PROBLEMS OF THE SPIRITUAL

ARTHUR CHAMBERS



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PROBLEMS OF THE SPIRITUAL

BY THE

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"Our Life After Death," "Man and the Spiritual World,"
and "Thoughts of the Spiritual"



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To mark my appreciation of our long-continued friendship, and moreover, to thank him for the encouragement he has afforded me in the performance of a not altogether easy task, I dedicate this volume to the esteemed Friend who suggested the simple and apt title thereof.

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PREFACE

It may help the reader to better understand the purport of this volume, if I briefly state the considerations which have led me to write it.

There was a *necessity* for my doing so; I had no other means of discharging an obligation imposed upon me. Let me explain.

Some into whose hands this comes, are aware that I have previously published three volumes on the subject of the Spiritual World, which have had a very large circulation in this and other countries. The result has been a correspondence so overwhelmingly great, as to make it impossible for me to keep abreast of it. Thousands of letters have been sent to me by earnest ones from all quarters of the world. Amid the pressing duties of a ministerial life, I have strenuously set myself to reply to those letters; and a great number of them have been answered. But many have not.

Among the latter, are those which contain questions, not only important to the writers in view of their search for truth and for the re-

moval of difficulties which are presented to their mind, but which, moreover, are incapable of being adequately answered within the circumscribed limits of ordinary correspondence. Some of the letters submit a *series* of questions, the answering of which would involve the writing of matter sufficient to form a booklet.

Moreover, in many cases, questions which have been fully answered by me on several occasions, have again and again been submitted by other enquirers. It will thus be seen how a great pile of the "Unanswered" has persistently grown, without there being any possibility, in spite of all my efforts, of diminishing it. How could I answer those questioners? What could I do to rid myself of the unpleasant thought that some—not knowing the circumstances of the case—might be accounting me neglectful or discourteous? This book is an attempt to solve, or to partially solve, the difficulty.

From the numerous questions sent to me, I have carefully selected such as I deem to be the most important and which have been the most often proposed; and then I have tried to answer them fully and exhaustively in the pages of this volume. It may be that those whose kind communications have elicited—until now—no response, will, after this explanation, extend to me their forgiveness.

The other consideration which has impelled me to write this book is the desire to vindicate the position of those who embody in the Christian Religion the ascertained facts of Psychic-life, and the "Larger Hope." The ranges of present-day knowledge and thought are larger and wider than those of the past. Science, during the last half-century, after having unfolded to us marvel after marvel with regard to the Physical, has of late directed her researches to the domain of the Spiritual. There, wonder after wonder has been disclosed. Psychic Phenomena have been carefully investigated, and their reality avouched by many of the foremost men of the day; until a new continent of life and possibility has been laid open before us, and a revealing light has been flung on the mystery of Human Being.

Further, the mind of this present age has moved on to the acquirement of fuller and worthier conceptions of God, His character, and His purposes with respect to mankind. Men are no longer able to think of Him as He was presented by the School men and divines of bygone ages. The crude and anthropomorphic notions of Him are fast disappearing. Many of the old religious doctrines—especially those which deal with Eschatology—have ceased to commend themselves to the intelligence and

the moral instincts of the day. Accepted without question in the past, as the integrant parts of Christian Truth, these doctrines have been found to voice, not the teaching of the Master Himself, but the unevolved ideas of those who interpreted His teaching. In a word, men's enlarged conception of their spiritual organization, and their realization that a non-physical realm of life and energy encompasses and interpenetrates them, has caused them to re-cast their thoughts concerning God and Truth. Now, it is this fuller revealment of Spiritual realities, manifested in Psychic Phenomena, and this re-casting of ideas concerning God and the scope of His Gospel, which is causing religious disquiet to some.

This enhanced knowledge and wider thought are regarded as being incompatible with the teaching of Christianity. The persons to whom I refer are mentally disturbed by any presentment of truth which differs from that which has been accepted by them. They have been trained to believe that the theological pronouncements and definitions of the Church or Body to which they have attached themselves, are the *final* utterances of God in respect to Divine Truth. They suppose that to question those pronouncements, and to imagine them capable of being altered or modified, is a sure

indication of declension from the Christian Faith. They are aware that the present-day conceptions, in regard to God and His purposes, and in regard to man and his interior constitution and relationship to the Spiritual Universe, are not in agreement with the conceptions of the generally accepted exponents of Christ's Religion who have lived since Bible-times.

