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Psychical Science And Christianity

A Problem of the XXth Century

By
E. KATHARINE BATES
*Author of "Seen and Unseen," "Do the Dead
Depart," etc.*

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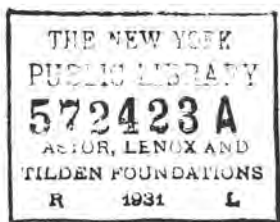


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DEDICATION

*To those dear relations and friends
in the "Unseen"
(G. G., C. E. B., G. E. and R. H.),
whose loving sympathy
has encouraged me to write this book,
I dedicate it
with grateful affection*

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"Build thee more stately mansions, oh, my Soul !
As the swift seasons roll ;
Leave thy low-vaulted Past,
Let each new Temple, loftier than the last,
Shut thee from Heaven, with a dome more vast ;
Till thou at length art free ;
Leaving thine outgrown shell, by Life's unresting Sea."
From "The Chambered Nautilus."
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

"Yet if it be that something not thy own,
Is even to thy unworthiness made known,
Thou mayst not hide, what yet thou shouldst not dare
To utter lightly, lest on lips of thine,
The real seem false—the beauty undivine.
So, weighing duty in the scale of prayer,
Give what seems given thee—it may prove a seed
Of Goodness, dropped in fallow grounds of need."
J. G. WHITTIER.

INTRODUCTION

DESPERATE diseases need desperate remedies. The time has surely come when silence on certain subjects is no longer discreet and advisable, but absolutely criminal.

"If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more flesh while the world standeth," said St. Paul in one of his moments of magnificent self-surrender.

Perhaps we have quoted this text sometimes too liberally; as an excuse for our silence, as well as a reason for our discretion. There is a time for all things: a time for silence and a time for speech; a time for discreet reserve, and a time for speaking out—and speaking boldly—even at the risk of offending some of our "brothers" and sisters.

A man once passed an artist who was working in the midst of splendid mountain scenery. He saw him put down his brushes, get up, and step slowly backwards, the better to judge of the effect of his work. Absorbed in this, the artist had forgotten the precipice behind him, and was quietly stepping further and further back, to get just the right light upon his picture.

The stranger, grasping the situation and realizing that a word of warning would only precipitate the calamity, seized one of the artist's paint-brushes and, with great presence of mind, daubed the paint over the beautiful picture which had cost him so many hours of patient work. The latter naturally sprang forward to save his beloved picture and to punish the "wicked outrage," and was himself saved from a hideous death.

The Churches have built up a beautiful picture, founded on tradition, both true and false, as to our Lord's life and mission; true and false because the groupings in the picture do not always harmonize, but are often in direct contradiction, the one to the other.

The noble lines of the most divine Life ever lived are all there—easily filled in by the devout and reverent soul. Our Lord said quite enough of Himself and of His mission to give the true idea of both. That accretions and additions should be found, due to the necessary limitations or the inherited prejudices of His recorders, *must* be true of any book, however sacred, that has not dropped from the skies, with leather binding and gilt edges complete. The critic may say, "What right have you to take

certain records and reject others? You must take all or reject all."

I do not think this is a reasonable remark, although of course it is a very general one, and for many centuries has effectually silenced all criticism.

When a beautiful, holy and consistent character is portrayed for us—when such teachings as the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount are given to us in the name of Jesus of Nazareth—then I think we have a perfect right to reject any interpolations that contradict the spiritual simplicity of these precepts, and to courageously declare that we stand by our Lord's teachings as a whole, and not by every text in which they have been conveyed to us.

It is "the letter that killeth." How many stock arguments have been used by superficial critics, anxious to belittle a character too far above their spiritual apprehension?

We are continually told that Jesus of Nazareth was hard, indifferent and wanting in reverence for His parents and in sympathy with their natural anxiety about Him; as, for example when He was lost to them for three days and found at last in the Temple.

It is by clinging to the letter whilst rejecting the spirit, that all these absurdities have been made possible : misapprehensions on the part of His friends, and futile criticisms (such as the one just quoted) on the part of His foes—foes only through lack of spiritual perception.

The clerical world as a whole, both in Anglican and Roman Catholic communities, is stepping backwards instead of forwards, *admiring its own handiwork in the Past, so absorbed over the details of its craft that it is absolutely blind to the fact that a few more steps will bring it to the brink of the precipice.*

If it is not to be Spiritual Evolution in the Churches, then it will most certainly be Spiritual Revolution outside of them! Is it not time for all those who know that this accurately describes the present crisis to come forward boldly and attempt to save the situation, even though this can only be done by becoming a cause of offense to many?

Some day we shall be judged more justly and therefore more leniently.

It is a small matter that we shall then be beyond the judgment of men.

E. KATHARINE BATES.

PSYCHICAL SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY

PART I

CHAPTER I

THEOLOGY—ANCIENT AND MODERN

IN all thoughtful lives there must be critical moments—revealing moments, when a new truth flashes across our mental screen or an old truth takes on sinews and flesh and the breath of life comes into the dry bones, as in the valley of Ezekiel's vision, and that special truth *lives* for us for the first time in our experience.

These revealing moments appear to come to us "out of the blue," but it is not so in reality. For long months—often for long years—the seed has been lying and germinating under the soil of our subconscious being, and then comes at last the critical moment when it is strong enough and sufficiently developed to push aside its old environment and emerge into the sunshine of

the upper air. These moments come to the individual and they come also to the Race.

It seems to many good and earnest and capable men and women that such a racial moment has now arrived. It is impossible any longer to *ignore* that push from the heavy superincumbent soil into the light of day. The only question now is, How shall we deal with it?

"Crush it down by all means—at any cost," has been the cry of many in past years. *"It is a poisonous weed—not a healthy and edible plant—ignore it or crush it. We will have none of this insidious poison in our well-ordered garden plots."*

But if the time is past when such growths can be ignored, it is equally past when such growths can be crushed. Root out the green shoots in one place—they will inevitably crop up in still greater force and number in a dozen other spots.

To drop metaphor, new truths are coming into the world, and the burning question for all of us is no longer whether we can go on ignoring and crushing them. Experience has surely proved by this time the futility of either course? No! What we need to find is some means of readjusting the old bottles to the new wine.

Now I think hitherto we have been doing the best we knew in the way of patching up these old bottles, and trying to make them capable of holding the strong, new wine that is being poured into them daily, both by Science and by what has been clumsily designated as the New Theology.

The attempt to accommodate the old to the new, and to squeeze the new into the old is in its way praiseworthy, and was almost inevitable under recently past conditions. There is, in fact, an evolutionary instinct involved. We feel that there must be no gaps—no violent break in the chain of events, either mental or physical, and this tinkering up of the old to receive the new is proof of this very sound instinct. I venture to think, however, that we have rather overdone matters in this direction.

We have been so busy in assuring people that nothing essential is lost; in stretching texts to cover new conceptions of truth; in an almost Spartan pulling out or chopping off process, in the wild attempt to fit new facts into old sockets, that we have not always taken time to notice the real outcome of our laudable endeavors.

Now I think one result has been that orthodox people feel, and quite rightly feel,

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that they have not been treated fairly. Dust has been thrown in their eyes, but after a short period of bewildered vision they have washed it out, and are prepared to affirm with imperturbable decision that nothing has been really altered by our explanations and ingenious suggestions—that the Bible says one thing and we say another, and pretend that the two are really one, looked at from the proper angle. Such persons may have honestly tried to be open-minded, but the end of it is that they feel they have been hoodwinked, that symbolism and analogy have been played for all they are worth, and that the result has been complete failure, so far as they themselves are concerned, and a failure accompanied by quite unnecessary mental and spiritual confusion, forced upon them by our methods. Black is black and white is white, and although you may get some shades of gray by mixing up the two, it is useless to contend that the gray and the original black, or the gray and the original white, are *identical*.

I have great sympathy for those amongst the orthodox who feel that they have been unfairly treated in this way. Our intentions have been good, but I think our methods

have often been extremely bad. We have taken texts and given them a symbolical meaning when it suited our purpose, and we have taken texts and given them a literal meaning when *that* suited our purpose. The fact that the purpose itself has been an excellent one, *i. e.*, to reconcile old texts with new truths, does not affect the question except so far as motive is concerned.

It was perhaps the only possible method, some years ago, by which to avoid the undoubted disasters attending all iconoclastic movements. But ever-increasing light has been thrown upon many matters since then, and I do not think it is any longer honest to fool ourselves or to attempt to fool others into the belief that the Evangelists and the Apostles said one thing, but that they really intended all the time to convey an entirely different meaning—often a contradictory one—and that exaggerated Eastern symbolism, *plus* types and analogies, will cover the whole ground.

They will not, and I think the sooner we are honest enough to admit this, the better both for ourselves and for those we may endeavor to teach.

That Christ's personal teaching should have come down to us so practically intact,

so little stained by the orthodox beliefs of the "milieu" in which He lived, is proof positive of the Divine Spirit brooding over the work of His recorders. But apart from this, we have numerous examples of the "stained-glass" element which accompanies, more or less, all inspirational or automatic writing of the present day. We have had volumes written to try and prove that the disciples did *not* look forward to a speedy and almost immediate second coming of their Lord to reign in majesty upon the earth. What does it all amount to? Is any one really convinced by these ingenious suggestions? Has not the time come when it is truer and therefore wiser to acknowledge that the same difficulties, which all psychics experience in keeping the channel unstained by the personality, must have affected these recorders also; in a lesser degree, doubtless, because we must believe that a book with such a mission would have very special guardianship. But the writers were human as ourselves, and liable to make mistakes with the best of us.

I do not wish to plead for a broader theology. We have that, thank God. Scarcely any educated man nowadays would get up in his pulpit or on any public platform to

preach or teach the old crude horrors of a physical and eternal Hell—terms which are in themselves mutually destructive. For how could a Hell of physical flames and physical torture be everlasting? The very idea is absurd in a scientific age. As an old Scotch lady said to me once in New Zealand—not intending to be blasphemous, I am quite sure—"Why, my dear, if you come to think of it, it is impossible! Either it would kill us, or it wouldn't kill us. If we were put out of existence it wouldn't matter to us, and if we were not, why then, we should be bound to *get used to it in time.*"

I quote this to show the very bathos to which such teaching must lead, so soon as our mental conceptions are ahead of it, and so soon as we have learned to *think.*

I have heard my friend, the late Dr. Alfred Williams Momerie, say more than once to his congregation: "My dear friends, I'm afraid you really must *think.* I am extremely sorry for you, because I know how you hate thinking, and it is a nuisance sometimes, but I see no way of avoiding it. I cannot do the thinking for you."

The fact is, many of us don't think and

won't think, simply because we are afraid to contemplate where it must leave us.

We know now that we have only exchanged a physical Hell, of endless and impossible torture, for a very real Hell, which begins *here* and *now*, so soon as we become sensitive enough to realize it, and will continue just as long as we live in separation from and antagonism to, the Divine Source of our being, whose presence with us spells Love and Life Eternal, and whose absence means Darkness and Hate and Separation and Remorse.

An old friend of mine, one of the greatest Mutiny heroes, who was more terribly wounded than almost any other man who has lived to tell the tale, said to me once when I was quite a young girl: "How much more terrible mental suffering may be than physical, and yet how little sympathy one receives with the former as compared with the latter!" He continued: "When I was cut to pieces out in India, every one was full of sympathy and goodness to me. Yet I have suffered infinitely more in my mind and spirit, and no one has shown the slightest sympathy."

There are two obvious reasons for this, which I was too inexperienced in my school-

days to suggest. One is, of course, that mental scars don't show as physical wounds generally do, and the other that many people have not yet reached the point where they themselves are capable of any deep mental and spiritual suffering. But the words made a deep impression upon me at the time, and they occur to me now in connection with the orthodox Hell, and the modern conception of spiritual separation and remorse. Many, in the terrible grip of the latter, might also be inclined to think that any physical suffering would be a relief from the spiritual torture.

That which makes even a spiritual Hell impossible from the point of view of Retribution rather than Reformation, is the undoubted fact that only the most spiritually advanced, and therefore what we should call "the best" people, are capable of realizing such a Hell at all. The sensualist, the materialist, the man of crude and cruel impulses, would be proof (either in this sphere or any other) against the gnawing of remorse, or the agony of separation from the more divine part of his nature; which is obviously at present a sealed book to him.

Therefore we are at once confronted by

the awkward fact that only the most highly organized and sensitive people can ever be in the most acute form of spiritual Hell, whereas the least developed and most wicked men and women would live in a sort of base material Heaven of their own, absolutely protected from all spiritual suffering when once they have left the theatre of their evil deeds, where *material* penalties might reach them. These two states suggest little difficulty when looked at from the evolutionary point of view, for they are obvious and inevitable.

"The wicked man" may hug his base Heaven to his breast for centuries or even æons, but some day the turning-point must come; if only because Evil has no life in itself, and is only galvanized into temporary life by its victims. When that day comes—no matter where or when—then Hell begins for the emerging soul, and will continue until the purging process is complete.

We sometimes hear people talk about the "New Theology" as a sign of the times—of the lazy, luxurious, selfish, motor-car times! "They even want to get rid of Hell, with their nasty, selfish, luxurious ways."

I have actually heard this said. It seemed to me just a step in advance of the

more general remark of a few years ago, which has been addressed to me personally many times: "*Oh, then if you don't believe in Hell, why should we not all be as wicked as we like?*"

The last time this was said to me, I felt justified in answering the lady thus:

"If that is really your view of the matter, I am thankful that you *do* believe in a physical Hell; and what you say shows me that, repugnant as the idea is to most progressive minds, the old orthodox teaching has had its uses from the police-office point of view."

Then again with regard to the old beliefs in the Atonement as a Blood sacrifice to propitiate an angry God whose laws had been broken. I remember when I was quite a tiny child, with possibly a fairly logical head on very small shoulders, how that question of the Atonement worried and perplexed me. At times it seemed quite clear that only my own wicked obstinacy and stupidity prevented my being absolutely satisfied with the explanations given me on the subject. But at other moments something stronger than myself seemed to rebel and to say, "No! it isn't clear, and it isn't fair, and all the faith in the world won't

make it clear, any more than it could make two and two equal five." The puzzle for me was this: I was told in the Bible and in church that Jesus Christ had died to save us and that God had promised Him every soul in the human race as a consequence of and reward for His death upon the cross. Then again I was told that a great many people would not be saved, because they would die without performing some act of faith or being converted—whatever that might exactly mean—a process at any rate which appeared a very dim chance, so far as I was personally concerned. Even at seven or eight years of age I had tried hard—and often succeeded—in working up some kind of religious emotion, which made me hope that this mysterious "conversion" might some day take place—but it never did. One was always naughty again under normal temptations, and the exalted mood passed and left a poor, little, lonely child, with no one to confide in, and with less and less hope of this mysterious event taking place in her life. Then despair and depression gave way to honest childish indignation. It was all so horribly unfair! What nonsense it was to talk about God's promise to His Son that every single human soul

should be saved, and then this mysterious "belief and conversion" were smuggled in somehow, to account for so many people having to go to Hell on account of their flagrant sins and wickedness! It may sound very blasphemous, but I am sure a great many more children of a thoughtful turn used to worry and perplex themselves over such questions than any of the "grown-ups" realized. Again I say, "Thank God!" that however selfish and materialistic we may be nowadays, the poor little children at least have no such heavy burdens to bear. At eight years of age I could have provided material for another *Cry of the Children*, from some such point of view, had Mrs. Barrett Browning been available to put it into words for me. And how many of the children of those days might say the same! Now that the hideous old dogma of the Atonement has merged by slow degrees into the beautiful and inspiring doctrine of the At-onement, through the fruition and the example of the One perfect human life lived upon earth, a life which must needs lead those who can be inspired by it into still closer conscious union with the Source of their being, have we not reason to rejoice in the grand example

given to us of the continuity of Evolution?

As in the physical world, inferior forms are always being replaced by superior organizations, so we can trace—even within the last thirty or forty years—how the crude and often cruel dogmas of the past have been ever tending towards higher forms of Belief and nobler conceptions of Truth. Some great truth has lain at the basis of all these crude theological ideas, just as the protoplasm and the amœba have lain at the basis of all organized human life. We don't hold that protoplasm and those earliest forms of life in contempt, if we are normal and intelligent beings—we acknowledge our debt to them, and this is just what I think we ought to do with regard to the beliefs and dogmas of earlier centuries. They have been, after all, a sort of theological protoplasm, which has formed the basis for our spiritual life, without which the latter, so far as we know, might not have been possible to our slowly evolving consciousness. That many men and women would disown such indebtedness has little significance. It simply means that they are taking short and strictly personal views of a very big subject, and prefer to ignore the unity of all

life, physical and spiritual, and the links by which they are held in the great universe of Spirit, as well as in the great universe of physical conditions.

CHAPTER II

SOME CLERICAL DIFFICULTIES

A REVOLUTION in the domain of religious thought, as radical, as far-reaching and, perhaps, even more important than the revolution in astronomy connected with the name of Copernicus, has set in. It has practically taken place within the memory of many living men and women, in fact during the last fifty years. The first feeble notes of protest were sounded when the once famous volume of *Essays and Reviews* was published. That seems such a far-away cry, that it is almost difficult to realize that the well-known Mafeking hero, General Baden-Powell, is the son of one of the chief contributors to that well-known and much-abused book. Some years ago I was crossing the Atlantic with Mr. Warrington Baden-Powell (another of the professor's sons), and we chanced upon this subject of *Essays and Reviews*. I said to him: "It is years since I read the book, but I suppose *now* it would be considered quite mildly unorthodox, compared with later literature of the same kind?"

"Dear me, yes," he replied, laughing. "I should go further than that, and say it would be considered a quite mildly orthodox contribution to religious thought in the present day." Yet the authors were Anathema Maranatha for many years, after this early indiscretion, although one of them, as we all know, lived to be Archbishop of Canterbury.

Then came poor Bishop Colenso, who was howled down by an infuriated mob of religious enthusiasts for his sinful arithmetical calculations touching the Levitical books of the Bible. I remember as a child thinking that he must be a terribly wicked man if he deserved half the abuse that was poured upon him so freely in my presence.

I was brought up as a child in the strongly Calvinistic section of the Church of England, and later in what used to be called the religious-aristocratic world; but the essential doctrines were much the same in High Church as Low Church. The chief difference lay in the more or less ornate form of the services and in the fact that the High Church clergymen being often men of more culture and education than their Evangelical brothers, were less addicted to "pulpit thumping" and the sensational

methods and lurid descriptions which were sometimes summed up graphically as the "fire-and-faggot" style of oratory.

There were many good, earnest and kind-hearted men amongst them ; as also amongst the High Church party, and in those days all were equally happy in one important particular. Nothing very essential had happened to shake their faith, to rouse awkward questions, to suggest difficulties—in a word to make them think. *Essays and Reviews* and Colenso's embarrassing numerical calculations, were but as voices crying in the wilderness, which made the warm nests of the orthodox Christians appear more cozy and desirable than ever by contrast. Faith in "Revealed Truth" was the test of all goodness ; I had almost said of all morality. Certainly good deeds, and even character, without this special faith, were scarcely considered respectable, and most certainly not admirable.

It has been said that Truth is always born in a manger and reared in fear of Herod. The Herod of the mid-Victorian days took the color of social degradation and disabilities, and very often of unmerited and cruel abuse.

Even good, kind people, who would not

have injured a free-thinking acquaintance physically for all the world, were much too *free-speaking* in their condemnation, and the opprobrious terms "Infidel" and "Atheist," too often hurtled through the social atmosphere—winged arrows dipped in gall.

We have changed all that—again, thank God! We have learned some respect for the opinions of honest men, even when these differ from our own in religious matters.

Thanks to the early pioneers of whom mention has been made, men have learned to think, to question, to realize that God asks for an intelligent love, not for grovelling adoration or a faith born of wilful ignorance. How can He who is All Truth fear Truth? Then why should we, His children, do so, and think to curry favor by such an attitude?

The apotheosis of ignorance is past, but there are many difficulties still in the path of any intelligent clergyman who has thought for himself, reverently and yet courageously, and would fain make his flock do likewise, if he dared!

I think clergymen nowadays receive scant sympathy for what is, in fact, an extraordinarily difficult position. I am not speaking of the seventy or eighty per cent. who

have taken orders without experiencing the slightest difficulty in doing so, or in subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles and anything else included in the *doctrine* of the Church of England. Some of these may be so saturated by tradition and custom that their minds are incapable of facing facts which would seem to throw the smallest doubt upon any of their cherished beliefs. Others have what I should call comfortable consciences, and their mentality is non-inflammable. It is fire-proof, so far as Science, Literature and Philosophy are concerned, when such subjects menace their religious tenets. (These latter have been settled once for all.) Many are excellent men, doing most valuable work, and enabled to do it with a cheerful heart, owing to the very limitations of their outlook.

But then we come to the twenty per cent.—have I put the figure high enough for these days?—who cannot look upon things from this comfortable standpoint.

They have minds that must be fed—that cry out for food as persistently as their bodies do. Unfortunately for themselves these minds are acute and analytical. It is impossible for them to accept scientific conclusions when they concern chemical com-

binations or other facts of physics, and to reject them when they speak with just as certain a voice regarding the approximate age of man on this earth, or the sun standing still whilst Joshua finished his battle, and a dozen other matters where modern knowledge and ancient tradition are hopelessly divorced from one another.

We are very quick to denounce such men—to gloat over their supposed hypocrisy—to condemn their subservience to the loaves and fishes, and we often speak with hard and unsympathetic impatience of what they ought to do: “The fellow has no right to stand up in church and read or preach what he doesn’t believe, and what he knows nobody else believes nowadays! He has no right to take money from a State Church to which he is no longer absolutely faithful in his innermost heart. He swallowed the Thirty-nine Articles and everything else necessary when he took orders. If he was too young to know what he was doing then, and if he is old enough now to know better, he should be man enough to say so. He ought to resign a living that he can no longer conscientiously retain.”

This sounds very specious, and no doubt has some truth in it. On the other hand,

how would these critics act themselves under similar circumstances? Probably on the same lines as the man whom they reproach. *He* may very justly say, "It is not as if I alone rejected some of the Articles or Creeds in which I have declared my belief. There is probably not a thinking member of my congregation who believes them all literally, and if we are allowed to take some things literally and others symbolically, there is elbow-room enough in the Church for all of us, preachers and congregation alike.

"The Prayer-book certainly is out of date lamentably in certain respects and needs revision as much as the Bible did. If the authorities refuse to give us this relief, well, then we all suffer alike and must make the best of it for the time being. The clergyman and the congregation are both repeating, occasionally, words which don't represent to them positive truth, unless indeed these have been twisted and distorted from the obvious original meanings. You might just as well say that the congregations ought to march out of church and refuse to return until their Prayer-books have been brought up to date! Moreover, I am earning my living honestly, so far as my work in the

parish is concerned. I can visit the sick and help the poor and comfort the miserable and get up innocent amusements in the parish for those who would otherwise be thrown upon the public-houses and less innocent forms of diversion. All this must be taken into account. Lastly, I have a duty also to my wife and family—these are obligations which I have incurred, and which, as a man of honor, as well as a husband and father, I must discharge. What avenues are open to an ex-parson who has given up his orders? Moreover, I don't *want* to give up my orders. I feel that the life is suited to me and I to it. Am I to throw everything over because I cannot at heart wholly subscribe to the antiquated dogmas and forms through which I received my ordination? If I were a man of sufficient private means I might see things differently and be prepared for the sacrifice of a congenial profession, which would only touch myself, and not bring my wife and family to penury. But in any case I consider my present position justified, when judged by common sense and common honesty, and not by carping critics."

I have put my own words into the mouth of my imaginary parson, but I believe a

great many are thinking and acting upon some such line of reasoning, whether consciously or unconsciously. And I think there is a great deal to be said for it. I remember the late Dr. Momerie found great relief from the fact that his own ordination had taken place when he was no longer required to subscribe to the *doctrines* but to the *doctrine* of the Church of England.

I confess this seemed to me always rather a quibble, but it afforded him much satisfaction. When clever and capable men are reduced to this sort of argument, surely the time has come to face facts boldly, and bring our theology up to date?

Science has had to reconsider and readjust her facts again and again. When the older theories concerning light and heat were upset, and the modern *bouleversement* of scientific opinion as regards motion and matter took place, the situation was not met by any obstinate forcing of old text-books on to young students. Why should not the same argument hold good concerning theology?

