually, of course, the real meaning is this: God Transcendent is God the Father; God Immanent is God the Son; God, the Holy Spirit is the Holy Breath. Without the Son (God within us) we can do nothing; through Him (God Immanent) we are able to approach the Father (God Transcendent), and we are sustained by the Holy Spirit, the breath of God.

Another recollection. Our teacher called us together for a confidential talk. He told us that it was time that we were 'saved'. Jesus had died to save us from being eternally punished by the wrath of God who had demanded a sacrifice of appeasement, yet this did not take effect if we were not 'saved'. We were saved, and yet we were not saved: that was all we could make out of it.

He declared that because we were not 'saved' we might go to hell at any moment, where we would be tortured for ever. He added that we might die through being run over by a cart or through sudden illness; or we might even be struck dead in the midst of our sins by an angry God. We were reminded that one or two of the boys belonging to the Sunday-school had died recently, and our teacher advised us to make up our minds quickly before it was too late.

By this time I was thoroughly frightened and thought that the sooner I became 'saved' the better. But Thomas was not convinced; he argued that we were not responsible for being sinful, therefore why did God want to punish us?

The teacher replied: 'Oh, but we are responsible! We are given free choice and if we choose evil we must be punished for it'. But Thomas produced a text which he said he had come across by accident and which ran as follows: 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.'

'Now', said Thomas, 'if that is the case, we are not responsible, therefore God has no right to punish us. Even an ordinary man would not do such a thing.' Again Thomas had got the better of the argument, and again the teacher was brought to a complete standstill.

About this time news came to us that our beloved late teacher had been killed in a big earthquake at San Francisco. As he ran out to escape from a large building, some masonry fell upon him which killed him instantly.

I expressed the fear to Thomas that perhaps our beloved ex-teacher had gone to hell, seeing that he was so unorthodox that he had been forced to resign from the Sunday-school.

But Thomas would not agree. He said that if there was a hell it would be for the really wicked, and that there would be a Heaven of some sort for decent and good people, even if they were unorthodox. This comforted me not a little, in spite of the fact that it sounded like heresy to me.

I do not know what became of Thomas and I have often wondered how he turned out. He could never have become a canting hypocrite, that is certain. He was fair and just and wise, far beyond his years, and had a much better idea of God than any of our so-called teachers possessed.

Thomas was intellectually honest, which was not the case, I am afraid, with some of the theologians and teachers of doctrine of the time of which I write. However, although the teaching was muddle-headed, the people themselves were good and kind, for Victorian people had many virtues which are sadly lacking today.

I have mentioned these incidents in order that the reader may form some sort of picture of the religious background of my early years; and also that my younger readers may glean some idea of the dreadful ideas of God which prevailed in those far-off days some seventy years ago.

On the other hand, it may well be asked: 'Why do you give us this account of your early childhood for you could not possibly have been a seeker

after Truth at such an early age?' That is certainly true, so far as conscious seeking was concerned.

But I think that we are seekers the whole of our life through, although we may be quite unconscious of the fact. There is something within us which is always seeking satisfaction. We may seek it in worldly and fleshly things, or even in highly intellectual pursuits, for we are as it were driven forward by desire. We may imagine that we really can find satisfaction in having our hopes and desires realized, but of course we find that contentment is as far off as ever.

We do not know at the time that what we are really seeking is God, and that God alone can satisfy our longings. Thus, although we may be seeking satisfaction in the things of this life, yet actually we are seeking God - although we do not know at the time that we are doing so.

But when we have 'arrived', even though it be but to a small degree, we begin to realize that although we may seem to have been the seeker and that everything depended upon our searching, yet actually God has been seeking us, and drawing us to Himself by the cords of His love.

Looking back on my life it seems to me that it has been like a magnet attracting steel filings: God has been drawing me (as indeed He draws all His children) all the time, even from my earliest years. Without being aware of the fact my so-called seeking has really been my response to God's attracting power of love.

Therefore this drawing by God must have begun as soon as my life on this earth began. Consequently it is necessary to recount these incidents of my early life in order to trace the way in which God has led and attracted me.

We all respond to this drawing process in different ways according to our individual make-up, circumstances, home life, and the early teaching which we receive.

It must not be thought however that because ours was a religious home, with Father following the religious life and Mother also doing the same only in a far less conspicuous way, that we children were a trio of saints. Far from it.

We were no better than we ought to have been, in fact often-times much worse. I can remember our little mother saying more than once that she wished she could run away and leave us, because we were so naughty. I can also remember her saying that we should be sorry some day when she was gone. As Mother was a woman of much spirit and strength of will, our misbehaviour must have been pretty bad to make her say such things !

As our parents were Baptists, we children were not baptized when we were infants, but had to wait for believers' baptism. When a boy or girl was old enough to know his or her own mind, and if he or she made a profession of faith and accepted a certain formula of doctrine, then baptism was granted and membership of the Church allowed. My brother, being the eldest, was the first to pass through this initiation. My sister followed but I, being very much younger, had to wait several

years.

I am not quite sure of the actual sequence of events during this period of my life; but I think that it must have been before I was baptized and received into the Church that I passed through a very disturbing experience which happened when I was about sixteen years of age. For some months I had been suffering from extreme melancholy. I used to pace our little garden, and as it was near a church I often heard the organ being played. The strains of the music almost drove me to despair for they seemed charged with all the sadness and sorrow that this world and its people had ever known. This must have gone on for months, yet I do not know how I succeeded in evading going to Service on Sunday evenings. Instead, I paced the garden paths, listening to the melancholy organ and feeling like a lost soul.

But worse was to follow. Suddenly and without any warning I woke up, so to speak, and realized that my true identity was not this little finite personality known as H.T.H. Then I exclaimed: 'Who am I, and what am I doing here?'

During this distressing period I went to my parents as well as to our minister and asked them what it all meant, but they could not help me. I sometimes think that if at that time I could have received a little help from a competent teacher, I might have been saved from much suffering and sorrow; but alas, there was no one who could help me in the slightest degree. Also, it might have helped if I had met some wise person who could have explained to me that the personal ego was not my real Self, but merely a shadow on the screen of time. If I could have been shewn, as does

Professor Mottram in his *The Physical basis of Personality*, that the real 'I' or core of my being is a spark, an atom of the fundamental Reality in the Universe, it might have made a tremendous difference to me in my almost despairing perplexity.

However none could help me, and so the golden moment was lost. Yet gradually the great realization of my true identity died away and I became normal, as people called it.

In reality, however, this 'normality' pushed me back into my prison, and it was many a long year before I was able to realize the Truth again.

On thinking the matter over after a lapse of nearly sixty years, though, I must admit that there may have been another side to the question. It might have been the worst possible thing for me at that age to have pursued the matter of my true identity. It may have been a premature breaking out of the Eternal Self, and this might have proved too much for me and unhinged my mind.

Truth is undoubtedly withheld from us until we are ready for it, for it is so powerful that it would destroy us, in much the same way as if we gaze at the sun too long without protective glasses we may damage the retinae of the eyes. Therefore a premature realization of the inner Spiritual Man might have proved equally destructive to me.

The experience, however, did prove to me that it was possible to have a true Cosmic experience without knowing any doctrine, or creed, or theological theories. Those around me who were full to the brim with these things had no direct

Cosmic experience nor knowledge of their true natures, whereas I who accepted none of these matters had the Cosmic experience.

Consequently I came to the conclusion that the Real Thing (which cannot be described) can be found only through experience, and quite apart from any doctrinal or theological theories.

What knowledge I have of God, and the way to find God and to realize Truth, I have found wholly apart from any doctrine or theory. This is not meant to imply that I attack these things indeed, I know that they are helpful to many.

But I have to put on record that they have never been helpful to me.

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE AND A CERTAIN MR. PLIABLE

As I grew older I quite failed to understand my father's theology. It transpired that he was a Calvinist and therefore believed in the doctrine of predestination, consequently it was not easy to understand why he should pray for us children so earnestly and imploringly. If our destiny as to whether we were to be saved or lost - was settled before we were born, why should it be necessary for him to pray to God to save us ere it was too late? However, I thank God that our father did pray for us so earnestly and persistently, for we certainly needed it.

But my parents' loving zeal on my behalf was not confined to long and earnest prayer. I wished at the time that it had been. Their prayers for my conversion did not worry me very much. I was quite content that they should continue to pray for me as it seemed to please them and, as far as I could see, did me no harm.

But soon after our Sunday-school teacher had told us that we had better 'get saved and flee from the wrath to come', my dear little mother started a similar campaign. The onslaught by our Sunday-school teacher was not too bad for, being frightened by what he said about going to hell if we should be run over in the street, we were only too glad to agree to what he said, and really mean it at the time. But the effects soon wore off and we were not worried about the subject again.

But with Mother it was different. It was easy enough to give way to her gentle pleadings and

really want to be a good boy - but I was not allowed to forget her concern for me.

Again and again I was asked if I had given my heart to Jesus, yet when I stuck up for myself against my sister and brother, I was told that I was inconsistent. Naturally enough I got very weary of being worried, cajoled and harried in this way.

I had been very ill, I remember, when Mother first began this process of direct action, instead of relying on prayer. I was extremely weak at the time, not even convalescent. Mother said that I might easily have died, but God had spared me. He might not spare me another time, therefore in order to be safe I ought to be 'saved'. I gave in to her pleadings, but it made me very unhappy to think that God was of such a nature, that we had to be 'saved' in order to escape from His wrath.

I remember, too, that Father began to deal with me in much the same way. He got me by myself and told me that he had something very serious to say to me. He said that it was time that I came to a decision. But Father was more reasonable than the others who seemed to think that I could be persuaded into being a Christian by argument and pressure. He apparently did not quite agree with that line of attack, but made me promise that I would become a 'seeker', and then nearly every night would ask me if I was still seeking.

I am afraid though that in order to escape his attentions and so avoid awkward questions, I often told him that I was. But of course I was not. All the badgering to which I was subjected merely tired me out, and did not make me a real seeker.

However, in course of time I followed in the footsteps of my brother and sister, by asking to be baptized by immersion according to the rites of the Baptist Church.

After the morning service my father took me into the vestry, and told the minister that I wanted to join the Church. I was very emotional at the time, so that when the minister began to question me I burst into tears. All that the dear old man asked me was: 'Well, my dear boy, do you love Jesus?' I had been expecting him to question me about doctrine which might have been difficult to answer, so that when he asked the simple question, I was reduced to sobs, as I confessed that I did indeed love Jesus.

I knew then that I always had done so, and that although I was a rebel against theology and doctrine, I should always love Him, even though I might follow Him but a very long way off.

It was at a special Sunday evening service that I was baptized. I was just one of many candidates. I was conscious that the church was packed with people, especially in the gallery which permitted the best view.

The platform beneath the pulpit had been removed, revealing a large pool filled with water about three feet deep. The service was a very impressive one, yet what hymns were sung or what the sermon was about, I cannot recollect. I do remember though that the congregation was very interested and very quiet. At last the minister went down the steps into the water. Then he called the first candidate, and so the ceremony began.

When my turn came I felt strangely elated, and when I was actually immersed, was conscious of a great spiritual Presence. I know that I felt very happy, peaceful and carefree. For once, everything in my life seemed to be just right; I seemed to have found my true place and to be at the heart of an interior harmony which was the perfect expression of the Divine Idea.

Mine had not been a happy life. My disposition was not light-hearted, and my temperament was what is called difficult, consequently I cannot remember ever having been really carefree. Therefore when during my baptism I felt lifted up into a state which transcends happiness, and which can be likened only to bliss and indescribable joy, the experience was unforgettable.

When I was received into the Church and was allowed to take part in the Communion service, I was not conscious of the Presence at all. This deeply disappointed me. The joy and bliss which came to me at Baptism had continued with me for a time. Then the feeling of upliftment began to wane and finally died out, like a fire in the grate which goes out because of lack of attention. Perhaps that was why the love in my heart grew cold - through lack of attention.

Yet it is a fact that it does not seem possible to stay permanently on the mountain top of spiritual experience. For if there is anything in us which is unredeemed, or which needs sublimating, then we must needs go down into the valley again to meet our Apollyon.

I however had not got as far as that. I was more like Bunyan's shallow-hearted companion, who when

he fell into the Slough of Despond turned round and went back to the City of Destruction. I responded easily and quickly to the call to the Divine Life, but I easily tired and soon gave up in face of the difficulties of the way.

Nevertheless, God had not forgotten me, although I had so quickly grown weary of Him.

It was easy to feel happy and good at a prayer meeting and to enjoy 'the fellowship of saints'; but it was far from easy to keep my mind fixed on Divine things when I was at my daily work.

There the atmosphere and the language were far from heavenly indeed, they savoured more of the Bottomless Pit. I used to wonder where all the filth and profanity came from, for such things could never find their origin in the human mind. The only explanation was that certain of my fellow-students were open channels to a belching up of evil from that plane which is like a cesspit of iniquity.

That such a plane exists we know from the fact that those who unfortunately become 'possessed' (although they have never in all their life heard such evil language), will in their insanity pour out the most fearful obscenities and profanities.

It is unlikely that the workshop in which I spent my working hours was either better or worse than any other similar place. Consequently, what I had to go through was typical of what every boy or young fellow, who tries to live a life according to Heavenly principles, has to face.

Some are strong enough to stand fast and to win through persecution and ridicule; but alas, I was

not strong, but weak and yielding. My mother used to quote a text against me: 'Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel'. I used to start out with high hopes and in a spirit of easy optimism, but before long I would be cast down and discouraged. Then, like Mr. Pliable, I would soon be back at the place from which I had started. Gradually I succumbed to the temptations of my workshop environment, and in consequence found myself living a dual life.

At home I would be the highly worthy Dr. Jekyll, while in the workshop I would be the highly reprehensible Mr. Hyde - a deplorable state of affairs which could not continue indefinitely. The highly respectable Dr. Jekyll side of me was merely a sham, a mere shell of pretence, and sooner or later the shell would crack, revealing the real state of affairs within.

It was not so difficult to keep up the deception while I lived with my family; indeed, it was comparatively easy to fit into the framework of home life. Here was a set pattern to which I had been accustomed all my life: we children were expected to act with propriety, to be well behaved, to attend public worship and so on. There were no smoking, drinking, dancing and going to theatres. To all this I fitted in quite easily, for I never found it difficult to mould myself to my immediate environment. It was a case -with me - of being all things to all men. It just depended upon my environment at any given moment whether I was pseudo-saint or rollicking worldling.

Of course this sort of thing was very bad for me. It was baneful for my health owing to the inner

conflict which was engendered; it was also detrimental to my spiritual life.

The time came however when it was deemed advisable for me to leave home. Dr. Jekyll was sorry at the prospect, but Mr. Hyde was thrilled with the feeling that at last he was going to have the opportunity of really kicking over the traces and having a high old time. So it was with mixed feelings that I left the parental roof for the first time.

It was an exciting, or at any rate a thrilling, experience for it was to a small country town of some 2,000 inhabitants in Norfolk that I went in order to fill a very humble position.

The little town was not much more than a large village, but it had a market square, a town hall and magistrates' court - altogether it was tidy, clean and compact. There were also two public houses, an hotel, a church and a Congregational chapel. The glamour of it all comes back to me as I write, but alas I cannot express its magic!

After the artificialities and monotony of life in a London suburb, to be in a real country town was an inspiring change. I was thrilled; here indeed was life! I was near to the source of things, to the heart of nature. Who would ever live in a soulless suburb? I mused. The very thought gave me a feeling of suffocation ...

The Congregational people soon found me out. They had received a letter from the church secretary at home, asking them to look after me. I was invited to attend church services, to join their literary and debating societies, and to engage in various

other activities. This I did, and for a time Dr. Jekyll was much to the fore - but alas, there were no spiritual life and power to support him, consequently it was not long before Mr. Hyde began to make his presence felt.

In fact, he took almost complete control of the situation.

Evil thoughts were allowed to dominate my mind. The old Adam nature came to the surface and I led a life which so far from giving me any happiness or satisfaction, brought me great unhappiness and dissatisfaction. How easily we are misled by desire. We think that if only we can have a certain thing that the gratification which it gives will bring us satisfaction. But instead we find that it yields us the misery of remorse, together with an increased sense of emptiness, dissatisfaction and frustration.

There might have been some excuse for my wild companions. They knew no better. But in my case there could be none, for had I not had glimpses of the Heavenly Vision? I seemed to be like the man, spoken of by Jesus, from whom an evil spirit departed. No good spirit took the place of the evil spirit, so that when the latter returned accompanied by seven other spirits, even more evil than itself, they were able to enter into the man and thus was his last state worse than his first.

Mine was indeed a Jekyll-and-Hyde life. And like the little girl in the nursery rhyme who, when she was good was very very good, I also in my Dr. Jekyll state lived almost an austere life, one of impressive propriety. I was quiet, wellbehaved, having no love for anything worldly or unseemly; I was content to stay at home, or to attend lectures

and concerts, or engage in debates, or write and read papers.

Yes, like the little girl, I was very very good, but-!

Yes, that was the trouble. The pendulum of my life would swing too far either way - first to the right, when all was good and orderly, then to the left, when all was evil and disorderly. Like the man in the parable, the evil spirit would leave me for a season, and my life would be all that could be desired; then after a time it would return, accompanied by a number of other evil spirits, so that my last state was worse than the first.

Looking back, I can now see that God was leading and guiding me even in those days. He was giving me enough rope to enable me to learn through bitter experience, sorrow and suffering, the great lesson that of ourselves we can do nothing.

Yet it did not seem much like Divine guidance then, rather it seemed that I was being impelled by a hundred devils. In my lucid moments I pondered deeply over the situation and it became obvious - not only to myself, but to everyone who knew me - that I was deteriorating.

Also I was becoming careless in my work as well as in other things.

Friends said that if I left the town, thus breaking away from the wild set which they believed was the cause of my weakness, I might turn over a new leaf and settle down to a normal life. So that is what I did. I left the town and went to the Midlands where things were as different as they could be - the people, the way

of living, my working conditions.

In a word, it was a complete change. I started off with renewed hopes for the future, and for a time did well; but before long the old story was repeated, and in each case 'the last state of that man was worse than the first'. So again I left for another place in order to make a fresh start, yet again the same thing was repeated.

It was at this time that I began to suffer from bouts of terrible remorse and periods of black despair. A very fine young man did his best to reclaim me and pleaded with me to join in with him to live the religious life.

He was about to become an Anglo-Catholic priest and urged me to follow his example. He said that transubstantiation was the great secret, and that he had known men of grossly immoral characters who had become completely changed and master of themselves and their passions, simply through believing in and practicing transubstantiation. I was attracted, but not convinced. I was attracted more by this line of thought than I was by my father's hard and harsh doctrines, but I did not feel ready to live the religious life as this good man lived it. I was much affected by his love for me and his anxiety for my welfare, but I refused his outstretched hand.

And so we parted. What became of him I never knew. He was a fine fellow, a true fisher of men, and I send him my love. (That is one of the lovely things about the Inner Life: we can send love to all men wherever in God's universe they may be. So now at this moment I send my friend my love and at this moment he receives it.)

So my solicitous friend, looking very troubled, left me while I continued my self-willed and devil-possessed way, feeling distinctly unhappy and uneasy. But the feeling wore off after a time, and once again I was following too much the devices and desires of my own heart.

It was about this time that I suffered much from remorse and was filled with the anguish of the lost (i.e. those who have lost their way). My affairs too were in a desperate and unhappy condition. So I decided to return home, for I came to the conclusion that there I would be able to live the kind of life that would be expected of me. I felt that the discipline of my parents rather austere way of living would be beneficial and that I would be able to forget the past and thus make a fresh start in life.