All this constitutes a very real difficulty to such Christians. Is this fuller knowledge concerning the Spiritual, and is this brighter and more hopeful outlook towards God and the Future, inimical to the Gospel which Jesus taught?

We believe it is not; and the other object in view in the writing of this book, is to try to show that the Gospel of Christ is so Divine and comprehensive a thing as to be capable of embodying all the acquisitions of knowledge and all the movements of men's minds to higher thought and aspiration.

The Christian Religion, we believe, would cease to maintain its hold on mankind, were it not able, as God's great ocean of Revelation, to draw into Itself and absorb all the streams of Truth which flow through the channels of the Religions of the world, as well as those tributaries and brooklets of enlightenment which

from the uplands of human thought slowly, but surely, find their way into the streams.

ARTHUR CHAMBERS.

Brockenhurst, Hampshire, England.

August, 1907.

PART I.

I. Our mother, just before she died, very calmly and emphatically declared that she saw and recognized several persons who had departed this life years before. Do you think this was merely a subjective experience, or were those departed ones actually and *objectively* present? And if the latter, how was she able to recognize them, seeing that the physical form, by which alone she had known them, had been laid aside?

In answer to the first of these questions, we say—Yes; we believe that persons can, after death, be *objectively* present, and possess the power, exercised under certain conditions, of manifesting themselves to those living in the earth life. We submit the reasons on which we ground this belief.

I. There is a very strong *presumption* that this is so, arising from the fact that there has existed throughout all past ages, and there exists *now*, an ineradicable conviction that, at times, the so-called "dead" return.

Among all the races of mankind, civilized and uncivilized, and under all the differing phases

of religious, or non-religious, thought, men have persistently believed in, and borne testimony to, the possibility of the departed manifesting themselves; and that, in spite of all the efforts which have been made to prove the belief a foolish and groundless one. The science of the past (not the science of to-day) has ridiculed the idea as being the outcome of superstition and ignorance. The Church herself, with a curious lack of consistency, has labelled it as an unscriptural and a rather wicked notion. And yet, throughout the whole history of the race, men have pertinaciously clung to it, and no testimony borne to anything outside the *ordinary* experiences of mankind, has ever been so great and so continuous as that which has been given in regard to appearances after death.

This persistent conviction is significant. It points to *fact* as the basis upon which it rests. Why, we ask, if the departed have never returned, have men so persistently believed the opposite?

The objector will answer, that this conviction, although so widespread, can only be classed among many other baseless ideas pertaining to ages of unenlightenment; and that

as mankind advances in knowledge, this particular notion will cease to command belief.

The supposition is completely contradicted by present-day fact. The extraordinary advance that has been made in science and general knowledge, during the past twenty or thirty years has neither removed nor shaken this conviction in the minds of men; on the other hand, it has become enormously strengthened and intensified. The belief in the return of the departed, so far from dying out in the light of fuller knowledge, is more persistent and widespread to-day than ever it has been; and in the ranks of the believers are to be found some of the foremost men of science. In a word, the advance of knowledge has *increased* the belief. This is inexplicable on the supposition that the belief is founded on a fancy; it is to be accounted for, if it is built on the foundation of *fact.*

Thus, the persistent conviction on the part of mankind that appearances after death do take place, is to us a very strong *presumption* (apart from all direct evidence) that such is the case. Had the alleged fact been impossible of verification, the belief in it would have died out, as have baseless notions, long ago.

II. The *verification,* after careful investigation, by scientific men, of the present-day facts

of Psychic Phenomena, affords another strong reason for believing that the departed may return to us. The idea of such return is no longer scouted by men who have given their attention to the matter as foolish and impossible. The deniers of the fact are for the greater part those who assume the unscientific attitude of antecedently settling themselves in the conviction that the thing is impossible, and then of declining to make any enquiry, or to accept any evidence whatsoever on the subject. The pronouncements of such persons count for simply nothing at all. The opinion of the person who says—"The thing, I am convinced, is *impossible;* and therefore I will consider no evidence in support of it,"—is so completely outside the radius of practical importance, that we may dismiss it as valueless, as we should the opinion of one who, having antecedently come to the conclusion that the North Pole could not possibly exist, ignored every scientifically ascertained fact concerning the same.