"The two subjects are not analogous," I hear some one say. But that is just the initial mistake. They are analogous. It is *we* who have made the water-tight compart-

ments for theological science. Theology claims the Bible as a divine or rather *the* divine revelation. Science has an equal right to claim Nature as a divine revelation, and a really more reliable one in many ways, since her credentials are ever with us, in Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, renewed day by day, and teaching to all but blind eyes and deaf ears the beautiful lessons which our Lord drew from Nature so continually. These lessons do not depend upon oral or written tradition nor on the uncertain memory of man. Neither can they be falsified nor lost, nor burned, nor destroyed for us in any way. Our Lord seldom referred to books or records, but again and again He bade us find our lessons, our inspiration and our wisdom, in Nature. The methods of our Lord Jesus Christ were directly opposed to the isolation system which men have set up between Nature and God—between the science of Nature and the science of God. After all, science only means knowledge—the knowledge of God's laws, so far as we have gone in experience of them. Science *per se* is not the big, black, relentless bogie that most of us seem to conceive, and to dress up in frock-coat and spectacles and a sniffy and rather superior

way of talking to, and generally snubbing us! That is our conception of Science as it too often materializes for us, but it is a very narrow and limited conception of a very big Truth, and Jesus knew this Truth and was not afraid of it. For Him it was the Father's Truth, to be traced in the fields and amongst the flowers as much as anywhere else in His Father's Kingdom. Why should it not be the same for us? Why must we have ecclesiastical bogies as well as scientific bogies, when the truth above both of them is so impersonal, so simple, so glorious and so *identical*, as soon as the music has been beaten out and science and theology take their rightful places in that grand orchestra; no longer as hated rivals, but as faithful and loyal helpers in the universal chorus of wisdom and happiness?

Before closing this chapter I should like to revert for a few minutes to what I have already said as regards the twenty per cent. of clergymen of the present day who would hail some relief from the antiquated forms of doctrine to which they have subscribed. I have referred there more especially to men of *known* progressive tendencies, but there are also many men in orders whom Fate has placed amongst the most orthodox

and Evangelical of their class; honorable men, who have done their duty admirably and given no sort of "occasion to the enemy," men beloved in their parishes, and whose names are synonymous with all that is most fixed and immutable in orthodox theology. Yet these very men require such relief as I have suggested even far more urgently than any others. Why? Because their personal intelligence is in advance of their personal creed, and whilst remaining outwardly loyal to the latter, they have inevitably given away the key of their inner fortress to the advancing troops of doubt and perplexity, who may never take the citadel, but will always carry on occasional and most disturbing raids at its base.

I am not talking at random, but speak of what I know through personal experience. Owing, perhaps, to having led a very detached life through the force of rather unique circumstances, and having also a fairly broad outlook upon life in general, it has been my fate to have had rather exceptional opportunities of getting to the "back of things." Men have often said to me, "I always forget when I am talking to you that I am not talking to another man." This may or may not be a compliment, but

at any rate it enlarges one's mental area. I venture to think that a man will often say more concerning his inner life to an impersonal sort of woman than he would or could say to another man. However this may be, I have certainly heard some curious confessions in my life.

I need only mention two instances to prove the truth of what I have said as regards the undoubted fact, that even a narrow creed (*given intelligence*) will not protect its disciple nowadays from embarrassing mental situations.

In both cases I take instances of men who have passed away during the last few years. The first was that of a celebrated professor—a clergyman—in one of the British Universities.

He combined extraordinary intelligence, not merely in his own department but in all branches of human knowledge, with an apparently childlike faith, not only in God as his Father, but also in the special tenets of the strictly Evangelical section of the Church of England, to which he belonged. I have often heard him say, with beautiful humility, that it was not for him to question but to accept, and I am quite certain he was sincerely convinced that in saying

this he was describing his permanent attitude towards those questions (I remember he especially mentioned the six days of creation, etc.) which his special form of belief bound him to accept, but which his intellect and scientific knowledge alike rejected. Oddly enough his position, from the opposite end of the pole, reproduced the exact position of the extremely intelligent but equally devout Roman Catholic of the present day. I had for many years accepted my professor's wonderful feat of mental gymnastics at face value, and should have done so to this day, had I not chanced to spend one special Christmas in his house. We were a small but cheerful party on that Christmas Eve. The professor had been showing us some most interesting photographs and explaining them in his inimitable way—making the dry bones live in very real fashion.

By degrees the other members of the party had drifted away to bed, and ultimately he and I were left alone. I don't know how the conversation between us turned upon religious difficulties, but I do remember my extreme astonishment when he quite innocently told me of long talks with the vicar of the University Church,

and how they had paced up and down in that very room, engaged in the rather hopeless task of attempting to square their honestly-held creed with their intellectual knowledge and development. This same vicar, by the by, had only a short time previously prosecuted a clergyman in the neighborhood for preaching a sermon upon miracles in his pulpit, which was not "quite sound."

The other case was that of a very old friend of my childhood, many years my senior, and whom I had always heard spoken of as a very bulwark of Evangelical creed. He was a capital parish priest, and he and his wife were splendid "workers," as the technical phrase goes. He was officially connected with a north country cathedral where I paid long visits in my girlhood. Later these ceased to a great extent, but my old friend often came to see me when business or recreation brought him to London. Now he also was a man of undoubted ability, and I often regretted the cramping mental conditions under which he lived, and marvelled at the self-hypnotism which made it apparently possible for a man of that calibre to remain perfectly satisfied with his narrow creed.

But during these visits to me in London, when we often discussed religious problems, I found that his mentality was by no means caged in the way I had naturally supposed. His speculations covered quite as wide a range as my own—rather wider if anything. He generally ended our talks by saying in a rather deprecating way, "*Of course, I should not think it wise to discuss these matters with any member of my congregation,*" which I could easily understand. I knew him intimately up to the time of his death, and can testify to the fact that his spiritual outlook never ceased to be critical of the narrow form of creed which he had professed all his life. I am quite sure that he was never consciously disloyal to it, but these are the facts.

The upshot is this: Evolution of the reasoning faculties cannot be stemmed by any broom yet manufactured in the Partington Factory. These reasoning faculties may sometimes be found combined with the most narrow religious beliefs—that is often a question of circumstance or heredity. Some souls are of such a type, or rather have arrived at such a point of growth, that it is impossible for them to endure mental coercion. They break the

bars of the cage at any cost. Others have not arrived at this point and are therefore content with the comforts of the cage, so long as they are able to make little excursions from it at times. Then they fly back to it as a refuge from the cold blasts outside. I have only given two instances—I could have given many more, to illustrate my point. Therefore the fact that large numbers of clergymen are working, and apparently are content to work, within the limitations of a specially cramping form of creed, is really no sort of proof that they are mentally as well as outwardly imprisoned by their creed. All forms of work are a very wholesome corrective to too much introspection, and the needs of a large parish (or even a small one if energetically administered) must be a great sedative for too much mental activity, and will have a very calming effect upon the troublesome problems that so often torment the man of leisure.

This, however, does not in the least alter the fact that many more men in orders would hail some reasonable changes in the ritual they are bound to follow than might at first sight appear.

It all depends upon their special point of intellectual development, and this is not by any means always indicated by their special form of belief.

CHAPTER III

A NEW CYCLE

GENERAL BADEN-POWELL'S uncle, Mr. Piazzi Smyth, wrote a very curious and interesting book many years ago upon the great Pyramid, the object of which was to prove amongst other things that all the measurements and calculations connected with this special Pyramid of Cheops found their culminating point and came to an end in A. D. 1881.

With apologies to the late author of that book, I am irresistibly reminded of the famous Mother Shipton's prophecy :

"The world to an end shall come
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one."

Now the outside world would certainly say that Piazzi Smyth's researches had no special significance and that Mother Shipton's doggerel was only an old wife's tale. Those of us who know anything of psychical research and occult science, however, may hold a different opinion. Many people consider that a certain cycle in our

planet's history was closed about the time indicated, and that we are now living in the opening years of a new cycle of planetary existence. In any case it is a fact that just in or about the year 1881 various societies were started, which still exist, and certain remarkable books were produced, all dealing with a further sphere of life. The Society for Psychical Research was started, the Theosophical Society was still in its childhood, Madame Blavatsky's remarkable books were being written, and Edward Maitland and Anna Kingsford were giving to the world their contribution to thought and teaching in a volume called *The Perfect Way*.

It was a period of great significance as a reaction from the materialism of the preceding years, a materialism which was itself doubtless a reaction from more superstitious times.

Some sixteen years ago a communication came to me automatically from one who claimed to have been an old Egyptian priest, concerning the great Pyramid and the Sphinx. I cannot put my hand upon the papers (which were, however, preserved), but I can remember that he spoke of the great Pyramid as symbolizing the cycle through

which the earth had recently passed, and the Sphinx as a symbol of the new cycle and new conditions just evolving. Certainly the last seven or eight years have witnessed an enormous increase both in the amount of available evidence as to hitherto unstudied powers of the human race, and (which is still more significant) in the amount of interest shown in these researches by scientific men. Perhaps in Italy and France this has been even more marked than in Great Britain, but we also can point to a goodly list of quite respectable as well as capable men, who, having given some time and trouble as well as money to the investigation of psychic science, have had the courage of their opinions in speaking of their results.

All this has naturally had a great effect upon the Press. The cheap sneers and silly jokes which were common to all papers, daily or weekly, a few years ago, are now conspicuous by their absence from the more respectable and better-known journals. Not one of these now speaks upon these subjects in the silly, contemptuous, superior tone of only a few years ago. Whatever the private opinions of the critics may be, they have learned their lesson so far as the general pub-

lic is concerned, and know that it is no longer considered "smart," but simply stupid, to attempt to win the cheap laugh of the ignorance of an earlier day. We are therefore reminded now pretty constantly of the "more things in heaven and earth," and the journalists or reviewers, whilst "holding their judgment in suspense" (an endless suspense apparently), are quite free to confess that "some day we may know more about these matters than we do at present!" If so, it will hardly be through the efforts of these gentlemen to diminish the area of their personal absence of knowledge!

But this only touches the fringe of the subject. Within the circle of these converted or at any rate *silenced* scoffers, come the ranks of what may be called the psychic outsiders. I mean by this term that large and ever-increasing mass of people who are mildly interested and quite willing to let other people energize in the way of experiments, and tell them the results. Next comes the smaller circle of those not yet convinced of the truth of any abnormal powers, but willing and anxious to investigate for themselves; and, lastly, the inner circle of the men and women who *have in-*

vestigated, *are* convinced, and only differ as to the causes and not at all as to the facts of extended powers manifested by certain individuals, but not as yet normal to the whole race.

We may roughly divide this latter nucleus into two parts—those who, acknowledging the truth of the phenomena, limit the latter to the extended action of incarnate beings, and those who, from personal experiences, have been led to realize the coöperative action of incarnate with discarnate entities.

The grouping of the latter seems to me almost entirely a question of temperament, which probably is only in such case another word for evolution. Those who can see and hear for themselves on these extended spheres accept the testimony of their senses just as ordinary mortals accept the testimony of their senses on the purely material plane. Those who are limited by an intellectual conception without personal experience of these more developed senses, very naturally reject the evidence of other people, which has never been their own. They see only illusion and self-hypnotism in the convictions of their friends and even when convinced mentally of the presence

of abnormal phenomena, will put it down, naturally and quite rightly from their standpoint, to an extension of incarnate intelligence.

But this chapter more especially concerns the comparatively small, yet ever-increasing numbers of men and women who, through natural capacity, combined with intelligent curiosity and interest, have been enabled to bridge the gulf of so-called Death, and to satisfy themselves that this latter is only the gateway of more abundant Life. This absolute knowledge only comes, I think—only *can* come—through the removal from earth conditions of some one very dear to them.

Outsiders will at once say, "Just so—their wishes and desires naturally enable them to see what they want to see so intensely." That is only one side of the question—the more obvious but not the truest side. Earthly love is always depicted as blind and bandaged, but love raised to a higher power becomes clear as it takes flight to higher regions. Even the purer and more intense *earthly* love is always the least blind. The woman who loves her husband with the truest and deepest affection is the one who loves him, knowing his faults, not

the one who is merely blind to these. This holds good of all relations in life. Therefore, the keenest love will always be the most clear-sighted, the most difficult to deceive. According to the measure and the purity of our love will be the instinct, the "flair" of our recognition of identity. We may not be able to pass this perception on to others, but we shall not in the long run be deceived ourselves, because the sense is too subtle, too accurate, too absolute.

And through some such "great tribulation" alone, can positive assurance of the continued life of our beloved come to us.

Those who have loved and lost and found their loved ones again will endorse my words; to others the same experience may come later.

Now I think to those who have thus found once more husband, or wife, or child, there must often come a moment of sadness in their joy, especially if they have been brought up on orthodox lines of thought. We read in the Bible of the blessedness of the righteous, of a state of absolute peace and joy, of the glories of the Redeemed, under symbols of the glassy sea and green palms and gold crowns, and so forth. We sing fervently "Forever with the Lord,"

and have been taught to look for the rest of the "Blessed Dead." Some, indeed, imagine a period of vague waiting until the number of the Redeemed is completed, and all are caught up to meet the Lord in the heavens, but the goal is ever the same—rest and peace and entire freedom from sin and suffering. Of course I am now referring specially to the conceptions of the Anglo-Catholic Church.

Into this rather vague but comfortable and comforting picture of our future, modern research has suddenly burst with curious and variable results. Some have welcomed any facts which seem to give them back their dead, not as a cold abstraction for the future, but as a living, blessed experience in the present; but even these have sometimes been saddened by remembering the gulf which lies between the old conceptions and the new conceptions, founded on the new facts. "How different it all is in reality from what we were taught to believe! What a different tale is told by those who come back to us in visions and speech and evidential communications, from the descriptions of life after death given to us in our Bibles! Why have the facts been withheld from us in an inspired

revelation? How can we believe anything when we have been so terribly misled?" I think some such thoughts must have passed through many minds. Roman Catholics are, of course, saved this heart-burning in the rare cases where they are allowed to investigate psychical phenomena, or where they take "French leave" to do so, because they can spell Purgatory as Probation; or with one letter less and call it Progress.

I want to suggest a very simple view of the case, which seems to me highly reasonable, and is certainly somewhat explanatory.

I must first say, however, that I do this with no sort of idea of Bible *apologia*. I can admire what is admirable and reject what does not appeal to me in the most wonderful book in the world, delivered through human scribes and inevitably conveying somewhat of their limitations in addition to their often glorious inspiration. The people who tell you that the Bible was not written to teach geometry or geography or archæology, and that this fact explains all possible mistakes and inaccuracies in it, have always appeared to me well-meaning but lamentably wanting in common sense and, one is almost tempted to add, common

honesty. Regarded as a vindication of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures as a whole, it is the sort of argument one would expect from a Jesuit priest or a very illogical woman.

So, in putting forward my view, I do so entirely on its own merits and not in the least with any idea of squaring Bible assertions to fit in with modern facts.

It has always seemed to me that the simplest explanations are generally the most comprehensive and the most satisfactory. And this holds good also of simple analogies. Earth training and discipline are often more than suggestive of a big human school, and certainly God's dealings with us individually appear to be those of a loving and yet tenderly severe Father with the children whom He cherishes too much to leave uncorrected. Carry this idea a little further and it seems to shed some light on the orthodox descriptions of Heaven as a place of absolute bliss and absolute perfection, which we find in the Bible. I am not now thinking of the details given, for instance, in the Book of the Revelation of St. John, and rather flippantly and foolishly stigmatized as "the Heaven of a jeweller's shop" by those who are incapable

of appreciating the symbolism, and would seem to know nothing of the mystic properties of color and precious stones, even in the physical world.

I refer only to the state of perfect righteousness as well as perfect joy described in the Scriptures. As no intervening stages are very clearly defined, this state has rather naturally been hitherto taken as describing the *next* conscious experience of the soul which escapes the fate of the "Unbeliever"; the latter being supposed to be irrevocably fixed at the moment of death, even if an interlude is allowed before the punishment of such sinners is actually carried out. Even the horrible doctrine of an Eternal Hell may have had its uses in earlier ages when moral instincts were less developed—let us hope it may have been so.

But my suggestion is this: An earthly father will sometimes hold up the picture of a great man—great in learning or in politics or as a judge or a famous commander of men, and will say to his little son, "Look, my child, at the picture of this great and good man. If you are a good boy and learn your lessons well, and do everything father and mother think best

for you to do, some day you may grow up to be as good and great as he is."

He points out the goal to be aimed at, but a wise father does not weary and depress his child at the moment by telling him of the hard school work that lies ahead—nor of the University training that must come later—nor of the many hard knocks that he is bound to experience in life before the much-desired consummation takes place. May not our Father in Heaven have treated us in exactly similar fashion?—have allowed and even inspired these visions of the Blessed, to St. John the Divine, in loving care for the childhood years of the human race? Now that the human child is growing up, he must learn to take his responsibilities and to face the facts of his spiritual life. He is reaching an age when the full truth will no longer appal but may surely rather inspire him, if he has any noble instincts? He will feel the longing to exercise his faculties to the utmost, and a life of earnest work and ultimate reward will no longer oppress and frighten him, as it might have done—probably must have done—if suddenly sprung upon him whilst still in early childhood.

Dr. Phillips Brooks said to me once when

I was speaking to him of the long and weary road to be traversed in the spiritual life: "Well, if I could have had my choice whether to be created a man or an angel, I hope" (he paused and looked at me with a bright smile, then repeated), "I *hope* I should have had the pluck to choose to be a *man*."

I cannot do better than close my chapter with these brave words—words that may bring comfort and fresh strength and courage to those of us who are sometimes weary and footsore, and look with sinking hearts upon the long vista of continuous effort and warfare which our evolving spiritual consciousness is certainly unfolding before us in these later days.

CHAPTER IV

OUR NEW CONTINENT

A FEW months ago I was present at a private house where some sixty people were gathered together, by special invitation, to hear some extracts read from the *Hope Letters*, as they have been called, adopting my name for them in my last book—*Do the Dead Depart*. These messages, as many of my readers will know (I trust that they may be made public *in extenso* before my own book appears), were given to a mother who had lost her young son, a Tunbridge schoolboy, and who was distracted with grief until this means of communication had been opened up between them.

When these few extracts were read out at the meeting to which I have referred, and when our host asked us in turn to give our various opinions upon the subject, I was greatly interested and somewhat amused by the contradictory nature of the latter. Some people seemed to think the little boy of twelve ought to have spoken from the other sphere to his mother as a philosopher

of sixty years of age—others regretted the absence of any marked religious tone in the child's communications—many were evidently shocked by the triviality and absolute naturalness of the boy's words. Most of them seemed almost incapable of seeing matters from the standpoint of the child and the mother, and I think many in their secret hearts wondered why they should have been asked to come and listen to such childish remarks.

It appeared to me that the greater number of those who spoke later (with one or two marked exceptions) entirely missed the point of the whole subject.

We were not invited to listen to a feat of mental gymnastics from the next sphere; to a sort of Mischa Elman or Franz von Vecsey performance, wonderful and beautiful as these youthful geniuses undoubtedly have proved themselves.

We were asked to listen to some extracts from the messages of a very human, loving, simple-minded little boy, who had gone "from this room into the next," and had found himself able to cheer and comfort his mother by talking to her in his old, loving, natural manner.

The child did not write these "talks"

with an eye firmly fixed upon the public and their possible prejudices and likes and dislikes, although he certainly appears to be quite boyishly delighted by the idea that "his book," as he calls it, is really going to be printed!

I think Mrs. Hope is making a truly heroic sacrifice of her feelings in giving these records to the world—I know as a fact that it has been a most bitter experience to her, a sacrifice which she makes only in the interests of other bereaved mothers. I can hardly believe that the most ribald or superficial reviewer will *betray* such generosity as she has shown by trampling coarsely or carelessly on the ground sacred to mother and child. Those who are not interested can leave the book alone. They owe it—and her—at least the grace of silence.

The charm of these records lies in their spontaneity, their absolute simplicity and the compelling sense of reality which they will bring to many minds—others, no doubt, will disapprove of them on account of these very qualities. It is surely somewhat remarkable that so many messages from the other side—almost, in fact, without exception—are evidently descriptive of similar states rather than localities, and

that the testimony should be so unwavering and comparatively identical, whether it comes from a child of Gordon Hope's tender years, from a young man such as Judge Forbes' son, or from a man of middle age, such as Richard Hodgson? The essential facts related of the next sphere are the same, in these and in numberless other instances. When America was a comparatively unknown continent and few travellers visited it, a dozen intelligent Englishmen may have returned from such rare visits, each with a story differing in detail according to individual experience, but agreeing as to the essential features of climate, customs and nationality.

Yet even here we should expect to find considerable differences in their travellers' tales. One man may have remained in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington and the Eastern States exclusively—another may have travelled to California and brought back wonderful stories of the rising townships there and of the wonderful vegetation and the glorious scenery, which would sound like fairy tales, even in the ears of the Eastern State Americans of that day. Another traveller may have spent his time on some lonely prairie, and *his* tale would

differ materially from both of the preceding ones, and tell mainly a story of loneliness and desolation.

Yet they would all be describing truthfully facts and features not only of the same world, but of the same continent.

Now this is just what we find as regards "our new continent." There are vast differences sometimes as regards individual experiences, and certainly as regards individual opinions (which seem to differ as much there as here), but there is as marked a consensus of testimony regarding the essential facts of the next phase of existence, and as to some very distinctive ways in which it differs from our present life. Naturally, it is the similarity which first strikes our travellers over there, and then by degrees they realize the points of difference as well as the points of contact.

That which shocks most of the good people on earth seems to be that there should be any likeness at all between this life and the next one!

This, of course, is to be accounted for by the dead weight of traditional teaching, even upon those who consider themselves entirely emancipated in thought, and who would bitterly resent such a suggestion.

To say that any human being can have wholly escaped the results of centuries of traditional environment, is as bold as it would have been fifty years ago to say that a man could get outside and look at himself! I am obliged to make this limitation to my statement, because otherwise occult reviewers will remind me that a man *can* get out of his body and look at himself, nowadays, quite easily and comfortably.

But to go back. How can we otherwise account for such a general howl of indignation and protest against the idea of houses and gardens and rivers and boats and horses and cats and dogs in the next sphere? All these are absolutely in line with recent scientific ideas of evolution, which seems to abhor *gaps* as much as Nature abhors a vacuum.

From the strictly evolutionary point of view, present spiritualistic "facts" are just what the scientists ought to expect and to anticipate in tabulating any sort of continuation of life at all.

A more tenuous form of matter, with the inevitable differences entailed by that fact; more extended powers, owing to the increasing scope of the senses belonging to this more ethereal form of body; greater

freedom in range of thought, owing to an improved brain apparatus; greater freedom also from many of the vices (such as selfishness and greed) engendered by the fierce competition of material life as we know it—all this and much more that might be added, is surely just what an intelligent scientist, who accepted evolution in the past and continuity of life in the future, would be bound to arrive at, if he thought the matter out carefully?

Yet when we find (those of us who have had reason to accept the evidence) that this is just what takes place, so soon as we have cast off the outer material body for the inner material body, every one cries out either in horror or in ridicule of the dreadful idea that there can be houses and boats and lecture rooms and colleges in the next stage of existence.

It seems blasphemous to some and absurd to others, although I cannot understand in this case why they should not consider their present life either blasphemous or absurd?

To return for a moment to the meeting referred to in my opening sentences. A charming and very intelligent theosophical lady of my acquaintance was good enough

to suggest with kindly tolerance that although poor little Gordon's evidently materialistic tastes might attract towards him ponies and gardens, no doubt more advanced and superior people would find "religious development" awaiting them, rather than cats and horses, etc.

"Why should it not be possible over there to have religious development *and* a pony?" was my apparently frivolous contribution to the discussion. But the underlying idea was not at all frivolous. I think the sooner we get rid of the notion that matter in itself and apart from the uses to which we may put it is undesirable or undignified or unspiritual, the better. Probably in some form or other we shall have to put up with matter (rechristened ether or spelled in any other way) for a good many æons yet, and it seems rather premature to be trying to get rid of it completely, as a bar to spiritual development, so early in the day!

There are spiritually-minded men—even bishops!—who use motor-cars for transacting their spiritual business. Why should they not find and make use of etheric and sublimated motor-cars in the next sphere of their activities? I trust these latter will

have neither smell, noise, nor excessive vibration !

It seems to me not making *too little* but making *too much* of matter to judge otherwise. We may fairly hope that in the next stage, and with a more attenuated form of matter, we may learn to put it in its proper place, as our servant rather than our master, which latter is too often the present relationship between us.

But to dismiss ponies and horses and "such-like," as only worthy of a small boy's fancies, and in direct antithesis to religious development, appears to me a little premature, and certainly not in line with what we know at present about evolution.

All those inhabitants of "our new continent," with whom I have come in contact, agree practically as to two or three broad distinctions between our present life and the one immediately succeeding it.

Matter there is more malleable, more under our control and at our disposition, to be manipulated in a way quite impossible for us under present normal conditions. Probably Oriental occultists (when not frauds as well as fakirs) have anticipated some of these powers, but I think most of us will be wise if we content ourselves with

present conditions until we are quite sure that our morality has kept pace with our mentality—otherwise we shall inevitably find (to use a vulgar but expressive Americanism) that we have “bitten off more than we can chew” with comfort, either to ourselves or to our neighbors.