At this point in my story it may be asked: 'But what about your search for Reality?' My reply is that I cannot remember making any conscious search for Ultimate Truth at all, so that my search - if such it could be called - was quite unconscious on my part. I was searching by not searching, so to speak.

Because I was seeking for satisfaction where it could not be found - in excesses, in sensation, in the things of this world and the flesh - it does not follow that I was not seeking God. There was something within me which responded to the drawing power of God who is Love, but the trouble was that I sought satisfaction in the wrong things - in the broken cisterns of the world and the flesh - instead of in the Living Fountains which can never

fail.

We may possess great powers and possibilities, yet if our lower nature is not redeemed or sublimated, these powers and possibilities may find expression in unregenerated forms.

It would seem that in the case of some of us, these powers become awakened before we are ready for such a thing to happen. My good Anglo-Catholic friend said that he could see great possibilities in me, and that if only they could be harnessed to the right cause, or be sublimated, then my life would become a channel of considerable blessing. But how to bring about this change he did not know, neither did I.

It is I think a true saying that a great sinner, if thoroughly converted, can become a great saint. I have been a great sinner; indeed, at times I have confessed to God that I was the greatest of sinners (and I meant it), consequently I ought to by now to have become a great saint, but, alas, I see no signs. But I can say that I loathe the things which I once loved, and that my only ambition now is to follow Him who has blazed the trail and trodden the path that we all must tread. It gives me a thrill to think that we are all traveling along the same path - 'the path the saints have trod'.

We are all one brotherhood, one fellowship of saints, and this includes the weakest and humblest among us. We belong to that company among which none wants to be ministered to but only to minister, and to be looked upon as the least of all.

When the disciples argued as to which should be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, they showed that they were not ready for the Kingdom. For those who are heavenly-minded have no desire for preferment: they are content to take the lowest seat at the table.

Adopting for a moment the conventional idea of Heaven as a walled city with a gate in it, presided over by St. Peter, I love to imagine myself (if ever I get thus far) as slipping in unobserved while St. Peter is engaged in attending to some matter of importance and then hiding myself in a corner where no one would notice me, where I could join in the singing and praise, pouring out my heart in gratitude and love to my Lord....

I decided therefore to wind up my affairs and to leave the town. This was a sad business, for I had some good friends who had stood by me through thick and thin. They knew that I was almost penniless yet one gave me a shilling- which was all he possessed; another had no money but insisted on my accepting a wonderful walking stick which he had made. This was his greatest pride and pleasure, so I accepted it because of the love which lay behind it.

And so it went on ... We were a small group - all victims of human frailties, but all good friends, always willing to share what we had and to trust the morrow to provide for its own necessities.

Thus came to an end the first phase of my pilgrimage or, as some might prefer to term it, my career as a modern prodigal son. I was at this time less than twenty-three years old and had been

away from home about four years, yet I had worked in no fewer than three different places.

So I had nothing about which to boast for I had achieved nothing. I was a complete failure, a ne'er-do-well or, as my brother described me, 'a messer'. However, God was leading me and He can teach us more through our failures than through our successes.

As I look back on those far-off days, my heart is filled with devout thankfulness and gratitude to God for exercising a restraining influence upon my life. I almost went to the devil - but not quite. It was the love of God which saved me from complete self-destruction. Although always on the brink, love kept me from falling over.

3 BROKEN CISTERNS

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out of cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.-Jeremiah 2:13.

When I returned to my parents' house I did not go as did the prodigal son. I just returned home, neither expressing sorrow nor explaining my shabby appearance and penniless state. Yet I met with no reproaches: I was accepted and made welcome. How great indeed is the love of some parents !

It was in a chastened mood however, that I resumed my place in the family circle, but I doubt whether there was any real change of heart. That is to say, the atavistic and irresponsible elements in my make-up remained unsubdued - they were still there lying dormant, ready to come to the surface whenever opportunity offered. I desired as ardently as ever to live a blameless life, and I believe I also longed to follow the religious life; but my experience was like that of St. Paul: 'For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do'.

It was soon after I returned home that the Presence (which was with me at the time of my baptism) came to me again. Elsewhere I have described this experience as follows:

'One night I felt that I must pray, so I knelt down by the side of my bed. Immediately I became aware of the Divine Presence. I felt that God was near and that His Presence filled the room. This Presence was real and tangible. It was warm and

glowing: it was not merely a state of mind or consciousness. It was something more than that. It was as though the Lord Himself had come into the room and had come very close to me, and that I had entered into His aura, or whatever we may call the spiritual atmosphere which surrounds Him and which is emitted from Him.

It is not possible to describe such an experience. All care, anxiety and fear vanished, and I felt that I was cradled in Divine Love, and poised in it and in the Eternal, effortlessly, just as the Heavenly bodies are poised, effortlessly, in space. The deep peace of the Eternal flowed through me like a river; yet at the same time it was as though I was being carried along on a Stream of Divine Bliss, and that the Lord and I were unified and had become one in union for ever. There was I, cradled in Love, immersed in God's Inward Peace, and floating out on to the bosom of an Infinite Ocean of Infinite Bliss; yet, at the same time, His Peace and His Bliss flowed through me like a great river, and I was one with it, while, paradoxically, it seemed that I was the river itself.

But just as Peter and James and John were not allowed to remain on the mount of transfiguration, so it was with me. The night of blessed revealing came to an end; the blissful sense of the near Presence departed; the realization of union was lost - and the vivid experience faded into a memory.

Time passed, and I became so immersed in the material life that it took a series of sharp shocks and considerable upheavals in order to reduce me to that dependent and receptive attitude

without which it is impossible for any revealings to be made.

In times of great sorrow and loss, or in times of great strain and stress, crisis and difficulty, the Presence has come to me as He did in my early years. Also, at other times, when a great blessing has been approaching, I have become filled with a great peace and sense of Heavenly joy. In fact, that is the way in which one can be guided and forewarned. If what we call an evil experience is approaching, then a dark and chill cloud descends upon us, destroying all sense of God's Presence. If, on the other hand, what we call a good experience is approaching, then we become encompassed about with light and radiance, and filled with joy and bliss.

How wonderful is the Love of God, and how gracious the Lord is! To think that I should be favoured with such an experience after all my wildness and transgression! One would have thought that after such a gracious experience I would never have fallen away again. Yet its effect wore off after a time, and in spite of the veneer of the Dr. Jekyll appearance of piety, Mr. Hyde's propensities were as active as ever.

I lived at home for four or five years, and built up a business out of nothing and without any capital. Then I had a long and serious illness from which I did not recover entirely. So I turned the business over to my brother, and once more left home, to seek health and fortune elsewhere.

Fate took me to the Eastern counties where at a seaside resort I made many friends. It was during this period that I got married to the lady to whom

I was engaged, and for a time we lived on the Norfolk coast, sharing a cottage with a farm worker and his wife - a most delightful couple.

It was, however, before my marriage that an incident occurred which seemed to shew that God wanted to make use of me, in spite of my many lapses and irresponsibilities.

It happened in this way. One Saturday evening the assistant Congregational minister called on me and made a strange request. He asked me if I would deputise for him the following morning at their church about two miles away as the senior minister had been taken ill suddenly, so that the assistant would have to preach at the parent church. At last after much persuasion I consented, but on condition that my friend, the Y.M.C.A. Secretary, should go with me and give me his moral support as well as help to conduct the Service. By this time it was late evening and I had work to do, so I had no time in which to prepare a sermon.

Never had I felt more miserable and helpless than I did when going to Church the following morning. I had neither sermon, nor text, nor had I even a reading or hymn chosen.

I felt like a man must feel when going to his execution; indeed, while my friend opened the service by giving out a hymn, I would gladly have died if only I could have escaped the coming ordeal ! I wished devoutly that I could have sunk through the floor, never to be seen or heard of again. But it was not to be. Inexorably the service proceeded, each minute bringing me nearer my doom.

In vain I looked through my Bible for a portion to read, but being in a state of panic my mind could not concentrate on anything.

Then all at once when I was in the deepest despair and feeling really desperate, I began to read - apparently quite by chance - part of John 2:15-17

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ...

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

At once, in the twinkling of an eye, the burden was lifted from me and with it the darkness and fear. For a time, at any rate, I entered into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God'. I was filled with joy and peace, for once again the Presence had visited me. The service proceeded, but I felt no more fear or dread. Even my friend's strained whisper, telling me not to forget the special prayer of thanksgiving, failed to upset me. I led the congregation in a prayer of thanksgiving quite extempore and as I prayed we all seemed to be lifted up into the bosom of God. This was a good preparation for the sermon, yet even now I did not know what I was going to say; but I felt intuitively that God had given me the right text and that He would also tell me what to say about it.

And so it proved. For as I read out the three verses, I entered into a larger consciousness, and saw all life and humanity spread out before me. I saw men lusting and striving, grabbing and scrambling, clutching eagerly at the baubles of life yet failing to hold them, and then being caught in eddies which drew them down out of

sight.

For a short time I seemed to have Cosmic Vision. I seemed to be standing on a mountain top looking down at a sea of faces, with a feeling of intense pity in my heart.

What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world (of worthless baubles), and lose his own soul?'

Everything was spread out before me; I seemed to see into the hearts of struggling men and women - their hopes and fears, their desires and frailties, the hopelessness of all their strivings.

Love not the world ...for the world passeth away and the lust thereof.

And as I spoke tears came to my eyes. The whole dreadful tragedy was so clear to me and, so it seemed, to the congregation also. And then came the positive promise contained in the text

But he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.

Yes, that was all that we had to do - to do the will of our Father, God; not to believe in any doctrine which might affront our intelligence or sense of justice, but just to do the will of God! If we do so we abide for ever, for the will of God is the Divine Order which never changes or grows old.

When I had said all that the Presence wanted me to say, I left off, and the service soon after came

to a close.

When I look back on this incident it seems to me that it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. For a brief space I was really in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and like the apostles I was given not only power, but prophetic insight. What is amazing and past all human understanding (or so it seems to me), is that God should have chosen one so frail and unworthy to be His channel. Yet it would seem that it pleases God to do this sort of thing.

Looking back over the years I see another thing very clearly. It was when I was at my extremity and in an agony of helplessness-when I realized that of myself I could do nothing-it was then, and not before, that the Spirit came to me and lifted the burden and set me free.

Perhaps this is the explanation of the mystery. It probably is in my particular case, for every great enlightenment which has come to me since that experience has come when I have been in a state of dire extremity. It is probable that I am one of those who can learn the deep truths of life only through bitter experience and frustration. When one has learnt one's lesson in this way, it is well learnt, so that one is inclined to think that there is no other way. I am quite content to have come the difficult way, but nevertheless I believe that God has a better way, for the way of the Spirit is harmony and peace. However, I can only describe the way that I myself have come, and tell of that which I have learnt through practical experience.

Now it was after we were married that I became acquainted with a gentleman holding a high position in a nearby town, and who was very much respected. In appearance he looked particularly healthy. Although elderly, he had what is sometimes called 'a schoolgirl complexion', his eyes were bright and he possessed remarkable powers of endurance.

He used to rise at four o'clock every morning and in spring and summer would walk about eight miles before going to business. He lived on two meals a day, which at that time consisted of fruit and nuts. Later he added cereals, but not pulses. His drink was water.

Anyhow, this remarkable man aroused my interest, for I could do none of the things which he was able to do so easily, in spite of the fact that I was only half his age. For instance, if I had been able to walk eight miles before breakfast, I should have been tired out for the rest of the day. Yet this elderly man did it easily and without fatigue. Also he beat me easily at mental work requiring close concentration, and he accomplished it without fatigue.

If I attempted similar feats, I became exhausted. It was natural then that I should want to know how he did it. What was his secret? He explained that we could control ourselves and our lives entirely by diet: if we were ill we could cure ourselves by fasting; if we were too stout or too thin we could regulate our weight simply by being selective in our diet. Everything, he said, was in our own hands.

My friend also lent me some books, one of which was Fasting and the No-breakfast plan. I read this

with avidity, thinking that at last I had found the great secret of life.

Then I came across other books which made even more remarkable claims. These told me that I could become quite heavenly and godlike if only I would eat pure food. They assured me that if I would but do this, I should have pure blood and then because of the purity of the blood which flowed through the capillaries of my brain I should think pure thoughts, after which would follow pure actions - and so on to sainthood! They also declared that disease would cease, and that we should all live to a great age. 'Look at the elephant,' exhorted the pundits, 'and be wise. He eats only vegetable food and lives to be a hundred, whereas the dog who lives on flesh dies after a few years.'

I must have been very gullible, for I swallowed everything that the books stated - and really believed it. But more: I insisted upon everyone else believing in it also, and so I deluged my friends and relations with a stream of propagandist literature-booklets, magazines, pamphlets and leaflets, becoming a thoroughgoing crank and a general nuisance to everyone who knew me.

When I started telling everyone the glad new gospel, that everything on this earth was to be put right quite easily through a change of diet, I expected that they would accept it as eagerly as I had done. But I was doomed to disappointment, for not one of them did so. This not only disappointed me, but filled me with anger. The weakness of my case lay in the fact that I did not look healthy, neither did I feel well.

I therefore decided that I must make myself fit -

then perhaps they would listen to me. As usual, I went to extremes: I fasted and followed all the food fads that I knew of - but all in vain!

About this time my wife and I left East Anglia and went back to London. There I carried on my propaganda, and with my fastings and freak diets. I was so enthusiastic that the minister of our church asked me to give a lecture. This gave me a new idea, and I could see a new channel of propaganda opening up before me, so I readily accepted the offer. The meeting was a great success - so much so that before long I found myself fulfilling many engagements ...

In spite of all my efforts however I did not look well, whilst I suffered frequently from heavy colds.

It was about this time that I discovered in a little newsagent's window, a copy of MacFadden's Physical Culture Magazine. I bought a copy at once, and perused it eagerly.

What struck me most was the fact that MacFadden recommended two meals a day of fruit and nuts besides, of course, outlining all sorts of exercises. I used to get up early in order to do exercises, bathe, and also go for walks, but I tired myself out and became excessively thin. Still I persevered: I sought to become a picture of health, poised and cheerful - but alas, I was none of these. I was irritable, suffered from bad colds and my weight fell from about twelve stone to nine stone six pounds.

However, it was not my physical condition which was my principal disappointment. I found through

bitter experience that all the assertions made about the eating of non-flesh foods automatically translating people into saints and gods was pure moonshine.

Believing what I had been told and what I had read, I had incorporated these assumptions into my lectures - consequently I passed on to others irresponsible and unsubstantiated advice. And because I misled people in these matters, it became necessary that I should learn and prove through bitter experience the absolute falsity of the statements I had made. There was not a single claim which I had made which was not to be demonstrated in my life and experience as completely false.

I remember now that I was warned by a wise and good man about this very thing. At his invitation I lectured at his Baptist Church. The lecture was well attended and passed off successfully. A few days afterwards the minister called and stayed to tea. In the course of conversation he told me, apropos my lecture, that he felt that I was putting the cart before the horse, and that what I was teaching was an inversion of truth. He further remarked that if he had been giving the lecture he would have emphasized the fact that first of all we must change our thoughts, after which right action and the adoption of a right diet would follow.

Of course I could not agree with him, and when he left he may have thought that he had failed in his argument- yet his visit was not in vain. Everything that the minister said was to be proved true in my own life, and I remember him with deep

affection....

Time passed, and my enthusiasm both for extreme dieting, fasting and physical culture began to wane. For one thing, I could not demonstrate any good results in my own life and affairs, and I also found that there were others who, following the same cults, were as unfruitful as myself.

As I look back, I am appalled at my denseness, but evidently it was a necessary phase through which I had to pass before commencing the next stage. I had to learn to put first things first, and not to attempt to improve the soul through the body, but rather the body through the soul. We come to this plane in order to learn certain lessons, as well as to accomplish some special work or act of service. What few things my life's experiences have taught have had to be learned through blood and tears, but they will never have to be learned again. What I have learned has been woven into the very texture of my being and can never be obliterated.

All that I have been through seems to have been necessary, and looking back - even upon my greatest losses and sorrows - I would not now have had it otherwise.

With regard to a non-flesh diet, I continued with this for eight years; then when I became successful in business in 1909 I abandoned it. I kept to a mixed dietary until after the first world war, and in 1919 again took to a non-flesh diet, and have continued with it ever since.

I am not spiritually-minded because I am a vegetarian, but I am a vegetarian because I strive

to be spiritually-minded. As one advances in spiritual understanding, flesh eating becomes repugnant and one is happier without it - at least, that has been my experience.

As to physical culture and body worship: at the time of writing this I am nearly eighty years of age and obviously have no ambitions in that direction. I do no physical exercises but ride my old bicycle still, and lead an active life. This is sufficient, I think, for a septuagenarian. But let the young follow physical culture if it is attractive to them, yet let them not overdo it. And let them remember to put soul and spirit first.

4
NEW IDEAS

It was round about the rear 1904 that I came in contact with what is generally known as New Thought. This was a great revelation at the time and although the few books which came my way were diffuse and rather vague, they contained much information which was quite new to me.

I learned for the first time something about the nature and power of thought -- Of the evil effects of negative thinking, and the beneficial effects of positive thinking. I also read of the destructive effects of evil emotions, such as anger, lust, envy, resentment, hatred, and so on.

All this came as a great shock to me, for I realized that I had been in the habit of wallowing in a sea of wrong and even evil thoughts. What a fool I had been! No wonder I had met with so much trouble and difficulty!

But my reading also brought me a glimmer of light. Instead of hoping that in some distant future - as a result of abstaining from flesh foods - I might become capable of thinking pure thoughts, I began to see dimly that it might be possible for me to train my mind to think good thoughts to the exclusion of evil ones ...

I therefore determined to become a right thinker, which sounded simple enough. Also I could see that prayer was an attempt at right thinking, and it was obvious to me that in order to pray one had to concentrate one's thoughts upon God. As God is the very quintessence of Goodness and Truth, then

prayer, if it succeeds in staying the mind upon God, must be the highest form of right thinking.

All my life I had been puzzled by the various doctrines and theological theories propounded by the various churches, but now I was led to see that all such speculations had only one purpose: to focus one's thoughts upon God. It all seemed as simple as that, but little did I know what lay before me ! However, God always leads us a step at a time. We do not know where we are going, nor how we are being led; but God does, for His ways are perfect and His dealings with us past all human understanding....

And so I determined to become a right thinker. But was it easy, as well as simple? Indeed, it was not for I found that I had very little power of concentration. My thoughts persisted in wandering all over the universe and into past and future, instead of remaining one-pointed on the idea or subject upon which I wished to fix my mind. I also found myself thinking wrong thoughts almost always, so that it was only by a special effort that I could break away from my accustomed habit of mind; yet after a minute or two I was indulging in my usual practice of thinking thoughts of a wrong kind. With me it was not a case of thinking rightly as a general rule, only occasionally lapsing into wrong thinking and suffering for it accordingly.

No, it was just the opposite of this: I discovered that I was an habitual wrong-thinker, that I had been one all my life and that I lived in a veritable sea of wrong thoughts. It was only occasionally and by great effort that I could brace myself up sufficiently to think a few

positive and constructive thoughts.

Another great drawback was that I possessed no substratum of Truth; it therefore seemed to me that everything depended upon my right thinking, and that if I wanted good to appear in my life then I must create it by my own efforts.