But we turn to the men who *have* given thought and attention to the subject; to men whose opinions are of weight, because, by culture and profession, they are qualified to weigh evidence and estimate *fact.* I am referring to some of the most distinguished and well-known

of the scientific men of the present time. They *have investigated* the existing facts of Psychic Phenomena, and have given to the world statements concerning them which have revolutionized the ordinary ideas of men. We ask the thoughtful enquirer to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" all that is contained in those two exhaustive volumes, which embody the results of the scientific examination of Psychic Phenomena, by the late Professor Myers. ("Human Personality; and its Survival of Bodily Death"). It will open the eyes of some to the possibilities of the spiritual. It will go very far towards making the thought of manifestation after death a believable one.

An absolute change has come over the mind of science, in regard to the spiritual and its possibilities. She, as represented by the ablest of her exponents, is no longer *materialistic.* She has at length reached the point of acknowledging that it is impossible to account for certain experiences vouchsafed to many men and women on any hypothesis of the merely *Physical.* She has even gone the length of admitting, that apart, from the acknowledgment of that which within us and about us transcends the Physical, and which links us with the Spiritual,

many of the inherent powers and the experiences of thousands of our race are inexplicable.

It may be asked—In regard to Science, what has brought about this change of front? Why has science, so materialistic, in the past, become now so pre-eminently the means by which men are so much better realizing the possibilities of spirit? We answer—The fact of Psychic Phenomena, of late years, has become so *persistent* and *demonstrable*, that science has been unable any longer to ignore it. In the past, the followers of science, no less than the adherents to religion, have been handicapped against the acquirement of fuller knowledge, by prejudice and traditionalism. It is very different now. Both systems are learning that *all* the facts of human experience must be honestly faced, if truth is to be attained Many of the old conceptions in regard to religion are vanishing away, and better and truer ideas are taking their place. And the science of to-day has made admissions with respect to human life and experience, which would have been ridiculed by the scientific men of fifty years ago. The existence of the soul; its survival of bodily death, and the possibility of communication between those in spirit-life and those in earth-life, are no longer ideas which science proclaims to be groundless and

incredible. There are many of our distinguished men of science, unlabelled as to religious creed, who, in consequence of a knowledge acquired through the investigation of Psychic Phenomena, have an intenser belief in the reality of the spiritual than many Christians who persuade themselves that they believe all the spiritual wonders recorded in the Bible.

Thus, in the face of the admissions of science in regard to the spiritual; in fact of the enormous testimony borne by mankind to the effect that the departed may, and *do* return, which testimony has not been overthrown by scientific investigation, we are drawn to the conclusion that the re-appearance of those who have passed hence is a verifiable *fact.*

III. An enormous amount of *direct testimony* has been borne by "all sorts and conditions" of men, as to the fact of appearances after death.

Let any enquirer on this point but take the trouble to ask those with whom he may come into contact, if any such experience has come within the range of their knowledge, and we venture to say that every other person so questioned will recount some instance of a departed one having been seen, either by himself, or by some one whose testimony he accepts. It is only as we make enquiries, that we find out how

widespread is the experience with which we are dealing. Thousands never mention to others—save, perhaps, to their own circle—what they know in regard to this subject. They are afraid of being accounted weak-minded, or untruthful, and so the testimony adduced, great at is is, is less than it would be if it were not for this fear of the scoffer. Moreover, it is a notable fact, that the ones who give their testimony as to any personal experience of manifestation after death, are convinced that their experience was *objectively* real, and not to be attributed to hallucination. The following is an instance. An old gentleman (connected with the writer) lost his wife, to whom he was deeply attached. He felt the bereavement acutely. One morning, at the breakfast table, he told his sons he had had a strange experience; all the more strange to him, because, until then, he had deemed such a thing impossible. He, when lying awake, and thinking of other matters, had seen his departed wife standing beside his bed. She had smiled on him, and said,—"John, you will be with me in *May*." The sons pronounced the experience to be only a dream, or the outcome of overwrought imagination. The father most calmly asserted that it was not so, but an *objective* reality. His sons remained uncon-