Another point of agreement is the extended and well-nigh creative power of Thought. The influence of thought on the mental plane is obvious enough here, and it has of course an indirect and secondary effect upon matter, but in the next sphere we are always told that Thought controls matter in a *direct* rather than indirect fashion (through hands as well as brains), as is the case with us. Howard Forbes, Gordon Hope and all those who have spoken to me, tell the same story—“*Here you must think hard when you want anything.*” “*Thoughts are Things,*” is the Christian Science formula. “*Things are Thoughts*” we may also say in this respect. Howard Forbes used to speak of the home he was preparing for his parents, and ask his mother what pictures and ornaments she would like to find there when she went over: “*You see, mother, you must think hard when you settle what you want—that is how we get things here*

—*we have to think them, and when we think hard enough they remain with us.*” Gordon says practically the same thing, again and again. The permanence of surroundings there seems to be in direct ratio not only to our thought, *but to its power of concentration.*

Now concentration is one of the most difficult things for most of us to achieve. It needs much practice and patience, but it is good mental discipline here, and may prove of the greatest importance hereafter.

The difference between arriving in the next sphere with some small power of concentration instead of arriving there, as so many must do, with their thinking an untrained and chaotic process, may well prove to be as the difference between travelling on the Continent with some knowledge of the languages, and arriving there in helpless confusion and dependent upon the first good-natured stranger who will take pity upon our incapacity and ignorance.

I have likened the present revolution of Thought, not only in Theology but also in Science, to that which heralded the Copernican view of the universe. Is history to repeat itself? Are the churches once more to be the obscurantists; to stand between us and the sun?

Surely not! Surely they will have learned from the bitter experience of the Past, to welcome their prophets rather than stone them? Are we to have a repetition of the bad old days—the days of Galileo and Giordano Bruno—of clerical oppression and tyranny, taking God's name in vain and sheltering beneath the cloak of misnamed reverence, to conceal their real love of power and dread of seeing it wane in the clearer light of advancing knowledge?

Let us hope not. It can at least do us no harm to be sanguine. Clerical disapproval can no longer light up the faggots, but it can, and in many cases will, struggle fiercely to shut out the light.

It has always been so. The prophets and the priests have ever been at war. Sometimes it seems to us in our despair that as it was in the beginning, it is now, and ever shall be!

Is it because the true prophet worships *Truth*, whilst the priest too often worships *Form*? Yet we have amongst us, in the English State Church and elsewhere, some of those finer spirits who are bold enough to stand up and declare the truth as it has been revealed to them, in spite of abuse and loss of favor and persecution of various

kinds. Such men are often accused of being mere self-advertisers, and making a cheap bid for popularity, although they may be making the greatest sacrifices, both of time and money, in order to follow where their inspiration leads.

I do not speak of that modern development, the flippant and often agnostic clergyman, who tells you that he is not going to put his eyes out with his grandmother's knitting-needles—that he is as much a man of the world as yourself, and means to “have as good a time” too.

No—I am speaking of the devoted and earnest men who are standing shoulder to shoulder in the present crisis—who see, whether they be Anglicans or Nonconformists, that the time has come when it is a question of Evolution or Revolution in the history of Religion. Few but fervent, and fired by a grand enthusiasm, these are the men who will save our churches, if they can be saved—who will stand between us and spiritual anarchy and confusion.

They represent the “ten righteous men” who may yet save the city from destruction! Surely these modern questions of extended psychical capacities, with the light they throw upon spiritual facts and

methods, should most naturally and rightly attract the special attention of those religious teachers whose hands would be so greatly strengthened by studying them ?

We have in Telepathy more than a suggestion of the probable channels used in Prayer; in Clairaudience the verification in modern days of the old stories of the child Samuel and of the Prophet of the Lord; in the "passage of matter through matter" and the disintegration of matter, a marvellous light upon various episodes in the life of our Lord; in "*apports*" and in some of the verified recitals of true Oriental phenomena, we see how these spasmodic possibilities, only to be achieved now through fasting and much ceremonial, were the powers belonging to the sphere to which our Lord belonged, and were exercised by Him in perfectly normal fashion.

All this and much more has been unfolded to us of late years in psychical phenomena and a better comprehension of Eastern lore; but those who should have been the first to open our eyes and bid us take heed to these things, have been the ones to try and screen us from the dawn of a brighter day, by telling us it all comes from the devil being let loose upon the

world, and that we must resist him tooth and nail.

Now Science, at least, is not going to be frightened out of the evolutionary path by any such cry of "wolf," or rather of "roaring lions!" She has already started in the psychic field, and a daily increasing number of her votaries are already equipping themselves for an intelligent investigation of the claims put forward.

No intelligent man without preconceptions, in fact with a "mind to let," has ever yet given time and talents to the research without eventually admitting the facts (whatever may be his interpretation of them).

Therefore we are now within measurable distance of the day when Science will be in the van as regards giving a welcome to these twentieth-century facts.

Are our spiritual pastors and masters content to lag behind as usual, until they are *forced* to step along, by pressure from the crowd behind them?

Is that a dignified mode of progression?

CHAPTER V

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

It has sometimes struck me that a really romantic and fascinating chapter might be written, by some one wielding a golden pen, on the relations between Religion and Science—as they are—as they were—and as they will be again.

I say Religion and Science advisedly, because of course Religion must come first—man must have had some conception of a Divine or Superior Being before beginning to have any curiosity about His Laws or Ways of treating him. The first dim conceptions of a Power to be propitiated by gifts or sacrifices must have been succeeded by the instinct of worship; founded on gratitude for some relief or indulgence, in supposed answer to propitiatory ceremonies of the rudest and most barbarous kind. Then in the succeeding ages when Fear and Propitiation were succeeded by curiosity and investigation, the first feeble cry of the child "Science" was heard. It came with the wish to know *why* something happened, as

well as to find the best means of protection, if the something happening chanced to be unpleasant. So that we must look upon the scientific instinct as the offspring of the religious instinct, and not as its parent, and I think the relationship between the two has been just that of many fathers to many sons.

Some months ago we were all reading with delight that fascinating book by Mr. Edmond Gosse, entitled *Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments*. There we have the relationship to which I refer, indicated under the most favorable circumstances, because there was evidently great affection though little affinity between the two. In the years of childhood very little friction occurred, because the child was naturally under the dominion of the parental rule, and although possessing both originality and independence of thought in a marked degree, he was evidently content for some years to be the "Infant Phenomenon" along the lines of his environment. It was only later, when the boy realized the essential narrowness of his father's outlook upon life as compared with his own, that the real mental antagonism set in and the divergence of the paths took place, which was to land

them later such worlds apart in everything save mutual affection and respect.

It is only as I write this last sentence that my analogy alas! breaks down after the usual fashion; for I fear we cannot say that the extreme divergences of opinion between Religion and Science have been accompanied by any marked affection between the two, or even by any great amount of mutual esteem. But the earlier lines of description make a very fair comparison between the real father and son and the father and son of my parable.

There was a time when Science and Religion must have jogged along quite comfortably together; in fact when Religion, like the elder Mr. Gosse, must have been quite proud of its clever child, so eager to learn and so quick to assimilate. In those early days there could have been no question of friction or separation between the two; for the Churches had too strong a grip upon the feebler hands of their children.

But the child "Science" grew up—just as other children do, and then came friction, as is almost inevitably the case when the younger generation begins to realize other standards than the parental one, and to think and weigh and decide for itself. And

so by the fifteenth century, Science had come of age and began to assert its rights and its individuality. Unfortunately, the parent against whose decrees it rebelled was far more stern and inexorable and pig-headed than the father depicted in the autobiography of modern days.

"No individual judgment allowed here! Out of my house you go, if you question a single word that I say! We will imprison you for your souls' good, and exorcise you with bell, book and candle, but we will have no scandals in *this* house. It is like your youthful impudence to think you know better than your parents!—that your wonderful discoveries give their instructions the lie! Whatever is true is known already by Us, and can be read in this book. Therefore what you think you have discovered is not true. That is absolutely logical, and if you ask me to look down your telescope, I tell you I won't, because I should only find a blasphemous lie at the other end of it."

This was the form of reasoning, and it was very effectual for a time, because the ecclesiastical authority was top in those days, and every one else nowhere.

We have reversed all that in the last four

hundred years. Science has come into its rights and privileges of Manhood ; and has no longer anything to fear from the thunders of the Church.

The positions in fact are reversed, for the Churches have acted as though *they* had good cause to fear the result of the researches they condemned. Is it to be wondered at that Science should feel not only a tolerant contempt for the present ecclesiastical attitude towards scientific men, but also some bitterness, engendered no doubt by a latent memory of the persecutions which their forerunners endured at the hands of these clerical tyrants? This is just what might be expected.

A quasi-scientific attitude is common enough in the modern pulpit it is true, but scientific men listen (if at all) with the amused contempt of the professional expert when an amateur poaches on his ground ; and also probably say to themselves : " That is all very well, my good friends ! you are civil enough to us now, because you daren't be anything else, but you would like to put a spoke into the wheels of Science if you could, and if you and your brother clerics were not in danger of being so hopelessly left behind ! "

But I believe brighter days are coming ; days when, without unworthy capitulation on either side, Religion and Science will once more be in harmony and accord, not because one has all the power and the other all the knowledge, as in past days ; but because both have come to realize that the ancient antagonism between them originated in human misconceptions, and that their real affinity rests upon the impregnable Rock of Truth.

I think we all owe a very deep debt of gratitude to Sir Oliver Lodge for the great work he has been doing in this direction. He has come to us as a reconciler, not by unworthy capitulation as to his own position as a Scientist ; not by any futile attempt to exaggerate facts or to minimize them with the object of finding some possible junction ; but by the much worthier and more successful method of showing to Science on the one hand, and to Religion on the other, the Spirit of essential Truth and Unity which must underlie both departments of human knowledge, and without which, neither could have survived the corruptions of Time and of Error. If there is not some spark of Life, corruption must set in and destroy the human frame. The same truth

holds good of the various departments of human knowledge. If a system of thought or action survive, it is thanks to that spark of life at the centre, and not to the corroding accretions of error which are bound to be manifested in the circumference.

Given two men who have been living in constant antagonism, through misconceptions and bitterness, perhaps of years, but each of whom has some sterling qualities—some real desire at heart to be an honest and just citizen, and even some underlying affinity with his enemy. A wise man who sees this comes and says to each separately,—

“ You two, who are wasting strength in bitterness and antagonism, are really one at heart, and you could do splendid work together—far more than double what either of you can achieve alone ; your true destiny and your greatest wisdom is to combine forces, for you are really essential to each other in working out your aims. This misunderstanding and bitterness between you is only a hard shell that has formed on the surface and which hides your true natures from each other—natures which have in reality so much in common. Let me help you to get rid of these misconceptions, and

then you will both see things from a new and true standpoint."

This is just the work that Sir Oliver Lodge appears to be doing, and doing so admirably. Only a layman and a Scientist *could* do it, for a clerical reconciler would be met by the inevitable sneer from the ordinary man of the world, that in the first place he was no scientist, and in the next place that it was obviously a part of his profession to preach peace and good-will all round ; and shut his eyes to facts.

Now this reproach cannot be brought against Sir Oliver Lodge, who is an eminently practical man of Science.

"The letter killeth—the spirit maketh alive." The letter divides—the spirit unites. This is the "Spirit of Truth" which we are being taught to search for, as underlying the surface incrustations caused by error or intolerance on either side.

We are daily recognizing in greater degree the essential unity between Religion and Science. Their aim is one—the finding of Truth. Even their methods are identical, for if the Christian or Buddhist needs faith, so also does the Scientist. If the Spiritualist dream dreams and have visions, so does the Scientist who is going to do any origi-

nal work, and not merely plod along the road that others have pioneered. No great discoveries in Science could have been made without scientific intuition or *flair*, if people prefer that word. The discoverer is the man who argues from the known to the unknown, and to whom flashes of real inspiration come from time to time. What matter if they seem to him to come "out of the blue" and without rhyme or reason? They come, and he acts upon them, and Humanity is the richer for that fact.

Then again the enthusiasm and endurance which inspire the religious martyr, inspire also the scientific martyr. When men sacrifice life and health in the pursuit of their researches, as is being done every day under our very eyes, what is their motive?

"Love for Humanity" people say glibly, but this does not cover the facts. Sometimes these men have never shown any special or extraordinary love for Humanity, but they must have an all-absorbing and dauntless love of TRUTH, and think no toil too great, no bodily pains too agonizing, if only they may catch a glimpse of that radiant presence. It may be the truth in X-rays or in radium, or in some chemical combination, or in any phenomena of Nature.

It matters little what the special goal of each man may be—it is the search for Truth which is so all-absorbing, so relentless and so monopolizing. And whether it be the devout Christian or the enthusiastic Scientist, the aim is the same for each in his differing area of thought; the methods demanded are similar, and so are the sacrifices entailed on the physical plane.

Can we doubt that the rewards also of this single-minded service will be to each man according to his faith and to his powers of appreciation?

Since writing this, I have been reading Edouard Schuré's interesting book, *Les grands Initiés*, and am tempted to translate the following lines from his introduction:—

“Science and Religion—those guardians of civilization—have equally lost their supreme and magical gift—that of a great and powerful teaching.

“The Temples of India and of Egypt produced the greatest sages upon earth.

“The Greek Temples have moulded heroes and poets.

“The apostles of Christ were amongst the most sublime of martyrs, and thus have begotten thousands of others.

- “The Church of the Middle Ages, in spite of its primitive theology, made saints and knights, because she had faith and felt the Spirit of the Christ vibrating within her.
- “To-day, neither the Church, bound within the limits of her dogma, nor Science, imprisoned in matter, knows how to produce the most perfect type of man.
- “The art of creating and guiding the Soul has been lost, and will never be found again, until Science and Religion, remelted into a living Force, apply themselves to the work together and with one accord ; for the good and for the salvation of mankind.
- “For this, Science will not need to change her methods, but to extend her dominion ; nor need Christianity part with her traditions, but rather study to understand their origin, their spirit and their scope.”

These are very suggestive words, and seemed to me curiously appropriate to my own train of thought, which I have endeavored feebly to indicate in the present chapter. Mons. Schuré goes on to say :—

“This time of intellectual regeneration and of social transformation is bound to come—we may be sure. Already certain signs are announcing it. When Science KNOWS, Religion will be strengthened, and man will act with renewed energy. The art of Life and all other arts can only be reborn through such a union.

“But, meanwhile, what can be done during these last years of a century which resembles a descent into an abyss in threatening twilight, although its beginning appeared as the ascent to the mountain tops, under a brilliant dawn?

“A great philosopher has defined Faith as the courage of the Spirit, which rushes forward, certain of finding Truth. Such Faith is not the enemy of reason, but is, on the contrary, its torch. It is the faith of Christopher Columbus—the Faith of Galileo, which demands proof upon proof, and it is the only Faith possible for us to-day.

“For those who have irrevocably lost their power of Faith—and they are numerous (for the example has come in high places, and the road is easy and well beaten)—it only remains to

float with the current of the day, to submit to the times instead of fighting them, to resign themselves to doubt and negation, to console themselves for all human misery and for future catastrophes by a disdainful smile, whilst disguising the profound emptiness in which alone they believe, by a brilliant veil, decorated with the beautiful name of Ideal; although they consider this latter only in the light of a useful fantasy.

“As for us, who believe that the Ideal is the only reality and the only truth, in the midst of a passing and changing world; who believe in the sanction and in the accomplishment of its promises in the history of Humanity, as well as in a future life—who know that this sanction is necessary, and that it is the recompense of the Human Brotherhood as well as the meaning of the universe and the logic of God—for those of us who have these convictions, only one course is possible. Let us affirm this truth as boldly and as loudly as we can! Let us throw ourselves with her and for her, into the arena of action, and above the

crowds and confusion, let us endeavor to penetrate through meditation and individual initiation, into the temple of immutable Ideas, in order that we may arm ourselves with the principles that will endure. This is what I have attempted in this book, trusting that others will follow me and do better."

Here the quotation ends, and I cannot "do better" than close the present chapter with a sincere echo of Mons. Schuré's last words.

CHAPTER VI

A SUMMARY

IN summing up this last chapter of the first part of my book, I think it is well to remind my readers that we have Biblical authority for no longer attempting to pour new wine into old bottles, nor to piece old garments with new stuff. Both these feats have been attempted hitherto in ecclesiastico-scientific matters—from the ecclesiastical side. It has been perhaps inevitable that it should have been so, but the new wine is already bursting the old bottles, and explosions are better avoided if possible. My clerical readers will doubtless wish here to remind me that I have omitted to quote the verse immediately following those above; where our Lord says, "*No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith, the old is better.*"

But that exactly describes what many men are saying nowadays as regards old and new doctrines—" *The old are better. We are accustomed to the good, old, heavy port and*

matured brown sherry—what do we want with these raw, immature, young wines? Away with them!”

Men mistrust the New Theology, as it is barbarously christened. They talk of “new fashions in religion,” and say—very truly—that this is a time of fads and fancies, both as regards spiritual and material diet. So it is, but why?

Simply because this is a time of progress, of readjustment of old ideas in both departments. We are all experimenting to some extent in order to find the best physical fare, because the world is arriving at the very wholesome conclusion that we have most of us eaten a great deal more food than we needed in the past, and a great deal of indigestible food into the bargain. Naturally, the pendulum swings a little to the other extreme at first, and some get ill from insufficient or badly-chosen nourishment.

What suits one does not suit another. Yet we clamor incessantly for uniformity in our dining-rooms as well as in our churches! “*If it suits me to eat no meat at all and live on vegetables, then it must also suit my neighbor, and his health would be as good as mine if he were not too obstinate to change his diet.*” Another man thinks the vege-

tarian equally mistaken in his ideas, and boldly declares that in fruit and nuts alone, lies the true way of physical salvation. In fact, I think the latter would go a little further and say that the effects could not be limited by the physical, as the "fruit-and-nut" disciple would be in a much more receptive mood for spiritual teaching and experience!

It is the same in theology. Here, also, it is a time of fads and fancies no doubt, but why? For the same reason. Because the wholesome idea is permeating the world that we have consumed too much theological dogma, and that a good deal of it has not been nourishing to us at all, but has brought on at last a fit of very undeniable indigestion. Many of us are trying to experiment here and there in order to find the spiritual nourishment that is best suited to us. When we think we have found it, we are too often intolerant of those who differ from us, and who choose a spiritual diet which is not the same as our own. We make no allowance for differences of age, of temperament, of surroundings. We do not realize that all are at varying stages in spiritual as in physical evolution, and that one man's meat is truly another man's poison.

Surely this latter truth has been once for all revealed to us in Swedenborg's teaching, where he describes the varying effects of the same Divine Fire on various temperaments? The simple prayer of a little child and the ecstasy of a Santa Theresa are at very different points in spiritual evolution; yet they spring from the same divine source acting upon different ages, different temperaments and certainly different stages in development.

We are often reminded of the mental restlessness and absence of peace in the present day, and sometimes we are bidden to note how different it is in the Roman Catholic Church. How united in the faith all the worshippers are, *there*, compared with the members of our own church, rushing hither and thither to hear some new preacher, and yet finding no rest to their souls in spite of all their efforts! This is perfectly true and must necessarily be true. The Pope gains uniformity of belief at the cost of individuality in growth; but even here the uniformity must sometimes be only in the outer manifestation, and not in the inner heart. No artificial act of faith in the tenets of any church upon earth can always and forever "put back the clock" of human develop-

ment, through all time and through all eras of increasing revelation.

Many are happy in the spiritual atmosphere of the Roman Catholic Church—others are wearied of the clash of opinion and the problems to which neither their hearts nor their intellects seem to have any answer, and they are thankful for any refuge where they can remain in peace; until that terrible Soul of ours wakes them up again to fight their individual battle and to beat out their own music. That may never happen on this present sphere of life, and no one can grudge them their temporary repose. Lastly, come the numbers of excellent men and women who have been born into the Church of Rome and hope to die in the odor of "Catholic sanctity," and have never been troubled by doubts or perplexities as regards their spiritual welfare. The fact is, that behind all creeds, all languages, all forms of worship, lies the blessed fact of spiritual communion with the source of our being—the Lord and Giver of all life.

Those of us who know what that means, may be tossed hither and thither on the waves of this troublesome world, and in proportion to our intellectual development and according to our temperament will the

surface of the waters of life be sometimes troubled and perturbed. But in such case our Sheet-anchor can never fail, nor can we really remain for any length of time oblivious to this fact. He or she who has once experienced that personal touch between the Soul and its Source, can never wholly lose it; even though clouds may, and often must, obscure the sun for a time. It depends upon no special church nor special creed, although we may identify it with such, at certain stages in our spiritual growth. But some day we shall know that in the free-masonry of these experiences there are no labels and no limits. The secret but unmistakable sign may come to us from a Mahomedan sitting in the midst of his disciples in an Arab mosque (as happened to me once in Algeria); in some poor cottage in England or Ireland; from a priest in the churches of Assisi; from an extreme Ritualist, or a devout Roman Catholic, or a convinced Evangelical, or in any other surroundings. The fact that most of these might consider their personal experiences identical with their personal beliefs, does not affect the question. The spiritual masonic sign may be unconsciously given where we should least expect it, and be un-

mistakably absent when we might most reasonably look for it.

Perhaps the true mystic alone will be willing to admit the truth of these words; to him it will be simply obvious.

But here we are outside the limits of theology and in the boundless kingdom of the Eternal Father, in whom we live and move and have our being.

To return to theology.

I have already spoken of the Roman Catholic atmosphere as being so satisfying to many, and I must at once admit that the many include myself. Often in passing the Brompton Oratory, or when near the Westminster Cathedral, I go in and sit there—just to saturate myself with this atmosphere. One finds it, thank God, in our own churches, but, I must confess, less often. I have vainly tried to find a reason for this that is entirely satisfying, but am unable to do so. There are many Roman Catholic churches where this spiritual atmosphere is markedly absent, but when present, it seems to be so in a very astonishing degree.

I suppose people must be to some extent "sensitives" in order to realize just what is meant by a spiritual atmosphere clinging to a church or a cathedral? I think I never

felt it more strongly than in the "Porziuncula" at the Church of *Santa Maria degli Angeli*, in the outskirts of Assisi. The place I especially wished to visit in that church was the altar raised over the spot where Saint Francis and Santa Chiara partook of their historical meal together. That story seems to me always of so beautiful and sacramental a nature, that I had expected to find the spot where it had taken place full of the most wonderful and mystic influences. For me, at least, it was not so. Against all theories of subconscious expectation raising strange images, and so forth, I experienced absolutely nothing; to my great disappointment as well as surprise.

I had already looked into the chapel of the Porziuncula in passing through, with a very unsympathetic priest; and had merely remarked to myself how bare and uninteresting it looked. Being left to my own devices later, and after the visit to the altar already mentioned, I returned for a last glance at the "Porziuncula" before leaving the church to resume my journey to Assisi; and here a great surprise awaited me.

Kneeling down on one of the relentless-

looking wooden benches to say a short prayer before leaving the church, as is my usual practice in foreign churches, to my astonishment I became at once conscious of this remarkable "spiritual atmosphere," for I can call it by no other name. Wave after wave seemed to pass over me. With no conscious effort on my own part, my whole being seemed to be bathed in this divine element. Prayer appeared all too cold and mechanical; in fact one's soul seemed to be wafted into spheres where earth language was no longer necessary or possible, and where the spiritual communion took place through other channels than speech; "uttered or unexpressed."

It was only afterwards that I learned that my visit was paid the very day after sixty thousand pilgrims had been praying in that very spot. Certainly the prayer of faith had left a wonderful impression on those bare, wooden benches and plain, rough walls!

The only church which I can compare with the "Porziuncula" in this respect, is a small military chapel on the very highest point of Fort Nazionale in Algeria, certainly the last spot where one would naturally have expected to find such spiritual conditions! I only went there once, and am not

aware that any special function had taken place in it at the time of my visit.

This last paragraph leads us back to the psychic aspect, with which I wish to end this chapter.

At the very moment of writing these words a letter has been handed to me from a clergyman of the Church of England, addressing me from New Zealand on the subject of my two last books, *Seen and Unseen*, and *Do the Dead Depart*.

He says, "I have recommended them, together with Stead's *After Death*, to many anxious enquirers. I often wonder whether to envy people with these psychic gifts or not. On the one hand, it must be very delightful to be able to give help in the way that you can; but, on the other hand, many of your experiences seem a little creepy, and I would rather be without them. But I suppose we cannot have the pleasures of any gifts without the pains?"

"I do hope you will give us some more books like these two. They really help one very much. I think the Church ought to establish the sort of bureau that 'Julia' demands in *After Death*, and guard it very carefully from irreverence or profanity."

Now this last remarkable suggestion comes, be it noted, from the vicar of one of the most important cities in New Zealand. Nothing could have strengthened my hands so much in making the impassioned appeal I should like to make, more especially to all other clergymen of my own church—the dear old Church of England. There are evidently some men within its orders who can judge of these things in a sane and reverent spirit—who feel that no truth can ever be endangered by any other truth—who realize the enormous engine for good that these newly-discovered and emerging facts and capacities may be, when reverently used, with discretion and courage.

Why should the number of such men be so lamentably small at present?