I was seeking and chasing after good, but in spite of all my efforts it always eluded me. Little did I realize that the truth of the matter was the exact opposite: that actually good wanted me and was seeking me, striving to help me and fill my life with all manner of harmony. I did not know then that what was needed was not to create good, but rather to remove my inhibitions, thus allowing the ever-present good to enter and manifest itself.

I also fell into the error of thinking that I had to avoid all unpleasant thoughts and think only pleasant ones. The result of this was disastrous, for my natural weakness of being unable to make a decision was greatly increased. Now a man of indecision is one who will not face up to facts. If in addition he will not face up to his thoughts, avoiding all unpleasant ones, his case is then indeed a serious one.

What I was trying to practice was not right thinking, but really a form of wrong thinking; for as soon as an unpleasant thought came into my mind (such as, let us say, a picture of limitation of some kind), I would dismiss it and think of something pleasant. This is correct enough if the thought is one of temptation to do evil, but it is wrong to dismiss it if it is a thought of some

unpleasant duty to be performed, or some crisis which has to be met.

Such a practice is the equivalent of day-dreaming -- One of the most destructive of all mental habits. It is tantamount to the action of a man who is in debt and whose business does not pay, going out for the evening and getting drunk in order to forget his worries! By such an action he reduces his own efficiency and wastes valuable capital, whilst after it is over he has to face the same old troubles, less equipped than ever to do so.

My fundamental and most serious mistake was in demanding money, power and worldly success from the Infinite, for this was done with the idea of getting something for nothing - which of course is impossible. We can only get something for something, notwithstanding all popular ideas to the contrary; we have to pay the price for everything that we demand from life.

But being galled by the respectable poverty in which I had been brought up, I greatly desired to get out of the rut and join the ranks of what are termed the privileged classes. Consequently when I read about the power of mind and thought, and how one could alter one's circumstances by making demands upon the Infinite, I jumped at the idea.

I was greatly in need of money at the time, having several businesses, but without sufficient capital to work them properly. So every night after dark I went into the garden and, standing by a clothes-line post, I made vehement demands upon the Infinite that a certain large sum should be taken weekly at each business. I continued this for some

weeks, perhaps months, but as there seemed to be no answer to my demands, I gave up the practice.

To-day, I know two things which I did not know then.

The first is that if we make strong demands on the Invisible, Something (which may not necessarily be the All-Good) will answer. In our selfish demands for worldly wealth and fame we may be addressing ourselves not to God, but to the prince of this world.

If we are to become united with God then we must be pure and unselfish in motive and, instead of demanding that our will should be done and our desires satisfied, we should seek that the Will of the All-Wise, All-Loving and All-Good should be done instead.

The second thing which I did not know was that it takes time for matters to work out; and that if our demands are big, then there may have to be big upheavals so as to make way for the new order of things.

As I have said, I made my demands over a period of time and then forgot all about them, becoming engrossed in material things. But the Invisible Powers which I had set in motion did not forget. Indeed, I found myself thrown and tossed about by circumstances and involved in almost cataclysmic upheavals for some three years and then, in 1910, I found myself established in a very profitable business in the West End of London.

More than once during the times of change and upheaval through which I had to pass, I seemed to be brought to the brink of ruin; but when all

seemed lost, a fresh opportunity would open up in quite a miraculous way. My friends talked much about my astounding luck. 'No matter what you do or what happens', they said, 'you always fall on your feet'.

This was very true: I always fell on my feet. My competitors were also amazed at my good fortune. There seemed to be a Power behind me, pushing me forward; there seemed to be an Influence at work which made many people go out of their way to bring me still more business.

Influential people took me up for no reason that I could see. As my competitors said, my luck was phenomenal.

To-day I can only attribute the rapid change for the better in my circumstances to the strong demands that I had previously made upon the Invisible.

True, it took about three years to manifest, but I did not realize that before they could be met I should have to be transplanted from a thrifty neighbourhood to a well-to-do district - a process which was extremely painful because I regarded the upheavals as evil, instead of recognizing them as necessary if my demands were to be met.

Something which happened about this time must be recorded. This is how I have described the experience elsewhere: It was at the end of a fairly successful day. I was rather weary and leaned back in my revolving office chair and looked at a large window facing westwards.

I had just had the window partly covered with leaded stained glass, of a chlorophyll colour. It

was still September and the setting sun shone full on my window and, of course, through the chlorophyll glass, on to me.

Light, when filtered through chlorophyll glass is always restful to me, but on this occasion something really happened - something which could not be attributed to chlorophyll filters.

It seemed that I was leaning back not on a swing chair, but on the Sustaining Infinite. At last, after years of wandering and struggle, I seemed perfectly comfortable, perfectly fitted into my environment, perfectly at one with the pattern of life and with the all-pervading Essence which upholds the whole universe in a state of order and perfection.

For a brief space, I knew myself to be a true child of the Eternal, and one with the Changeless One. There was no emotion, no rapture, no ecstasy, but only a sense of great comfort and certainty. There was an entire absence of fear. I was in my right place in the Cosmic Whole, and I knew that I always had been and always would be.

This experience lasted only a minute or two, or perhaps five at the utmost, but it made a great impression on me. I interpreted it to mean that good fortune was coming to me and if phenomenal business success can be termed good fortune, then I was correct in my interpretation.

Looking back over forty years to the time when this glimpse of Reality was vouchsafed to me, I marvel at my density and lack of discernment.

To interpret a spiritual experience, such as many of the saints might have envied, as being merely a sign of good fortune was surely the very acme of

obtuseness. I must have been so obsessed at the time with the idea of making a success of my business venture, that I could interpret nothing in terms of Heavenly wisdom, but only in terms of material gain.

I had forgotten the wise words of Jesus: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.' Either I did not know or else I had forgotten that the most precious of all was to know God, really and truly, and to enter into peace, and for His peace to flow through me like river .

But what had brought about my extraordinary change of fortune? Some said it was through Black Magic, but I would rather term what I practiced as prayer wrongly applied. In the parable of the importunate widow Jesus seems to have given his sanction to prayer which consisted of asking for a thing until one obtained it, no matter how often one were refused. This of course is the lowest type of prayer; but Jesus seemed to have thought it legitimate and my demands upon the Infinite were prayers of this nature.

The great mistake which I made was in demanding the wrong things: instead of seeking the best things, I demanded the things of this world - material success, money and fame.

Some Power answered my prayer - whether it was God or some astral power, I do not know. But answered it was.

And because I had demanded the wrong things I became successful - but at the price of health and happiness.

Aldous Huxley in his book, *The Perennial Philosophy*, says that one-pointed concentration 'may become a dangerous form of idolatry', and mentions that in a letter to Booker, Darwin wrote: 'it is a cursed evil to any man to become so absorbed in any subject as I am in mine.' Aldous Huxley adds: 'It is an evil because such one-pointedness may result in the more or less atrophy of all but one side of the mind.'

I too found it to be a cursed evil, for other sides of my mind atrophied so that I could no longer find enjoyment in the simple things of Nature. My finer sensibilities were numbed and blunted. I had gained much - but the price I had to pay was indeed a heavy one.

Of course, I was not happy; it was impossible that I should have been happy, seeing that I had made an entirely false start. I had chosen the wrong path, so that the more advanced the farther I departed from the Divine pattern of my life.

I admit that there are thousands of people who, rising from humble beginnings, become successful in life and enjoy being amongst what to-day are called the privileged classes. They make good use of their money and apparently have no misgivings; indeed, they fill their new positions with dignity and earn the respect of their fellows. But in their case they have simply followed the pattern of their life: some are born to fame and fortune and if they follow the pattern of their life, nothing more is asked of them.

But I was not one of these, for the Divine pattern of my life was quite different. Therefore when I found myself at the head of a large business, with

the ball of life at my feet, I was unhappy and dissatisfied ...

When I had won the kind of success for which many would give their very soul to achieve, I was of all men the most unhappy. I who at one time had found consolation in Nature, and who loved Nature's ways, now found myself unable to enjoy them when I had the opportunity. Also I had lost all sense of God's presence. I was shut off from Nature and from God.

Of course, everything has been overruled for good in the infinite wisdom and love of God. But how much needless suffering would have been avoided if only I had made a right choice! At least, that is how it seems to me now.

What I marvel at is the wonderful way in which God brought me back in spite of all my wrongdoing. Having worked against the Divine pattern of my life for so long, it seemed at the time that I was completely estranged from God and hopelessly lost. God however brought me back; but this could be accomplished only through suffering. Of course, God did not want me to suffer; it was I through my wrong mode of life who was the sole cause of it.

There is one other matter which must be mentioned before I close this chapter. It has been described elsewhere as follows: When I was in full swing, building up my business, with my mind fully given to the task, with never a thought at that time for higher things, I had a series of night experiences which finally drove me out of business altogether.

In the middle of the night I would be awakened by a feeling of actual hell. I do not use this word

as a figure of speech, but in its literal sense. I felt that I was in the place of the damned. It seemed that I looked back over a past which covered all the history of man, and contained all the hopeless despair of the damned of all ages. And the lamentations of all the damned and their hopeless despair seemed to be concentrated in my own soul. I shuddered as I looked over the past. I shuddered as I looked to the future. All the sorrow, the despair, the hopelessness of a lost humanity seemed to be included in me. I felt indeed that I was in the Bottomless Pit.

I find it quite impossible to describe these experiences, for I have no words or gift of speech with which to describe them. I can only say that they were indescribably awful.

After an experience was ended I would go to sleep again, and, when the morning came, try to forget it.

Each experience shook me, but I still went on, becoming even more immersed in business. Business (that is, starting with practically nothing and working upwards against almost overwhelming difficulties) was such an engrossing sport that it was possible to forget even these solemn warnings. So that before very long I was as bad as ever, all my thoughts being set on business and material things, with never a thought for better things.

These warnings persisted until I decided to get out of business. Then they ceased. I had not been going God's way, so the warnings were sent to make me turn round and live an entirely different kind of life. How blind I was. How slow I was to wake up to the fact that God's purpose was that I should engage in my present work. Alas, due

entirely to my self-will and obtuseness, I was to wander for another six years in the far country before I returned to my Father's home.

I RETIRE FROM BUSINESS

Early in 1914 I retired from business and we went to live in the country. I felt that if I could only get away from my business associates and from all the exactions of business and live amongst flowers and birds, then I would be happy.

It was a relief to get away from London, but while my unhappiness was lessened, I still could not say that I was at peace. No one can be made really happy through a change of environment - happiness, as we all know, can come only from within. All the same, I must confess that I would not live in a town for a king's ransom. Yet although I can feel at home only in the country and beside the sea, these of themselves can never give real happiness.

But when I escaped from London it was probably more of a relief than it would have been to most people, for I had grown psychologically ill through becoming successful in a career for which I was not intended. The Spirit wanted me to go one way, whereas I had been lured by ambition to go another: therefore there was a constant state of conflict, an inner warfare which was prejudicial to health. Also when I decided to give up my business career, the night terrors ceased, thus proving that they had been warnings of great evils to come if I persisted in following a worldly career.

Consequently, although I could not say that I was happy, yet I experienced considerable relief as a result of my retirement.

It was in May 1914 that we settled into our country home.

Then in August the first world war broke out and in due course the countryside became denuded of its men and finally in 1916, I myself went off to the war. Joining up as a private in the Mechanical Transport, I finished up as Officer-in-Charge of a Technical Branch of the Royal Air Force. This experience, although possessing some interest to me, has little to do with the story of my pilgrimage, so I will say nothing about it.

Yet I must mention one incident which happened during this period, for it was a deep and searching experience and had much to do with my retirement from the world altogether in order to devote all my energies to my present work.

My wife and I were very devoted to our second son, who was about ten years of age and away at a public school. He was taken ill and we were sent for. Everything possible was done for him but, to our great grief, he passed away on the anniversary of our wedding day, 27th March 1918.

This was a heavy blow to us both and it seemed to me as though the bottom of my life had fallen away. But the loss inspired in me a great sympathy for all who were bereaved and in trouble, and made me desire to do something to help mankind. I felt that I wanted to take part in some altruistic work and to engage no more in business and money-making.

So after the war was over I bought an army hut, erected it in the garden, engaged a secretary and began to write, for I felt bursting to express myself. Thus, after many vicissitudes *Within You*

is the Power was produced.

When I started I had no idea of writing such a book.

Apparently I wrote haphazardly, putting down just whatever came into my head at the time. I planned nothing; yet in spite of this, I think that I must have been guided in my writing, for this little book has been translated into several languages and, at a rough estimate, probably something like two hundred thousand copies have been sold.

I did not know then that I was simply reviving the teaching of Jesus who, when He began to preach said- according to modern translators - 'Change your minds (and consequently your thinking), for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'. Then later on He said that the Kingdom of God is not here or there, but is within us (or as some translate it, 'inside us'). Of course my writing was not automatic; it was ordinary conscious writing. First the idea would come into my mind, then the words with which to clothe the idea.

Although at the time I commenced writing I was not conscious of being led by the Spirit yet - upon looking back over more than a quarter of a century - I can see very clearly now that it was Divine guidance which led me to write such books as *Within You is the Power*, and *Look Within*. (How wonderfully I was led to choose, in my ignorance, such titles for my books !)

Yes, it is indeed wonderful the way we are led by a Higher Wisdom to do just the right thing, and to make a right choice, in spite of the fact that at the time we are ignorant of the deeper

implications which lie behind what we do, or say, or write!

About this same time, too, I wrote a series of articles for an American magazine. These I republished in book form under the title, The Message of a Flower. I also contributed another series of articles entitled The Art of Living to the same magazine and these were also afterwards reproduced in book form. Another book of mine about this time was The Power of Thought.

Although only an amateur writer and quite ignorant of publishing, I managed to sell my books, and have continued to do so ever since, but it is not a course of action which I would recommend to everyone. This literary excursion of mine was a help to me in my own search for Truth. We are told that the best way to learn is to teach and this I found to be true, for trying to express oneself in writing helps to clarify one's thoughts and ideas.

It was in April 1920 that I began the work which is known as 'Science of Thought'. In 1921 I decided to publish a monthly magazine - the first number appearing in October. It was an immediate success. Yet needless to say I had many difficulties to overcome, as well as innumerable struggles, but there is no need to tell of them here.

Suffice it to say that my new work was a success and, judging by the letters I received, was helpful to many.

Again I was on top of things, just as I had been in business.

But fortunately God did not allow me to stay there, for the position I was in was similar to that of a popular preacher: thousands of people hung upon my every word - and we all know what a dangerous position that is for anyone to be in. God is too wise and too kind to allow that sort of thing to continue. Indeed, how true it is that He putteth down the mighty from their seats, and exalteth them of low degree! I too had to go through the humbling process - hut of this, more anon ...

Going back a little in my story, it was before I began writing that I got mixed up with the 'I am' and 'I am It' affirmation-type of teaching. I obtained some books on what is called Mental Science (not Divine Science, which is a different teaching). These told me to deny evil, poverty, disease, sickness and even sin and death. As I am always willing to try anything once I repeated these denials in deadly earnest, but the result was far from satisfactory, for I soon began to feel really ill ...

And so I continued to follow many lines of thought, but they all ended in failure. However, I gained a certain amount of understanding through such experiments, but fortunately I did not try any tricks with my breathing, otherwise I might not have escaped so lightly.

In course of time I began to understand what I really wanted. What I was seeking was not anything of this world, but only to know God and experience His peace. What I yearned to do was to be able to get clear of all human strain, anxiety and the pressure of circumstance so that I could enjoy

true liberation. I wanted to 'enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God', consequently I could never be satisfied with the various teachings which I sampled, for they seemed to aim only at human good.

Nobody seemed to be interested in the Path of Liberation; those whom I met wanted what they called 'demonstrations', they wanted tangible results and had no desire to get away from the self, or the things which bind one to earth. They did not realize that attachment to things implied attachment to earth and that all indulgence in sensation could bring only suffering in its train.

In those days, I used to pace to and fro beneath the stars, repeating a text or poem which 'spoke to my condition', as the Quakers would say. Something disturbing might happen which would draw down upon me an avalanche of fears which threatened to sweep me off my feet, so I would try to overcome them and to reach a certain measure of peace before retiring to rest. Each time that I overcame in this way made it easier for me to overcome the next time I was assailed.

And so through experience I found out how to overcome waves of fear, apprehension and strain. I discovered, again through experience, that if I concentrated upon a text, or poem, or psalm, and kept on repeating it perseveringly, the fear would be overcome and the strain relieved. This was a valuable discovery.

Previously I thought that to say a few prayers would be sufficient, but experience taught me that in my case, to do so was useless. What I found to be needed was intense concentration, combined with

perseverance, and for this to be persisted with until the mind became calmed and a sense of Divine peace enjoyed.

To keep on repeating a text or statement of truth about the Absolute is not a vain repetition as some critics declare.

It entails concentration through perseverance, and a persistent reaching towards the Eternal, the result of which is that after a time the mind begins to pay attention and becomes conformed to the Truth which we so perseveringly utter.

As has been said so often, the mind can contain only one kind of thought at one time, so that if we succeed in filling it with those of Truth, then thoughts of fear and other harmful suggestions are shut out, so that the mind can abide quietly in the Truth which makes men free.

It was soon after *The Science of Thought Review* had been established that I became acquainted with the late Princess Karadja, founder of The White Cross Union and also well known as a seer. Princess Karadja wrote several books in which she displayed a profound knowledge of esoteric and occult matters which was quite beyond me. She also wrote some articles for *The Science of Thought Review*, but these were so abstruse as to be quite beyond our readers' and my understanding, so I stopped publishing them.

Once when in London and having an hour to spare, I visited Princess Karadja. She told me many interesting and extraordinary things, the most of which I have long forgotten but I do remember that she touched upon the mysteries of the Great Pyramid, and held some interesting theories about

the axis of the earth which, she declared, was in process of being changed. She also told me that, to her, my eyes appeared luminous, like electric lamps set in alabaster.

I did not pay much attention to this at the time, but I have since been told the same thing by others. Also sometimes when I have been speaking at a small meeting where we were all of one mind, in one place, people have remarked afterwards that they had difficulty in looking at me because I appeared to emit rays of brilliant white light. (I have since been told that this is by no means unusual and that the same phenomenon has been observed in certain preachers.)

I dismissed all this from my mind, looking upon it as so much imagination; but I had to change my mind sometime later.

A lady called on me - I think she came from India - whose eyes were distinctly luminous, 'like electric lamps set in alabaster'. Indeed the whole of the upper part of her head appeared indistinct to me because of the luminosity which enveloped it.

As I am not psychic or clairvoyant, I had to admit that there might be something in what Princess Karadja and other people had told me. But this luminosity in my visitor was not the rather hard and glittering light seen in certain portraits and drawings supposedly illustrating psychic subjects. Instead, it was a soft and heavenly kind of radiance which is only visible to those who are living in a higher consciousness.

My visitor was a very spiritually-minded woman.

Consequently after this incident I began to look more closely at people and I noticed that the majority of people, being unawakened, had a dead, putty-like appearance; but here and there I would find one whose face was full of light.

In those cases where I got to know people who had the light upon their faces, I found that they were praying people - that is, they had daily intercourse with God. So that explained the whole subject. The dull, putty-like faces belonged to unawakened people who had no intercourse with God, while those who had the light shining through their faces were those who walked and talked with God.

God is Light, God within us is the only reality about us, and God is Light.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

I have found however that a person's religious views have little or nothing to do with the matter. Indeed, I knew a man of limited views who belonged to an extremely narrow and exclusive sect yet who had the light on his face and wore a heavenly expression. His doctrinal beliefs were to me wholly unacceptable, yet he had the light upon his face because he was a praying man.