cerned, and the old man never again alluded to the subject. Five or six months passed, and the father regained all his old cheerfulness and interest in life. An evening party was given by him to celebrate his birthday, and those present remarked how well he appeared to have recovered the shock of his wife's death. On the following morning he was found dead in bed; and it was the month of May. There are thousands of recorded experiences similar to this, and we contend that it is more reasonable to regard them as based on fact, than on fancy; of being *objective*, rather than *subjective*. A person completely sane, calm, and invariably truthful, deliberately affirms that he has seen a dear one after death, and that the experience was not imagination. Those who have not had the experience, or any like experience, as positively assert the opposite. But which statement, we ask, is of the more evidential value—that of the one who had the experience, or that of those who did not have it? We do not usually attach much importance to the pronouncement of anyone concerning a subject, about which he acknowledges a total lack of experience, and a fixed conviction that no idea but his own can possibly be right. We drop him outside the reckoning, as not possessing the necessary data

upon which to come to a true conclusion. Thus, the testimony of *one* person who has had any experience of *post-mortem* appearances, is worth more in assisting us to come at the truth of the matter, than all the assertions of a *hundred* others, who have had no such experiences. We admit this principle in the concerns of every-day life.

Again, if it is difficult to cast aside as unreliable the testimony regarding an appearance after death of a person whom, in all other respects, we regard as sober minded and truth-loving, it is still more difficult to reject the testimony of *several* persons who conjointly and simultaneously have the same experience. There are a great number of verified instances of two, three, or more persons who have seen the departed at the same time, and in precisely the same way, so as to leave no room for the supposition that the experience can be explained as *hallucination.* The writer himself has had such an experience. He saw, in company with an intimate friend, a manifestation which presented itself, *in every detail*, in precisely the same way to him as it did to his friend. If this experience is to be accounted for on the hypothesis of its being merely *subjective*, then we are shut up to the conclusion that two absolutely independent

minds are suddenly and simultaneously so affected, as to similarly see, in every particular, something which had no existence except in imagination. We ask, in the face of this concurrent experience, which is the more reasonable explanation—that the experience is to be attributed to a disordered mind, or to *objective* fact? Thus, we have, in the direct testimony adduced by thousands of our fellow-beings, another strong reason for accepting as true, that the departed may, and do, at times manifest themselves to us.

IV. We have the statements of the Bible that persons, after death, have *objectively* manifested themselves. The testimony of the Bible on this point is very emphatic, and it ought to settle the question at once for those who profess to believe that book. And yet, strange to say, the ones least disposed to admit the possibility of *post-mortem* appearances are very often those whose religion, as Christians, is founded on the fact of appearances after death.

The Christian Religion rests on the acknowledged truth that our Lord Jesus Christ was seen, after death, by a considerable number of persons. He was seen under circumstances which preclude the possibility of accounting for His appearances on the hypothesis of merely

mental impressions. He was, moreover, seen in such a way as to demonstrate the fact that He had passed beyond the restrictions of the Physical, and was living in the environment of the Spiritual. He could suddenly present Himself before the eyes of astonished apostles, in a room whose door was closed and barred. He could instantly vanish from their sight; could quickly transport Himself from place to place; could change His form; be unrecognized for a while by those who knew Him well, and could cause Himself to soar upward in seeming contravention of the law of gravitation. In a word, from a world, transcending the Physical, into which He had entered at death, He presented Himself to men and women still on the earth-plane; and they acknowledged the fact, and the Christian Religion was built on it. No Christian, after this, can consistently and *logically* doubt the possibility of manifestations from the world of spirit.

If the Bible be true in stating that Samuel and Moses and Jesus, and "many of the saints which appeared unto many" at the time of the crucifixion, and the "fellow-servant of thy brethren, the prophets," who came to St. John at Patmos—presented themselves after death, then we contend that the Christian Religion it-

self demands us to believe that the so-called "dead" may, and do, return. If we deny that such manifestations are possible, we have cut away from ourselves all reasons for believing the scripture records. The spiritual world to-day is no different from what it always has been. What was possible and actual in the past is so to-day. And the accumulated evidence of this age in regard to spiritual realities confirms this statement.