Why should not all clergymen and religious preachers, who are capable of taking an intelligent interest in scientific research and who have the interests of their congregations at heart, say to themselves:—

“These subjects are no longer merely the playground of the weak-minded or the dishonest. They are being investigated by a certain and ever-increasing number of scientific men all over the world, and those who investigate long enough are always con-

vinced in the end that the supernatural is no myth, and is really in our very midst at the present moment.

“These modern facts throw a searchlight upon old traditions and superstitions that is almost blinding in its intensity, but illuminating in its suggestion. Surely it is for *us*, as guardians of religion, to investigate these abnormal occurrences vouched for by scientists of known reputation and probity? It is for *us* to experiment. It is for *us* to encourage the use of God's last gift to us, in stemming the rising tide of overwhelming materiality. It is for *us* to learn also the best means of avoiding the abuse of His gift, and of teaching the members of our flocks to keep a level head and a pure conscience; to avoid mere idle curiosity and to cultivate a reverent and grateful attitude towards this as towards every other branch of knowledge. If we miss our opportunity it will not return, and then when those who trusted to us learn that their trust has been betrayed, through our culpable negligence or inveterate prejudice, they will have found other teachers who may not be nearly such safe guides for them.”

As the French abbé of whom I speak in *Seen and Unseen* said to his brother-priests in

Paris: "*La lumière est venue, mes frères—et si vous ne la suivez pas, vous serez laissés seuls dans vos églises.*"

The parting of the ways was bound to come, so soon as Science had been persuaded, at long, long last, to look seriously into the facts.

Through my heredity—through the pure and beautiful memory of my own dear father—I have a special feeling of respect and affection towards clergymen of the Church of England.

How will they elect to act at this critical juncture? Along the path of Evolution they are bound to walk in time, but shall it be as unwilling and carping critics, or as free men going forward with joy and thankfulness to welcome this new proof of a father's love?

It is for them to decide.

Some years ago an old friend of mine died, who had been for many years chaplain at a Foreign Embassy, where he had a congregation who believed in him absolutely, and were entirely devoted to him. The foreign country to which I refer was rather off the ordinary track of tourists, but in time modern spiritualism penetrated even there, and the English residents appealed

to their beloved minister to preach against this poisonous and wicked development of modern times, which, of course, could only emanate from the devil! My friend was a clever man and also a courageous one. In spite of a very defined creed, he thought for himself on a good many subjects, and kept his judgment in suspense. So he told them that he really could not "preach against" a subject upon which he was entirely ignorant, but that if they liked to trust him, he would investigate it.

So he did, with the result that he became convinced of abnormal facts and powers, but in those days Science had not taken up the matter, nor had the startling occurrences of later years taken place. So my friend left the subject as he found it; but remained convinced that some of the facts he had come across in his rather exhaustive investigation could not possibly be explained by any normal or known laws.

Now this seems to me the right spirit in which to meet the present crisis. "*Always investigate before you denounce,*" and then perhaps you will find more to encourage than to denounce, and your denunciations or warnings will at least have double significance. But there are different ways of

investigating. A man who, without being a professional Scientist, has written a good deal upon scientific subjects, and whose name (if I felt at liberty to give it) would be known to all my readers, tells us in one of his best-known volumes that he has made a complete and exhaustive examination of the claims of modern spiritualism, and that he is in a position to assure the world that *there is absolutely nothing but fraud and imposture in the whole movement.*

I have heard this gentleman's statement (which I am sure he made in all good faith) quoted again and again, as settling the matter once for all. A near relation of my own told me once that it was extremely conceited of me to suppose for one moment that I could know better than a man of this calibre, who had given time and trouble to the investigation.

Now it so happened, by curious coincidence, that I was able on the spot to tell my relative the exact scope and amount of the investigation in question. One of this gentleman's daughters happens to be an old and intimate friend of mine, and I had the account from her. It was, in fact, only at her instigation and by her urgent request that her father was unwillingly induced to

visit a clairvoyant of her choosing. This was what took place: The moment he entered the room he said to the clairvoyant (a woman), "Now tell me at once the name of the ship in which I went to India (or Australia) twelve years ago, and then perhaps I shall think it worth while going further. *You can't know that*, so here's your chance." The poor woman was naturally rather perturbed by this sudden and masterful attack, and pleaded for a little time to get into harmonious conditions, etc.

"Ah! the usual humbug. Harmonious conditions means trying to fish it out of me unawares" (or words to that effect). "Now, then, I give you one more chance. It is a simple enough question, and if you really have these wonderful powers, there can be no difficulty in answering it. What was the name of the ship I sailed in for Australia, twelve years ago?"

Of course the test failed. How could it be otherwise, considering what we now know of necessary mental conditions? He might as well have thrown a heavy stone into a pond and have said, "Now, if there are no ripples, I will believe that is water—not otherwise!"

The poor medium tried to get him his

test, but in vain. He lost patience at once and jumped up. "Come along, Marian, out we go! I knew it was all humbug when it came to any real test."

This is the type of investigation upon which in the old days we were expected to found our judgments—" *Nous avons changé tout cela.*"

As a proof of the saner and more tolerant days that are coming, I may quote a little personal experience of only a few weeks ago, which makes a good *pendant* to the letter of my New Zealand vicar—more especially as it occurred within the Roman Catholic Church.

A cousin of mine, the other day, left a card at my rooms in London, asking me to lunch with her next day. I found this was in order that she might invite a trained nurse, who had accompanied her and her little son to Las Palmas in the preceding spring, to meet me. This nurse, whom I will call Miss Bird, had expressed a great wish to see me after reading *Do the Dead Depart*. My cousin mentioned the fact that she was a Roman Catholic. "Then how is she allowed to read such a book?" was my natural comment.

"I really don't quite know, but I believe her

priest knew all about it," was the answer. At the moment Miss Bird was announced, and came into the drawing-room with my book in her hands, intending possibly to ask me some questions about it.

In the few minutes before going down to luncheon, I told her that I was specially interested to hear that she belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, and yet had not been forbidden to read my book.

"Forbidden!" she said in surprise. "On the contrary, it was my priest who gave me your book, and *told* me to read it, and he is going to give me *Seen and Unseen* later. He has been my best friend and guide for many years. He knows that I have these capacities myself and am bound to develop on these lines, and he said he wished me to read the most sane and wholesome literature on the subject."

Now—putting the personal note in this entirely aside—I do think we have here two very cheering episodes, both happening within a month of each other, and coming from widely differing ecclesiastical camps. It gives us courage to hope that the ten righteous men will be found within the city after all, and that their influence will permeate in time both the great Anglo-

Catholic and Roman Catholic centres. So may it be!

I cannot do better than close this portion of my book with the wise and pertinent remarks of Dr. Phillips Brooks, late Bishop of Massachusetts, than whom it would be difficult to find a nobler character or a greater man.

He says, "Certainly there is nothing clearer or more striking in the Bible than the calm, familiar way with which from end to end it assumes the present existence of a world of spiritual beings always close to and acting on this world of flesh and blood. It does not belong to any one part of the Bible. It runs through the whole vast range. From creation to judgment, the spiritual beings are forever present. They act as truly in the drama as the men and women who, with their unmistakable humanity, walk the sacred stage in the successive scenes. There is nothing of hesitation about the Bible's treatment of the spiritual world. There is no reserve, no vagueness which would leave a chance for the whole system to be explained away into dreams and metaphors. The spiritual world, with all its multitudinous existence, is just as real as the crowded cities and the

fragrant fields and the loud battle-grounds
of the visible and palpable Judæa, in which
the writers of the sacred books were living."

—DR. PHILLIPS BROOKS.

PART II

CHAPTER VII

SPIRITUALISM—ITS USE AND ABUSE

I HAVE divided this book into two parts: the first dealing in a brief and cursory manner with the results of psychical research as they affect modern Theology and modern Science; the second dealing more exclusively with the same subjects on their intrinsic merits.

Every one knows the story of the old woman "who found such comfort in that blessed word Mesopotamia." Now I am sure, to many of my readers and probably to most of my critics, the word "Spiritualism" will bring not comfort and blessing, but hatred, boredom, and gnashing of teeth! There are several obvious reasons why this should be so. To begin with, we have all inherited from our savage forefathers a feeling of enmity and hatred towards the unknown, the stranger, and the foreigner. Probably this instinct was their

salvation in the earlier and ruder developments of Humanity—events must so often have justified their rooted suspicion of strangers and strange events; especially before the social instincts had had time to develop.

I often think this must be the reason for our own instinctive antagonism towards strangers, even when the antagonism may be very mild and scarcely conscious to ourselves. But when the stranger has become a pleasant acquaintance or even a trusted friend, we are almost uniformly surprised to realize how different he or she really is from our first conception. I need not labor a point which will scarcely be disputed, unless somebody is very much in want of an argument.

Well, that is reason No. 1 for disliking a subject upon which so many people are entirely ignorant.

No. 2 I am afraid I must confess is due to the very "bad company" in which the words "spiritualists" and "spirits" have too often been found; as Mr. Myers was fond of reminding us at one time.

Of course the same applies to every other label upon earth, more or less. We might as reasonably object to clergymen, because

many of us have known, or certainly heard of, ministers of religion who were not only immoral, but also dishonest, and sometimes hopeless hypocrites. Or we might refuse to meet doctors, because the famous William Palmer poisoned so many unfortunate people, thanks to his medical training and knowledge. A schoolfellow of my own, to whom I was greatly attached, insisted on marrying a clever doctor, against the wishes of her family. After living together for several years and having five children, he grew tired of her and poisoned her, in order that he might marry a young governess, whom he had insisted upon keeping in the house. Fortunately for the vindication of justice, he committed the extraordinary blunder of marrying this young woman in London during the Queen's Jubilee—the very week after he had buried his poor wife. He had managed the poisoning so well and so carefully, that except for this monstrous stupidity no one would have suspected him—no one, at least, except another schoolfellow of mine, who had been trained as a nurse and who was staying in the house at the time, or rather up to three days previous to, the death of our poor friend. The doctor evidently suspected *her* of suspecting

him, for it came out in evidence that he had insulted her in every possible way for some weeks before the consummation of the tragedy, wishing to get her out of the way. She refused to accept any insult from him, when broad hints had failed to move her; but finally his patience was exhausted, and he practically turned her out of the house. Three days later my poor married school-friend died, her husband having hurried matters up so soon as he felt himself free from the keen watch that had been kept upon him, with so much courage and devoted friendship. As a matter of fact it was the diary, so carefully kept by this brave woman, which hanged the doctor in the end; but his own extraordinary lapse from common sense, by marrying the governess within a week or ten days, tied the noose round his neck by supplying motive, and leading to the exhuming of the remains of his poor victim.

Now I think I have made out a very good case—in this true story—for denouncing all doctors, if I were as much at the mercy of my prejudices as many anti-spiritualists seem to be!

I must apologize for going off the track when this sad and gruesome little story sug-

gested itself as an illustration. To return to the subject. There is a No. 3 reason, which is possibly the strongest of all, and which may be split into two. Firstly, that spiritualists are often intense bores and apt to become monomaniacs, and secondly that they look "queer," and are sometimes eccentric. I suppose all enthusiasts are apt to look queer and to be eccentric. But I must confess we might have a more keen sense of humor sometimes, and talk less, perhaps, of the "summer land" and of "planes of thought and expression," and "unfoldment" and "development," and so forth and so on.

This is why I am personally extremely thankful that my own education and "unfoldment" had gone on for a good many years, upon social and musical and literary lines, before the special study and investigation, to which I have devoted my later life, came within my horizon.

I think it is a decided advantage, because it gives one more perspective, a truer sense of values and proportion, and lastly and most important of all, because it is so very hard to give individual attention to other matters when once this absorbing subject comes into one's life. We came here for

the experiences of life as a whole; and I think the "other life" investigations come *for most of us*, more seasonably, wholesomely and naturally, when we have already had ample opportunity for experience of life on the present plane.

Moreover, I think this wider experience gives us greater influence and weight in dealing with the outside world. But every rule has its exceptions and there are of course many born psychics, to whom it appears quite natural to live in both spheres at once. Much of the best work in the world has been done by these; from prophets and mystics onwards.

I have been reading lately the French translation from the German by Dr. Encausse, of a remarkable book given in the form of an occult romance, and entitled *Au Pays des Esprits*. Towards the end of the book the subject of Modern Spiritualism is handled in the following way:

A great occult teacher, named Chundra, is speaking to his pupil "Louis," the hero of the story, and he says: "The mediums of whom John Dudley has written such marvellous descriptions, declare themselves inspired by the great spirits of the earth. They affirm that their accounts are exact

and describe that which we believe it to be impossible to put into human language.

“ They are ‘sensitives,’ Louis—magnetized by the spirits, they give information that the world is ripe for receiving. Imagine the most difficult and abstract problem of Euclid brought down to the comprehension of children! Well! The descriptions of the countries of the Unseen, which come to us through the lips of somnambulists, have equally to be brought within our comprehension. As for the great names used, so long as Humanity is dependent upon their authority, they will be heard in all *séance* rooms, for mediums are perhaps even more influenced by their audience than by the spirits. The latter are only anxious to give us the information in the words that we desire.”

Then Louis, the pupil, says: “ All this seems very unworthy of a great movement.”

Chundra continues: “ It MUST BE that the world should progress, Louis; and Spiritualism is the only means through which it can progress. Do you trouble yourself as to how your bread is made? If you knew, perhaps you would never eat any more of it! And yet through this you are nourished, and you evolve physically.

Don't trouble yourself too much about details. The movement of modern Spiritualism is only the chaotic reflection of ignorance and credulity. It is, however, the first step towards the breaking of the seals, towards the Apocalyptic time which is approaching. These beginnings are more important than the next efforts of the kind. Man will advance more and more towards the Divine Kingdom—the elements will approach nearer to Humanity—all creation will go up one step on the Ladder of Life. Everything depends therefore on the initial movement which comes to break up the old order of things and to inaugurate the new—Be patient."

The anonymous author is a little too hard in his generalization of modern Spiritualism as merely a necessary evil—a chaotic reflection of ignorance and credulity. Yet perhaps at some future time, in the irradiating light of further revelations, many of the most convinced Spiritualists of the present day may describe their earlier and more limited knowledge in similar words. In the blaze of sunshine we are apt to forget the beauty and rapture of the dawn, thanks to which we are not still in the dark.

Some readers may think—judging by my

fervent appeal to our spiritual teachers and pastors to look into these things for themselves, that I write as a spiritualistic propagandist *pur et simple*.

Such is by no means the case—but quite the contrary. I have always said, and shall always maintain, that indiscriminate investigations of this nature are, in the highest degree, dangerous—dangerous both to the physical and the moral health. It must be so. You open a door through which may rush a crowd of ignorant, undeveloped, even malignant entities, anxious only to make mischief and eager to play upon your idle curiosity or your vanity, whilst showing you a few specimens of abnormal powers as their credentials. Few of us will be bold enough to affirm that we can always be sure of keeping our heads level in the face of subtle flattery, so long as it is not laid on with too heavy a hand.

The lower class of spirits on the other side become great adepts in the art of discriminating flattery. The soothing ointment is concocted very carefully and with a view to the peculiar necessities of each individual case. For the ordinary investigator, it is sufficient to promise riches and earthly possessions as the direct outcome of

his very superior acumen and business instinct, or power of dealing with his fellow men—but all cannot be manipulated in this very obvious way.

Others are told that they have been chosen as great teachers of evolutionary truth, and that their mission is “unfolding” daily, and will do so still more rapidly, if they keep in touch with their spirit friends—generally through the help of mediums.

A step higher than this come the messages from departed friends, or even from departed foes, craving help in their upward course or forgiveness for some vague wrong in the past. Far be it from me to say that there may not be a basis of truth in any or all of these cases, but I do know from personal experience that even when the conscious or unconscious mind of medium and sitter are both justifiably excluded, there remains a residuum of specious flattery on the part of the entities themselves, which ought to warn us that we are dealing, not with wise counsellors, but with spirits who have an object to gain, and who are not over-scrupulous as to the means employed. Possibly such spirits are more frequently actuated by ordinary love of power than by

any more malignant motives, but the latter cannot be entirely ignored. I know of a case where a young and charming woman, intelligent, musical and artistic, has had her life completely wrecked by listening to the counsels of a spirit on the other side, professing to be one of those nearest and dearest to her. This entity promised her all sorts of marvellous experiences and wonderful knowledge if she would only listen to his advice. Unfortunately she believed in the identity of her self-constituted guide, and blindly followed his directions, with the result that her mind became unhinged, her home broken up, and that which might have been a very happy and normal life was turned into misery for herself and those who love her. There are hundreds of such cases, attesting to the abuse and not the use of Spiritualism. They should not be ignored by us, but should rather act as marsh lights, warning us of the swamps and morasses for the unwary on the darker side of psychical research. Was it not Martin Luther who declared that he would go to the Diet of Worms, even "*if it rained devils,*" or, as some chronicles put it—"*even if there were as many devils there as tiles on the roofs of the houses.*" I prefer the former

version as stronger and more picturesque, and I dare say it is equally historical. Martin Luther had a great work to perform, and he could meet devils on more equal terms than most of us weaker souls. Unless we are firmly convinced of some very pressing necessity, I think most of us had better give them a wide berth.

In saying this, I do not of course ignore the very helpful and loving intercourse that may exist between us and the next sphere. To many of us life would be unthinkable and unbearable without the consciousness of this. Here there is no question of false flattery or selfish counsels, for the pure and loving help of our dear ones on the other side is far above any such criticism.

Again, to some people, these investigations have come as an obvious life-work. They have been set apart, perhaps all their lives, from ordinary human ties and human interests, and may have fiercely rebelled against that fact. They have watched the often happy and certainly full and busy lives of their neighbors, with envy and regret. The years pass and only negation and renunciation of the ordinary joys and sorrows of human life seem to be their portion.

And then, at long last, the dawn may come and the key to the riddle of *their* "universe" is put into their hands. They have been preparing unconsciously during these long years of drought and famine for the work that was to come later; and we cannot doubt that the full Harvest of the years of plenty will some day crown their efforts. I have known more than one case where the dark problems of a long life have received such a solution.

These people may well say, in spite of all dissentient voices and protesting friends and relatives, "'Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus;' of His mission for me in these modern days of strife and confusion and mental unrest."

But we must remember that it is not only pioneers who are needed in these researches. We want also guides and even scouts to warn us of the approach of the enemy. Perhaps the best scout will be that inner monitor who warns us (if we encourage rather than silence him) that our outworks are being captured by the insidious forces of flattery, and that we shall soon be bound hand and foot in our own citadel, if the enemy be not instantly repulsed.

George Eliot said to me, many years ago, but after passing to the other side of life, "If you and others could only see the dark and malign influences surrounding you, under which you have to fight your life's battle, you would lose heart and courage entirely."

Fortunately for most of us, "our eyes are holden," and for the more sensitive souls there is but one course left open—to go forward as brave old Martin Luther did, "in the strength of the Lord," and say with him, "*If it rains devils, I will not be afraid.* They shall not turn me from my purpose—from the work put into my hands. I will look upon them as necessary discipline, so long as I am not able wholly to ignore their presence. God is greater than the devils. They are but negative to His divine positive, and the day must come when they are negative also to my divine consciousness."

Most people are inclined to ignore this darker side of psychic facts altogether, and in the main this is a wise course. There are many psychical researchers and workers who are not in the least degree highly sensitive. Mr. W. T. Stead, for instance, always maintains that he is one of these. Probably he could not do all the work to

which he has been called under any other conditions. But in an evolving world, this higher degree of sensitiveness to impressions is bound to come at some stage in our evolution, simply because, as we have said before, evolution abhors gaps as much as Nature abhors vacuums. So that the whole human body must at some time become more highly sensitized ; which merely means become receptive to finer vibrations, and therefore conscious of the presence of entities living in a more ethereal condition than that of which our ordinary physical senses can at present take cognizance.

Such sensitives may have some interest (probably *must* have some interest) in psychical questions ; but so long as they take no *active* part in the propaganda, they may expect to be left alone by the malignant entities to which I refer. Both these classes will therefore join in advising their less fortunate (?) fellow-creatures to ignore these darker facts and to treat them as illusions of the imagination.

But this is poor comfort for those of us who know that malignant entities, eager to discourage all efforts towards a fuller comprehension of God's truth, are an undeniable fact.

They do *not* dwell only in the imagination, but are too often permitted to give practical proof both of their presence and, within limits, of their power to bring about physical disaster upon their victims. I shall have more to say about this in a future chapter. I only touch upon it here in order to explain my reason for treating this unpleasant subject from a positive rather than a purely negative point of view.

Three-fourths or possibly four-fifths of our psychical investigators can afford to treat the matter in the latter way, and they will tell you quite sensibly and reasonably, that by ignoring such ideas they have kept entirely free from any trouble. But I am writing just at this moment for that minority of highly-sensitized workers who can only ignore what is as real to them as any other fact in life, by the Christian Science device of changing words and thereby supposing they have changed facts. To say you have only a "*belief in sore throat,*" instead of saying boldly that you "*have a sore throat,*" is not much consolation to the sufferer. If the Science healer can try conclusions with your sore throat and get the better of it, or enable you to do the same, that is quite another matter.

If a fact is too patent to be simply ignored, we must find some other way of dealing with it, and I think Luther helps us there. When his malignant spirits on the psychic plane became too aggressive, he didn't ignore them—he threw ink-pots at them, and this seems to have been equally efficacious! Anyway, they were not allowed in the long run to stop his work, although no doubt they obstructed it as much as possible, and gave him “a very bad time,” in modern parlance.

We must expect the same, in our own small way, if we attempt to oppose the forces of darkness and obscurantism by doing any definite work, and *if we are at the same time extremely sensitive.*

My friend, Lady Wincote (of *Seen and Unseen*) told me once of some experiences of her own, arising from a sensitive condition to Unseen entities, and of a curiously suggestive message which was given to her at the time, and which was to the following effect :

“If you are not strong enough for these tests, then you had better give up the whole subject. But before deciding to do so, you must realize that no second opportunity will come to you during your present lifetime.

All have to pass through these dark zones in their upward path, at some stage in their experience. If you feel unequal to the task, it is better to resign it; but you will have to work out the experience later."

She said she felt at the time such an influx of courage that it seemed impossible to doubt or to hesitate.

In proportion as the Light shines, the darkness disappears; and so in the measure in which we can appropriate and keep burning brightly the divine Sun of Righteousness in our hearts, will the shadows of the night flee away.

The dark entities of ignorance and envy may work us some spiritual and even physical discomfort and harm now; but if we are faithful to the Light that is within, and are chiefly concerned to keep that shining, it will search out all dark corners in our surroundings and chase away all ghostly enemies, that may injure the body or "assault and hurt the soul."

CHAPTER VIII

OCCULT—AND OTHERWISE

A LADY, with whom I was at one time in rather close relations regarding psychic matters (as to which she had known nothing before my meeting with her) told me of a curious dream she had had about herself and me just about that time.

She dreamed that she and I were walking together and came to a narrow lane in the country. This lane had a locked gate at either end, and a guardian was placed at each gate. As we approached, he unlocked the gate for us and allowed us to go in without any word of warning. As we went further on, however, some most unpleasant experiences came to us. The lane seemed to be the haunt of wild beasts: lions and tigers prowled around and came a great deal too near us for our peace of mind. By extra agility and some display of courage we seem to have eluded them and managed to get safely and with our bones intact, to the other end of the lane, where we found the

second gate, also locked, and the second guardian.

My friend immediately attacked him and his fellow-janitor with bitter reproaches for not having given us some idea of the dangers we were running; upon which he said quietly and in a very final tone, which admitted of no discussion: "If it had not been known that you would be able to get through in safety, you would not have been allowed to enter the lane at all."

This has always seemed to me a very suggestive little parable. I think it is very applicable to all forms of psychical research, and more especially to the occult side of it. The domain of occult science must naturally be a shifting boundary, according to the amount of our individual knowledge of abnormal capacities and possibilities. The commonest forms of human knowledge are necessarily "occult" (hidden—unknown) to the nearest ant-heap, and, in a lesser degree, probably to most of our domestic animals—although the latter certainly seem to run some of us rather close in the question of intelligence.

All the great religions of the world have had their esoteric as well as their exoteric aspects. In ancient days the knowledge of

the priest always transcended the knowledge of the people. The former depended upon the *essence* of the faith, of which the people saw only the more or less ornate manifestations.

Only the great Initiates, prepared through long years of self-denial and abstinence for the reception of the innermost revelation of the truths of the universe could really penetrate to the heart of the mysteries of their religion. It was not a question of "keeping things" from the outer crowds. It was the mere fact that without long spiritual training and vast experience these latter *could not* enter the holy of holies with any degree of understanding, and would therefore merely have vulgarized and misconceived the most sacred truths of the Shrine. At the root of all these great religions and behind their outward manifestations, the initial truths seem always to have been the same. The outer manifestations differed with differing countries, climates and social conditions. The basic and esoteric truth was always the Unity of the Divine—His dual and thence His threefold nature. God the Essence—male and female—God the Son thence proceeding—God, the Divine Word—the Divine Manifesta-

tion in all worlds—in this or any other Universe. How could the vast congregations who flocked to the temples realize these transcendent truths *en masse*? It was impossible, and so the esoteric doctrine grew and was tenderly nurtured in the very innermost shrines of the Initiates; whilst they gave to the outer world as much as it could assimilate, under the only forms of speech or ceremony which could be “understood of the people.”