When I was young, one of my friends was a Baptist minister, a very good man but very denominational and exclusive in his views. He - like all his fellow-ministers - had one pet aversion: 'High Church', but in spite of their exclusiveness they tolerated 'Low Church'.

After a few years we lost touch with one another, and it was nearly forty years before life brought us together again. I found that my ministerial friend had broadened considerably in his outlook.

One of the things which gave him seriously to think was an incident which once happened in the course of his ministerial duties.

The Free Church ministers held a meeting once a month, and to it the Anglican Church sent a delegate in the person of a curate. What the Free Church ministers would have liked would have been a Low Church curate whose doctrinal views were similar to their own. But to their chagrin they were informed that a very High Church curate had been appointed, so they hoped for the best and prepared for the worst.

But when the curate arrived, my friend had the shock of his life. The newcomer was so possessed of the Holy Spirit, so obviously a child of the Light and so full of Divine power, that all those present noticed a difference when he came into the room. The spiritual temperature became raised directly he arrived. The light and power remained as long as he was in the meeting, but when he left they departed with him, leaving the gathering empty and cold.

It was obvious, my friend said, that the curate possessed something which they did not, and this made him think - especially as later on the High Church curate left the town, and his place was taken by a Low Church curate whose doctrinal views were all that the ministers could have desired, but who possessed neither the light nor the power.

My friend came to the conclusion that doctrinal views and beliefs are not everything.

The reason why the first curate had the Light and the Power was that he was a praying man. He had intercourse with God for hours every day, and never allowed anything to prevent it. There are some who say that the Light is not in every man; that it is only given to a few. When I was young, fierce controversies raged over what was called Calvinism whose adherents contended that only a favoured few were predestined to be Children of the Light; while on the other hand members of the opposing camp, called Arminians, averred that this was a dreadful mistake, and that anyone could become a Child of the Light just whenever he chose.

To-day the same question arises in a new form: is the Light in every man, or is it in only a few? Those who say that it is have the support of John who said that the Light lighteth every man coming into the world. Those who say that the Light is only in a certain few can however quote the parable of the wheat and the tares: the wheat typifying the Children of the Light, while the tares represent those who have not the Light. Also they can quote Jesus as saying that Truth was kept from some in case they might hear and understand and be converted. And so the controversy continues . . .

(*note by Margareth Lee: why would one want to know that? The whole discussion seems to be just like the one of the apostles regarding a hierarchy in heaven. They thus demonstrated they had no understanding of life in heaven. We should see the Spirit of God in everyone and everything, then that will be all we experience)

This has caused me much thought. While it is true that if we look into the faces and eyes of some people it does not seem possible that there can be any inward Light within them at all (oftentimes they seem to be bereft even of soul), yet I believe that the Light is actually there, though covered by so many wrappings of self as to be undiscernible.

It is true of course that the vast majority of people never, from the cradle to the grave, show any signs of spiritual awakening. They are born into irreligious homes, never receive any devotional instruction and also seem to have no spiritual faculty at all. Anything of a religious matter seems to be entirely beyond their comprehension. Yet in spite of this I still believe that the Light lighteth every man that cometh into the world, even as John said.

It is true also that John records Jesus as saying: 'No man can come to Me, except the Father draw him.'

But this need not be read to mean that God draws a favoured few and not the remainder, or that some are so constituted as to be incapable of responding. We can interpret it as meaning exactly what it says, viz. that we cannot reach the Light by our own efforts.

What happens is that we respond to the softening and drawing power of God's love. 'We love Him because He first loved us'; but we cannot do that even of ourselves, for there is nothing in the natural man that can respond to the Divine influence. It is because God's Spirit is in us that we are able to respond.

In fact, it is the Spirit in us which responds; and when in course of time we enter into full realization and know God, whom to know is life eternal, it is the Spirit in us who knows, for 'only God can know God'.

But if this is so, it may be asked how is it that the majority of people remain unawakened and pass from the cradle to the grave without manifesting any signs of the Light that is in them?

My answer is that everyone is not at the same stage of unfoldment. Some are very much in the beginner's stage; others are a little more advanced; while yet others are still more advanced. And so we proceed right up the scale to the fully-awakened and illumined soul who becomes merged into union with God.

According to the teaching of Jesus, we live eternally with the Father and make a journey into a far country; and then, having gained knowledge through experience, we return to the home from which we departed.

Owing, I suppose, to the teaching of the parable of the prodigal son, the Church allows belief in the pre-existence of the soul. Some of us know that interiorly we are eternal beings and that this existence here is but an incident in an endless life.

Some believe, like Princess Karadja, that we come here many times to gain experience, but I am not prepared to accept this. God is infinite, and His ways are infinite, and there may be many other worlds to conquer. 'In My Father's house are many

mansions' said Jesus. I think that it is wiser to leave the matter with Him.

Jesus describes it very picturesquely as keeping our lamp under a bushel, or bowl, or corn-measure. He says that we should not do that but instead should bring it out of its covering and place on a lampstand, so that all who are in the house can see it. Now my experience has been that it takes a long time to remove the wrappings from the lamp within.

But each battle of the soul, each victory won and every grief and sorrow faithfully borne tend to remove something from that which keeps the Light hidden. Gradually but surely however the wrappings become less until at last we become conscious of the Light within - 'that true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' ...

Another thing which Princess Karadja told me was that Love rays which were beating upon this planet would increase in intensity, and that as they did so the inhabitants of the earth who were not attuned to them would become increasingly violent and rebellious. She explained that the Love which brings joy and bliss to one who is attuned it, has an agonizing effect upon those who are unattuned.

This she told me in 1923 and subsequent events have tended to support her view. After I left the Princess I felt lifted up for days, but I did not feel that her kind of teaching was for me, so shortly afterwards we parted.

It is strange that I should have to go to an occultist in order to learn as never before that God is Love, and cannot anything else but Love.

And in due course I came to realize that we are not punished for our sins, but by our sins.

The father of the prodigal son did not punish the boy but only loved him; the son was however, punished severely by his sins. In other words, he punished himself by departing from his father's home. It was in this way that I came to a realization that God is Love, and that He never has been anything else but Love.

How lovely it is to come to this liberating realization. But what a long time we take to come to this great truth, how reluctant we are to trust our best Friend!

Postscript

Since writing the above I have been privileged to have another lady visitor whose face shone with the light of Heaven. She seemed to be enveloped in the Light, but it was when she spoke of the things of God that it became most evident. Then the Light seemed to well up from within and to me her face became less distinct owing to the glory which shone from it. I can quite understand that Moses had to put a veil over his face after being so long with the LORD.

There was an interesting sequel. My visitor and her husband kindly sent me a photograph of themselves, taken together. In it the faces of both are bright with Heavenly joy, but behind the wife can be discerned a blaze of light.

It is an interesting fact that a photograph will record that which would be invisible to the ordinary onlooker, and those who are spiritually unawakened would see nothing exceptional if they were to meet my visitor.

6
ON FEELING

On looking back over my life, and especially during the last thirty or forty years, one thing is very clear to me, namely, that feeling is a greater power than thought. This may seem to be a strange statement to make in view of my many writings on the power of thought.

For instance I can see that when, about the year 1906, I started making demands upon the Infinite, it was not so much the thoughts expressed or the words used which produced such a startling change in my circumstances, as the intense feeling which I put into the words, which turned my life literally upside down. Therefore my statement neither weakens nor contradicts anything that I have ever said as to the necessity of right thought -for this is of the utmost importance. But it is necessary that we should feel what we think, otherwise the thought has but little power.

This was brought home to me once when one of our readers explained in a letter that although she had been left a widow without means, she had never had any difficulty about money, and this she attributed to the fact that she always felt rich. If we feel rich then we find that our modest needs are supplied, and in addition we have something to give away. But if we feel poor, then everything seems to run away from us. It is the same with regard to health. If in spite of our ill health we can feel well, in an inward way, then it is not long before we find that we are well. Many will ask how can one feel well when one is ill? The answer is that if one is really ill or suffering from complete breakdown, then the only thing to be done is to

rest and allow others to minister to us. But if it is only ill health from which we are suffering, then to feel well is a great aid to being well.

The fact that so many people do not respond to metaphysical and spiritual healing is due very largely, I believe, to their knowing and thinking too much. The best patients, so the late Mr. Hickson found, were those who are generally called 'natives', that is, those who have not been spoiled by civilization. The people who know or think they know everything about healing, and who can give us all the answers are, generally speaking, those who are never healed.

It is one thing to know with the head, and quite another thing to know with the heart. Head knowledge is a hindrance; that is why in order really to know God we have to lay aside all that we have learned about God. We continue to do this until at last we have cast away the last thread of our so-called knowledge; then when we have reached 'nothing' we find that we have found everything. The way of attempted understanding through head knowledge becomes more and yet more complicated the farther we advance. On the other hand, the way of understanding through the heart becomes simpler and yet simpler the more we advance. We have to get beyond thought in order to enter into Ultimate Truth.

When we have cast aside all our acquired knowledge, we come to that which has always been. When we cease our thinking, we glide out on to the ocean of God's peace -we become aware of and feel the bliss of Divine union.

So long as we struggle and strain to find God, through thinking and understanding with the

head, we clamp down a sort of iron lid on our intuitive faculty which most effectively prevents us from entering into the liberty and freedom of direct knowing. St. Paul speaks of a veil which is between us and God; but he says that 'when it (the heart) turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away'. He does not say that through much mental seeking we can get through the veil, but that when we turn our heart (the feeling part of us) to the Lord, then the veil is taken away.

This I have found to be true in my own experience. All intellectual attempts on my part have proved themselves to be but broken cisterns. It is only through feeling and intuition that I have found the 'well of water' within my own being, 'springing up into everlasting life'. All the while the terrible iron lid presses down upon us, we live a life that is separate and alone; and no matter how much we may strive to remove it, we completely fail. It cannot be got rid of by resisting it, but only by acceptance and surrender,. This is indeed a paradox: the very thing which is pressing us down now, is the very thing which will later raise us up and set us free.

In my own case I have had to make many surrenders, each one of which at the time was thought by me to be complete and final. Each one in turn however proved to have been only partial, so yet another had to be made -until at last I could go no lower and could do no more, but simply cast myself into the Abyss. One of our readers once wrote a poem about this very thing. In it she described a very definite and authentic spiritual experience in which she found herself hanging at the end of a rope which she was clutching with all her strength, in

order to save herself from dropping into a bottomless pit. She seemed to hear a voice, saying: 'Let go of the rope !' but she was afraid to do so, for apparently that would have meant the annihilation of her soul.

That is what we all have to face at some time or other - actual death, or so it seems. We know that although our body may die, yet we do not die; but in this terrific experience, annihilation of our soul or real individuality is what faces us. It really seems that if we leave off fighting to retain our life, and let go of the rope, so to speak, that that will really be the end of us.

At last however she let go - and immediately found herself caught in the arms of God! She had solved the great mystery! She knew the inner meaning of the words of Jesus: she had lost (given up) her life, and in so doing had found it (the real life of the Eternal).

The iron lid of self separates us (in consciousness) from God, pressing down upon us so that we cannot breathe freely. But directly we let go, the oppression ceases and we are able to breathe freely, down to the deepest depths and right up to the highest heights, without let or hindrance. It is like an elephant - to us a clumsy metaphor - being transformed into a bird on the wing! I am imagining of course that an elephant must feel very earthbound, whereas a bird must feel delightfully airborne-anyway, that is how we feel when we gather up the courage to let go. We are reminded of the words in Isaiah: 'They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles'.

At last we have discovered our true place in the Whole.

Like the heavenly bodies, we find ourselves perfectly poised and balanced, moving along our appointed orbit without effort. Ours is an effortless life, in which everything takes place at the right time and in a divinely orderly way. We are perfectly at home in God; we can lean back on 'the Sustaining Infinite', and be at rest. Or, we can float out on to the ocean of God's Peace. At the same time, paradoxically enough, we feel God's Inward Peace flowing through us like a river. We realize with joy the reality of the Divine order, and that it is everywhere present and that we are really never separated from it. In it everything comes to pass at the right time.

I cannot describe how perfectly at home I feel in God - 'feel' is the right word, for it is a feeling of bliss infinite.

It is beyond thought, therefore we have to cease our thinking in order to experience it. Thought can bring us only to the foot of the mountain of Truth, after which we have to proceed by intuition and feeling. No one can know the bliss of Divine union, of being completely at home in God, through thinking about it or trying to understand or know it intellectually: it can only be experienced and felt. How can we reach this stage? Is there no open sesame, no secret formula available to us? I do not know of any such secret and easy way. The way I have come has been one of seeking, seeking, seeking, ever seeking and trying this and trying that, in an effort to find some secret and magical way of attainment, but all such efforts have been in vain.

As I look back, I can see that life has been the great initiator in my own case through the ordinary experiences of life - experiences such

as are common to all of us - these are the great initiator. When once we have surrendered to the will of the Whole and have dedicated our life to the Quest, each experience which comes to us is perfectly designed by Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love to advance us towards Divine union. That is, of course, if we meet each experience in the right way, in a spirit of co-operation instead of resentment or self-pity. It makes such a difference when we realize that we are being guided by Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love, and that each experience is designed for our good, and that if we meet it with acceptance and deal with it in love, it will be found to be a blessing, raising us to higher and better things.

If we meet an experience with resentment or self-pity, then it is turned into what looks almost like a curse. On the other hand, if we meet it with acceptance and co-operation we find that all things work together and fit together in a most wonderful way, and that each experience brings us nearer to the heart of God. It was a great day for me when the realization came to me that Love is behind all life's experiences, and that the secret of life is simply Love. Directly I realized this I could see that Love had been at work in my affairs all the way through, and that the disorders of my life were due to my working against Love instead of co-operating with it.

Gradually my outlook became more cosmic. I could see the unfoldment of God's plan and purposes, both in the great and the small things of life. I could see that the Divine order is everywhere present and is not something that will come to pass in the future. The Kingdom or realm of God is with us NOW and always. 'Now is the accepted

(or acceptable) time; behold NOW is the day of salvation'. The whole of God's Infinitude is available at any given point, NOW. An infinitude of joy; an infinitude of peace; an infinitude of wholeness, could we but realize it.

It was also a great day when I realized that whereas I had been seeking God all my life, apparently in vain, yet the actual truth of the matter was that God had been seeking me and trying to bring every possible blessing into my life.

Again, it was a great day in my experience when the understanding came to me that God is at work in the life of each one of us, as much in the life of one as in that of another.

The way in which Love has blessed us and followed us all our days is both wonderful and glorious, but we are not the favourites of Divine mercy. Everyone is being dealt with by the Spirit in a perfect way, according to Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love, but we are all at different stages of unfoldment.

The majority of people are not even spiritually awakened, while amongst those who are awakened many are at quite an elementary stage. But they are all in the love and care of God, and each one is in his right place at the time. A tadpole is not a frog, but he is a good tadpole, that is all that matters.

In the Divine order, everything comes to pass at the right time, and each one of us is in his right place, at the right time, and doing his right work.

Many years were to pass before, after countless experiences, I was privileged to be given the inner understanding or revelation that God has a place and a use for each one of us. He has a place for the heroic pioneer who dares all and

climbs the heights. He also has a place for those who keep to the lowlands and who remain with the herd. Each is equally dear to the heart of God. Each is of equal importance. Each has his place in the family of God.

Some have been perturbed because their loved ones have passed on without shewing any evidence of having been spiritually awakened; but all this passes away when it is revealed to us that God has a place for everyone, each at his respective stage. The reason why so many people are unhappy about their loved ones who do not follow the religious life, and who may have passed on without shewing signs of soul awakening is due to the old idea that God is a God of wrath and punishment, and not as He really is, infinite wisdom, love and compassion. There was once a little French priest whose duties included ministering to the dying, many of whom were hard cases and passed over still unrepentant. This made the little priest most unhappy and he was very miserable over the fate of those who died in their sins. He continued to be very unhappy and, indeed, became increasingly so until one day he had a revelation of the Love of God, and that God is Love and can never be anything different from Love. Our little priest became a changed man: he was full of joy and peace, and love and compassion. He gladly ministered to the dying, no matter how sinful they had been, for did he not know that God was Love? The realization that God is Love was a revelation to me; so also was the fact that soul-awakening comes to a man only at the right time, and that it cannot come at any other time. God is at work in our life, all the time, even when we may be following strange gods and relying upon broken cisterns. The French priest

knew that all was well with those who died outside his Church, because he knew that God was and is Love, and has never been anything else. As I have stated elsewhere, what is termed the 'wrath of God' is not wrath at all, but the love and order of God from which man has departed. The greater the love, the more painful it is for the one who is out of correspondence with it. The story of the prodigal son is a perfect example of what happens to one who departs from his father's home. He is not punished by his Father, but he punishes himself by placing himself outside the order and harmony of his true home. The farther he wanders away, the more acute his sufferings become.

In the Revelation of St. John we read of the great ones of the earth hiding in caves and crying to the mountains and rocks: 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' What this means is that the Love Rays being poured out upon this planet are to be intensified. This will bring increasing joy to those who are attuned to Divine love, and increasing discomfort to those who are out of tune.

Love would appear as wrath to those who are not attuned to it. The more unlike Love they are, the greater will the wrath appear to be. But, of course, there is no wrath, but only Love. It would be the same with one given to impurity. If such a one were confronted by absolute purity, he would indeed want to cry to the rocks and mountains to fall on him and hide him.

Of course it is of the utmost importance that those who die should at the time of passing have their attention directed to God and Christ, and

that they should be in a state of forgiveness towards those who have wronged them.

Those who minister to the dying always try to get the one who is dying to forgive those whom he feels he simply cannot forgive, and also to look to God, or "to Jesus Christ. This is all most helpful to the soul of the dying, but if it cannot be accomplished then we have the satisfaction of being able to fall back on the joyous fact that God is Love, and that He can never be anything less than Love, and that He is Love to all eternity .

Now I began this chapter by writing of feeling. I do not know Truth through the intellect; I know God who is Love through love. I cannot know Him through my mind, but only through my heart; in other words, my heart responds to Love, so that I feel God. And thus it is through feeling that I know, and not through reasoning. Because God is Love, it is necessary that in order to know God, we too must become Love, for only God (Love) can know God (Love). It follows, therefore, that we can really know God only through feeling.

We feel this power of love in the region of the solar plexus, or what in the Bible very probably is termed the heart. This is the part of our body where we experience an 'all gone' feeling when we are dominated by a great fear.

One poor man said to me, when he was in great trouble and stricken with fear, that he felt as though he had 'no inside'.

Yet when he regained his sense of realization of the presence of God, that was the very place where he felt full to bursting with power. In this connection I am reminded of a verse in Hosea: ' And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my

people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God'. Yes, in the very place where we felt lost and all gone, in that very place we feel the power of the sons of the Living God. In order to become filled with Divine power, it is necessary that we should cultivate feeling, as distinct from knowing by the head.

The more advanced we grow, the simpler Truth becomes.

In order to know God, we have to discard all our knowledge about God until there is nothing left. Then when we have come to nothing, we find that we have found everything. We have to lose our life in order to find it. All the complicated teachings which we may have studied can now be put aside -doctrines, theories, esoteric mysteries can all be discarded, for having served their purposes they can now be consigned to the limbo of forgotten things.