We proceed to answer the other question submitted above:—How was the mother, who on her death-bed declared she saw and recognized departed ones, able to recognize them; seeing that the *physical* body, in which only she had previously known them, had been laid aside? There are two ways by which a being passed into spirit-life can manifest himself and make himself recognizable to those in earth-life.—(a) By the clothing of his spirit-presence with a *thought-form*, in such a manner that he assumes the appearance in which he had been previously known by those to whom he manifests. (b) By building up around his spirit-presence a temporary encasement, constructed from particles and emanations drawn from physical bodies.

This latter is commonly called "materialization."

With regard to the first of these two methods of manifestation. The appearance produced as a thought-form is not physical, nor can it be physically perceived. It is a creation of thought. The excarnate being, knowing that he would be unrecognized, except in the appearance in which he had been known in earth-life, thinks of himself in that way, and his thought takes form, and his spirit-presence is invested with that form. Thus a being in spirit-life is able to manifest himself in different ways to different persons, in accordance with the manner in which he may think of himself. If he were to appear to one who had only known him in earth-life as a young man, he would think of himself as such, and be presented in that form. If he were to manifest to another who had known him in later life, he would mentally draw the picture of himself in that condition and be seen in correspondence with that thought. When the prophet Samuel was seen after death, it was in the form of an "old man" (1 Sam. xxviii. 14.)—the form in which alone he would have been recognized. As to this power of the mind to produce form, and how it does so, we know but little as yet; but there are many indi-

cations that the fact is coming within the bounds of scientific demonstration. It is known that, pervading all space and interpenetrating all physical matter, is a subtle element—the Æther. It may be that thought-forms are the result of mental energy, projected as vibratory motions, upon the ætheric atmosphere, and that they register thereon the impressions and images created in the mind. There seems to be no greater difficulty in supposing the æther capable of registering a mind image, than in knowing that the sensitized plate of the photographer can register the likeness of a physical object. A spirit-being appears to possess the power, not only of projecting these mind-images which he creates upon the ætheric atmosphere in which he has his being, but of so identifying himself with the projected image, as to merge, for a while at least, his spiritual self into it. He is seen, then, in a thought-form of his own creating. Thus, in the spirit-world, our environment, and ourself as we appear to others, is mainly determined by our mind.

If this be so, it may be asked—How can non-physical thought-forms be seen by one whose vision of objective realities is dependent upon the physical eyes? In other words,—How can a spirit-being who has enwrapped himself in a

thought-form be seen by those still living in the earthly body? The answer is—By means of the faculties of the interior spirit-body. Within our outer physical body lies this spirit-body—the encasement of our spirit-self. St. Paul, writing on this subject, in 1 Cor. xv. 44, states—"*ἔστι σῶμα ψυχικὸν, καὶ ἔστι σῶμα πνευματικόν*"—
—there is a natural body (i. e. a body pertaining to this life only), and there *is* (i. e. *now*) a spiritual body. Spirit and spirit-body constitute what we call "soul." A man after death is an excarnate being—a spirit; but he is not a shapeless entity, a fluidic essence; he has a bodily form; he is in a spirit-body. This spirit-body possesses faculties, which correspond with the faculties of the physical body, but transcend them. The powers of sight and hearing in the spirit-body are intensified. The eyes and ears of the physical body can be sensitive to only a limited number of vibrations in regard to sight and sound. The faculties of the spirit-body on the other hand, are capable of receiving *ætheric* vibrations; whereby sights invisible to physical eyes, and sounds inaudible to physical ears are perceptible to the spiritual organization. The *normal* condition of the spirit-body, while encased within the physical, is undevelopment. The latent powers are there, but their close as-

sociation for a while with the physical body places them under restriction. The inherent capabilities of the soul-man are at a disadvantage in exercising themselves through the environment of the physical man. The bright electric light can shine but dimly through the coarse, enveloping medium of a London fog. There is a likeness between the condition of our spirit-body and that of the physical body of a child shortly before birth. The latter has all the potentialities of perceiving sights and sounds. It has eyes and ears; but until birth they are unopened. The pre-natal conditions of existence afford no scope for the exercise of those powers. Birth to it means a quickening and an opening of already existing faculties. It becomes, then, *en rapport* with a world of physical sight and sound.