Jesus Christ Himself, the last and greatest Divine Word in manifestation, followed the same course, in spite of His sublime simplicity of teaching and absence of all ceremonial or outward show. There were still “many things” He could not tell His disciples—why? Simply because they were not at a point of growth when they could have received these many things without mental confusion and misconception. Christ always worked along the lines of evolution, never in antagonism to them. He never forced spiritual experiences upon those unprepared for them.

His appeal was ever to Nature in His parables, and He followed the methods of Nature in allowing growth to develop—in never forcing it to do so.

Therefore with Him preëminently there was an esoteric as well as an exoteric aspect of Truth.

Whether we read of Krishna in India, of Hermes in Egypt, of Orpheus in Greece, or of Pythagoras (who although a Samian by birth, was educated in the mysteries of the esoteric doctrine in Egypt), the story is the same—long years of discipline, of learning to control the will and its rebellious instincts, of submitting to tests of courage and endurance—of trials by fire or water, or the menace of death, or the awakening from deep trance to renewed terrestrial life. These were only so many different methods of “keeping under the body” and “bringing it into subjection,” which was the Pauline translation of the same great truth.

The great tests of initiation, of which we read, seem to have been in reality a sort of condensed object-lesson on the fierce trials of human life for each human soul, and the courage and endurance and submission and faith needed by each one of us, if we are to be accounted worthy in the end of the prize of our high calling—worthy to be instructed further in the divine spiritual wisdom.

These ancient initiations often seem to

have lasted the best part of a lifetime. One wonders that any neophyte had patience to endure to the end; yet we all have to endure our own lives to the end, and for many of us these need as much courage and faith and often self-sacrifice! It is the grand initiation of LIFE—of which all of us are the neophytes.

Pythagoras spent twenty-two years with the priests of Egypt, going through the most severe tests before they considered him fit to receive the Divine mysteries which were guarded with such unswerving devotion. But what a grand twenty-two years it must have been, for he was preparing all the time for the final revelation! It was in Egypt that he studied the Divine Science of Number and the Universal Principles, which afterwards, through the crucible of his genius, became the centre of his scheme of philosophy. There also he learned the prodigious powers of the human will, trained and exercised with wisdom and discretion—how it could affect for good or for evil the human body or the human soul. The Egyptian priests, his masters, taught that the Science of Number and the power of the human will were the two magical keys, and that with them all doors in the

universe could be opened. Finally, it was in Egypt that he learned to comprehend the grand truth of the *involution* of Spirit in matter by a universal creation, and the *evolution* of spirit, ascending once more to the Divine Unity through that individual creation which we call the development of consciousness.¹

Wonderful knowledge all this! Well worth an immolation of more than twenty years amongst the grand old Egyptian temples! No wonder the priests waited all those years to assure themselves of his being a worthy disciple, fit to receive the two keys which would open all gates in the Universe.

How different were these old methods from the superficial, half-digested knowledge of too many of our modern schools of occultism! We seem to have lost count of the great spiritual truths of genuine occultism, and to be chiefly concerned with the marvellous and abnormal powers that we may learn to develop—powers which may land us in the very gravest dangers, and land our unfortunate friends there with us, if we begin experimenting upon *them* with our two keys of the Universe!

¹ *Les Grands Initiés—Pythagore.*

Law will act, whether evoked wisely or unwisely—gravitation will bring us down from the top of an omnibus or the window of a railway train, if we lean out too far, just as inevitably as it will enable us to keep our feet whilst whirling round in space, at inconceivable rates of motion.

Therefore if we study occult science physically before we have reached that extreme high-water mark morally, which would render us safe custodians of such abnormal powers, we shall no doubt succeed in using them and very possibly in doing considerable damage mentally, if not also physically, to that special *ion* in the universe of human atoms which represents our individual self.

We can learn how to call up elementals no doubt, and even insure their coming to us, but would most of us be any better for the experience? I think not. We should probably learn too late that this form of service might have to be too dearly paid for in the end. If we want something done which we are not ashamed of owning to, I think it is much safer to appeal to the angels than to the elementals, and leave it to them to make use of the latter, should they see fit to do so. I confess that I don't know in the least what an angel is like; but I use

the term in a general sense to cover the kindly guardians, of whose presence the most obtuse amongst us must surely sometimes be conscious.

In this way we should at least be appealing to those wiser than ourselves and not more limited; to those who can see from above and not merely grope about at our good pleasure from below. And the common-sense argument seems to me that if we are to have dealings with entities in any sphere but our own present one, it is a good deal better to invoke those further on in the evolutionary spiral and not those who are still many coils lower down—no, not even to get service out of them or as a sop to our curiosity and love of power.

I am not speaking merely from theory in saying this. I joined an occult society once and went through several degrees in it. No doubt it was conducted on similar lines to others of the kind, and I have no reason to doubt the *bona fides* of any member of it—I speak only of my individual feeling in the matter, and have no wish to lay down the law or to force any opinion upon other people which does not appeal to their own views in such questions. Every one must judge for himself, and it is only as concerns

our motives that any one of us will finally be judged—even by his own conscience.

Before closing the subject I feel inclined to quote the words of a wise woman, who has been a constant source of help and consolation to me, and whose automatic script I have given in *Seen and Unseen* under the initials "E. G." She passed over many years ago, and I did not know her personally in earth-life, although her name was naturally well known to me, and I have often been in the same company with her.

She seemed quite willing that I should have the experience of a short novitiate in occult science, but after six or seven months, appeared to be equally anxious that I should renounce these studies. As I have an almost morbid dread of allowing the "other side" friends to influence me unduly, I determined to wait until I could feel quite sure that I was acting upon my own initiative, and not blindly following her ideas. After all, we cannot live our lives at second-hand any more than we can learn to paint by allowing our master to touch up our feeble attempts and cover our errors with a few bold strokes of his practiced brush!

So months passed on, and an evening came when I was anxious to have a little

chat with one of my kind friends in the Unseen, as I was feeling rather depressed at the time. I think the scourge of influenza was upon us just then, and the whole nation was mourning the loss of the King's eldest son. I had a most interesting and touching experience with the latter just about this time, by the by; but for obvious reasons this cannot be made public.

To return to our subject. Greatly to my disappointment, the friend I specially wished to see could not apparently come, and almost immediately the initials E. G. were knocked out. I asked if she would begin her message, and on receiving an affirmative answer, started the usual wearisome alphabet, which I used at that time almost exclusively, having been warned that I was not yet sufficiently trained to take automatic messages with impunity.

We had got as far as "YOU HA," when to hurry up matters (non-evidential) I did what I have often done in those days, made a guess and asked, "Is the next letter V?" I felt quite sure the answer would be yes, and that the obvious word was "have." But I was wrong—a most emphatic "No" was rapped out, and I was told to begin the alphabet over again. I did so, with the

result that we arrived at "y" without any intimation or rising of the table to mark the right letter. I concluded that I must have passed it, by repeating some letter too rapidly to give time for the deliberate "rise"; and was just going to start again impatiently, when to my surprise and relief the unmistakable sign came at the letter "z." Now I must confess, although it seemed to me very stupid later, that I could not for the moment think of any word beginning *haz*. So in perfect mental fog, which prevented any possibility of mere lazy guessing on my part, we started again. The table rose at "a" instantly, and the word "hazard" was spelled out.

I have only given this special word in detail, because it was so entirely outside any mental suggestion of my own at the time. Of course we must always make terms for the mysterious and omniscient subconscious self of which we all talk so much—and know so little!

When the sentence was completed it ran thus: "You will soon hazard my respect for you if you neglect my repeated injunction to give up your novitiate in occult science."

I asked at once:

“Why? Is it wrong in itself, or wrong for me?”

The answer was very suggestive, and although some will think it too drastic as regards occult studies in general, it certainly put the truth so far as I, personally, was concerned, into a nutshell:

“Both. It should only be studied as a natural stage in the soul’s progression; not as a forced and artificial growth—full of danger.”

We are between “Scylla and Charybdis” in this as in everything else in life. We are here to find the true balance of things, and our own special stage of growth—mental, moral and physical—without dogmatizing and laying down hard and fast rules for other people.!

To shut ourselves out from all studies that may have a dangerous possibility would mean practically exclusion from all forms of *knowledge*, though not of wisdom. But I suppose knowledge and its acquisition is perfectly legitimate in its proper place, and is obviously part of our present training? All knowledge may be abused as well as used, in common with every other human possession. This fact doubtless led to the deification of ignorance and

terror of the intellect which marked a previous age to this one.

We might as well refuse to go out into the streets for fear of being run over by a motor-car or an omnibus, and sit at home all day, to pine away from want of exercise or to be crushed by the falling of a wall in our own house!

With reference to what I have already said as regards the esoteric side of our Lord's mission, I think the following translation from an interesting commentary on *Saint Jean* by a doctor of the Sorbonne, who calls himself Alta, may be worth quoting. Speaking of the many things which Jesus Christ said His followers could not yet understand, but which He promised should be revealed later, the author goes on to say:—

“The fact that the Holy Spirit—the Revealer—has suggested for a certain moment a certain wise decision, does not prevent the same Divine Spirit enlightening our spirits still further during the course of the ages.

“A formula, no matter whence it comes, in what language, in what phase of the human mentality, falls quickly from the domain of authority into the domain of Science; for no matter how infallible such a formula may be, it must of necessity

appeal to criticism, to philology, to philosophy, to intelligence, in order to establish the authenticity, the intention, the sense and meaning of the words which constitute it. Yesterday cannot suppress to-day, nor can to-day paralyze to-morrow.

“The symbol of the true Church is not a *Rock* but a *Ship*. It is not the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome. It is St. Peter's ship upon the waters of Galilee—the Galilee of the nations. Peter may be the pilot, but it is the function neither of the pilot nor of the captain of a ship to command the waves nor to forbid them to break, to swell, or to recede in due course. On the contrary, it is just this breaking and movement of the waves which bears onward the ship.

“The Divine Spirit breathes in different ways in different souls; so that from the clash of opinions the light may be kindled, and thus the daring of one mind will balance the timidity of another; the resistance of this man will moderate the dogmatism of that one, and thus the progress of the Future shall carry on—without breaking them—the links of the Past.”

CHAPTER IX

AUTOMATIC WRITING—ITS USE AND ABUSE

I THINK it may be well to recapitulate the divisions I have given to this subject in my last book, *Do the Dead Depart*.

First—Intuitional writing. By this I mean to indicate where pen or pencil is used, but where only the broad general idea is given from the Unseen, the whole detail being consciously added by the use of the medium's own brain capacity with its individuality of wording and expression. This kind of writing, although lowest in the scale from the automatic point of view, has its own very obvious advantages. It is more usually found in agents of some strength of character and power of intellect, and such persons are those least likely to be victims of trifling or deceptive messages. Their own strong personality drives off the mere tramp or vagrant from the spirit spheres.

Secondly—Inspirational writing. This is perhaps the most desirable of all, given a person of solid character and high aspira-

tions, likely to attract inspiration of the noblest kind. We are too apt to forget that inspiration merely indicates a method, and may be divine or infernal.

In inspirational writing, not only the main idea would be given, but also as much of the clothing of the idea in earth language as is compatible with an absence of entire control over the personality of the agent.

Thirdly—Automatic writing in the primary sense of the term. This would be where the personality of the scribe is completely overshadowed, and in such cases the process is generally slower, more deficient, and necessarily more exhausting. It is probably more exhausting for the communicating intelligence also, and perhaps not always more truly accurate, except in verbal expression.

Fourthly—The last class comprises automatic writing of the above description, where the control is so absolute that the message does not pass through the conscious physical brain at all, but seems to take place as though some unseen hand guided the fingers of the recipient, without impressing the physical brain. My own first attempts at automatic writing took place when I was a young girl of eighteen, and I am thank-

ful to say they were eminently unsuccessful. Nothing but long straggling lines of meaningless pothooks, or endless loops and twists, were the result. At long last I did get a few letters of the alphabet and even a sentence, but this sentence always was the same: "Emmie is an enemy—Emmie is an enemy," repeated *ad nauseam*!

No matter when or where I made the attempt, this was the invariable outcome, after a good many meaningless lines and loops had been drawn. So I became tired of automatic writing as a parlor game and left it severely alone for many years. After my first visit to America and when circumstances had led me to the path of psychical investigation, which I have never deserted, I made fresh attempts to develop in this way; not knowing enough in those days to realize the dangers lurking under this apparently innocent pursuit. These efforts were not so unsuccessful as those of my early girlhood, but I abandoned the subject, so far as personal experiment went, simply because my kind friends and helpers on the other side most urgently requested me to do so, although they did not at that time enter into any detail of the reason for the prohibition. This, however, was so constant and so decided in

tone that I did not feel it possible to disregard their repeated injunctions, and as a matter of fact it did not occur to me to ask for an explanation of the precise dangers they foresaw, and which I have since had so many opportunities of observing.

"Leave it alone—lay it down—do not attempt this kind of writing—it is dangerous for you at present—we will let you know later if you can try it with safety."

In one or other of these sentences the warning was always given. I accepted it, feeling convinced of their *bona fides* and wise precaution, and I have never failed to thank them for the counsel. I know now what untold trouble and confusion might have followed, both for myself and for others, had I disregarded the prudent counsel.

For fully five years the embargo remained. Then it was lifted, and I was told that a strong band of spirits would now be formed to protect me from danger if I wished to communicate at stated and reasonable times with my friends in the "higher life." This has always been the case. I cannot recall a single instance where any real discomfort has been caused or any positively false information has been given. Mistakes have often been made, especially as regards time,

which the friends always say they cannot calculate as we do. They have ever warned me not to give absolute credence to any prevision. They can see a little further than we do, and can often calculate the probable trend of events more accurately, but they are no more omniscient than ourselves, and so far as time calculations are concerned, they see events as far or near, not according to our time divisions of weeks or months or years, but as clouds, of which the nature can be gathered by the brighter or deeper shadows, and the approximate time-limit by their greater or lesser density.

Apart from the usual old stories of foolish women parting with diamonds and valuable lace or large sums of money in response to messages from the Unseen, and of foolish men and women contracting disastrous marriages in accordance with the supposed advice of the "dear spirits"—advice not always obtained by automatic script—I think my first important experience of the danger of tampering with automatic writing whilst in an undeveloped and therefore unguarded psychical condition, came through my acquaintance with the Mrs. Forbes of the Society for Psychical Research records. When she was overwhelmed with grief at the sad

and sudden loss of her only son, I had advised her—as a very old friend of her husband—to try sitting alone every day for ten or fifteen minutes, and concentrating her mind upon the boy; striving to realize his presence and continued life, and to give hospitality mentally to any attempt on his part to respond. It would never have occurred to me to suggest her attempting automatic writing, as she had then no experience whatever in these subjects. Moreover, her husband disapproved of them, and had never allowed her to join the Society for Psychical Research, and out of loyalty to him I should certainly not have taken the responsibility of attempting to set her feet at once in such an advanced stage on the road. I felt that no one could object to any mother sitting quietly and alone to meditate upon her boy as a living reality, and I hoped that by degrees this daily exercise might bring some consolation in helping her to realize spiritual facts.

Even when she wrote to me ten days later and said, with delighted gratitude, that she was now in constant, daily communication with her boy, I was still under the impression that this communion was on the mental and spiritual plane, and did not

understand until weeks later, that she had already, and from the first, used material means to bring about the communications. Had I done so, I should not have been so much surprised by receiving a despairing letter from her a week or two later, which was in sad contrast to those which had preceded it:—

“ I must give it all up, this intercourse with my son. It cannot be a right and holy thing, or I should not have had such a terrible experience. It seems to me in my despair as if I had lost my boy over again.”

She then went on to describe what must certainly have been a most painful and terrifying experience. It seems that some entity, giving the name of a man she had known and esteemed, and one well known in psychic circles, had forced his way in through the door left open by her premature and inexperienced efforts at communication; that she had felt as if an almost personal combat were going on between him and her son for the supremacy, the clash of personalities and ensuing discord being thrown upon her, and resulting in a terrifying night's experience. Towards morning the attack seemed to be relaxed, and eventually she felt that she and

her boy together had won the victory. It had left her naturally much perturbed and with a strong conviction for the time being that she must cut herself off from all intercourse of any sort or kind with her beloved son, on this side of the Veil.

Now Mrs. Forbes was, and no doubt still is, firmly convinced that the intruding spirit was a false one, assuming the name and personality of an old acquaintance, and that he had nothing in the world to do with the original and true individual. Of course, this may be so ; on the other hand, I think this special episode admits of a far more natural explanation. When this gentleman was alive, Talbot Forbes must have been quite a young child, and probably rather in the way when the former came to see his mother ; as young children requiring a good deal of attention are apt to be in the eyes of casual visitors. Later, the child grows up, is suddenly cut off in early manhood and goes over to the other side, within reach, no doubt, of the mother's old friend. Through communication opened up between mother and son, the former friend would find himself once more within touch, as it were, of Mrs. Forbes. Talbot Forbes (who must have appeared almost a

boy to the man, much older when on earth, and still older in spirit life) was, however, in complete monopoly of the spirit telephone, and doubtless resented any interference with his rights. He knew nothing of the man claiming to know his mother and who had died in his own childhood. Why should he accept his word and give up his place to a stranger, even for a moment, of this short and precious time of intercourse with his mother? The older man would almost inevitably be put down by the young one as an impostor, whilst the former would doubtless look upon Talbot as a great nuisance, and obstacle in the way of renewing a valued friendship so unexpectedly made possible for him. In fact, Talbot, as a young man, was playing the same *rôle* consciously, as I have suggested may possibly have been played unconsciously by him as a child. The antagonism on either side and the misconception on Talbot's part, who might feel he must guard his mother from this impersonating evil and deceitful spirit; all this would be thrown upon Mrs. Forbes and materialize itself as a deadly conflict between her son and an emissary of Satan. She, on this plane, and the son on the other plane, with-

stood the enemy, who appears to have given way at last in sheer despair.

Now this is only my alternative suggestion, which I have no doubt Mrs. Forbes herself would deny from start to finish. Knowing something of human nature in general and by report of this special man's nature in particular, I think my view is at any rate a common-sense one. The suggestion of wickedness in connection with the impersonating spirit would not materially affect the question; because it might obviously be the hypnotic response of Mrs. Forbes to her son's preconception.

It was on this occasion that I begged my friends in the next sphere to give me some information on the subject. They did not enter into the rights or wrongs of this special case (which may or may not have been clear to them). They took the more practical course of explaining to me the confusion and deceptions that might so easily arise through a premature exercise of automatic writing, and for the following very sensible reason. They said practically—"The initial mistake was made when Mrs. Forbes adopted this method of communication instead of following your instructions literally. She is not at present sufficiently developed to be

able to use automatic writing without risk." When I asked why automatic writing was more risky than mental communication with the other side, the answer was—as it seemed to me—both simple and sensible: "The more material your methods of communication, the greater risk there is of attracting the more material spirits, who are ever waiting about, watching for suitable opportunities to make themselves recognized by you on earth. Now a pen or pencil is obviously more material than a thought. Therefore the more earth-bound spirits can manipulate pen or pencil or table and Planchette more easily than they can manipulate and mould your thoughts."

The mention of Planchette reminds me of another case which came under my own observation, and where the results were obviously and unmistakably bad, and admit of no such whitewashing as I have attempted in the Forbes case.

A lady I know took a house some years ago in the South Kensington district, and she and her husband went to live there with their four children.

I think some of the fixtures and possibly a little furniture were taken over with the house. At any rate it turned out subse-

quently that an old Planchette had been left in one of the nurseries. This lady's eldest daughter, whom I will call Pansy, was at that time a pretty child of twelve, very truthful and straightforward, whose word could be absolutely relied upon.

Soon after they were all established in the home, poor little Pansy complained to her mother of seeing a "wicked-looking old woman, with thin gray hair and terribly cruel black eyes," in the back drawing-room. Up to this time the lady knew nothing at all about psychic matters and took absolutely no interest in them. She had lived for years in one of our Colonies and had had far more practical matters to occupy her time and thoughts. Naturally, however, she was greatly distressed when this child—whose word she had never had reason to doubt—persisted in her tale. She said the old woman did not frighten her so much when other people were in the room, because she did not put on such a horrible expression then. But when the poor child was left alone by any chance in the drawing-room, especially in the back part of it, the old woman took the opportunity of making faces at her and rendering herself altogether extremely terrifying and unpleasant.

When my friend investigated the matter further, she heard for the first time about the Planchette that had been left in a nursery cupboard, and also found that Pansy and her nurse had "been trying to write with it for fun." It was no fun for the poor little girl, for some months at least.

The door having been opened in this ignorant and casual way, the old woman seems promptly to have walked in and to have done her best to make the poor child's life a burden, owing to her unfortunate and hitherto unsuspected clairvoyant power.

The mother, a very practical and sensible woman, did not waste time in fruitless regrets. She heard of the Society for Psychical Research, and at once became a member, thinking she might in this way get some practical advice in dealing with the matter and releasing her little daughter from the painful and frightening experience. I think as a matter of fact that the relief came eventually either through private friends or through 110 St. Martin's Lane. Anyway, I have great pleasure in mentioning in this connection the name of Mrs. Manx, who has been in England and whose absence is regretted by all who knew her.

When Pansy's mother went to her, she at once described without the slightest suggestion, exactly the features and appearance of the haunting old woman. I cannot remember whether she was also able to see why this special entity clung to the house. In any case, she gave some excellent and very disinterested advice as to the best means of getting rid of the "unwelcome guest." For when my friend suggested Mrs. Manx coming to the house and holding a *séance* the latter at once dissuaded her from any such course. "*Don't do anything of the kind,*" she said, "*you may attract other undesirable visitors whilst trying to get rid of this one.*" She then gave some simple instructions which turned out to be quite successful.

My friend continues to live in the house, but neither she nor her daughter have experienced any discomfort or undesirable visits from other than mundane personalities.

As for Pansy, the last I heard of her was a year ago, when she was enjoying her first ball, and I am told she has grown into a very charming and pretty girl.

So the "wicked old woman" has mercifully not been allowed to cast any permanent shadow on this bright young life.

But matters might have been very different. If a sin-stained man or woman, rather than an innocent young girl, had been in question, what untold misery might have been the result of such a haunting presence! —a haunting directly due to the apparently innocent but premature and ignorant playing with forces whose powers and conditions were not understood, and could therefore not be guarded against.

In addition to the initial and most obvious danger in automatic writing, namely that it is one of the most subtle and yet easiest ways in which a door may be opened and left unguarded for the entrance of undesirable spirit visitors, there are many minor dangers on the moral plane associated with any indiscreet use of this alluring phenomenon.

In the first place we may give up too much of our time to it, and thus neglect more immediate duties, besides losing all taste for them. Exactly the same argument might be used in regard to excessive novel-reading, and I am quite willing to admit this. Our sceptical friends would probably say there was quite as much fiction in one case as the other!

Then again automatic writing, unless we

are very much on our guard, may minister greatly to our natural vanity. Like attracts like, and people with a well-developed bump of vanity on this plane are apt to attract those of the same class behind the veil. I am thankful to say that my most frequent correspondents from the other side are of rather robust constitution, and more apt to give me salutary rebukes than to prophesy smooth things; but we all need to be on our guard in this respect.

We get so many buffets in this world, unless we are extremely rich or excessively dense. In the first case nobody dares to tell us the truth about ourselves—in the second case we don't care "a button" if they do! But most of us belong to neither extreme, and may very reasonably think that after getting some hard raps down here, our unseen friends might at least put us on good terms with ourselves again—just as a worried business man, who may have been lectured in his office, expects a little soothing syrup at home, administered by an admiring wife and family.

This is all right within due limits, but when we are told that *all* our views and arguments are in the main true, and those of our neighbors mistaken, so far as they

diverge from our own—or that a great mission is laid upon us as to which we alone are competent, and for which the world has been waiting for many hundreds of years, then I think we ought to recognize the danger-signals and “go slow.”

I know it is very difficult, because often these messages may be perfectly sincere without being perfectly correct. Apart from the question of deceiving entities, we naturally attract to us those who are in affinity with us or have a strong affection for us. Probably they often *do* think we are right in this or that opinion or action. It does not follow that their view is correct, but one often hears people backing up their own prejudices or actions by telling you of the beautiful messages they have received on the subject ; as though that were a final appeal.

So long as we are prepared to keep our automatic script within reasonable bounds and not allow it to encroach unduly upon other duties—so long as we are willing to receive blame as well as praise if need be—to hold our judgment in suspense and receive these communications as we should receive those from esteemed friends on earth—and most important of all, so long as we

keep our independence of action intact, and don't learn to run to the unseen friends for every small or great decision in life; so long we may no doubt exercise our gift without abusing it.