Now that I know God, I want to know nothing about God. All that is necessary for me now is for me to be still and know God. All that I need now is to know God's inward peace, to immerse myself in the deep river of God's peace, and at the same time to feel it flowing through me. Thus the great mystery of the ages is solved: we in God, and God in us. Not as a theory or doctrine but as an actual, factual experience.

Daily we can sit quietly, knowing God. We do not try to define God, for God is beyond all definition; we simply become still and know. We feel the One Life, deep within our being, and find that our own life has infinite extensions, beyond time and space. No longer do we seek God

with our head -we know Him with our heart. Deep down within us we find God's inward peace. We 'breathe the sweet ether, blowing of the breath of God', as Edward Carpenter has it.

We feel within our soul the pulsations of the one Infinite Life. And not only so, for as we sit in the Great Stillness, we realize that the Presence of God is all around us: that we live and move and have our being in the One Universal Spirit.

As we sit quietly -being still, and knowing, or feeling God- the rays of the Divine Life beat upon us and flow through us like wireless waves passing through the walls of a building. Then it seems as though our physical body dissolves, so that we become wholly Spirit. This indeed is the object of all religions: to get behind the material to find the spiritual; to pass from the temporal to the eternal.

I find now that it is no longer necessary to follow any set system of meditation and contemplation -but only to know God and to feel immersed in His peace, and to feel His peace flowing through me like a river ...

ON TRYING TO LIVE A LIFE OF FAITH

There may be said to be three stages in the life of man. The first ranges from childhood to about twenty- three years of age; the second, from about twenty- three to about forty-five years and the third, from about forty-five years to old age. In the first stage we sow seed, and do very little reaping; in the second, we reap some of the fruits which we have sown in the first stage, at the same time sowing more seed which will be reaped in the next stage.

In the third and last stage we reap the fruits of what we have sown in our two former stages; we also consolidate what we have learned through life's experience, and build something enduring which will live after us.

In the first stage of my own life I seemed to have but one compelling idea, and that was to get out of the rut of circumstance and thus escape from irksome poverty. In the second, this desire to overcome poverty was intensified. At last I achieved my ambition; but strange to say, when I found myself out of the rut and 'with the ball at my feet'- with nothing to prevent me from becoming as rich as I liked -I developed a strong dislike for the kind of life which the rich and well-to-do live. The consequence was that instead of wanting to go forward to greater success, I longed with all the strength of my soul to be able to get out of it and retire to a simpler way of life.

This, of course, was even more difficult than climbing out of the rut in which I was born. All my life I had been striving to get on in life and this had produced a momentum towards worldly success and outward achievement. It would have

been easy to have continued that kind of life; there would have been no obstacles to overcome, for they had already been mastered. The whole current of my life flowed in one direction, and it was easy to follow. But when it came to getting out of this current, it was indeed a different story.

Before going on to consider my third stage, it may not be out of place to emphasize that success in life is really an attitude of mind. If I had been told this in my young and struggling days I should have found it hard to believe, yet nobody did tell me and I had to find it out for myself.

After tremendous struggles (mostly unnecessary) we at last manage to get our life flowing in an upward direction, and when once this has been achieved, material success is almost as easy as falling off a log. To continue being successful is then simply following the line of least resistance. To try to change one's life at that point is indeed one of the greatest and most difficult tasks possible.

Many of us do not understand the law of momentum. We do not understand that if we keep our mind fixed upon the achievement of a certain aim, we build up a sort of Frankenstein monster which becomes our slave-master. That was what I began to discover, but fortunately I was able to escape before it was too late. I found that, whereas in the early stages success appeared to be under my control, in its later stages success threatened to control both me and my life, and also to dictate to me as to what I should do or what I should not do ...

How to get out of my bonds was indeed a problem! To the reader it may seem strange that there should be so many difficulties, but they were as

numerous as the devils which afflicted the man who dwelt in the tombs and whose name was legion. There were wheels within wheels, problems connected with the business and problems connected with my family. Also there were the inner and invisible forces - the most powerful opposition of all. The conflict was so intense that at last I fell ill. There was nothing organically wrong with me; my illness was purely psychological, due to the conflict between my strong desire to live a different life and the chains which held me to the business which was fast becoming my taskmaster. Ultimately (as the reader already knows) I did escape -but only just in time. I feel quite sure now that if I had not acted promptly, I should have been lost as others have been lost. Thus it was that I entered the third and last stage of my life.

Having resigned from my business activities, I began writing and publishing -as described in a previous chapter.

About this time I wrote two courses of lessons and for these I charged very modest fees -yet this made me uneasy, very uneasy. How could I, though, carry on without any income? George Muller, I recalled, refused to take a salary and also abolished collections, but he put up boxes in which the congregation were expected to place their contributions. He also taught his people the duty of giving, and told them in his sermons of the blessings which come to those who give to the Lord willingly, joyfully and systematically. In the metaphysical world, however, it was quite a different story.

Those who wanted help had to pay for it. One good man advertised that he was willing to pray (give treatments) for anyone at five shillings

(a dollar) a time, or a guinea a week (5 dollars), whilst a large organization charged two guineas (10 dollars) per week and had a number of salaried practitioners who faithfully attended to the various cases which were passed on to them each week. Each practitioner had about twenty cases on his or her list, and to deal with them all twice daily was as much as he or she could manage.

I have known several of these people, both those who were paid by an organization and those who were freelances, and have found them to be charming. They were poor, self-sacrificing, devoted and most conscientious; but they said that they had to live and that was why charges were made.

If they did not charge for their services they would starve, so they said; they worked just as hard as any doctor or psychiatrist and, like them, they had to live.

In my case, however, it was even more difficult. I did not do any healing it is true, but anyone who wrote to me received an answer. Most did not even enclose a stamp, but each letter we sent out cost about two shillings (fifty cents) for office expenses, postage and so on, excluding my services which were given free. Further, preparing and issuing courses of lessons was an expensive matter. It was easy to sink five hundred or a thousand pounds in one course alone, then after that the necessary students had to be enrolled, wages of helpers paid and postal expenses met. Therefore as the magazine was issued at a substantial loss, and it cost more to print and circulate our books than what we received for them, it followed that my courses of lessons were our only source of income.

If I gave up charging fees, I should from all appearances soon be forced to discontinue issuing lessons. There was also another point - an important one, so it seemed to me - which was that people always think more highly of a thing if they have to pay for it, while on the other hand they regard it lightly if it is given to them free. I was in very truth on the horns of a dilemma. ..

What actually happened was that I ceased charging fees, relying upon free-will offerings. And at this juncture I was helped by the fact that readers of our magazine began sending of their own free will what they termed 'love gifts' to help me with my work. I had thrown out no hints whatsoever, and what they did then - and have done ever since - was undoubtedly due to the influence of the Spirit, or to the working of an immutable law of the universe.

What life was trying to teach me was that I was to live the life of faith. I had to learn that I was to cease entirely from trying to get, and that all I need worry about was to give to the uttermost, thus emptying the channel for the Divine blessing to flow in. Until we do empty the channel by giving ourselves and all that we have, the Divine blessing cannot flow freely.

And so I found that the more I gave, not thinking of any reward, the more I received. Also life became more harmonious and peaceful.

'The way of the Spirit is harmony and peace.' At first, however, it was not easy; far from it. My training was wholly against the 'faith and giving' idea, and all my life my principal idea had been to get as much as possible from life, and give as little as possible to life. And because of this I had suffered much owing to the fact that I had been working against the pattern

of my life, consequently I found it extremely difficult to switch over from getting to giving.

Sometimes I made things so difficult through some fresh venture of faith, that I became filled with fears and reduced almost to a state of panic. Indeed, I suffered so much that at times my burden seemed almost too grievous for me to bear. Yet each time I was delivered and brought victoriously through, in spite of my weakness and fears. I do not mean that I simply dismissed the fears which were troubling me from my mind, refusing either to face my problems or to think about them. No, I faced them and endeavoured to overcome them by a realization of Absolute Truth, I found that all that I had to do was to overcome my fears and find inward release and peace for if I did that then the threatened disaster would begin to fade away. The difficulty was to find inward peace, but until I succeeded in doing so I suffered very much.

I mention all this in order to encourage those who may be faced with similar difficulties, and who may be discouraged by certain books which make everything appear so very easy. There can be nothing more discouraging than to read of people achieving most wonderful results without any trouble at all, simply by using some magic formula. My experience has been that anything worth having in the spiritual field can be won only through searching experience. I continue to make my life more difficult from time to time and feel impelled to do this, because I am only really happy when facing great difficulties. Indeed, as soon as life becomes easy and methodical I become bored, and begin to long for fresh fields to conquer. Thus I embark on fresh

ventures of faith. Sometimes I think that I have overdone it, and that I have assumed a burden greater than I can bear but on the other hand, I should not be happy if I were not faced with a task that tested me to the utmost. I have found that the great secret of a truly successful life is always to go forward, to be greatly daring, never to play for safety, never to follow the easy path of least resistance, but to grapple with life's difficulties and seize its opportunities in a spirit of high adventure and with courageous faith. Life yields its highest prizes to the courageous soul who claims them and always goes forward, burning his boats behind him.

In other words, we are called upon to live a life of faith in which we dare all, again and again, and in which we may seem to lose all, but never actually do. True success attends those who do and dare, but failure dogs the path of those who count the cost and who try to make life easy and comfortable.

At first, my faith must have been very small and feeble, and it was through having my faith tested that it began to grow. I noticed that whenever I held back and played for safety, the result was always disastrous: the easier I tried to make my life, the more difficult it became. Whereas if I went forward, greatly daring, choosing the difficult task, it invariably turned out to be the easier path in the end. I also noticed that if I did not discipline myself, then life would do it for me. I found that many of my difficulties were due to the fact that I did not go forward enough; it became quite plain to me that I must order my life in such a way that it would compel me to work hard and live progressively.

Consequently whenever I found that I had overcome one set of difficulties, I would set about creating another lot- a practice which I still follow. But what God has done, God can do. As an old hymn has it: His love in times past, forbids me to think He'll leave me at last, in trouble to sink.

Recalling God's goodness to us in the past, and His deliverances from pressing troubles and threatened dangers, is of the greatest possible help to us when facing apparent disasters.

I have found that the searching experiences which came to me as a result of my ventures of faith not only increased my faith, but also advanced me in the spiritual life. The object of our life here is that we should find God and know Him. In other words, to find what Jesus called the Kingdom which really means a state of God-consciousness. Yet such experiences were really terrifying to me at the time. As the dreaded day advanced nearer I became almost worn out with the strain of it all. The thoughts would come to me: 'Why did I burn my boats behind me?' How I longed for a bolt-hole of escape! But there could be no retreating; having ventured all, I must go on.

How I prayed and affirmed, even wrestling with God, just as Jacob did, but still there was no response -no sign of deliverance. And so the experience would hasten on, every day finding me prostrate before God -for it was only God, the one Omnipresent Spirit who could deliver me.

Then fear would raise her voice. 'Suppose, after all, you have been mistaken and there is none to deliver? Other people whom you know but who follow worldly methods and never think about God are prosperous and apparently happy, while your position becomes more precarious every day.

What is the use of praying -for nothing ever happens, nobody cares, you have thrown away your substance and are too old ever to regain what you have lost. Why continue to attempt a life of faith? It is all foolishness and so much moonshine and self-deception.' And so the thing would continue, the position becoming worse every day. Would the tide never turn? Was the Tempter right, after all? Was there God who could or would answer prayer? Down, down, down I went until there seemed to be nothing left of 'the self', and my only desire was that God should deal with me and my affairs in His own way and at His own time. I could do no more. I had done my best and apparently failed, therefore God alone could extricate me from the alarming position in which I had brought myself. Then at the last minute of the eleventh hour deliverance would come - and then what joy was mine, such as no pen or tongue can describe! At such times waves of joy flowed through me, all fear and strain departed, and I felt perfectly at home in God. For a time, at any rate, I knew that 'all was well, a thousand times well, both now and a million years hence'.

Every experience of this kind, after it had been passed through, found me nearer to God, enjoying a more intimate fellowship than ever I had known before. O, how I praised and thanked God from the depths of my heart! Now I know that such experiences, through the very anguish which they entail, break down - or wear away - the hard shell which encases the ego (or false self) and separates it from God our true Centre and Source. Consequently I did well to make my life difficult, for each experience, although at the time almost too grievous to be borne, brought me nearer to God and more deeply into His peace.

Things are not what they seem, for what appears at the time to be our greatest hindrance, turns out later to be our greatest aid and advancement. All difficulties if met in the right way are turned into stepping-stones to higher things.

And so we go from strength to strength and from victory to victory.

There is another side to this matter of making life difficult in order to attain. It was only in this way that I could become capable of helping others, for it is only those who have been taught by experience who can help others who have to pass through similar experiences. We all travel 'the way the saints have trod'; indeed, we all have to make the journey of Jesus and must be willing to pass through experiences similar to those through which He passed, but in a minor degree, of course. We are all tested and tried, but never beyond our strength. We may be bent and strained, but God never breaks us: relief always comes -just at the right time! This is true of all of us. But those who would help others, and perhaps be looked upon as a teacher (even though it be in but a very humble way), must be prepared for much more searching experiences. The law of sacrifice operates always, and at every level. We can help others only to the extent that we are willing to suffer ourselves. Therefore we have the satisfaction of knowing, when passing through a trying experience, that others will be helped and blessed indirectly through what we are enduring at the time.

It is impossible to help others by means of book learning, for passing on what we have read from books carries no conviction whatsoever. But what we have learnt through experience may come like

a message from heaven itself to those who are ready for it. We speak with conviction only when we have lived through the thing of which we speak. Yes, the law of sacrifice runs through life at all its levels. We cannot raise others up except by stooping down and giving them the helping hand of encouragement, so that they can make the great effort needed to bring them round the corner. We cannot of course truly help others by making things easier for them. Doing things for people instead of helping them to help themselves, through the exercise of faith, does but weaken them for they at once begin to lean on us, instead of upon God.

One concluding word about giving instead of getting.

This applies not only to money and substance, but also to such precious things as love, friendship, encouragement and so on. If we truly love our fellows, then we find that love comes back to us from many different quarters. If we become a universal friend and brother, then we find that our world is filled with friends and brothers.

Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.-Luke 6: 38.

I CONTINUE MY STORY

God does not permit us to remain on a pedestal of self-satisfaction for long. Whilst in my own case I cannot remember ever being self-satisfied (I knew my weaknesses too well), I think that I must have been satisfied with my own work and the way it was succeeding. I remember the late Miss Bridgeman, who founded The Rally, calling upon me -her second visit. But the first time she came I was in the process of building up the work when it looked as though it would be 'touch and go' as to whether I should win through or not. She had come in order to find out what sort of individual I was; for owing to the fact that I buried myself in the country and never appeared in public, some strange tales were spread about me.

People could not understand why I shunned publicity: the fact that I did not want to bask in the sunshine of public favour was, to say the least, suspicious. Some said that I was deformed, others that I was a freak -all thought that I had something to hide! Consequently several people came to see me so that they could find out for themselves, and they declared that they were relieved to find that I was a normal sort of chap! Miss Bridgeman was one of these. She said that she would go back to London and put an end to all the foolish stories which were being bandied about.

The second time she came she seemed to be somewhat disappointed. She said I was too much the successful business man and that I exuded an atmosphere of success and prosperity. I do not remember what I replied, but I probably said that it was necessary to make a success of

anything which we might undertake, and as my work was to help people, the more successful I was the greater the number of people who would be helped. Anyway, although I was not self-satisfied, I was very grateful that my work was being blessed and prospered. But life was not going to leave me in that position of fancied security and satisfaction for long. I was being brought to a place of 'naughting', as the old mystics term it.

Up to this point I had evolved a system which was successful in my own case and also in those of thousands of others. It helped people to face up to life's difficulties, overcome fear and worry, put their faith in God, become more efficient and healthier and happier, to serve instead of trying to get. This surely was laudable enough teaching, so what could be wrong in being satisfied with it? There was really nothing wrong about it, save that I was putting my trust in a system, instead of surrendering to God and allowing an inner, hidden Wisdom to take charge of my life. I had to come to that point where everything which I could do myself, and everything in which I had put my trust, failed me. Hitherto I had made use of God in order to attain my own ends; now I was to learn the difficult lesson of becoming dead unto self and alive unto God, so that His ends might be achieved through me. Having reduced prayer to an exact science which could be used successfully to clear up any situation, I was now to pass through that time of apparent failure and frustration, when God seems to have removed Himself from us and even our prayers are found to be vain and fruitless.

I was approaching a great crisis in my life
...at the naughting place where we have to lose

our life in order to find it. First of all, a great personal trouble began to develop. I felt that I was dealing with a powerful and menacing presence. All my well-proved systems of prayer proved to be of no avail whatever, and so the evil thing developed steadily and rapidly. Everything which had hitherto been so successful now failed me, and I was reduced to a condition bordering on despair .

One evening as I was sitting feeling burdened with trouble and overwhelmed by a black cloud which threatened to destroy me, God suddenly spoke to me in a verse from an old hymn greatly beloved of my father. Of course I heard no voice, but the Spirit recalled this verse to my memory, and illumined it in such a way as to bring a message to my soul:

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread,
Are big with mercy, and will break
In blessing on your head.

There may seem to be nothing particularly remarkable about these words, but to me at that moment they meant everything and in a flash I passed from a state of crushing despair to one of comparative peace. Let me try to explain the matter.

Ever since the trouble started I had been resisting it; I had looked upon it as an evil thing to be fought against and destroyed. Nothing but evil could come out of it - so I believed - therefore if God did not take the trouble away it would be the end of everything, and nothing would remain but abject despair. But it was too big a thing for me to master. It was one of those things which we have to allow to develop and unfold in its own way. I had got to

learn the great lesson of agreeing with my adversary, even as Jesus taught.

Then God revealed to me through the simple words of the verse that the cloud which I feared so much, and which I looked upon as an evil thing, was actually full of mercy and that the trouble itself would descend upon me in the form of a most gracious blessing. This great experience would probably be termed by modern psychologists as a 'reorganization of the personality' - but which I prefer to call total surrender of ourselves to God and His will concerning us. Sooner or later we discover that life is divine; that is, that God is in every experience and that the divine activity is in every happening. What is needed is that we should submit to the divine guidance, for life is divine (or good) and what is needed is that we shall agree with it and come into correspondence with it. But as I mentioned in the last chapter, the act of surrender has to be repeated many times - this it will be remembered I have found to be true in my own life. At the time that this great experience came to me, I believed wholeheartedly that I really and truly surrendered everything to God: every sinful desire, every weakness, all pride and self-sufficiency - every atom of self. I gave myself utterly and completely and dedicated my life wholly and unreservedly to God, so that I had not a desire of my own at all. As far as I knew at the time, my surrender was genuine, sincere, and absolutely wholehearted.