To us, physical death involves a similar experience. Death removes from us the restrictions of the physical. By it, the body of our spirit-self is brought into adjustment, and is made capable of functioning in an environment where the possibilities of spiritual seeing and hearing surpass the possibilities of the physical. After death, the conditions of being become altered: then we live and move in the domain of the ætheric, and the horizon of perception, of

observation and inherent power becomes enormously extended.

Thus the "resurrection" (the anastasis, the advance) which Christ referred to, in His argument with the Sadducees, means the liberation of the spirit-body from the obstructive connection with the physical, and the exercise of higher powers by the spiritual man. But this opening and quickening of the faculties of our interior spirit-body takes place, sometimes, *before death.* Persons, still resident in the earthly body, at times see and hear that which physical eyes and ears are incapable of perceiving. From beginning to end, the Bible is full of such instances. The spiritual beings who were seen by patriarchs, seers and others were not seen through the mediumship of the physical eyes, but by an abnormal opening of the sight of the spirit-body. "Lord, open his eyes that he may see," prayed Elisha, in regard to the young man, whose physical eyes were insensible to the nearness and reality of the spiritual (II Kings vi. 17). And the opening of his eyes disclosed to him wonders beyond the ken of the physical. There can be no doubt that the reason why our Lord selected St. Peter, St. James and St. John to be witnesses of that spiritual revealment on the Mount of Trans-

figuration, was because they alone of all the Apostles were so spiritually constituted as to be clairvoyantly and clairaudiently capable of seeing and hearing the spiritual visitants who there manifested themselves. In the case of the mother who declared, just before she died, that she saw and recognized departed ones, we believe that there was a quickening, an opening, of the faculties of her interior spirit-body, by which she was made capable of perceiving the presence of those persons. Those dear ones had been drawn to that death-chamber by the magnetic power of love We dare believe that the great All-Father of Love commissioned them to come, in order to remove the "sting of death," and to mitigate that feeling of strangeness which must come to a human soul, in passing from the conditions of the physical to those of the spiritual. The spirit-friends wanted the dying woman to know they were with her. They pictured themselves as they knew she was thinking of them. In so doing they enwrapped their spiritual selves in thought-forms. Others in the death-chamber saw them not. The eyes of their spirit-bodies were unopened; and like Balaam, under those conditions, they were conscious of no angel beside them. The mother saw the God-sent visitants. Her indwelling spirit-body,

feeling the first throb of expanding life, received the "Ephphatha" of God, and looking through the crumbling walls of the physical, she saw the spiritual.

Apart from the creation of thought-forms, those who have passed hence can manifest themselves to those on earth in another way. By means of *materialization*. There is an incontrovertible mass of evidence to prove that it is possible, under certain physical conditions, for a spirit-being to present himself as encased in a temporarily assumed physical body. Materialization is a verifiable fact; it has been attested by some of the foremost scientists and investigators of the present time. Of course, there is a considerable section of mankind which is unconvinced in regard to it, and it is absolutely hopeless to try to convince such. Persons of this class know little or nothing about the subject; they do not want to know, and moreover, they are antecedently positive that such a thing could never be. We are not concerned about them. They are simply lagging behind the ascertained knowledge of the day; the fact of materialization will be admitted by them before long, and then will come to them a startling revelation as to the possibilities of spirit. It is for the information of those who are prepared

to enquire and to accept investigated and verified facts, that we are writing. Materializations have taken place, and are constantly taking place, under conditions and circumstances which shut out the possibility of hallucination or imposture. The writer, in the presence of a clergyman and others, has seen, on the same evening, two such materializations (the one of a child and the other of a man) in the barely-furnished parlor of an artisan's cottage. The whole process of materialization and de-materialization was seen. And testimony similar to this has been adduced by scientific men.