But all this is a rather large order! I wonder how many of us, automatic writers, can feel honestly convinced that we have filled in the contract satisfactorily?

There is another less pleasing possibility to contemplate, but one which I don't feel justified in ignoring completely, since it has been more than once brought under my personal notice. It is a temptation which so-called "religious people" occasionally fall into, that of thinking they are influenced by the highest motives instead of the lowest ones, and using their religion or their psychic gifts to confound or humiliate their enemies—as Bishop Creighton used to say to some of his obstinate clergy, who refused to submit on points really not vital: "*A great deal that you call conscience is, in reality, temper.*" I have seen the germ of this subtle temptation to spiritual priggishness and a desire to score off any one who has offended them, in quite small children. I have heard one little girl say to another severely, "*You are a very naughty little girl,*

and all I can do is to pray for you." This is one of my earliest childish reminiscences, and I am always devoutly thankful to have been the "*naughty little girl*" upon that occasion!

Christian Scientists, in the early stages of their initiation into what one might politely call the technical terms of the sect, are apt to say to any one who disagrees with them or annoys them, "This just shows that you are still in mortal mind."

And so I am afraid sometimes we may use our automatic script, quite unconsciously, in the same way, to score off our enemies or to put ourselves in a superior spiritual position with regard to them. It may be objected that in such case it would prove that the writing was simply self-suggestion—not necessarily, I think—I have long felt convinced that many of our unkind thoughts of our neighbors are really thrust upon us from outside.

If we open the door even an inch or two by a passing criticism, or perhaps a satirical remark upon an acquaintance, how quickly a rush of very unkind thoughts will often dash in and almost frighten us with the strength of the flood! If we are wise we shall stem it at once, by trying to say or

think something kindly of them. All of us who have any introspective faculty at all, must be aware of the truth of my words. Then is it difficult to realize that these unseen tempters may manipulate our pens more easily than our brains; especially when we have made ourselves intentionally passive and receptive, as in automatic writing?

As a "*pendant*" to the "mortal mind" illustration, as regards Christian Scientists, I will give a true experience of my own as regards automatic writers.

Some years ago a lady who happened to be staying in the same house with me, and who was an acquaintance of some years' standing but not an intimate friend, took occasion to come into a morning-room where I was sitting alone a few days after my arrival. I must tell you, by the by, that this lady had some psychic development of rather an elementary nature.

She brought a square MS. copy-book with her and a pencil, and told me at once (without any encouragement on my part) that she had just received an automatic message to the effect that I was obsessed by a very undesirable spirit who had followed me from India, I think, and that her spirit-friends

were greatly perturbed as to the effect my presence might have upon her, under such painful and undesirable conditions.

Now I knew that this lady was slightly piqued by my not having cultivated her acquaintance more energetically, and it seemed to me a very obvious, although probably really unconscious way of taking a mild revenge, in which it is quite possible that she may have had coöperation from the other side.

She was quite kindly willing to put her automatic gift at my disposal, and doubtless we should have had sheets of details had I been equally willing to respond, or in any way impressed by the announcement. As it was, I laughed good-naturedly and said quite pleasantly, "To-morrow evening, Mrs. X., I shall find out where *you* are, and come in with a big MS. book of my automatic writing, and I expect you will find you are the victim of several obsessing spirits, and that I have been ordered to leave the house and your company at once!"

She took the hint and I heard no more about that undesirable spirit who had followed me from India. This again I consider may be classed as an abuse of automatic script. In any case we have no right

to forget our manners and insist upon thrusting automatic messages upon acquaintances who have not asked for them.

There is an unwritten law in all such matters, and one of the first rules should be that we give nobody the benefit of our automatic script about them, unless they have requested this favor at our hands! Secondly, that we should consider it a point of honor not to attempt in this way to tap the subliminal consciousness of a friend or an acquaintance (far less of an enemy) with the same reservation and with the additional safeguard which Mr. W. T. Stead quite rightly imposes upon himself, namely to send any such script at once to the person concerned, even where it has been obtained by that person's express wish and permission.

My readers may justly accuse me of speaking, so far, only of the *abuse* of automatic writing. How about the other portion of my subject?

With the sad case before my eyes, to which I have referred in another chapter, where a young and gifted woman has apparently destroyed her health and domestic happiness by ill-advised and unreasoning faith in the entities purporting to communicate with her through her own hand in au-

omatic script, is it any wonder that the abuse should loom largest in my mental horizon?

But this is not the only reason for my devoting the larger part of my chapter to the darker side of the subject. The *uses* of automatic writing are so obvious and so numerous that there is not the slightest fear of their being overlooked. Too many grateful people are ready to testify to the help and comfort and happiness and consolation they have received through the wise and discreet exercise of the gift. The difficulty is not in realizing the use but in realizing the possible and very probable abuse of it, where a wise reserve and discretion are not observed.

To many these dangers have not become apparent, because they have instinctively guarded themselves or have been wisely guarded, as in my own case, where for five years my spirit-friends themselves begged me to leave the subject alone, until sufficiently advanced to take it up without danger to myself and others.

There is just one other small danger to which I have not yet referred, but which has come quite lately under my immediate and personal experience.

I refer to the constantly increasing tend-

ency to use this means of attempting to scan our own past lives and still more eagerly the past lives of our neighbors. In these days, most progressive minds have a tentative and modified belief in a sort of conditional reincarnation, such as that held by Mr. C. C. Massey, and extremely well defined by him in the posthumous papers edited so excellently by Professor W. R. Barrett, F. R. S.

We are all inclined to be curious about our "past lives," and to welcome any clairvoyant visions which assign to us important and interesting "parts" when we last trod this earthly stage.

Probably ninety per cent. or even more of such announcements are absolutely void of even the most fragile foundation in truth. It is far wiser to wait until insistent memories awake in our own brains, and even these must be taken with many grains of salt when they come spontaneously, for self-suggestion would have to be tabulated as well as outside hypnotic suggestion from the thoughts of others with whom we are in contact. Proud and loving parents of a metaphysical turn, would be bound to think their own children had played very important parts in previous lives, and would prob-

ably impress these ideas mentally upon their offspring. All this, however, does not affect the subject of my chapter. What is really to be deprecated is a growing tendency to gain supposed information as to the past lives of our friends, and this I think is palpably unfair, although I am sure it has been done, in many cases, without the slightest notion of going beyond legitimate experiment.

You may receive the most appalling statements concerning the past lives of your neighbors and friends. They are perfectly powerless in your automatic hands, when once this automatic-vivisection game begins. It can have no limits, within the limits of the writer's imagination, and as it is obviously impossible to refute such statements or to start a libel case, in which the Prosecutor would have to be your own previous personality (perhaps several hundred years old), there is nothing for it but to beg your intelligent experimental friends to unpin you from the psycho-dissecting table and turn their attention elsewhere.

Another grave possibility strikes me in this respect. We will suppose that a perfectly honorable and well-intentioned gentleman, interested in psychology and with

some gift of automatic script, receives a message about your supposed past incarnations in which, after the manner of such messages, you may be quite sure some dark and terrible insinuations will be made—probably against your moral character. By chance, some guest staying in the house sees the message or at any rate hears about it. Probably he or she has never set eyes upon you, but the suggestion of immorality—let us say—and *the name connected with it*, remain in the memory. In these sensational days this is quite sufficient to start the “white hare.” People have no time to listen perfectly to anything nowadays; far less to remember it accurately. “*Surely I heard something very doubtful about Mrs. So-and-so when I was in Cheltenham?—a divorce case or something of that kind—anyway, I’m positive I heard she had been the means of separating a man from his wife, etc., etc.*” The guest in question might quite conceivably have forgotten the circumstances and remembered only the scandal, little dreaming that it was all connected with a supposed previous incarnation of the poor victim.

This sounds an exaggeration, but I am absolutely convinced that it is a possibility.

In any case I think it is wiser not to tap the supposed previous incarnations of our friends, unless at their special request. Personally, I should refuse to do it, even then.

We are all walking just now amongst a good deal of very fragile china, and need to be very careful to avoid breakage.

And now to turn to the brighter side of the picture. Automatic writing within reasonable and sane conditions needs no further justification than the fact that *Spirit Teachings*, by the late Stainton Moses (M. A. Oxon.), now in its sixth edition, was received in this manner.

I do not include the marvellous works of that grand seer and divine philosopher, Andrew Jackson Davis, simply because I believe his inspired writings came from trance utterances, immediately taken down by a secretary on the spot, in which case they can hardly be included in our present subject.

So far as private experiences go, I suppose every intelligent and well-balanced automatic writer can tell of happy instances where he or she has not only received personal help and comfort, but has been able to convey this to others by the exercise of this gift.

I have mentioned several cases of the kind in my own experience in my two last books, and need not refer to them again. Many people speak of automatic writing as if only silly and frivolous messages were received by this means. This is a great mistake. As Emerson has so truly said: "*If we meet no gods, it is because we harbor none,*" and if we meet only with silly and lying messages, it may be because we are not very wise, nor even perhaps very truthful, ourselves.

But those who are not conversant at first-hand with automatic writing, are apt to repeat this rather general statement, as though it were an axiomatic truth.

Even so lately as a few years before the death of Mr. Frederic Myers, I remember his giving an address on psychic subjects at the Sesame Club, and in referring to automatic messages he said: "*I don't for a moment defend the substance of these messages. I quite admit the folly and triviality almost without exception of what comes in this way; but the question of the source is still of interest to us, whether the water that comes through these channels be clear or tainted.*" I remember this the more readily, because an American friend of mine, a very active old lady,

got up at once and indignantly refuted this statement, instancing my own messages as contradicting the truth of it.

In connection with these latter and in fact with all automatic messages, Sir Oliver Lodge and many others have raised the very pertinent question of "stained glass," by which, of course, I mean the possible intrusion of the scribe's personal knowledge or prejudices and preconceptions upon the supposed communicating intelligence.

No doubt we must always allow not only for the possibility but for the certain fact of such intrusion in greater or less degree, the amount of course varying in different writers, and at different stages of their development in this branch of psychic knowledge. Some coloring matter no doubt is bound to come in where the brain of the agent is used, and where the control of him or her is not absolute. The highest spirits object strongly to gaining this entire control of their medium (except under very special circumstances), thinking that it weakens the individuality and tends to loss of self-reliance. *Invading the personality to this extent is not generally considered desirable.* We may get entirely false messages, of course, even where the complete control

exists which renders the medium absolutely ignorant of the message conveyed; but where the control is only partial—given through the conscious brain and not through the submerged part of the personality—it seems impossible that some coloring matter from the medium should not be assimilated. Sir Oliver Lodge raised another point in saying of some automatic script of mine that "*the ideas were not beyond my own range of thought.*"

We must of course be careful not to jump to the conclusion that what is not *beyond* the range of a certain brain must therefore of necessity have emanated from that brain alone. Where philosophical and theological subjects are in question, the only evidence worth anything would be where statements are made or ideas propounded, which are both directly contrary to the views and also out of the intellectual range of the writing medium.

But where other matters are concerned, the question of range must be dropped in favor of *corroboration of the evidence.*

For example, if an automatic script tells me that a friend of mine, greatly perplexed about her future plans, will quite unexpectedly have an opportunity of going to

India ; that she will make the voyage within eighteen months at the latest, and will marry a man whom she will meet at Simla during the following hot season, and if all this come to pass within a reasonable period, this automatic script is certainly not beyond the range of my intellectual capacity. It is equally certain that it is beyond the range of my normal powers as a prophet.

Therefore it points to an intelligence guiding my pen, which is not normal to my ordinary personality, although of course, here as elsewhere, the theoretically omniscient subliminal may be trotted out, and harnessed up, and we may prefer a gallop round on this overridden steed to the more simple but less popular idea of communication from the excarnate.

Direct writing is rather wide of my present subject. As most of you will know, the term refers to those instances where a blank sheet of paper is locked up, either with or without pen or pencil, and kept carefully under one person's strict guardianship, and yet when opened is found to have been written upon. The paper may be locked away for several days and writing may yet be found upon it when opened after such an interval.

This has been considered in times past the most absolute proof we can ever have of direct spirit presence—granted the *bona fides* of the investigator who locks up the paper and carries the key day and night upon his person.

But now that we are daily finding out more of the wonders of our own living personalities—their enormous range of being—their unlimited powers, comparatively speaking, as witnessed by clairvoyance, hypnotic experiments, and abnormal powers of action, perception, and endurance, it becomes more and more difficult to draw any definite line between the capacities of those emancipated from the outer body, and of those still imprisoned, but daily emerging from the prison-house, even now and here, through the cultivation of hitherto undreamed-of powers of will and concentration.

How do we know that it is impossible for a highly evolved *incarnate* spirit to produce "direct writing" through those finer forces which must be implicit in the evolutionary being, but not as yet brought forth into normal manifestation?

But this way madness lies!

Again we may develop one part of our

entire consciousness abnormally, but at the expense of other and perhaps more immediately important parts of it. Hence the danger of books and pamphlets exhorting to this kind of self-culture. Many things are possible which are not expedient. These may be amongst them.

As a wise old ancestress of mine said to me once in automatic script: "You are here to learn BALANCE, and that will not come through any abnormal development at the cost of atrophy of other equally, and often more, valuable qualities." Even messages from the discarnate may be paid for too heavily, if discretion does not go hand in hand with development.

This may be an appropriate moment to mention a difficulty in automatic writing which I would not speak of earlier, as it cannot come under the heading of either a danger or an abuse of our subject. I can best illustrate it by an example.

Some months ago Mr. Stead received some automatic script from an unknown correspondent—a lady—who said it purported to come from Mr. Frederic Myers. There was nothing very startling in the communications, which were very sane and sensible, but in a style markedly differing

from that of Mr. Myers. This, however, need not have presented any insurmountable difficulty as regards evidence, had not the substance of the messages been so accurately and obviously in line, not only with theosophical conceptions in general, but with the modern *Western* theosophical framing of these conceptions, and even dogmas. It seemed extremely unlikely that if Mr. Myers had become a convert to Theosophy on the other side of the veil, that it should be this special blend. Of course it turned out that the lady scribe was herself a convinced modern Western Theosophist, and Mr. Myers' supposed statements as regards reincarnation were doubtless the coloring matter supplied by this fact. But an interesting message with regard to this script came through another and quite independent source. I give it for what it may be worth evidentially, but the idea conveyed is in any case suggestive: Another lady, also in supposed communication with Mr. Myers, gave the following message as to the former communication:

"Yes, I did certainly try with Miss W., but the trouble is, that I can set the current going with her, but cannot sufficiently direct and control it. I *know nothing* about rein-

carnation but often discuss it here with those who do hold the belief firmly. It is quite possible Miss W. took from my mentality *some of the remnants of these discussions still present with me.*"

Probably Miss W.'s own preconceptions would involuntarily affect the question of which part of his latent mentality she pitched upon. This would then come through, as if it were a direct communication from F. W. H. Myers himself.

So we see that the more we learn of these subjects the less we seem to know, and the more perplexing and therefore the more challenging they become !

CHAPTER X

ON SOME MISCONCEPTIONS

I HAVE been asked to write this chapter as a special plea against some crude and limited conceptions, or rather misconceptions, as regards the vast and undeniable differences in the varying lots into which Humanity is cast.

I think the first and most flagrant of these is the very usual idea of the world at large and the almost universal idea of modern Theosophists in the Western World, that the more or less favorable earthly destiny of an individual is the inevitable outcome, not of his Karma (that we might all concede, if Karma is kept within its legitimate meaning), but of his previous good or evil deeds. If Karma is held to mean *consequences*, we must all agree that every fact or event has its cause as well as its consequence—in fact, its Past—Present—and Future.

But the idea I wish to combat is one which I have heard propounded again and again, *ad nauseam*, by otherwise intelligent

Theosophists and by other people as well; namely, that happiness and prosperity in this life are the inevitable results, in exact measure, of an excellent life in a previous incarnation, and that suffering and poverty, with all their attendant consequences and miseries, demonstrate with equal precision that those who are condemned to suffering in this life, physical or mental, must have led very wicked lives when they were last incarnated. I am, for the moment, taking some phase of belief in reincarnation for granted, but many outside the charmed circle of modern Theosophy seem to hold much the same idea; only the "past life" would in this case be limited to the earlier years of the present incarnation.

No matter from what special camp the idea is promulgated, it has always struck me as such an exceedingly crude, childish and superficial judgment. Generalizations are of necessity always in error, but the measure of error would probably be decidedly less, if we generalized from the exact converse of this proposition.

I have many theosophical friends, for whom I have both esteem and affection, and some of whom are decidedly above the average in intelligence. We have discussed

this question frequently, but I have never succeeded in ousting them from what is surely a most superficial view of life, even as a mere question of personal experience.

I remember once trying to bring the "error in the sum" home to a very intelligent theosophical friend, by pointing out two brothers (both of whom she knew), the one extremely sympathetic and benevolent and spiritually advanced; the other indisputably selfish and material in his views and ideas, and certainly in a most elementary spiritual stage. She knew enough about them to recognize the truth of the facts I have stated, and did not attempt to question them; the illustration was too flagrant for that. The former brother was crushed down all his life by physical and mental suffering, his best and brightest qualities suppressed by ill health and atrophied by absence of opportunity. The other from cradle to grave had a life of exceptional and almost abnormal prosperity, and was not sufficiently developed spiritually, to miss or regret in himself the absence of the higher nature of his relative.

Even then, with the argument reduced to this one salient fact, under her very eyes, the "Karmic" hypnosis worked too strongly

not to master her normal intelligence, and she answered feebly that perhaps the prosperous man had been quite unselfish and a most charming and delightful and sympathetic person in his previous life! And this when the whole question was one of *character*, which we know means the slow accretion and development of years—probably of many centuries—for aught we know!

Again we have to define what we mean by happiness and prosperity. A certain kind of both of these is obviously more likely to be found in unsympathetic and elementary natures, for the very sound reason that the less we feel for our neighbors and their calamities, the "better time" we are likely to have here. It is quite a mistake to take for granted that extremely selfish people are always very unhappy and continually suffering from remorse on account of their limitation. It is not so, and anybody who has had some experience of life, and has any critical and analytical faculty, knows this as a matter of course. Very selfish people are generally very obtuse, and therefore very comfortable in their personal judgments. It is always the *other* people who are to blame and who get in their way so unjustifiably! It is only a

highly sensitive selfish person who is in the least danger of suffering from remorse. I do not mean a *physically* highly sensitive person. That is only a usual form of selfishness itself. I am referring to a highly sensitive person, mentally and spiritually speaking. As a rule, these latter are very seldom abnormally selfish. Therefore my argument holds good, I think, that the more selfish a person is, the more obtuse, and the less likely to be troubled by scruples or remorse. Such people as the man I have last described, are also apt to be extremely deficient in imagination; another proof of the crude and elementary character. Here again he is spared much suffering, and although, no doubt, he loses much enjoyment, it is of a kind which he is not as yet sufficiently developed to experience, and therefore for him it has no existence—whereas a comfortable income and absence of cares and well-padded armchairs and broughams, or motor-cars, have a very real existence, to say nothing of other creature comforts or even intellectual luxuries, which money can obtain for such a one. It is, moreover, a mistake to suppose that a man may not be very obtuse morally and yet sufficiently advanced intellectually to

enjoy good music or good acting or good pictures or well-written books.

Again, a very selfish man will often include his wife in a sort of double-selfishness, and even his children, if they don't interfere too much with his comfort, which, under the circumstances, is not likely to happen. Selfish parents have proverbially devoted children, and *vice versa*, so here again we are confronted by a contradiction of the idea that the happiness and well-being of men and women here is in direct ratio to their deserts.

Now given a thoroughly selfish person, with good digestion, a liver that works well, a conscience comfortably on terms with itself, and in addition a good income, good health to enjoy it, and an adoring wife and children who make him feel himself a sort of domestic hero, what more can be needed for "happiness and prosperity," as these terms are generally understood? I think the confusion of ideas as regards Karmic prosperity and Karmic misery has arisen from a confusion as to standards. Are we judging by the standards of this plane or of the next? It is necessary to settle this question rather definitely, for the two are very seldom compatible. I do not say *never*,

because one or two of the most prosperous people I have known, judging by present standards even, have also been the most spiritually-minded and the most sympathetic, but these have been but "one or two" amongst thousands of my acquaintances, and in their cases a healthful imagination has been one of their most strongly marked characteristics. No character can be developed without suffering, but in these rare cases the suffering seems to have taken place elsewhere, even when we have the chance of tracing such exceptional lives from cradle to grave.

I think it is Allan Kardec who suggests that every spirit upon earth has three cardinal incarnations: the first in favorable conditions, so that the youthful pilgrim through each planet should not be too much discouraged at the outset; the second unfavorable, as a test; and the third dependent upon the use made of the intermediate existence, and therefore either very unfortunate or extremely prosperous. This might help us to see how the rare lives I have referred to may come about.

It has sometimes struck me that the history of Job, if intended, as has been claimed by mystics, as a history of the soul,

seems certainly to point to some such possibility. His first estate was prosperous—the second stage a terrible test of faith and courage and resignation, which he came through with a fair amount of success; and his last experience gave him back all his prosperity with much more added to it.

Now I think it would be a great advantage to ourselves and decidedly a boon to our less fortunate neighbors, if we could give up this crude and superficial judgment, which a mistaken conception appears to have read into the overridden Karmic argument. I think it must have been started by some opulent and materially prosperous devotees, who naturally would wish to justify their own pleasant destinies in the eyes of less prosperous friends and neighbors. Of course I am perfectly aware that no Western Theosophist upon earth would *allow* that he or she took the view I have here demonstrated. So many of us judge matters practically, from a point of view we should all condemn as quite foreign to us, theoretically. Not one of us is capable of casting the "first stone," so far as this little human foible is concerned!

I would only ask one question: If I have merely described a figment of my own im-

agination, how does it happen that I have not met a single theosophical friend, with whom I have discussed the matter, who has not used some argument of the kind described? Yet my friends in this Society are certainly equal in intelligence to the average—if not beyond that mark. I should wish to repeat, however, most emphatically, that it is not only amongst Theosophists that some misconception of the kind exists; but I do think that a misconception of the word Karma (practically—not theoretically) has given some fresh impetus to the misconception of true standards.

I may quote in support of my contention that even such an advanced and wide-minded writer as M. Edouard Schuré says, in speaking of the light thrown by the doctrine of reincarnation on "*the inequality of human conditions*":

"The variety of souls, of conditions, of destinies, can only be justified by a plurality of lives and by the doctrine of reincarnation. If man is born on this earth for the first time, how can you explain the numberless evils with which a blind Fate seems sometimes to overwhelm him? How can you admit that there is eternal justice, since some are born into conditions which

relentlessly bring with them misery and humiliation, whilst others are born fortunate and live happily? *The differences in condition result from an unequal use made of the free will in preceding lives, whilst intellectual differences result from different stages of evolution.*"

He goes on to say :

"The earth resembles a ship, and all of us who inhabit it are the travellers, who come from distant countries, and disperse at different stages, to all points of the horizon."

Finally : "*The doctrine of reincarnation gives a reason compatible with justice and eternal logic, for the most appalling evils as well as for the most enviable joys*" (of human beings).

We shall all agree with what Monsieur Schuré says about the reason for intellectual differences, and probably also all appreciate his simile of the earth as a ship, distributing her crew to all quarters of the horizon, after voyages of varying length. But the first and the last paragraphs of my quotations from him suggest unmistakably the very point I am trying to make. Here again the standard of happiness as the antithesis of misery, is a standard of material happiness as contrasted with material misery. This is proved by his speaking of our seeing and

envying one lot, and seeing and deploring the other. Now the things that are *seen* are decidedly "temporal," because material.

I think this proves my point, that the taking of this temporal standard is a misconception into which many of our most remarkable writers and teachers are apt to fall, when attempting to justify the ways of Providence *via* reincarnation. It seems to me it would be better to say boldly, "There are two standards for success and two standards for happiness—the standard of this present plane and the standard of eternal truth, or as much of it as we shall be able to grasp in the next round of our spiral. Although for a time and in rare cases these standards may appear to us to be superimposed, they are in reality entirely distinct, and it is for us to make up our minds which one we are using, in speaking of the *cruelty and misery* of our fate." "Which world are you booked for?" as I heard a very young girl say once to an elderly and amused man, who had been speaking of the expediency or in expediency of some particular course of action. "*Ah! that depends entirely upon which world you are booked for,*" said innocent Fifteen, in a cheerful, practical tone! This exactly expresses what I mean.

If we could see with the "eyes of the soul," we should be more likely to judge correctly, and then perhaps from (what Schuré himself calls) "*la vue d'en haut*," we might see that the "miserable lots" are more really enviable than more "prosperous" ones. They may even be much happier, judged by the real things of life; for happiness which comes from a *plus* of prosperity and comfort, or even of intellectual enjoyment alone, cannot weigh in the scale with the smallest true spiritual emotion, but (barring the intellectual) finds its ultimate in the pig and the trough; even though the trough be gilded and the pig a very refined type of animal, and exceedingly faddy and fastidious in his tastes.