But as time went on, another crisis gradually developed and again I was brought to the naughting place. I found that in spite of the sincerity and apparent completeness of my first surrender, there were still certain areas of my

personality which were unredeemed, parts of me into which I would not admit my best Friend. Then again I surrendered whole-heartedly and fully, genuinely thinking that it was complete. But after a time another and yet another crisis would come into my life. Verily, the self takes a long time to die! One of the crises was due to a recrudescence of all the old passions and weaknesses of the flesh. Everything came back with redoubled power and I could in truth then sympathize with St. Paul when his oft-quoted words were wrung from his agonized and tormented soul: 'The good that I would do, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do'. Now the Adversary said to me: 'What is the good of it all? What is the use of your trying any more? Here you are, back again! You cannot escape me! All this holiness business is futile; you cannot keep it up. The revelations from God which you think you had were only hallucinations' ...It was the same old story (but on an infinitely humbler plane) of 'He saved others: himself he cannot save'. 'Where now is thy God?' I have been told that those who try to teach along the lines of the Gospel have to pass through desperate experiences and tests; that is, if their teaching is true. If their teaching is nefarious, or a mixture of the true and nefarious, then they will be left alone. But directly they begin to teach the real thing they are marked down as a special target: from every possible angle and at every possible point is an assault made. Also I am told that those who try to teach spiritual truths in order to help others are liable to take upon themselves the trials, troubles, tests and even diseases of those to whom they minister. Again, whatever he may teach, upon that very

thing will the teacher be tested. This was first brought to my notice by a lady who had been a contributor to a now-defunct metaphysical magazine. She confessed that everything about which she wrote brought to her a severe testing on the very thing about which she had been writing. The reason is not difficult to see, for it was through meeting such a testing experience that the writer was advanced to that stage of attainment about which she wrote. Most writers on these subjects generally write beyond their present stage of attainment - after which comes the experience which - if it is properly grappled with - will advance them to that stage about which they have written.

It is much the same with those who use affirmations. They generally affirm something that is at present beyond them.

Then they may be surprised to find that an experience comes to them which gives them the opportunity of proving the truth of that which they have affirmed. They may not like the experience at the time, but when they have passed through it, they realize that they now really know, whereas formerly they only believed. We can only know as the result of experience. It is only when we have passed through an experience and been delivered by God, that we know God as our deliverer; similarly we can only really know God as our Healer by being healed, as our Source of supply only by trusting God to the last ditch, so to speak. One correspondent once wrote to me that she was trusting God to the last lump of coal ...

Temptation comes always to try us on our weakest point: there must be something in us which responds to the temptation, otherwise it would not be any temptation to us. But the object of

the test is not to drive us down into hell, but rather to bring us to that state of surrender in which we let God in, so completely and utterly, that He can unite us with Himself and make us like unto Himself, so that our weakest point becomes our strongest.

'But' it may be asked, 'is there no royal road to attainment? Must progress always be made through terrific cataclysmic experiences in which the soul is brought to the very brink of extinction?' The answer is that it depends upon the individual. Some are getting near the end of their immense journey, and are willing to make a steep and direct ascent to God, and to go through anything in order to enter into Divine union. Such invite tremendous experiences and are quite satisfied to meet them, for each obstacle is a stepping-stone to higher things. Others, on the other hand, may not be willing to make the steep and sharp direct ascent to Divine union, preferring to go more slowly by an easier and less direct route. These are less heroic and daring than the pioneer type; they prefer to follow rather than to lead and are not prepared to suffer, or run risks. Such individuals are what might be called the rank and file - they wait for pioneers to blaze the trail, or even to make a good road for them. They are not prepared to go on alone, neither do they want to scale the heights.

Rather, they prefer to follow a winding path up the mountain, a path not so steep or dangerous but which, although it is far longer, yet at last leads to the summit. God has His place and uses for each type. Each one of us is in his right place at the right time.

Lest any might think - apropos my own crises - that I am making excuses for myself, let me say

at once that I realize that within myself is the cause of everything that comes into my life, and I take full responsibility for all the catastrophies which have come to me. One of their objects has been to teach me humility, for we can make no real progress in the spiritual life without true repentance, humility and love. I think that I can say that I have done my share of repentance and have tried to love all humanity and to be a universal lover and friend, but I fear that I have failed in humility. Consequently many of the blows which I have received have been necessary, in order to teach me humility. We are all inclined to become proud and self-satisfied, and it needs great blows to rid us of these vices. A blow to our pride is one of the most painful experiences through which we have to pass, and as such come through other people, it is a great help if we have learnt the great art of returning love for every wrong done to us. It is pride which makes us want to justify ourselves and to resent false attacks and misrepresentation.

There is another great cause of severe trouble arising in the life of the true aspirant - neglect of waiting upon God.

'They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength.' The promise is not given to any others, but only to those who wait upon the LORD. Renewal of strength is conditional upon the regular practice of waiting upon God, therefore if we neglect this we become weakened and are liable to fall in the hour of temptation. We also find ourselves entangled in all sorts of difficulties. Then some great trouble comes which drives us back upon God: we are compelled to seek Him afresh, through much suffering, until at last we find Him and harmony

is restored.

Quite often I receive letters from people whose story is that, through neglect of waiting upon the LORD, they have fallen into dire trouble and old weaknesses have reasserted themselves. Everything in their life appears to have gone wrong, and there seems to be no way out of their distresses.

They would like to get back to the Path once more: in fact that is their one great consuming desire, but feel unable to do so. The remedy is, of course, to make a supreme surrender to the LORD. Jesus had to come to it in the Garden; Newman came to it when he wrote *Lead Kindly Light*. All of us have to come to it sooner or later. We come at last to that stage when we lose our life in order to find it - that is, we give up the puny life of the self and separateness, to find in its place the Life of God which is our true life.

It seems to me that no matter how perfect we may be, we must all come to our naughting place. The classic example is the experience of Jesus. He who went about doing good and who had overcome all temptations and had lived a pure and unselfish life - even He was brought to the limit of his endurance in the garden of Gethsemane. Even He prayed in his agony: 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.' In spite of his perfect life and his ministry of love and healing, Jesus was brought to that dark hour of utter surrender to the Father's will, and to the willing acceptance of all that was coming to Him. Yes, even He had come to his naughting place ...

My own experience has been that the life of the Spirit is in sections. During the first we live

a life of faith and trust in God; we try 'to live a godly, righteous and sober life', and probably succeed most of the time while, if or when we fail, we are truly sorry for our sins and shortcomings.

During this period we think that we are doing everything and accomplishing everything which is accomplished - with God's help, of course. We are pleased with our progress; we are thankful that we can help others. We make progress in many directions and learn many lessons through experience. We meditate upon Truth, we may even work wonders through faith and prayer and may also become teachers and speakers, preachers and writers. But during the whole of this period, 'self' is really our centre and our master.

We may be unaware of it, but our life - as we have known it hitherto - has to come to an end, while the 'self' which we know, has to die. 'Ye must be born again.' As Jesus also said, we have to be reborn of the Spirit from above. Again Jesus said, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone'. That is the secret: we have to die in order to live; the grain has to die, as a grain, in order that out of it a new life may arise. It is this dying process which is so painful to the 'self'. We want to preserve the 'self' at all costs. But at last we come to the point of utter surrender; and when finally we give up the 'self') we enter into such joy and peace as we have never known before, and which we did not believe to be possible.

When we reach the second stage, we realize that we are not doing everything as we fondly imagined: we discover that God is doing it all, and that without Him we can do nothing, and indeed are nothing. God is in everything and the

Divine activity is in every circumstance and happening.

When once we know this we can declare that God is with us in every experience and that therefore only good can come out of it.

It is in order that we should reach this second stage that the naughting stage is necessary. We have first to go down before we can be raised up. But the naughting experience can assume many forms. It came as a dark time to the saintly Newman, and as a catastrophic series of experiences to my unsaintly self. But I believe that it was the same experience.

It is rather like taking a railway journey. We travel quite a long way, but at last we reach a junction where we have to change into another train and on to another line, if we are ever to reach our right destination. We have to break away from that which hitherto has served our purpose very well.

If it had not been of service to us we should not have arrived at the junction; but now it can no longer serve us. We have to break away from it all, and set forth anew. No matter, then, what form the experience may take, the time comes when we give up ourselves and our life entirely into God's hands. Directly we do this we enter into a great peace which is God's own inward peace, such as the Divine Mind knows and enjoys. Because we have given ourselves up entirely to God we are able to enter into His peace, and we become immersed in it.

The great experience through which I had passed had its effect upon my work. As I changed, so also did my teaching change. I had been through the dark valley and had emerged a changed man, dependent upon God for everything. Therefore I was now equipped to help others through the same

experience. So from that time on my teaching took on a new note and became more spiritual, less metaphysical and psychological. I could only teach effectively that which I had learnt through experience.

This entailed considerable financial loss, for I burned up all the tons of booklets and lessons which had been so laboriously prepared. The fire lasted for days, and with it perished much of my capital. It also entailed a tremendous amount of work, for all the things which I burned had to be replaced by others, all written by myself. This had to be done outside office hours, for at this time my office work was a whole-time job. In addition to writing new courses of lessons, my books also had to be withdrawn from circulation and rewritten.

How I survived all this labour without a breakdown seems wonderful to me now. Not only was I overworked, but at the same time I was making unwise and ill-advised experiments with my diet. Also I fasted a lot - equally ill-advised - so that I felt completely exhausted. However the task was at last completed but I could not relax, for with the issuing of the new teaching, came more students (floods of them, it seemed!) which meant more work and yet more work.

Many expressed their regret at the changes which were made, their objection being that the former teaching helped many thousands, and because of that it should have been continued. They explained that the majority of those who were helped by the former teaching were not ready for the more advanced instruction, neither would they be willing to follow it, even if they were able to understand it. They also pointed out that the former teaching was helpful because it

applied to this life and how to make the most of it: over-coming difficulties, rising above obstructions and living a life of service and working in harmony with the laws of life.

I was reminded by all this of what happened to Jesus.

Many thousands of people flocked after Him, and thousands professed to be His disciples. But the majority of them, when they discovered that His teaching really was the gospel of the interior Kingdom (and not the founding of an earthly kingdom) went back and walked no longer with him.

Consequently, Jesus lost most of His disciples. They were glad to go with Him when He fed the multitudes and worked other signs and wonders, but when they learnt what real discipleship meant, they preferred to walk another way.

I felt that I must follow Jesus in this matter, so I withdrew my teaching, and started all over again. Many left us, but not all - whilst others were attracted. These were seeking to become heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, who in their search for Truth were prepared to go anywhere the search might lead them.

The difference between the new aspect of my teaching and the old was this: the former teaching did not accept the disciplines and what Paul termed the chastenings of life, but overcame them by resistance and by the use of spiritual powers. My new teaching accepts life's disciplines and chastenings, works through them, learns as much as possible from them, and thus turns apparent obstacles and hindrances into stepping-stones to higher and better things. The former teaching stressed too much getting on in life; the latter stresses the necessity of 'giving all to life' and leaving God to give the

recompense. The difference is a very subtle one, and a great many people have no patience with it.

They say that this change from 'self' to God is unnecessary and ask why they cannot go on as they are, but getting better and better, until they become perfect. But Jesus said 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone'.

Alas, the teaching of Jesus has been ignored and other things substituted.

Of course, I realize that everything is right at the time and in its right place: I can see now that I was being led by the Spirit as much when I turned out elementary teaching as when I promulgated a more advanced teaching. It was the same Spirit leading us on, both teacher and taught. Thousands of people were helped then who could not have been helped by a teaching more advanced. Even now, most of my books are what one might term pre-surrender teaching.

But my one desire now is to help aspirants to find God and enter into Divine union. Yet on looking back on my life, the thing which stands out probably more prominently than anything else is the wonderful way I have been led to do the right thing, at the right time. In spite of all my foolish mistakes, and wanderings into Bypath Meadow, yet just when I reached the critical point when another step would have ruined me for ever - I have been led to strike out on an entirely different path. And this path has always proved to be the only right one for me. This is the story of my own search for Ultimate Truth.

It is in no sense a textbook, neither does it presume to lay down any laws for others. Each seeker must go the way in which the Spirit leads

him, yet because he may not yet be ready for the experiences which I describe, he should not be perturbed. Everything will come to pass - in his case, as in mine - just at the right time. All that he has to do is to live a life of trust in God, and deal with each experience of life in a spirit of love and service. He should put the little bit of Truth he already knows into practice, and if he does this greater understanding will come to him - not intellectual knowledge, but a real knowing by the soul of things which are quite beyond the greatest intellect.

We do not have to worry about our unfoldment at all, for the experiences of everyday life give us just what we need in order to advance us in spiritual understanding. If we make every difficulty a matter of prayer, then every experience brings us nearer to the heart of God. The many irritating incidents which happen during the day may all be resolved into harmony by turning to God and realizing the Divine Truth about them. This not only conserves us physically, but also advances us in spiritual understanding. Everything that happens to us is an opportunity to seek our Divine Source in order to find a harmonious solution.

The mistake which we are liable to make is in being satisfied with living a life of faith, in which all difficulties are resolved by turning to God and realizing the Truth.

But of course we cannot stand still; we cannot remain where we are, in a state of satisfaction: If we try to do so, then a time comes when everything appears to go wrong and all our methods fail us, until at last we can only pray: 'Lead Thou me on'.

In the light of experience, it seems to me now

that if I had been willing to be disciplined and chastened, then the change-over would not have been so painful and catastrophic. The Path of Liberation is not a vale of woe; Love accompanies us all the way. Everything is designed to bring us to greater joys than we have ever known before, while to experience God's peace is greater bliss than can be described. The greatest human or physical bliss is but a counterfeit of the real bliss of Divine union.

THE OVERCOMING OF GRIEF AND SORROW

A passing reference has already been made to the bereavement which befell us and our family in 1918 and whose immediate impact made us feel that a light had gone from our lives. As all of us must at some time or other experience grief, sorrow and bereavement, let us consider this matter together: first, the necessity of overcoming the grievous experience; second, the best way of doing so.

It is as vitally important that we should overcome our grief and sorrow as it is that a boy should overcome his disappointment when he fails to pass an examination. If he were to give way to his disappointment he would never try again, and thus would never be able to retrieve his fortunes and make good.

If we give way to grief, we lower our own efficiency; we also invite sickness and ill-health. In addition, we attract financial loss, poverty and other negative ills. There is an old saying to the effect that 'troubles never come singly'.

This is very true, and the reason this is so is mainly, I think, due to the fact that the first trouble - if given way to - produces a negative condition which attracts other troubles and ills of various kinds. If therefore we overcome our grief and sorrow, we also are protected from many negative ills to which we might otherwise be prone. Or, even if we do have to meet such negative experiences, we are able to do so with a stout heart and a triumphant spirit, instead of falling a victim to them.

For the sake of others also, we must overcome. If we give way to grief, we not only become less

efficient, we also become a drag upon those around us. They, instead of being inspired by our example, become depressed and weakened by our mourning and sorrow. Instead therefore of being a help to those around us, we become a hindrance.

We see around us some lovely examples of those who overcome. I can recall one woman in particular whose face expressed to a remarkable degree a state of inward peace.

One could describe the expression of her face only as heavenly - there was no other word which could describe it. And as we looked at her calm face, we realized intuitively that here was one who had been through the fires and who had weathered many a storm yet one who had found God's inward peace, and that it flowed through her like a river.

Alas, we also meet those who give way to grief and sorrow.

How sad a sight it is to see them! They excite our pity, but they do not inspire us for if they have the opportunity they will pour out their tale of woe. Two extreme cases of this type might be mentioned. The first was that of a man who lost his son. Instead of meeting his trouble like a man and trying to find a certain amount of relief by working extra hard and with increased diligence, he refused to go to work at all. He walked about telling everyone of his bereavement and describing his own sufferings. The end of it was that he lost his job, and thus became a charge on his own family; he also lost the respect of those who knew him. The other case is even more extreme and was told us by Swami Ramdas. Ramdas once met a man who had left his work and also his home, going about from place to place, wailing and weeping loudly.

Swami Ramdas told the man to keep on repeating a certain mantram without stopping; this the man did, and then found to his surprise that his grief had gone.

Now I know that while it is easy to speak about over-coming grief and sorrow, it is far from being an easy thing to do. Indeed, it is only one who has come through the furnace himself who is able to help others to overcome. Those who do not overcome cannot of course help others, for their idea of comforting those in sorrow is to relate all their own griefs. But this can only make matters worse. In my own case I did not get much help from others. One parson said that I should look forward to the resurrection; another was most lovingly sympathetic and took hold of my hand in both of his and called me 'his dear brother'. I loved him for doing that. I also loved the other parson, for I knew that his sympathy was wonderfully deep and true; but neither of them could help me in any definite way. They had nothing to suggest. Consequently as usual I had to find my own way and puzzle things out for myself; which was probably the best way for me, as I have always been inclined to be independent.

This brings me to our second point, viz. the way to overcome grief and sorrow. Briefly it can be stated that deliverance is achieved to the extent that we succeed in staying our mind upon God. Some however may exclaim: 'But how can I cease grieving, when it is as though my heart had been torn out by the roots?' The answer is that we do not try to stop ourselves from grieving, for to do so would be I useless. By trying to stop a bad habit or hurtful practice we do but make it stronger; the only effective way of dealing with a bad habit or hurtful

practice is to cultivate an opposite good habit or practice. Therefore instead of giving way to our grief and sorrow on the one hand, or fighting against it, on the other, we make a deliberate effort to switch the mind over to God and Truth. To the extent that we succeed in doing this, do we succeed in overcoming our grief, for we have to do something positive if we are to overcome. Instead of making our bad habit stronger by fighting it, we cut the ground from underneath it by cultivating the most positive habit or practice of all, viz. staying the mind upon God. Thus we overcome by what is termed 'action in inaction'. In one sense, we do nothing; yet in another sense, we do something very positive.

I have heard some people say (and I also receive letters to the same effect) that they do not know why they fail, because they try so hard to overcome their weakness. Also, some tell me that they fail in spite of the fact that they pray so hard against their weakness. The reason they fail is of course that they do not work according to psychological law. The laws of mind are infallible and unchanging. It has been said that we can overcome Nature only by obeying her laws; in the same way we can overcome our weakness only by obeying the laws of mind. This is the secret of all overcoming - not to fight, but to retire into the hidden Strength, keeping our mind stayed upon God.

How can we do this? In my own case the first thing that I had to discover was that the true way to meet life's experiences is just the opposite of the natural way. It was after I had discovered this that I noticed, rather to my surprise, that Jesus had taught the same thing. I could then understand why my father and others

would not pay any attention to the teaching of Jesus, but said that I must accept certain doctrines instead. They were trying to explain everything by the reasoning of the human mind, and as the teaching of Jesus was the very reverse of this, they would not have anything to do with it. Having been taught certain doctrines instead of the words of Jesus, I knew very little about His teaching. Therefore I had to find things out for myself; then when later I found that what I had discovered had been taught by Jesus, I was greatly encouraged. What I discovered was very simple indeed - so simple and obvious was it that I could not understand why I had not seen it before.

All that I discovered was that the way of the Spirit, that is, the heavenly way of dealing with life's experiences, was the exact opposite of the way of the world and that of the human mind. Consequently, as far as ethics were concerned, all that I had to do was to do the exact opposite of what I would naturally want to do.

Jesus taught us to agree with our adversary instead of resisting him; we were to go the other mile, and so on. All at once I realized that that was what I was doing: I had learnt to do the very opposite of what the natural man would want to do. And so it was with dealing with the problem of grief and sorrow. The natural thing to do when bereaved is to give way to grief and sorrow. We may feel that we want sympathy from others; that we want pity, that we want to show to the world how great our love is, by appearing crushed and stricken. We may want to indulge in self-pity.

...Instead, however, of behaving in any of these ways, we do the exact opposite. The bolder we

are, the better. So we start off by praising and blessing God for all His goodness and mercy.

(That in itself kills self-pity; it also destroys our self-centredness.) Only too often inordinate grief is due to self-centredness) consequently if we keep on praising and blessing God, our self-centredness becomes undermined, so that it dies a natural death, as does a plant when it has been deprived of its roots. Also it is an act of faith, for it requires faith to praise God when we are sorely stricken, and unable to understand why it is that we should have been dealt such a fell blow.

Is it easy to praise God in such circumstances? No, indeed, it is far from being easy; but it is possible for us to master it, if we make up our mind to do so. At first it is like trying to swim in water that is choked with weeds. If however we persevere, we can actually make a habit of praising and thanking God, so that we feel at a loss if we cease doing so.

This method can be applied to any calamity which may come to us. No matter what it may be, if we perseveringly thank and bless the LORD in the face of the trouble, we do the one thing which will ride us through the storm, and bring us into a haven of peace.

But I have also found it helpful to thank God for the loved one whom we 'have lost awhile'. This requires more courage, for it reminds us of our loss. But we must be brave in this attempt to overcome; we cannot be victorious if we run away. We have to face up to that which we dread. I do not think that any victory can be won merely by trying to forget.

It is much better if we face up to things and try to overcome, instead of endeavouring to evade that which is painful.

Therefore it is helpful if we have a photograph of our loved one in every room - not in order to remind us of our grief, but in order to remind us to pray. If we pray every time our eye rests upon the photograph it leads not only to victory, but brings great blessedness. Therefore we take the brave course and thank God for the loved one, who has passed into another room of God's many mansions.

The first stage of our prayer, then should be:

'I thank Thee for all Thy love and goodness.'

The next stage:

'I thank Thee for -' (mention the name of our loved one).

Then this can be followed by:

'I thank Thee for his (her) love and faithfulness.'

This can be followed by:

'I thank Thee for the years of blessed companionship which we were privileged to enjoy.'

This is probably the most difficult prayer of all; and it is so, because it reminds us of the fact that this blessed companionship has been seemingly cut short. It is not easy to concentrate upon the years of blessed companionship which we have enjoyed, and to refuse resolutely to admit the thought of our loss into our mind. Of course, we do not fight against the intruding thought at all, but only

concentrate on thanking God for the years of blessedness which we have been privileged to enjoy.

Finally, we come to the last stage of our prayer, which is:

'I thank Thee because Thou art leading him (her) on to higher and better things.'

Yes, life is ever progressing. The next world is not a stagnant one; the life there must be one of constant progression, a rising to higher and better and more glorious things.

Instead of limiting our loved ones by our selfish prayers, we let them go so that they can rise into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

Then we can add:

'I thank Thee because Thou art raising us all to higher and better and more glorious things.'

It does not matter whether we are still here on this earth plane, or whether we have passed on to the Light Realms, we are equally in the love and care of God.

It is a good plan to master each stage of this prayer before passing on to the next one.

Indeed, one stage is about as much as most of us can manage at the time. When the first stage of the prayer by constant and faithful practice has been mastered, the next stage can be added. Thus in addition to saying:

I thank Thee for all Thy love and goodness— we add:

'I thank Thee for -' (mention the name of our loved one)

This will not prove at all easy, because it may bring back our sense of loss, and make us feel 'empty and raw inside', as one dear sufferer described it. But, again, if we face up to it bravely and persevere in using the prayer, we are helped to overcome. The natural tendency is to be tempted to do just the opposite at such a time. But if we follow the way of love and faith, by practicing the prayer, our grief becomes more assuaged.

When we have mastered the second stage, we can add the third.

We can say:

'I thank Thee for his (her) love and faithfulness' ,

This too will be a difficult addition. To use it may seem like raking over raw wounds, but if we try to use it, we are again helped by the Spirit and given strength and grace sufficient for our task. After this has been mastered, we have next to add what is probably the most difficult stage of all,

'I thank Thee for all the years of loving companionship which by Divine grace we have been privileged to enjoy.'

Having mastered this by persistence and by persevering practice, we are now ready to complete the prayer by adding:

'I thank Thee because Thou art leading him (her) to higher and better and more glorious things.'

And while praying in this way we should try to feel the uplift of these words. When this has been mastered, we can add:

'I thank Thee, because Thou art leading us all on to higher and better and more glorious things.'

While saying these words we realize that there is no separation, neither is there any loss. We are all of us, whether still 'here' or already 'there', one in the love of God. So now we are ready to pray the complete prayer, which will now run as follows:

'I thank Thee for all Thy love and goodness.'

'I thank Thee for -, and for his (her) love and faithfulness.'

'I thank Thee for the years of blessed companionship which we were privileged to enjoy.'

'I thank Thee because Thou art leading him (her) on to higher and better things.'

'I thank Thee because Thou art raising us all to higher and better and more glorious things.'

This complete prayer can only be prayed when we have a little quiet time to ourselves; we cannot use such a long prayer while we are going about our daily work. At such times we must use a shortened version of it. If we are very rushed we can say 'I thank Thee' which will recall subconsciously some of the prayer itself. When we get a little time to ourselves, we can sit down, close our eyes, and pray the prayer right through.

The question may be asked what I mean by

praying. Do I mean that we are to kneel down, close our eyes, and fold our hands in the conventional way? No, indeed. What I mean is mental prayer which can be practiced at odd moments.

We can lift up our heart to God, the Central and Interior Harmony, while busy about life's duties. If we can steal a moment to ourselves, we can also close our eyes while we connect ourselves up with the Divine Harmony, and utter our few words of praise and thanksgiving. Of course we must concentrate upon what we are doing. For instance, we should not close our eyes and pray while we are, say, driving a car; but we can pray before we start. We can also maintain a joyous and praiseful state of heart which keeps itself going, subconsciously.

All prayer must be fervent if it is to be effective. Therefore when we pray we should do so with all our mind and strength, and we should bless the LORD with 'all that is within us'. There is an interior central harmony, in which everything is perfect and right. This is the realm which we contact when we pray.

Through the practice of prayer, and also perhaps through the anguish of the sorrows which we all have to meet at some time or times during our life, we reach a stage when we can rise into the Divine peace and harmony at any moment. We know at once the peace of God: we enter into a state of blissful oneness and unity.

Some may protest that what I have been saying is all very I well and that while it may apply to cases of ordinary bereavement, it fails to meet the needs of those whose experience has been of a violent and tragic character. Some, alas, have had a loved one murdered in terrible circumstances. What can those who have had such

a terrible experience do? How can they bless and praise the LORD? Frankly, I do not know; but I do know that prayer is the only remedy for every ill.

Therefore the worse the experience the more need there is for prayer. I have found that the only remedy is prayer in some form, no matter what circumstances I may be in. And so to those who have had to meet such a tragic and terrible experience I would implore them to pray, and to keep on praying, with all their strength. For the final remedy is the staring of the mind upon God, and it is only by prayer that this can be accomplished.

It is those who come through the greatest experiences and trials who enter into the greatest joy, and experience the profoundest peace. Those who go about in an atmosphere of peace, and with the Light of Heaven upon their countenances, 'these are they who have come through great tribulation'. No tongue nor pen can describe the inward joy of one, who has won through great tribulation and bereavement, and who has learnt to praise and rejoice in the face of loss and sorrow. Such joy can never be described, for it is of Heaven, although it can be experienced on earth.

My closing word is - let us all pray without ceasing, for prayer is the remedy for every ill. It is through prayer that the overcoming of grief and sorrow is to be found.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE LIFE TO COME

It would seem consistent, at this point in my narrative, to consider some thoughts on the life to come - that existence which is ours when our earthly pelgrimage is done. What I have to say will be (as indeed is the case throughout these pages) the fruitage of my own experience, as well as my own

convictions. Some writers speak with apparent authority about the next life, but when we come to look into the matter we find that most of their ideas are but a repetition of what somebody else has written.

Others too speak with authority based on certain interpretations of Scripture - generally somebody else's.

My consideration of the subject entirely rules out anything of a psychic nature, for I have neither experienced the trance state, nor heard voices nor been vouchsafed visions. Such being the case, how is it that I am so certain of life beyond the grave?

I am certain because I know; that is to say, all my life I have possessed what might be termed a consciousness of immortality.

I never could understand those who declare that when they die, it is the end of them. They on their part cannot understand how it is that I know that I am immortal, and that I shall always go on living, not in this material body, but in some other body. As Paul says, spiritual questions can only be spiritually discerned - they cannot be encompassed by the human or, what he termed, the carnal mind. Now although I have had no psychic experiences, yet I have all my life been conscious of an invisible world

impinging upon this one which at times has been very near and real to me.

For instance, when I was quite young we were once visited by an unusually violent thunderstorm and everybody was in a panic of fear. I clearly recall sitting down on a chair, when immediately I experienced a delightful feeling of peace and well-being. All fear left me and it seemed, that I was surrounded by invisible Heavenly presences, and that I could come to no real harm, no matter what might happen.

Consequently I know that there is an invisible world and that it is infinitely good. I know because I am at all times conscious of it. But this does not explain how I know that I am immortal, and that I can never die. When I speak of immortality, I speak of the soul, and not this material body. I believe that the physical body can be transmuted even as was the body of Jesus.

In addition to being aware of another world of infinite harmony and friendliness, I am also aware of my own identity. As I have described more completely elsewhere, I one day suddenly awoke to the fact of my true identity, and knew that I, in my true inmost self, am immortal. This was not a mere belief, or intellectual conception, but was a sudden awakening to a realization of the truth of being.

It was the real self breaking through the shell of egohood which encased it like the shell of an egg encases the chick, and which longs to break through into a wider world.

This then is what I know by direct knowing; what follows is what I firmly believe.

'In my Father's house are many mansions', said Jesus (John 14:2).

Paul spoke of a man who was caught up to the third heaven, and others postulate seven planes or heavens - but I know nothing of these things. This however is quite clear to me that we shall all be provided with a suitable body whichever heaven we may go to. Here on this earth plane we are provided with a corresponding 'earthly' body, in order that we can function in this world. If we go to celestial planes, then we shall have celestial bodies through which we can function on celestial planes, or in the highest Heaven. But although our bodies will be different in texture and rate of vibration they will still be like us in appearance.

That is to say, we shall easily be recognizable, but glorified in appearance. I mention this because so many people, having read all kinds of conflicting theories about what happens to us after we are dead, are afraid that they will never see or meet their loved ones again. I am convinced that this is not so. Love can never die, and those we love can never die, and love will surely bring us together again. Also we shall surely recognize one another; we shall find our loved ones glorified, but they will still bear the same likeness.

Now a word about death itself - and by death I mean the passing on of the victorious soul to higher realms when it sloughs off the physical body.

I am convinced that the act of dying is not a painful process, and that on no account should it be feared. It is no more to be dreaded than falling asleep.

Actually, it is like going into another room or rather it's like stepping out from a gloomy room

into a lovely, sunlit garden, where are beautiful flowers and the singing of birds. Jesus said to the thief on the cross: 'This day you shall be with me in Paradise'. Some scholars tell us that the word translated paradise is an Asiatic word meaning a garden. Jesus did not say that the penitent thief would be with Him in purgatory, or that he would have to sleep in the grave for a few thousand years until the resurrection.

No, what He promised was that he, the thief, would be with Him that day in Paradise, or a garden. Death therefore is not a thing to be feared, for it is merely a stepping out into a lovely garden. We should therefore try not to mourn and sorrow too much over the passing of our loved ones, but rather try to rejoice with them in their newly-found liberty and freedom.

I was brought up in the belief that after death we would summarily be sent to hell or to heaven, according to our doctrinal beliefs. If we believed in a certain doctrine we would at death be changed miraculously into perfect godlike beings; on the other hand, if we did not believe in this doctrine, then we should go straight to hell, in spite of the fact that we might have lived blameless lives. Of course I protested against this idea. I could not understand why a person who may have been far from Christlike in his life here, should go to Heaven just because he believed in a certain doctrine, while a man who may have been a much better character should have to go to hell and be tortured for ever, just because he did not believe in that particular doctrine. When I raised my feeble protest I was simply ignored by my elders who declared in no uncertain voice that living a

good life was no good at all, that it would not save us from the wrath of God but, on the other hand it did not matter how wicked we might be, if we believed in the doctrine, we should go straight to Heaven!

From what they said it seemed obvious to me that it was a disadvantage to lead a good life, in the Spirit of Jesus, and an advantage to lead an indifferent one, if with it we believe in a certain doctrine about Christ.

My elders declared that they were right, for they had learned it all out of some books. As I was young and had never read their dreadful books, I had to give in - but I was far from convinced.

Now I know that what happens to us in the next life depends upon what we are within, and upon our thought life. According to the teaching in which I was reared, Dives would have gone to Heaven instead of to a place of torment if he had believed in this certain doctrine. But Jesus never taught anything so unmoral.

Dives went to the place he was fitted for, by reason of what he really was, and according to the life he had lived.

He had fared sumptuously every day, while others starved; he had looked after himself and paid no attention to the beggar at his gate. If what my parents and other teachers had tried to make me accept had been true (and if Dives had believed in this particular doctrine and had gone to Heaven instead of a place of torment) where could the Heavenly denizens have put him, and what could they have done with him? Such a character could never have been fitted into a

Heavenly community, neither could he have been able to tolerate the love atmosphere of Heaven. Nothing hurts more than the high vibrations of Divine Love to one who is far from being attuned to them, for Love then appears as Divine wrath. But of course there is no Divine wrath, but only Divine Love. God is Divine Love to all Eternity.

We must never forget this great fact; we must never allow ourselves to be deceived into thinking otherwise. When we are faced by devilish suggestions that God is a god of wrath, fury and anger, let us repeat to our soul this great truth, that God is Divine Love to all Eternity.

God is Love and cannot be anything that is not Love. But what is love to one who is attuned and filled with love, appears as wrath and anguish to the one who is not attuned - especially one who not only lacks love, but is filled with envy, strife, jealousy, hatred and resentment. Consequently we all go to an environment which is an outpicturing of what we are inwardly.

The same law applies in this life; the man with a pot-house mind is happy, in his way, only in a pot-house; if he were put into a cathedral, or forced to attend a classical concert, he would be miserable and irritated and would know no rest until he got back to his pot-house. In the same way one who delights in cathedrals and classical music would be revolted if he had to spend his hours of leisure in a pot-house. Even in this life, we are generally to be found in an environment which corresponds to what we are within.

The old idea was that when we die we suddenly

become gods - that dying in some magical way transforms us into perfect godlike beings, and that the most selfish and bad-tempered of us would be just the same as the most saintly person who ever lived. The mere act of dying would make us all perfect provided, of course, that we believed in a certain doctrine. We know now of course, that this idea is all wrong. We know that we shall begin in the next life where we have left off here, and that our environment will be just right for us. I am convinced that there are various grades or planes and that in one of them we shall find just the environment which will suit us perfectly.

The essential thing is that we should cultivate Heaven in our own heart now.

We may have Heaven in our heart, although in this life our environment may not be altogether heavenly; but if we do this then in the next life we shall have the Heaven in our heart expressed outwardly in the form of beauty, perfection, love, joy, peace and holy laughter, which always seems to me to be like the sound of silvery bells.

At last we shall find complete satisfaction for all the deepest longings of our soul for perfect purity, selflessness, and expression of our love to God. Deep down within us is a great desire for goodness and a great love for God. This will find satisfaction in the next life. The important thing therefore is to cultivate an inner life of heavenly thoughts and ideas - and this of course is what Jesus taught. Change your minds (and consequently your thoughts) for the kingdom of heaven is nigh, or with you; think heavenly thoughts, cultivate an inner life of heavenly aspirations, commune with

your Father and my Father in the depths of your being.

Yes, that is the great secret. What we think, that also do we become; if our inner thought-life is attuned to Heaven, then we have Heaven within us and we become Heavenly men and women. If we have Heaven within us, then we shall find ourselves in a corresponding Heaven when we pass on.

Everything is beautifully arranged, so that no pure and noble thought is ever lost - no aspiration Godwards can ever be fruitless. Consequently, we should not grieve too much when our loved ones pass on. Neither should we be anxious about them if they did not accept the doctrines which certain people tell us are necessary. They will find themselves in just that environment which suits perfectly their present stage of unfoldment, and which will enable them to make progress towards higher and better things.

God is Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom, therefore everything has been arranged exactly right for each one of us, no matter at what stage we may be. God has a place for each one of us, and that place is perfect. God can never be anything other than Love and, combined with Infinite Wisdom, this ensures perfect everything for each one of us. When our loved ones pass over, we should not mourn unduly, neither should we worry about them should they not have become spiritually awakened.

Everything comes to pass at the right time for God's ways are perfect. We must also remember that the outward man that we see - the man of sin, or weakness - is not the real man. The real man is within; the real nature, the real self,

is created in the likeness of Elohim and the time for his manifestation is not yet but will arrive in due course. Because God is Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love, we need be anxious about nothing - we need be troubled about no one. What really troubles us is the wicked old theology which has held the world in bondage for so long. When we get rid of that and learn to love and adore God as He really is, we enter into peace, and all our fears and apprehensions come to an end. Instead of sorrowing and mourning, we should praise God and thank Him because He is Infinite Love and Wisdom, and does all things well.

We can commit our loved ones into God's hands, completely and unreservedly, for we know that Infinite Love and Wisdom can only do the highest possible good for them - the most lovingly perfect and wisest possible form of good the Infinite can devise.

We can thank the Lord too because He is leading them and us on to higher and better and more glorious things. We can rejoice with our loved ones in their newly-found liberty and freedom, and joy and laughter - yes, laughter. Some people seem to think that laughter is wicked. So far from this being the case, I am sure that Heaven is filled with laughter as indeed it is filled with worship and praise. On some occasions I have awakened from a deep sleep singing a happy devotional hymn with great feeling, while at other times I have wakened up laughing heartily in a very deep way, much deeper than any ordinary laughter. So deep indeed as to be quite beyond either description or explanation, and somewhat akin to the feeling which comes when deep breathing comes to us. Some readers will no doubt think the foregoing

very elementary. So it is. It is written by an ordinary person for ordinary people. I know that mystics look upon the idea of going to Heaven as rather childish, because they know that there is something far greater, I admit this. Truth is beyond all Heavens, but still the Heavens remain, in the same way that the earth remains in spite of our realization of higher things.

11
WAR AGAIN

FROM 1920 when my work started, until 1939 when the second world War broke out, were years of comparative tranquility. There was of course the general strike in 1926, but I cannot remember that this affected us very much. There were also the struggle of changing or rewriting my books, and the strain of starting a magazine without much preparation or previous experience in such a venture. But generally speaking, life was fairly tranquil and the work grew and prospered. A sad feature of this period however was the number of unemployed who streamed past our place. Every day we had dozens of callers asking for work, or assistance on the road, and my work was frequently interrupted. Some of the men may have been imposters, but on the other hand many were genuine, and I do not know how I managed it, but I provided them with new boots of the army type, food, clothing, money, and also odd jobs of work.

In those days there was of course a certain amount of freedom. I was able to buy crates of boots from a well-known London store as well as well-knitted woollen socks of good quality. Also I could give a man a few hours or a day's work in the garden. Now, of course, such boots are not available, the tax gatherer takes most of the money I might otherwise spend on them, while I am not allowed to employ anyone without stamping his cards for a whole week.

There are still in this year of 1951 almost as many men on the road as there were before the last war, in spite of the fact that most of the casual wards have been closed. Despite food rationing, however, we manage to provide them

with simple meals and also money for the road, but as for clothes and boots, we cannot alas do much for them.

I have been visited by murderers, ex-convicts and confidence-tricksters - some of whom would have made splendid actors whilst others would have made very good salesmen.