When a medium in trance (Mrs. Howarth by name) told me once of a previous incarnation of mine, she added, "but your present one is far more favorable." "Far less favorable," I hastened to assure her, "so far as money and social position are concerned." "What do we care for *that*?" said the trance control in a tone of impatient contempt. "*It is far more favorable for spiritual development, and that is the only thing you need trouble about.*"

It always seems to me that a public school

(as Mr. C. C. Massey points out) or a garden, gives us our best symbols for the education and development of the soul, under earth conditions.

I have spoken of the former already in *Do the Dead Depart*. Here also we find that the hardest lessons (the hardest lots) are given to the more advanced scholars. In the garden symbol we have the same significant fact taught us in the pruning process, which comes only at a certain stage in the plant's or tree's development. It is "the branch that *beareth fruit* that is fit for purging." All this seems to me so much wiser and truer than any such crudity as attempting to explain present *earthly* drawbacks by past earthly sins.

We have indeed a famous instance of the latter process being reprov'd in the well-known words of Scripture tradition, "*Neither did this man sin nor his father.*"

Surely Christ came to show us a "more excellent way"—how to escape from this wheel of rebirths into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; no longer the slaves of matter? This escape, however, does not come (as some of us have been erroneously taught) by an act of faith in repeating certain formulæ, but by being made partakers

of His Blood ; *i. e.*, by sharing His Life—the life of the spiritual sonship.

Surely this is the inner truth of the outer symbol in our service of the Holy Communion? We “drink His Blood” in token of our wish to share (however feebly) in His Life. Blood is the symbol of physical life, and therefore used by “correspondence” as the symbol of spiritual life.

All this does not for a moment preclude the teaching of the very salutary lesson that “who breaks—pays” in the spiritual as in the physical world. I don't think an honorable and generous soul would wish to be “let off” trying to make amends, where others have suffered through his fault, especially where the fault or “sin” has been consciously committed? That seems to me as dishonorable and wanting in self-respect as to wish to be “let off” the money debts that we have contracted.

But I do earnestly believe that such a flood of spiritual apprehension may come through even a poor attempt to share the Christ life (and this apart from any labels), that the soul may be freed from these lower conditions and allowed to “work out its salvation,” and even “to pay its debts” from a higher and probably more effectual

plane. I only throw this out as a suggestion to those who feel forced—unwillingly—to accept some form of the reincarnation doctrine. It is only reasonable to suppose that we *might* be more helpful to others (whether we have injured them here or not) from a more ethereal sphere, should our spirits be sufficiently developed otherwise, to function from there.

As to the law of consequences and compensation *per se*, I remember an interesting discussion in a country-house between my old friend Judge Forbes and Dr. Richard Hodgson on the subject. The Judge stigmatized it as “a horrible idea,” and from his earlier theological training was inclined to trust to the efficacy of “Christ’s sacrifice” for blotting out not only our sins, but their results.

Dr. Hodgson threw back his head with a delightful gesture of confidence in the Supreme Will, and said, “But it is *splendid* to feel you have to pay for everything—of course you must! That is just the beauty of it! *How else are you going to learn to do better?*”

This absolute confidence in the love and wisdom of the Father’s training, seemed to me the most truly *religious* attitude to which any of us can attain.

St. Paul, in his famous words, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," is constrained to add at once, "*who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.*" This gives us the whole "Process of Christ," as it has been called. It is the "walking after the spirit, and not after the flesh" which removes the condemnation, and St. Paul identifies this as a necessary result of the mystic "being in Christ" and sharing His life. These words, with their mystic meaning, are far more convincing than the carefully reasoned out passage from Romans iii. 25 to Romans iv. 6.

As regards St. Paul, we have always to remember two facts: First, that he brought all his power of logic to bear upon any proposition that seemed expedient, in combating an opposite error.

In this latter case he is obviously combating the idea that spiritual growth can come about through the mere materialistic keeping of the Mosaic Law—"the deeds of the law" as he calls it.

Secondly, St. Paul himself always tried to the best of his ability to distinguish between that which appeared to him to be direct inspiration and other parts of his

teaching. He is very tentative as to the latter; so I think we are at liberty to suppose that his eagerness to press home one side of a truth may sometimes have outrun his spiritual insight.

For St. Paul must have known as well as anybody else that *true* faith and "good works" are but two sides of the same shield. Faith cannot exist without works, any more than a well-grown, healthy child can exist without moving its arms and legs. These movements will be in proportion to its vitality. St. James endorses this when he tells us that "Faith without works is dead, being alone" (marginal rendering "by itself").

In all these matters it is, as usual, the letter that killeth—the spirit that maketh alive.

And now I think I had better finish this chapter by a sincere apology for poaching upon what are usually considered clerical "preserves."

All the same, I think, it would be better for many of us if we tried to air these difficult questions occasionally in our own backyards, instead of looking upon them as the exclusive right of the clergy—to be taken or left—in church. As a matter of fact we

must think them out for ourselves—if at all! No one can do our thinking for us.

I merely note down my own thoughts without the slightest wish to impose them upon others. Many will disagree and perhaps more will disapprove. But some may be at a similar point of view.

In a world where, as Mons. Schuré says, “we are all travellers on the same ship for the time being, but hailing from different and far-distant countries, and dispersing at different stages on all points of the horizon,” this is surely the most that any of us can expect.

CHAPTER XI

THE BRIDGE OF ETHER

THIS chapter differs slightly from the others in this book, in being addressed primarily to those who have already devoted some time and study to modern psychical research. I hope, however, that it may carry some suggestive ideas to readers outside this circle; even if at first sight it should strike them as fanciful.

As we have said before, if *some* men had not been capable of scientific imagination, we should be much nearer the dark ages in civilization than at present. Imagination in this respect implies inductive hypotheses founded on facts. The inductive process is the only process possible for finite beings. Therefore we are entirely justified in holding an inductive hypothesis so long as it is founded on some *fact*, and not merely hanging like Mohammed's coffin, 'twixt earth and sky. Now surely we may consider the scientific conception of ether as having a basis in fact? although the cleverest scientist cannot tell you what ether is, and the

name itself is of course purely arbitrary. He simply knows there must be some finer medium which interpenetrates all matter as we perceive it; which is imponderable, invisible but ubiquitous; since it has become a necessary assumption in regard to all phenomena of the visible universe, including Nature's finer forces, such as light, heat and electricity. These are now assumed to be the resultants of vibrations in this invisible but omnipresent medium. Electricity, as the highest and most mysterious manifestation which we yet know, has been spoken of as the cradle of physical matter, and even as the Garment of God. The medium through which these electric vibrations of intense and inconceivable frequency act, is postulated by modern science as etheric, in distinction to atmospheric.

Taking the word Etheric therefore with these limitations as an *x* of which we know little beyond the necessity for its invisible presence, I think it may be interesting to put down a few thoughts and suggestions on the subject, both from the point of view of ancient religions and still more of modern psychical phenomena.

We have seen that, as the true basis, *i. e.*, the esoteric basis, of all great religions, we

find the same few and simple truths—simple in their various modes of presentation, but gigantic in their implications. Esoteric Christianity has been practically lost to us since the second century, owing to a variety of obvious circumstances; but it is now being restored by the researches of earnest and reverent and capable scholars and thinkers. Here again we find at its roots the very same universal truths.

The Unity of the Godhead (always believed in by the adepts of all religions in their varying manifestations)—the Word, made flesh, through being first made light—the eternal co-existent principles of the Deity, of which the numerous “gods” of the ancients typified only the powers, forces and various manifestations of the one Divinity; so long as these ancient religions remained uncorrupted by the usual incurSIONS of materialistic thought upon esoteric conceptions.

But of all the inner and mystic teachings, none is so clear, so all-pervading, so continually insisted upon in every true initiation as this of the “*Verbe lumière*” as it is called in French.

Amongst the Hindus we find the same truth pervading all the traditions of Krishna

and of Devaki, his virgin mother. He is struck to the earth by a lightning flash after the death of Vasichta, and in a kind of magnetic trance sees his mother bathed in this sublime light, which radiates out from her and embraces him also, in the celestial spheres. We hear of it as the "Light of Osiris." It is the "Veil of Isis" in Egypt or of Persephone in Greece, behind which are woven the souls of all things living. It is made manifest to Hermes in his celebrated vision, as the "Divine Word of Light." It is the "Celestial Fire" of the Orphic mysteries and the "Light of Dionysius," in that aspect in which he is spoken of as the Son of Zeus. The writer of the first chapter of Genesis clearly refers to it as the light of the creative word, which was divided from the darkness and *preceded* by three "days," or stages of evolution, the "creation" of the physical lights of sun, moon and stars.

Now this universal knowledge of some divine, primeval light, or the Word of God in manifestation, must have clothed itself in some sort of "body," simply because the moment an idea enters our brain or emerges in it, it becomes clothed upon by our consciousness.

It seems a justifiable supposition that this outer manifestation, of which our Thought is the inward expression and correspondence, may be the mysterious Ether to which modern Scientists have been driven, in order to make the physical universe comprehensible and to bring some sort of order into that which would otherwise be mental chaos?

For Forces and manifestations must have a cause and a medium through which to manifest, and since Science has discovered that this medium has infinite tenuity, but is neither visible nor ponderable, then it must be conceived of as invisible and imponderable. Here in fact we step on to the Bridge of Ether—the *bridge between physical matter and force*—between the visible and the invisible in the Higher Physics.

The question is, Do we know anything from a phenomenal point of view of this so-called ether, or is it a mere scientific conception, as the matrix of light, heat and electricity? I think we do know something—those of us at least who have studied experimental psychology. This is just where my warning comes in, that I am writing this chapter from the point of view of a convinced and experimental psychical re-

searcher, but with no wish to dogmatize as to the supposed intelligences who may be manipulating the etheric substance. Some convinced researchers limit this intelligence to the abnormally developed latent powers of the incarnate individual; others extend this intelligence to the individualities of the discarnate. This fact need not affect our present discussion, because both classes practically admit the truth of the phenomena, and we are just now mainly concerned in discussing the channel through which these are made manifest.

The ancients, in Egypt and Persia alike, worshipped, under the symbol of the visible sun, this invisible light proceeding from the Unity in Manifestation. It is interesting to realize that the *dernier cri* of the modern advanced Scientist is the discovery of the light rays emanating not only from radium but from every atom of physical matter, and most obviously from that enormous congeries of atoms of which the human body is composed.

I am aware that Sir William Crookes has not yet given in his adhesion to the truth of the N-rays, but this doubtless arises from the fact that he cannot yet see them for himself, and very wisely refuses to take them

on trust. But we all know the apparently miraculous extent to which even purely physical sight can be trained, in the case of experts. The moment the *higher physical* light is developed in a sufficient number of responsible and dependable men and women (this number is daily increasing), it will become a simple matter of evidence. Even now it is quite possible to test the *bona fides* of various clairvoyants, for it is not only asserted that each one of us is surrounded by an atmosphere of "Light," but that the amount and the colors differ according to our physical and mental states. Therefore if half a dozen clairvoyants, susceptible to auras, as they are called, are brought successively in contact with the same stranger, and of course debarred from meeting each other, and if they all describe independently the same colors and the same *proportions* of each color round this individual, we have at least a *prima facie* piece of evidence in favor of something more than coincidence.

Now this light—allowing that it is an invisible fact—cannot be atmospheric light, or it would be visible to all of us.

So I put this down as one little stone in my Bridge of Ether. All direct clairvoy-

ance (by which I mean where thought-reading is eliminated) must mean actually *seeing* the scenes so accurately described, and such sight would require a non-physical channel or medium. Please understand that when I use the word *physical*, it is to distinguish it from the higher physical, which latter is also, of course, matter of some kind. We cannot speak of any substance as immaterial, until we know a great deal more about matter *per se* than at present. The whole scientific conception of matter has been shaken up in the kaleidoscope of modern scientific discoveries. What then can outsiders dare to say upon the subject?

From the psychic point of view, we do know something about the etheric body or astral body, because it has been seen, not only as the double of an incarnate individual, again and again, but by many independent witnesses, as being drawn out of the physical body, through the eyes, ears, mouth and nose, as a sort of gray misty replica of the latter.

I have spoken of direct clairvoyance, implying sight which would need a non-physical channel or medium, and have for the moment excluded thought transference, in order to distinguish true clairvoyance

from that which should be more accurately termed "thought-reading."

But this latter phenomenon is one of which we do not understand the conditions in the slightest degree, although we toss the phrase about so carelessly, and certainly imply that we know all about it when we use it as a missile to silence a credulous adversary in argument.

We know nothing about thought transference, except that it sometimes takes place beyond any possible limits of coincidence. But we do not understand *how* it takes place, and talking in a cheerfully vague way about "brain-waves" does not elucidate the matter. In Hans Andersen's delightful story of the *Emperor's New Clothes*, there was only one man (or was it a boy?) bold enough to say that he had not any clothes at all—new or old! In the same way we seem all to be tongue-tied when any convinced thought-reading maniac hurls Thomson Jay Hudson at our defenseless heads! Why don't we challenge him to prove by demonstration the unlimited, unconditional, and omniscient thought-reading theory as covering *all* facts? I suppose we are paralyzed or hypnotized by sheer force of brazen assertion!

All honor to Dr. Hyslop for bravely asserting that he, at least, challenges the *Emperor's New Clothes*, and won't join in the pæon of praise and adulation over them. Thought transference is an undoubted fact, but its mantle is not as wide as Charity, and, moreover, *we know nothing at all about the conditions through which it occurs.*

So I am quite justified in assuming for the moment that the process, whatever it may be, takes place, as wireless telegraphy does, in the medium we have elected to call Etheric.

Experiments have been made from time to time with reference to photographing the Double or Astral of a living person, at a considerable distance from the agent, and some of these have been very successful. Where private individuals, using their own photographic apparatus without outside assistance, have procured these results, they must, at least, be entirely satisfactory to those who are engaged in the experiments, and it is to be hoped that more and more people will be induced to devote some leisure to this important branch of psychical research. It will certainly need perseverance, but the results may be eminently successful, and it is surely as well worth while

to spend time and strength over this as over any other scientific study? It is only by *becoming our own photographers* that we can eliminate the elements of doubt and distrust with which we naturally approach the "spirit photographs" of a professional photographer and medium.

This doubt and distrust are, as I know by personal experience, often unnecessary and misplaced, but as they exist and are a needful corrective of over-credulity, it is well to take the only sensible means of dispelling them. Our standard of criticism is, of course, far more severe when turned upon the efforts of our neighbors than upon our own! This fact has come out rather strikingly during the last few months in some very suggestive cases. It simply means that we are all very human—even psychical researchers!

Talking of private spirit photographs, I am reminded of an interesting incident which occurred a few years ago, and which was told me by my brother and his wife, both of whom are convinced sceptics.

They were staying in a country-house in Dorsetshire, where they met a Captain and Mrs. Northcote (I have changed the name), who had just arrived there from another

country-house in Somersetshire. Captain Northcote was in the Rifle Brigade, and he and his wife were both bitten by the photographing mania so prevalent a few years ago. The Somersetshire house possessed a very beautiful old terrace in front of it, and this officer and his wife were both anxious to take photographs of it before they went away. Armed with their kodaks, they selected a good point of view therefore with this object. When Mrs. Northcote's films were developed, the terrace appeared perfectly normal and just as it had been when they saw it, but on each of the *Captain's films* the figure of a woman appeared on the terrace, although no living woman had been there except his wife. Greatly astonished, other photographs were taken with a similar result. Finally, Captain Northcote suggested that when his wife took the next photograph, he should place his hand on her arm or wrist, and under these conditions the woman's figure again appeared! I do not know if any history connected with her was ever discovered, but the story is a fact, and was told by Captain and Mrs. Northcote to my brother just after its occurrence.

There appears to be certainly some im-

pregnation of the camera by the mediumistic photographer, conscious or unconscious, and which I trust and believe Mr. Myers will now pardon me for suggesting might be of a magnetic nature. He was rather angry with me once for using this word, and declared it was most unscientific. I quite see his point, but we must use *some* term to express that of which we can see the effects without knowledge of the cause.

Anyway, this undoubted fact may account for the objection made by certain spirit photographers to use new and untried cameras, and it seems to me a very reasonable one. How many men and women prefer using a special billiard cue or golf club, and get better results when they do so? It is not that the club or cue is any better in itself, but they have established relations with it. I have known a most sceptical and materialistic doctor agree with me that some kind of affinity may exist between a man and his watch, and I am quite convinced of the fact myself. In truth, we are all extremely ignorant still, and the wise people are those who are the most conscious of their colossal ignorance!

Three or four years ago I went to see Signor Volpi in Rome—a devoted student

of modern psychology—and he showed me some very interesting photographs. My friend, Countess di Brazza, who had asked to accompany me in my visit, considered that the most interesting of all was one which contained no figure (I think); but a very excellent photograph of what looked like a large mass of a sort of white membranous “stuff,” falling over a chair, and which was explained as being the material used in materializations. It would be interesting to know if this were a kind of temporary etheric condensation, in which case it would, of course, speedily dissipate, as we see the materialized form actually does, and sometimes under our very eyes. Another photograph of Signor Volpi’s interested me very much, especially when he told me the history of it. He had lost his first wife, as a man in the early thirties, and was in deep grief over her loss, when advised to go to a certain photographer, devoutly hoping that she might be able to make her presence visible to him on the plate. He took a friend with him, and there was some spontaneous movement of a chair by them before the photograph was taken, of which I forget the exact detail, but which excluded the possibility of any

prepared "spirit" on the plate, owing to the special position of this suddenly moved chair in connection with the position of the figure. The latter, however, was extremely disappointing to Signor Volpi. It was a lady, certainly, but one whom he had never seen, and whose face and figure had not the least likeness to those of his wife, or any other lady of his acquaintance.

He was so much depressed by this failure, that a day or two later he took the disappointing photograph with him, when paying an evening visit to a Russian lady friend, who had some psychic intuition, especially when in a condition of slight trance. Under these circumstances she held the photograph in her hands and whispered to him, "*Ce n'est pas le passé—c'est pour l'avenir,*" and then suddenly put her hand to her face, as if she were in great suffering, murmuring at the same time, "*Ah, que je souffre ! Que je souffre !*"

Neither of them had the least idea what the words or gestures meant when the friend became normal, and the photograph was locked away as a hopeless enigma. Some years later he met and became engaged to his second wife, whose face seemed to have a haunting memory which he could

not place. Where had he seen her before? One day he came upon the photograph in question, and then realized that it was the face of his *fiancée* when a few years younger. My recollection is that Signor Volpi's photograph had been taken at some rather marked season, such as Easter or Whitsuntide—anyway, his *fiancée* was able to trace her own movements, or rather absence of movement, on that particular day, for she had been in bed all the afternoon and suffering agony from toothache or neuralgia, which made her half dazed at times. Some unseen friends may have taken advantage of one of those temporary reactions from violent pain to suggest her astral appearance on the photographic plate in the presence of her future husband?

As invisible substance is found to be the medium and background for the visible forces of light, heat and all forms of electricity, so there are phenomenal substances as real and perceptible on their normal plane to the organs of the etheric and invisible body, as purely physical substance is real and perceptible to us on our present plane of life.

A friend of mine on the other side of life wishes me to say that he is working at

this exact point—the Bridge of Ether, as I have called it. He is studying experimentally to find out the nature of the “electric ions” hidden within the atom on our side, and presumably more open to the astral vision, which is now his normal condition. He tells me that his present researches into the composition of etheric matter (visible on this side only by clairvoyance) will enable him (he hopes) to demonstrate the conditions under which materializations, voice production, “*apports*,” and other puzzling psychical phenomena can be classed as normal, to what we may call the point of junction, between the two spheres. No doubt he will in due time be able to convey this and much more information through the properly attuned brains of some of his progressive scientific friends.

Those scientists whose labors lie in the department of the higher physics *must* step over the bridge—the evolutionary, etheric bridge—although physiologists may for the present remain content to study the grosser forms of matter, without wishing to trace these to their ultimates. There is room enough in the world and work enough in the world for all sorts of scientists, as well as other useful people.

Lastly, my friend wishes me to say that his present studies in etheric matter, and the studies of the most advanced and progressive scientists in the same subject on this side, are the literal *tunnellings* of which Sir Oliver Lodge speaks when he remarks that "we are like workers in a mountain tunnel, who have got so far as to hear the picks of their comrades at work upon the other side, but the last barrier is not yet broken down."

This is all that can be given through an unscientific and therefore unprepared mind, such as my own. If it suggest a possibility for opening up personal "communication" between this worker and any progressive scientist, I feel that my humble rôle as "mouse" to the scientific lions, will have been amply played and rewarded.

I need only add that my friend's name is well known to many of them, and that this assertion as to his present employment and its motive has been given to me in several independent directions, as well as endorsed by myself in my automatic script. I give it for what it is worth, and upon its own merits alone.

It appears to be at least reasonable and sensible.

CHAPTER XII

IN CONCLUSION

I HAVE been reading lately the admirable Introduction ¹ to M. Léon Denis' new book, *Le Problème de l'Être et de la Destinée*, which seems to sum up sane thought on modern problems of life—social, moral and political—in a nutshell.

It would be well if some of these words of wisdom and insight could be translated into all languages and hung up, in letters of gold, in all international churches, universities, and most especially Houses of Parliament.

He begins by remarking very truly that in all University centres the most complete uncertainty still reigns with regard to the most important problem that has been given to man to solve, and that this uncertainty is reflected in all their teachings.

Most of the professors and teachers carefully avoid all questions touching upon the great problem of life, its goal and its duration.

He goes on to say that the same source

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of weakness pervades ecclesiastical circles—the priest by his affirmations, which carry no proof, can only communicate to the souls under his charge a belief which has no answer either to the rules of sane criticism or to the demands of reason.

“In truth, both in universities and in churches, the modern enquirer meets only with darkness and obscurity in all that concerns the problem of his life and of his future. The education given to the present generation is complicated enough, but it does not illuminate for them the way of life, nor does it arm them against its struggles. Classic lore may point to the cultivation of the intellect, but it does not in itself suffice to teach men how to act, to love, or to sacrifice themselves. Still less can it teach a conception of life and destiny which will develop the deepest energies and direct our efforts towards the highest aims. It is to this state of things that we must in great measure attribute the evils of the present day: incoherence of ideas, disorders of the conscience, and, in fact, moral and social anarchy.

“Francisco Sarcey, the accomplished University Professor, wrote (*Petit Journal, chronique* 7 mars, 1894): ‘I am on this earth.

I am absolutely ignorant of how I came here ; and why I was sent here. I am equally ignorant of how I shall depart and of what will happen to me when I do depart.'

" Nothing can be more frank than this, surely !

" The philosophy of the schools, after so many centuries of study and labor, is still a teaching without light, heat, or life. The souls of our children, tossed about between different and contradictory systems of thought—the positivism of Comte, the naturalism of Hegel, the materialism of John Stuart Mill, the eclecticism of Cousin, etc., float uncertainly and without ideals or any precise goal. Hence precocious pessimism—the disease of all decadent society—is a terrible menace for the future. Add to this the bitter and mocking scepticism of the young men of the present day, who believe only in money, who honor success alone, and often consider themselves vanquished before they have even stepped into the arena of life.

" Until recently, Thought has been confined within the strict limits of religions, schools or systems, which are mutually exclusive and continually at war with one another. Hence the divisions amongst us,

and the violent and contrary currents which disturb and upset the social equilibrium.

"We must learn to dispense with these rigid circles, and to give new spring to our ideas. Every system contains some truth—no system can contain the whole truth. The aspects of life and of the universe are too varied and too numerous for any human system to be able to embrace all of these. We must try to discover the elements of Truth in all these systems, and to harmonize them; then uniting them with the new and varied aspects of Truth which are daily being unfolded to us, we shall be on the true road towards a grand unity and harmony of Thought. The human spirit has been crystallizing too long. It must be shaken out of its inertia and carried to the heights, yet without losing sight of the social foundations which a reorganized and more complete Science will afford.

"It is for this Science of To-morrow that we are working, for this alone will provide us with the indispensable standards, the means of verification and control, without which, Thought left to itself will always risk going astray.

"The same difficulties and uncertainties

which we have spoken of already as regards teaching, find an echo in the entire social system. Everywhere we find a disturbing crisis. Under the brilliant exterior of a refined and advanced civilization we find a deep-seated uneasiness, and this irritation grows in the social ranks. *The conflict of interests and the fight for life become daily more emphasized. The sentiment of duty meanwhile is weakened in the popular conscience; so much so, that many men no longer recognize where their duty lies. The law of numbers—that means of blind force—is stronger and more masterful than ever. A treacherous oratory is employed to let loose the passions and the worst instincts of the people, and to spread unwholesome and even criminal theories amongst them. Then when the waters rise and the tempestuous winds are let loose, these orators are quick to hide themselves and to deny all responsibility for the hurricane they have raised!*

“What is the explanation of this riddle, of this striking contradiction between the generous aspirations of the present day and the brutal reality of its facts? Why should a century which has excited such high hopes threaten to end in anarchy and in the rupture of all social equilibrium?”