I was known all over England as the man who gave away boots and it was generally accepted that I was a millionaire! Not that I live like one, far from it: indeed, our house is small, while as for our clothes, we spend as little on them as possible. 'Make do and mend' is the rule in our household, yet in spite of this, I had the reputation of being a millionaire - a strange idea not only held by the men-on-the-road fraternity, but also by some of the local inhabitants. One lady who came from Portsmouth told me that when she enquired from a man at work on the road where I lived he said that he knew me and that I was a millionaire chap who kept a lot of typewriters! On another occasion a man living about two miles away came to see me and said that he had fallen out of work, and that he had been told that I would help him, as I was a millionaire! This mistaken idea was evidently widespread. There was also another strange idea, equally mistaken, held by quite a number of men on the road. This was that I was Max Pemberton, the well-known novelist and journalist. For years we had persistent callers, all asking to see Mr. Max Pemberton - some even brought manuscripts for his expert opinion! When they were told that Max Pemberton did not live here and never had done so, it was easy to see that they did not believe it, but that they looked upon it as a trick to get rid of them.

I had so many callers and down-at-heel visitors that at times I found it difficult to deal with them all and, at the same time, carry on with my work. Directly I sat down to a meal, there would be a ring at the door-bell and away I would go to render help to someone whose need was greater than my own. When I got back to my meal, it would be cold. This did not trouble me, but it was disappointing to my wife who had spent hours in preparing it. As soon, too, as I settled down to my work, the bell would go again. Then I would leave my desk and minister to another 'out of work', only to be met on my return by two or more unfortunates who wanted to see me. And so it would go on ... Sometimes I felt rather harried and driven by it all, but I tried to be as patient as possible, remembering the One who trod the hard way before us and who bore so many stripes. Also it seemed to me, very often, that in ministering to these 'men of the road' I was ministering to Jesus in disguise and after it was over I would feel glad in my heart. I thought of those words of His: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.' This experience was a good opportunity for me to learn something about the lives of these flotsam and jetsam of life.

I wanted to know why these men had come down in the world.

Some were drunken, others vicious, but most were merely weak; some were doctors, some lawyers, while others had at one time held similar positions. Mostly in these cases there was a history of giving way to drink or vicious habits.

But there were plenty who were neither drunken nor vicious.

And there were also the criminals, a few of whom made a bee-line for my place as soon as they were discharged from prison. After a time I began to recognize the new suit with which each long-term prisoner is supplied on the day of his discharge. Other men's clothes were old and worn, whereas the newly-discharged prisoner always had a new suit. I soon found that criminals were all alike, psychologically. They all had a grudge against life; they nursed resentments towards all in authority. They believed that everyone was engaged in a racket from the judge down to the humblest warder, even including the chaplain; that what these officials were doing was simply for what they could get out of it.

Missions and the Salvation Army, too, were simply a big swindle, defrauding the public and oppressing the poor prisoners! It was easy to see that so long as they held these ideas and nursed their resentments they would continue to find themselves in prison from time to time. But how to cure them was the problem, for they were set in their ideas and habits of thought. It seemed that nothing could ever change them. To attempt psychological treatment seemed to me to be hopeless and even foolish; what was needed was a complete change of heart and mind such as came to John Bunyan.

But this is the work of the Spirit and not of man, although man may be used as a channel as also may be the printed word.

Many of the men would no doubt have worked if someone had arranged for them to do a certain number of hours' labour each day, and then to draw their wages at the end of the week. But as far as one could judge they had no more idea of how to find new work, or how to create new work

through their own resources, than a pig has of flying. They were mere 'dumb driven cattle', victims of circumstances.

How to help them was indeed a problem.

A large proportion of these poor failures had sunk down to the lowest stratum of life simply through expecting other people to help them, and through self-pity. They complained that they had never had anyone to help them. One man told me that his mother had died, and so he had no home - never a thought apparently of his ever making one for her! Others were down at the bottom through not facing up to life's difficulties. They tried to dodge their responsibilities, always following the path of least resistance. It looked the easy way, but always it turned out to be the hard way. All criminals apparently belong to this class. They see a thing and take it, because to do so seems to be an easy way out; they run a swindle because it promises them a rich reward without the grind of working. There were however some good workers and I admired them very much. I told them that their trouble was only temporary, for it was obvious that because of their energy and willingness to serve they would find a regular job sooner or later. As my readers will know, if we grapple with life's difficulties and choose the difficult way instead of the path of least resistance, life yields up to us her richest treasures.

It does not matter how difficult or impossible our path may appear to be, there is always a way through if we go forward in faith. These experiences of meeting all sorts and conditions of men were really helpful to me, as they gave me a valuable opportunity of studying at first-hand the problem of failure. I could see myself

in these failures: I could say: 'There, but for the grace of God, goes H. T. H.' However, as I have already said, life on the whole was uneventful and peaceful. But of course I had struggles of a spiritual kind, and also my share of sorrows and disappointments, as all people have - but outwardly life was fairly serene ... Then came September 1939, and with it yet another war. The actual outbreak of hostilities was preceded by an unnatural peace. As a rule one in a position such as mine is conscious, in a special way and to an unusual degree, of the existence of powers which battle against the soul and all that is of the Light. But just before the outbreak of war these forces seemed to have been withdrawn, so that there was a great calm. This proved to be the calm before the storm.

Since that experience I have always been suspicious of those occasions when all the warring forces of evil disappear and there is a great and unnatural peace. This is a sign that great trouble is brewing. It is natural for the soul to be in conflict and for the warfare of the soul to continue almost without cessation, for it is only in this way that we can make progress in our spiritual unfoldment. Therefore should all the warring elements suddenly be withdrawn, this is unnatural and should be looked upon with suspicion. Also it should make us prepare to meet the blow which is to fall, by waiting upon God and finding His inward peace (which is of a different quality from the spurious peace of the unnatural calm before the storm.) The difference is like that between real period furniture and a cheap and shiny imitation.

The blow fell and caught me unawares, as I had been deceived by the unnatural calm and had therefore not made the preparation that I ought to

have made. Preparation by prayer, I mean. (I do not mean that I was so conceited and foolish as to think that my prayers could prevent the war from happening which was a Karmic effect of years of wrong thinking on the part of millions of people. No, all that I could have done would have been to prepare myself for the shock of hostilities and to have put on the whole armour of God more completely.) Consequently I was hit rather hard, because the outbreak of armed conflict in the material world was accompanied by an ever fiercer war in the invisible world: all the forces of hell seemed to be belched up at that time. These hellish agencies seemed to make me their special target - but I was only one of many; yet at the time it seemed to me that I received their special attention.

This was only natural, for the object of the Dark Forces is to destroy the Children of the Light. Although all are attacked, those who are leaders and teachers are their special target, for if they can but be destroyed then the movement which they represent will collapse like a pack of cards. When hostilities broke out a cloud of spiritual darkness descended upon me, and I seemed to be gripped by overwhelming forces of evil. This was not merely depression from which most people suffer when overwhelmed by trouble and fear of impending disaster; it was something of a far different quality. It was a darkness of soul, as though God had been completely wiped out of the universe, as though all goodness, light, truth and love had been destroyed and that nothing remained but eternal ruin and despair for the soul of man. It was impossible to find God or to realize His presence; all my attempts at prayer were fruitless. There were nothing but darkness and emptiness. God had apparently ceased to exist -

that is, the God whom I had known. Of course God was still operating in His universe as usual, for the heavenly bodies still pursued their respective courses just as serenely as before. Indeed, after a time, this very fact was a source of comfort to me. To watch the various operations of Nature taking place as usual, in spite of the awful upset on this planet made by man himself, became in time a source of satisfaction to me. But the God I had known, the God of intimate intercourse and companionship, had apparently disappeared. I could no longer retire into the Inner Chamber of my soul and find God there as Infinite Joy, Peace and Bliss indescribable. There were nothing but darkness and the seeming despair and lamentations of countless millions of apparently lost souls. As I say, this was no mere attack of depression, such as one can overcome by an effort of will, compelling oneself to cheer up. I found myself in a new experience. I was indeed under a cloud, and I seemed to be in the grip of all the Powers of Darkness from which there seemed no way of escape. One Saturday afternoon found me busily engaged in making black-out shutters. In actual fact the frames had been made by the local carpenter to fit every window in the house, and what I was doing was covering them with suitable opaque material. While I was in the middle of this task John Moreton arrived. Now John Moreton is no ordinary man. Without my telling him anything he had divined intuitively that something was amiss, so he had come down from London to see what he could do to help. There was no need for me to tell him that I was under a cloud, for he could see it ... But let me digress for a moment. Some years ago I read a little book written by a vicar, in which he related an experience which came to him during a church service. The curate was taking part and

while he was reading the lesson the vicar, who was at times clairvoyant, saw a powerful dark angel approach the young man and envelop him.

After the service the vicar spoke to the curate on the matter, who told him that at the moment when the dark angel was seen to envelop him, he felt a great fear come upon him, and that it still remained with him. Now in my present experience I could understand what had happened to the young curate, for I seemed to be in much the same fix. I was the curate, John Moreton was the vicar. He did not say anything about a dark angel, but he said that he was conscious of an evil presence.

I recalled an incident which had occurred some years previously when a man was brought to me by his wife.

What his complaint - a form of paralysis - was called I do not know, but none of the doctors and specialists who had been consulted could do anything for him. He told me that it started when, as a curate, he was conducting a church service and he was suddenly seized by a great fear. After the experience he lost control of his thumbs which became weak and which twitched and could not be controlled. Then the nervous disease spread over the rest of his body. When I examined him I found that he was perspiring like a man doing hard work, with every muscle flexed and as hard and rigid as though he were lifting a hundred pound barbell. Unfortunately, much to my sorrow, I could do nothing for him, but I am sure now that the poor man was suffering from a form of psychic invasion, even as had happened to the other curate. I also believe that I was attacked in the same way, and that it was due to the grace of God and John Moreton that I was set free. It will be observed that in all three cases, we were trying to help humanity and so perhaps it was partly because of

this that we became targets for those dark forces which seek to destroy the children of the Light. But, of course, in each individual case there must have been some weak spot or chink in our armour which allowed the enemy entrance. I think that some people are liable to become so busy trying to help others that they neglect their own defenses. Our first duty, so I think now, should be to guard ourselves by putting on the whole armour of God, and through waiting upon Him close the chinks which might leave a loophole for the enemy.

Both John Moreton and I wrestled with the dark presence, but without any noticeable effect. So he went back to London and I was left to struggle on alone. He had his work and I had mine, but at intervals we both tried to realize Ultimate Truth. The nights of course were the worst: I spent hours wrestling with those powers which seek not only to destroy the body but also the soul. I tried all the methods which I knew, including the famous affirmation: 'God is the only Power and Presence, and God is Love' which, repeated very earnestly for hours at a stretch, kept the foe at bay - but that was about all. I persevered. The days and weeks went by with apparently little or no improvement; but all the time the steady work which we both (John Moreton and I) did in affirming Truth, was gradually undermining the power which gripped me. At last I began to feel that the cloud was lifting and the power lessening.

Finally, I entered into the Light again, and found God's Inward Peace - much to my joy and relief! And so the danger was past; but it had indeed been a trying and searching experience. I do not think that the experience was unnecessary; certainly I am richer (and, I hope, wiser) for having passed through it. I am sure that no experience would

come to us if it were not necessary, for if it did it would be quite meaningless. There is a purpose in everything and in every happening which comes to us, which is that we are brought into our final happiness and bliss in God, the One Central Harmony. I have to admit, however, that painful experiences may come to us because of failure on our part to maintain our own integrity. But the experience which we attract to ourselves is not a punishment from God: it is the natural result of our failure to keep close to our Centre. It is remedial and not punitive. We are not punished for our sins; but we reap as we sow. It is a case of action and reaction: as we sow, so do we reap. The experience which comes to us is the best possible thing, as it is devised by Infinite Wisdom, and Infinite Love exactly to suit our condition and meet perfectly our need and correct our weakness, whatever that may be.

This was by no means the last of the attacks made upon me by the dark forces. Indeed, every conceivable effort has been made by would-be possessing spirits to gain an entrance, and I have had to fight, as it were, for my very life and soul. Presences have visited me which were so evil that they made every hair of my head literally to stand on end.

I had previously read of people's hair standing on end, but had thought that such a thing was impossible and that it was merely an exaggerated figure of speech. But I was to experience it myself and to know that it was something far worse than any figure of speech. However, each time I was brought victoriously through. I found that there was one infallible method of dealing with these evil powers, and that 'was to make use of the name of JESUS. This Name is all-powerful on all planes, and evil powers and entities simply

cannot stand up to it.

The name JESUS is all-powerful over evil powers because He overcame them, being Himself tempted at all points even as we. During the time of his ministry he was attacked again and again by infernal powers, and those who would follow him may be attacked in the same way. But those of us who do try to follow him, possess an infallible talisman in the Name which is above every name- JESUS.

Again and again, calling on this Name has brought speedy deliverance to me when all seemed lost. The all-powerful Name is JESUS - not Christ, although the two may be used together of course. The word Christ merely means the Anointed One, or Messiah, whereas according to Weymouth JESUS means Joshua, or Yeho-shua, meaning Jehovah the Saviour. 'Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.' This means saved from sinning which again means that we are delivered from sin and its dominion over us, and from all the evil powers to which sin connects us.

Every sin and every wrong thought connect us by invisible cords to hellish and infernal powers and forces. By calling on the Name of JESUS, sinful thoughts and also our love of them, are destroyed in us and the dominion of their corresponding infernal powers and potencies is broken.

Having been delivered from the terrifying experience with the Dark Forces, the first decision that I made was that I must continue my work as usual. It seemed to me that what I had to teach would be needed very much during the period of hostilities, so I made up my mind to do my best to help our people through the difficult times through which they were passing. I therefore brought out my book *Life Without Strain*, and sent it to our friends as expeditiously as possible.

The fact that it was given away, instead of being sold, made some people very suspicious. They thought that there must be a 'catch' in it, especially as it was attractively bound in blue cloth with gold foil lettering and a dust-jacket without any advertisement on it. I had 10,000 copies printed and bound. (Since the above was written, another edition of 10.000 copies has been prepared)

So many applications were received from people who wished to buy this book that I had inserted a printed notice inside each copy stating that a copy would be sent free to any applicant, and that on no account should any money be sent for it. This made some people even more suspicious, one man writing in great perplexity: 'How are you able to give away books such as this while other people charge top prices?' The answer was a simple one given to us by Jesus who, according to Paul, said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'. Our supporters had been giving, giving, giving to this work over the years, entirely on their own initiative.

I thought that it was time that I gave them something. One feels happier after giving (rather than receiving) a gift which proves the truth of what Jesus said. As to how I could afford to issue the book free, or find the money with which to pay the printer and binder - which was probably what our inquirer meant - I must confess that I did not give it a thought. I did not even know how much the project was going to cost; I simply gave the order, leaving the price to the printer to settle. When the bin came in, we had no difficulty in paying it at once.

Now I do not recommend others to follow this happy-go-lucky way of dealing with financial matters. The important thing is to be Divinely

led: if we are doing the right thing, supply comes as it were of its own accord, whereas if we are not doing the right thing, the financial side may be something of a nightmare. The essential thing is that we should do everything according to the mind and will of God - when we know this to be the case, we can go forward with confidence, knowing that supply will follow just as surely as day follows night. This is so because if we make sure that what we propose doing is according to the will of God, we obey the injunction to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, consequently all needful things are added - the right activity attracting its corresponding supply, according to whatever the need may be. The right activity and its corresponding supply together form one complete whole, and are part of the Divine order.

If all our outer activities were according to the Interior Order, in correspondence with the activities of the Real World in which the True Self lives and moves and has its being, then our life here would be beautiful and harmonious beyond description. But alas, our outward activities and our thinking seldom even approximate to the Divine pattern, and so our terrestrial lives shew forth much disorder, instead of Heaven's harmony and peace ...

Outwardly our lives were fairly peaceful during the war.

We were only attacked from the air once, when we had two bombs in our garden and two over the hedge in the next field. These caused a certain amount of material damage, but no one was hurt nor even scratched. Not one beehive was knocked over, while our hens continued to lay as usual. The villagers also were wonderfully preserved. One night two mines were dropped, causing considerable damage to

one hundred and sixty houses, but not a single person was injured. So we had much to be thankful for.

Nevertheless, all this was rather trying to two elderly people.

Also my wife and I got very little sleep most nights as we had to be our own fire-watchers and fire-fighters.

In all this, of course, our experiences were much the same as those of thousands of others, and we would not have had it otherwise. During the whole time we had not the slightest feeling of resentment, neither did we suffer from self-pity. We simply took things as they came, and kept on praising and thanking God for all His goodness and mercy. We felt sorry for those who tried to destroy us, and prayed for them and their loved ones that they might be Divinely blessed in every possible way. I think that this was possible because for so long we had made a practice of praying for our enemies that they might be blessed in every possible way and be the recipients of all manner of Divine good. If our home had been destroyed and our little grandson killed it would have been harder to do so, yet we should still have persevered in thanking and blessing God, and in praying for those who had caused the destruction. 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do', is the prayer which comes naturally to one when badly attacked by those who regard themselves as our enemies. They are the victims of hellish forces working through them, and do not really know what they are doing. After being bombed, I spent the rest of the night in blessing, thanking and praising God. I simply felt that this was what I wanted to do; I did not want to be protected or saved from any pain or suffering, or be favoured more than other people.

I felt that I just wanted to bless and praise God and express my love and gratitude.

At first when bombing began, I think that I resisted mentally and wanted to be protected. I am sorry to have to confess it, but I think that I wanted to be protected and also my loved ones, and also my work, and that I was not so concerned about other people, at any rate, at that time. It is a dreadful confession to have to make, for it reveals an incredible selfishness, but I think that we should try to be as truthful as possible in all matters.

It was after we were bombed, when things became even more difficult and trying, that I realized that I no longer wanted to be protected but that I just wanted God, no matter what might happen. This, I felt, was a great advance.

Previously I had been putting my own safety and that of my loved ones first, and also my work which is my very life. I had been putting these things first, and God second. This was all wrong, for Jesus said that we should seek first the Kingdom of God, after which whatever we might need would be added.

Immediately I gave up wanting to be protected and I knew that all I wanted was God, and that it did not matter what might happen so long as I had God - it was then that I entered into a new and more intimate relationship with Him. It was an inner union with God, so deep and intimate that I cannot describe it, but it brought great satisfaction to my soul. Then I thanked God for the experiences which had brought this wonderful thing about, for it did not seem possible that I should ever have arrived at this state of inner union without them. That is how it appears in my case, but of course with others it may be different. Some mystics speak of the Abyss and falling into it which may

have the same effect.

The object of our incarnation here is simply that we should find God and enter into eternal union with Him.

The 'I', the 'me', and the 'mine' have to be surrendered, so that God can be All in all.

'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die,' said Jesus, 'it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,' John 12:24.

'He that findeth (or clings to) his (personal or self) life shall lose it; and he that loseth (or gives up) his life for my sake shall find it.'

Matthew 10:39.

The war dragged on, and we got used to ordinary bombing. Then came the flying bombs which were much more fearsome, for they seemed to emit a spirit of evil. After that the rockets began to fall - On London and Kent mostly - so they did not trouble us. Then came the most terrible thing of all - the invention of the atom bomb. When we learned over the radio that the U.S.A. had dropped an atom bomb on Japan we felt overcome with horror. In addition, we knew that this was only the beginning of a new reign of terror. We remembered the words of Jesus: 'For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again ...

After that came the day of rejoicing---that is, for those who could rejoice.

We regarded such rejoicing with horror. If only, instead of an atom bomb, we could have dropped a bundle of compressed love on Hiroshima!