“Inexorable logic will answer us. Democracy, radical or socialistic, in its profound depths, or in its directing spirit, is inspired only by *negative doctrines*. How then can it have any but a negative result upon the happiness or progress of Humanity? As is the ideal, so is the man—as the nation, so is the country.

“Negative ideas in their ultimate results must end fatally, in anarchy, in emptiness, in social nothingness. Human history has too often suffered this sad experience.

“So long as it is only a question of destroying vestiges of the Past, of giving the final blow to privileges which are anachronisms, Democracy has known how to use its weapons. But now it is a question of *reconstructing* the city of the future, that vast and powerful building, which is to shelter the Thought of future generations. And before such a task, negative doctrines show their weak points and their insufficiency. Even the best workmen sink into a moral and material incapacity. They have no constructive power. *They can only destroy*. NO HUMAN WORK CAN BE GREAT OR DURABLE UNLESS IT IS INSPIRED BOTH THEORETICALLY AND PRACTICALLY, IN PRINCIPLE AS WELL AS IN APPLICATION, BY

THE ETERNAL LAWS OF THE UNIVERSE. ALL THAT IS CONCEIVED AND BUILT UP IN OPPOSITION TO THESE LAWS, IS BUILT UPON SAND AND MUST PERISH. NOW THE DOCTRINES OF MODERN SOCIALISM HAVE ONE FATAL FLAW—THEY ARE TRYING TO IMPOSE A RULE WHICH IS IN CONTRADICTION TO NATURE, AND TO THE LAW OF HUMANITY. INDIVIDUAL AND PROGRESSIVE EVOLUTION IS THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF NATURE AND OF LIFE. IT IS THE ONLY SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS OF FATE, THE *RAISON D'ÊTRE* OF MAN, AND THE NORM OF THE UNIVERSE.

“To rebel against this law and to try to substitute another goal is just as foolish as it would be to attempt to stop the movement of the earth or to interfere with the tides of the ocean.

“The weakest side of the socialistic doctrine lies in man's ignorance of his essential being, and of the laws which govern his destiny. And if individual man is to be ignored, how is social man going to be governed ?

“The source of all our woes lies in our ignorance of our moral inferiority.

“All society must remain weak, powerless and divided, so long as Doubt and Defiance, Egoism, Envy and Hatred govern it.

No society can be transformed by laws alone. Laws and institutions are of little value without elevated beliefs and good morals. Whatever may be the special political model or legislation of a nation, if they possess good morals and strong convictions, that nation will always be happier and more powerful than one of lower moral calibre.

“As a Society is the result of individual forces, good or bad, it is obvious that such a Society cannot be improved except by acting first upon the intelligence and conscience of individual members. But for the democratic Socialist, the inner man, the man of individual consciousness, does not exist. He is absorbed in the mass. The principles thus adopted are those which are a negation to all superior philosophy and to all great causes. Nothing is to be considered but the *conquest of rights*. Yet rights cannot be legitimately enjoyed without practicing the duties attached to them. Rights without duties, which limit and correct them, will only give birth to new cataclysms and fresh sufferings.

“This is why the formidable Push of Socialism will only displace the centre of yearnings and desires and sufferings, and

substitute for the oppressions of the past a new despotism, and one still more intolerable. We can see already the disasters caused by these negative doctrines. The moral world has become merely an annexe of physiology, that is to say, the reign and manifestation of a blind and irresponsible Force. The more elevated spirits profess a kind of metaphysical negation, and the mass or Humanity—the People—without beliefs or fixed principles, are delivered up, soul and body, to men who play upon their passions and speculate upon their desires.

“Positivism is no less fatal although less wide-spread. By its theory of the Unknowable, it suppresses all notions of a goal and of the greater evolution. It takes hold of man in his present phase of life—a mere fragment of his Destiny, and hinders him from looking either backwards or forwards; a barren, dangerous doctrine, fit only for those whose spirits are blind; although falsely proclaimed as the most glorious conquest of the modern mind.

“Such is the actual state of Society. The danger is enormous. The world must fall into incoherence and confusion unless some great Spiritual and Scientific Reformation can be brought about. It is true that

the Churches, in spite of their retrograde movement, still attract many earnest souls, but they are powerless to combat present evils, because they can furnish no definite knowledge concerning human destiny, founded on salient and well-established facts. Religion, upon this most important question in its domain, remains vague. Humanity, tired out with dogmas and baseless speculations, has plunged into materialism or indifference. There is no longer any hope left, except in a doctrine based upon experience and the *testimony of Facts*.

“Whence can such a doctrine come? What power is to deliver us from the abyss over which we are hovering? What new ideal will come, to restore to man confidence in the future and enthusiasm in his aspirations? In the tragic moments of history, when all seemed lost, help has never failed. The human soul *cannot* absolutely founder and perish! At a time when the beliefs of the Past have grown misty, a new conception of life and destiny, based upon the science of facts, reappears. The grand old traditions live once more, under more youthful and more beautiful forms.

“Once more they demonstrate a future full of hope and promise. Let us welcome

this Ideal, victorious over matter, and let us work together to prepare its paths. The task will be a heavy one. It will mean a reconstruction of man's education. We have seen that neither Church nor University, as at present constituted, is capable of giving this education, because they have not the synthesis necessary to enlighten the path of the rising generations. One system alone can offer this synthesis, namely Scientific-Spiritualism. It is already appearing above the horizon of the intellectual world, with promise of light for the future. To this philosophy and science, free and independent, with no official stamp nor political compromise about it, modern discoveries are bringing every day new and valuable additions. The phenomena of Magnetism, of Radio-activity, of Telepathy, are applications of one principle, manifestations of the same law which governs the universe and also the individual.

“Still some years more of patient labor, of conscientious experiment, of persevering research, and the new education will have found its scientific formula and its true foundations.

“Education, as we know, is the most important factor in progress and contains in

itself the germs of the future, but in order to be complete, education must realize and be inspired by the study of life under its two alternating forms, visible and invisible.

"The teachers of Humanity have therefore an immediate duty to perform. It is to recognize the spiritual once more as the base of all education, and to endeavor to bring the inner man into true manifestation. The human soul, lulled to sleep by a fatal rhetoric, must be awakened and shown its hidden powers and made to realize still more its glorious destiny.

"Modern Science has analyzed the outside world and made deep investigations of the *objective* side of the Universe. All honor to it! But modern Science knows nothing at present of the invisible universe nor of the invisible man. This is the boundless empire which still remains for her to conquer. To know by what links man is attached to the Cosmos, to descend into the mysterious folds of Being, where light and shadow mingle as they do in Plato's Cave, to pass through these labyrinths of existence, to sound the normal and the abnormal Ego, the conscious and the subconscious; no study can be more necessary than this. So far as the schools and academies of in-

struction have left this out of their programme, so far have they failed in any definite teaching of Humanity.

“But already we see a marvellous and unexpected psychology, emerging from which must come a new conception of being and the ideal of a higher law which will embrace and solve all the problems of future evolution.

“The present time is one of transition and therefore of birth pangs. The old forms of the past are growing feeble and giving place to others, which at first appear vague and confused, but will become more and more defined in time. These new forms are the first sketch and plan of the growing thought of Humanity. The human spirit is ‘in travail.’ Everywhere, in Science, in Art, in Philosophy, even in the bosom of Religion, the attentive observer will note a period of slow and painful conception. Science above all gives abundant promise for the future. The coming century will be one of great production. Whatever may be our attitude of sentiment towards the teaching bequeathed to us by our fathers, most of us will agree that these teachings have not sufficed to dissipate the agonizing mystery of the purpose of life. Yet action

and life were never more intense—but can we either live or act in the fullest sense, without being conscious of the goal to be attained?

“The soul of the present day demands a science, an art, a religion of light and liberty, to deliver her from her doubts, to free her from old slaveries and miseries of thought, to guide her to those shining horizons towards which she is impelled by her very nature and by the impulses of irresistible force. We hear much of Progress, but it is too often a word of empty sound in the mouth of orators, who are generally materialistic in their philosophy. Twenty civilizations have passed over our earth, lighting up the march of Humanity. They have shone through the night of the centuries and have become extinguished. Yet man, even now, has no defined sense in his limited thoughts, of the unlimited spheres where Fate is swiftly bearing him. Men can only truly progress and advance when they believe in a future, towards which they walk in confidence and certainty.

“Progress does not consist alone in material works—in the invention of powerful machines or agricultural instruments. Neither does it consist in finding new tech-

nicalities and processes in art, literature, or forms of eloquence. Its great objective is to find the leading idea which will fertilize all human life, the pure and high Source, from which will flow the truths, the principles and the sentiments which will inspire all great works and all noble actions. Civilization and Society can only grow and expand where thoughts even more pure and elevated, and light increasingly clear, come to illuminate the spirits and touch the hearts of *individuals*.

“The Universe is ruled by the law of evolution. This alone is what we understand by the word Progress. We are all subjected to the same law. We cannot fail to recognize the working of this sovereign law, which carries the soul across the infinities of time and space towards an increasingly splendid goal—but *the law can only work with our coöperation*.

“To do any really useful work, to coöperate with the cosmic evolution and gather its fruits, we must above all things learn to apprehend the reason, the cause and the goal of this evolution, to learn where it is bearing us, so that we may participate with all our latent faculties and capacities in this glorious ascension.

“It is our duty also to trace out these paths for Future Humanity, of which we shall still make an integral part, as we teach it of the communion of souls, and as Nature teaches by her thousand voices, and by her perpetual changes and renewals, all those who can study and understand her.”

In the above pages I have endeavored to give, not an entire and literal but at least a faithful *résumé* of the thoughts of a wise and philosophic mind on the present state of the world, physical and mental. The picture is strikingly true. The colors have been put in with a strong hand, but I think no reasonable and thinking mind can question their correctness. This is how the present position, national and international, appears to a man of thoughtful intelligence and observation; apart from any limitations of special creed or sect. I am reminded of the old story (is it told in *Lalla Rookh* ?), where the man who is climbing up the mountain peaks sees the earth crumbling beneath him as he steps forward. At length a terrible moment arrives when no solid ground appears in front of him, and he is apparently plunging into a terrible abyss. He looks up to the heavens in despair; but at that very mo-

ment he sees a golden chain let down to him. He swings himself on to it in an access of sublime faith, and finds himself drawn up to the skies.

We have reached the abyss—there can be little doubt of that, when we look round on the misery and menace and unrest of the world. The golden chain is already within sight, thank God! Are we going to seize it or to let it pass us by, unheeded by our feeble yet despairing hands?

That is the question which must soon be answered. M. Léon Denis points out to us, as others have done, though perhaps with less clear and unbiassed judgment, just where we must now look for help, to stem the disastrous tides that threaten to overwhelm us. Truth alone can do this, and the truth most earnestly needed just now is the truth of the eternal laws of the universe and of *our individual coöperation in the grand cosmic unity of the future.*

Hear what another noted Frenchman (Mons. Edouard Schuré) has to say on the same subject:—

“If the law of Christ has penetrated the individual conscience, or even to some extent the social life, Pagan and barbarous laws still govern our political institutions.

Political power everywhere rests on an insufficient basis. On the one hand it rests on the divine right of kings, which means military force—on the other it rests upon universal suffrage, which merely means the *instincts of the masses without selective intelligence.*

“A nation does not consist of a number of indeterminate values ; nor is it a sum in addition. It is a living organism. So far as national representation is not in the likeness and image of this organism, from its workmen to its teachers, there will be no national representation of a radical and intelligent nature.”

“So long as the delegates of all scientific bodies and of all Christian churches do not meet together in a ‘Supreme Council,’ so long will our societies be governed by instinct, by passion and by force—there will be no social temple.”

Mons. Schuré also sees in the developments of modern psychology our only hope for the future. I think he would say that the greatest hope of all rests with our Christian mystics, to whom the grand work is entrusted of rescuing the esoteric teaching of Jesus Christ from the misapprehensions and accretions of centuries. The misap-

prehensions were sometimes those of His devoted but not wholly illuminated disciples ; to whom He said that there were still many things that could not yet be assimilated by them. The accretions have come through the fights of the Fathers and the heretical persecutions which have so often led to the over emphasis of one side of a truth in the attempt to crush some error on the other side ; and thus, again and again, the true balance has been lost.

Behind all these human misconstructions and this exalting of the letter which kills, above the spirit which makes alive, stands the Silent Figure of the Patient Master, waiting for His Second Coming into our hearts, in a wider knowledge and a broader sympathy with His true mission and His true meaning.

Every great religion of the past has had its esoteric wisdom hidden from the multitude, not through any arbitrary fiat, but in the ordinary working of evolutionary law. Is it to be supposed that Christianity, the last and grandest " word of God " to man, should alone lack this element ? That our Lord knew *less* than other teachers of the past, of the great yet simple truths of the universe ? To those who have eyes and

ears beyond the material ones of sense, even such words of His as have come down to us, through oral and written tradition, are full of this inner meaning which flesh and blood cannot accept, and which our spirits alone can fathom, when guided by the Divine Spirit within.

That is why I say that earnest and reverent Christian mystics are imperatively needed just now, to speak openly of those subjects. It is no easy matter, and it needs much courage. Human Nature now is very much what it was nineteen hundred years ago, when our Lord Himself was reproved again and again by the limited and narrow creed-holders of that day—the orthodox Jews.

The Mystic will not only have narrow prejudices to confront, but (which is far more painful) the reverent and deep-seated beliefs of those good and earnest Christians who have clung to the special meanings they have always heard attached to certain texts of Scripture, and who feel that the whole edifice of their faith will crumble, if one single brick be removed. It is so easy to identify the letter with the spirit—a special interpretation with a universal fact—the scaffolding with the building; to which

it was at one time a necessity, but has now become an unnecessary obstruction.

Why are we so fearful that the Social building may tumble about our ears if we remove the scaffolding? It is because our reverence for the letter of the Past is stronger than our faith in the spirit of the Future.

We are so ready to patronize Truth, and even, it would almost seem, the Almighty Himself! We appear to think that neither can stand alone and without our assistance.

This attitude, which is very general, would be almost grotesque if it were not also so pitiful.

We draw down the blinds and shut out the light and try to turn our backs on the wicked laws of evolution, through some queer idea of loyalty to the Father who works *through these laws*, or to the Son, *who came here as the representative of them upon earth*.

The same mistaken loyalty is the stumbling-block which prevents so many "Christian people" from taking any active part in our research. They think and say that "*We are not intended to know this or that.*" But surely when God does not intend us to know anything, He can very easily keep the knowledge from us! Certainly He has done so in the past, over and over again.

Why has so much knowledge (presumably within the limits of ancient lore) been buried in the obscurity of past ages? Surely for one of two reasons; probably both. It would have been disastrous to have had too much knowledge, combined with too little wisdom, as has been proved in these past centuries. Also, we seem to be treated, very wisely, as our children are treated at school. They only gain prizes *when they have worked for them.*

Therefore, I really think, when such an influx of psychical knowledge is bestowed upon us—when scientists, after fierce rebellion against it, are at long last slowly but surely coming within the field of investigation—when our studies in that subject are daily gaining, not only in experience, but (which is even more necessary) in wise direction, owing to the number of competent men and careful observers who are now interesting themselves on these lines—when all this is happening under our very eyes, I would suggest in all reverence that it is time for us, poor blind moles, to trust the Almighty to know His own business without our intervention. The Society which has adopted the somewhat ambitious title of "THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY," has done ex-

cellent work during the last thirty years or so in popularizing Eastern teachings and bringing them within the scope of the ordinary Western man and woman. Until then, these ancient religions had been considered the speciality and sole possession of the few learned Eastern scholars in European countries, such as Max Müller in Germany (naturalized in England), Rhys Davids, and many others who could be mentioned; plus a limited number of distinguished amateur students, who from time to time have taken the trouble to learn Sanscrit, Arabic, Hindustani and other Eastern tongues, in order to prosecute their studies in the leading religions of the world, at the respective fountain-heads.

Many of these latter, including also numerous Buddhists, and not a few Hindus, have scouted the labors of modern "Theosophy," and have declared that the theosophists have "muddled up" various different systems of thought in the endeavor to make a comprehensive if somewhat complicated whole.

Doubtless all attempts at synthesis between various sources of religious teachings must labor under similar difficulties.

Nothing in the world can be separated

from its indigenous surroundings without some loss. If we take a doctrine, a system of thought, a philosophy, we need also to take the race, the conditions of life, of climate, of soil, through which the doctrine or system of philosophy was nurtured and developed—you might add to these, the mentality of the nation that evolved it. Otherwise, it is like going round the world and collecting specimens of the flora and fauna of many lands, and then coming home to plant them in your own little garden under totally different conditions. Some may grow, many more will die, whilst others will of necessity change their nature and appearance under the new conditions. And this is very much what has happened in the attempt to graft Eastern thought (in detail) on to Western stock.

Yet we are the richer for seeing even dried specimens of the flowers and fruits of other countries. Therefore I think we owe a debt of gratitude to any movement that aims at spreading knowledge and placing it within reach of those who might otherwise not search for it themselves.

"If I dared," as the witty Frenchman said who wrote some bright articles lately in the *Daily Mail*, I should like to give a word

of warning to these latter; having many friends amongst modern "Theosophists." We are all apt to think that what is new to us must be unknown to others. The reverse proposition that "every one probably knows what we know" is equally dangerous, because it takes too much for granted; but it is not quite so aggressively irritating to poor, fallen human nature! Yet it is very natural to identify a certain piece of knowledge with the particular channel through which it reached you individually. But it is sometimes a little trying to have theories and ideas, which may have been familiar to us for many years, through quite other sources, suddenly sprung upon us as theosophical copyright!

The second word I should like to say "*If I dared,*" is that we all need to remind ourselves continually of the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. We may know every technical term connected with every system of thought in the past; or in the present, for that matter. We may be able to stand an examination as to the division of the human personality into its component parts—physical—animal—spiritual, and give exactly the right proportions and names to each. We may have

the most accurate information as to the human aura, or even the various future spheres, and know the correct Sanscrit and Hindustani words for every subject upon which we write, or speak, or lecture. All this is *knowledge*—it is not *wisdom*. It is multiplicity—not unity.

No adept can teach us Wisdom. We must be our own adepts for that; since it comes only by living the life and treading the path ourselves, not by merely knowing the name of the road; even in Sanscrit! And that road will differ for each one of us, for it is part of the multiplicity. It is only on reaching the goal that we shall once more come into Unity with all who have arrived there, through very varied experiences.

Fasting and prayer may help us in the path, but we must use our own feet in walking along it. Neither Madame Blavatsky nor Mr. Sinnett, nor Mrs. Besant, nor even Mr. G. S. Mead (with whose writings I feel personally the most intellectually affinitive) can do that bit of walking for us.

But it seems to me that Wisdom—not only knowledge—does underlie all the earliest conceptions of all the great religions, so long as their esoteric teachings remained

pure and unadulterated. These teachings, so profound in essence and so simple in form, consisted as we have seen of a few grand principles—

The Father-Mother God—in Unity.

The “ Word ” of God—Humanity—in manifestation.

The Spirit of God—in the interior illumination of the Divine Human.

Three lines, which sum up Life and Death and Eternity.

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I will end this chapter as I began it (after my quotation) with a fervent appeal to all those who are in authority—State or Ecclesiastical—not only to read their Bibles in the light of scientific and psychological discoveries of the present day (many doubtless do that already), but to have the courage of their opinions in stating openly and in the highest places that the time is ripe when we must read all revelation of truth in its inner and therefore truest meaning; or be content to see Christianity put aside, as a superstition of the past, useful enough in its time, but with no message for the think-

ing men and women of the present day. Some may say, "This can never be," but it *will* be, unless we bestir ourselves and take warning ere it be too late. In being over-careful of the letter (for fear of giving offense or pain to others), we are in danger of losing the spirit, which alone carries the germ of life.

What matter if the disciples were occasionally mistaken on a few points?—If they read their own limited ideas into the Lord's words? Is not this just what He Himself knew they would do? Was not this His reason for saying so little, since even that little was so obviously beyond their powers of understanding at times?

We have parted with "verbal inspiration" as a manifest absurdity—and the most "convinced Christian" has survived the shock.

Now we are asked to go a step further—to say (as many clergymen in their hearts are saying to-day) that the Bible is the history of an inspired nation, but that it is not wholly or equally inspired as a record.

Even within my lifetime I can recall the fierce fights over verbal inspiration, where all now is peace. Another and far more important crisis has arrived.

Are we to rescue the teaching of our Master, even at the expense of allowing limitations in His disciples and apostles?

Or are we to lose that teaching—at least in its possible fullness and truth?

That is the choice—the only choice now possible for us.

Viewed from the present standpoint of Science and Psychology, there are such numerous and unmistakable indications in His words, of the inner meaning, which always accompanied the outer symbol. *But we fear to bring this into strong relief, lest a shadow should be cast on some textual difficulty, which we feel bound to accept as of equal value.* This is the popular problem which has to be solved. How are we going to meet it?

I am writing in the interest of the Anglo-Catholic world at large; not for those scholars and mystics, lay or ecclesiastical, who can air their advanced views in various advanced theological magazines, or before eclectic circles of friends. It is a *popular* danger which I have indicated, and it needs a *popular* (and not eclectic) remedy.

When the thoughtful middle classes and the thoughtful lower classes (with ample apologies) are beginning to realize that they

know enough of modern scientific discoveries and of modern psychological discoveries, to feel themselves ahead of generally accepted Christian "doctrines," surely there must be something wrong which needs re-adjustment?

There are some who can assimilate spiritual food more easily when served up with Thibet Sauce. This is probably a question partly of temperament and perhaps of previous incarnation, but it is also due to the fact that they find thus a freedom of intelligent thought and intuition, a sense of space, of spiritual oxygen, which are too often absent from the ministrations of our own churches—absent, we may almost say, of necessity. Preaching that must compromise with, or even openly defy, public opinion, may, in the latter case, be courageous, but it can never be healthily normal.

The Resurrection of our Lord—the very corner-stone of Christianity, as St. Paul so truly and logically declared—brought life and immortality to light. Until within the last fifty years this has been an article of blind faith to most good Christian people—a stumbling-block to many of the more thoughtful and intellectual amongst them. As with the miracles, so with the Resurrec-

tion; they have had the wish, but often not the power, "to believe."

Modern psychology has come to the rescue, and has pointed the way out of this *impasse*, a way lighted by the torch of evolving Science. As Jesus Christ rose in the psychical body and manifested this to His disciples and to certain others at various times, with the powers and capacities normal to such a body; so now, after nearly two thousand years, it is necessary to bring about the Second Coming of our Lord into our advancing spiritual consciousness, and this can only be done *through the coöperation of the human race*. It is for us to realize first ourselves, and then to show forth to others, that Jesus Christ, the Divine Master, taught only through principles, never through narrow doctrines or creeds—that *this* is the standard by which we must test all accounts of His doings and sayings. Water must rise to its own level. How can the Divine Messiah sink below the level of His own teachings? *If He is ever represented as doing so, we must reject that representation, rather than allow such an impossibility*. There is more than enough of the high water mark in our New Testaments by which to judge of His credentials.

To those who believe firmly in Evolution—Spiritual Evolution will appear not only reasonable but absolutely essential, both for the race and for the individual. It is true that we are all at varying points in spiritual as in physical evolution, but surely we have justification for concluding that the Divine Messenger, who showed us the grand Love principle—not merely as a fine human emotion, but as the beginning and end—the Alpha and Omega of all conscious existence—Love, as the very essence of the Almighty, must be Himself in advance of the grandest and purest revelations of the past, which have *lacked* this final word of the Creator to the children of His creation ?

St. Paul attempted to define the undefinable mystery in his grand chapter on Love, in the first of Corinthians ; but even there he failed. How can Eternity be compressed into words ?

St. John—the greater mystic—did not make the attempt. He only tells us that the Divine *is* Love, and gives us some tests by which we may know how far the human copy approaches the original.

Christ—the greatest Mystic as well as Messiah—tells us of the love of God. That was His special message to the world, but

He does much more than this. He shows us *love incarnate* through His own life, as well as in His own death, and by *doing this* HE SHOWS US THE FATHER (who *is Love*), and thus justifies His magnificent *claim*—“He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.” Yet in the very next sentence He distinguishes between Himself, in His human aspect, and the Father, by hastening to add: “The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.”

Could He have defined the position more clearly for those who have ears to hear and hearts to understand? For spiritual truth must be apprehended by the heart, as well as by the intellect.

“In My Father’s house are many mansions.”

Each cycle seems to bring another mansion in the Father’s House within our view.

Can we doubt, in the light of the Past—in the light of the Present—above all, in the light already filtering down to us from the Future, that a grand destiny awaits us, when we have passed through the waves of this troublesome world, and as many more troublesome worlds as may be necessary for

our development, and enter once more into the FATHER'S HOUSE, having received, through the weary path of Evolution, the right to call ourselves no longer His servants, but His sons?

THE END