It will be asked—How can a spirit materialize? By taking the aura, which is matter in a fluid condition, as it exhales from the physical bodies of persons, and consolidating and constructing this around the spirit-self in such a way as to form a temporary physical encasement; which encasement is as appreciable by the eyes and the touch as any ordinary physical body. This aura is similar in appearance to the mist-like exhalation which can be seen arising from a hard-driven horse on a frosty day. It is physical matter in a gaseous state; and from all persons it is constantly exhaling. Some bodies give it off more freely than others; and those with whom this is the case constitute the

"mediums," the ones so essential to materialization. When a number of persons are together in a room in which this aura is confined, the conditions are favorable for materialization. A spiritual being can collect it, can draw it to himself, can consolidate and mould it, and build it up around himself as a body physically substantial and tangible. And more than this—the enhanced power of mind and the formative energy possessed by it, enables the spirit being, desirous of being recognized by those to whom he is manifesting, to impress upon the structure which he has temporarily built for himself, the form and characteristics of that picture of himself which he has antecedently created in his mind.

The adaptation of physical matter by a spirit, for the purpose of manifestation to those whose vision does not extend beyond the physical, would seem, from what has been observed, to be not granted to all. Moreover, a spirit appears to possess no power of *retaining* for any length of time the materialized body he may have formed. In the personal experience to which I have alluded, the little child who materialized at arms' length before us, was heard by all of us to say—"I cannot keep the power; it is going;" and we saw the form that had

touched us, and had kissed the mother who was present, melt and disappear. May not the explanation be, that a spiritual being, although, at times, permitted by the Father-God to come again into relationship with the physical, is not allowed to remain therein? May this not be the reason why the spiritual visitants seen by the ones of Bible times suddenly vanished, and why the Christ, when He appeared in that room at Emmaus "vanished out of their sight"?

We regard, therefore, materialization, not as a *normal* experience of spirit-beings, but as a means permitted to some to lift the dark shadow flung by death, and to verify the words of Jesus, "They all *live* unto God."

II. Is the fact that trickery and imposture have been associated with spiritualism, a proof that it is the outcome of falsehood and credulity?

No; and such reasoning is wholly inconsequent. Throughout the history of the world, falsehood has been constantly associated with truth; but while it has damaged the cause of truth, it has constituted no real objection against the truth itself. A thing may be true, and as such, commend itself to persons of the highest intelligence, and yet may become so mixed up with that which is false and foolish, as to cause the indiscriminating observer to be unable to perceive the truth because of the falsehood. It has ever been so; nay more, it seems as if the greater and more important any truth is, the more does it lend itself to the possibility of admixture with error and falsehood. Take, e. g., the greatest of all truths—that which is connected with the person and character of God. No truth has ever been so overlaid with error, so encrusted with superstition, and so associated with untruth, as this truth. Yet the

truth itself concerning God is not discarded by us because of this. The honest "seeker after God" tries to dissociate the truth from the falsehood. Take another instance—the Christian Religion. We believe that it has its foundation in that which is essentially true.

Its founder called Himself "the Truth."

And yet the vilest deeds and some of the greatest impostures have been practiced in its sacred name. Good men and women have been persecuted, imprisoned and burnt at the stake by the professors of it. All sorts of ecclesiastical frauds and deceptions have been resorted to for the purpose of upholding the authority of the Church, and of stimulating the religious credulity of the masses.

"Very shocking!" says the man who has enlightened moral instincts, but is not a discriminator, "the whole thing is *falsehood and evil.*" He makes a mistake.

He allows the increment of error and falsehood, which has been imposed on truth, to blind him to the truth itself. In regard to Religion, to Science and a thousand and one other things, the truth exists in spite of all the falsehood which may have been associated with it.

The case is precisely the same with respect to spiritualism. The thing itself is true. The

phenomena connected with it are verifiable facts.

The testimony of thousands of persons now living—including that of some of the foremost scientific men—has been adduced, that these phenomena have been witnessed by them under conditions making trickery, or hallucination, an impossibility. The truth of the thing can be, and has been, proved. Tricksters and impostors may from time to time be detected in their dishonest practices in the name of spiritualism, and rightfully made to answer the charge in the law courts; judges and counsel in their ignorance of present-day facts, and their anxiety to provoke the laugh of an uninformed crowd, may cast ridicule upon the thing; but the fact remains that there are to-day great numbers of enlightened and cultured persons—men and women of sound discriminating power—who are believers in spiritualism, in spite of all their antecedent prejudices against it.

These are not the class who would openly avow their belief in a thing which has no basis but in falsehood and sham.

We admit that in some cases—in many cases, if you like—spiritualism has become associated with impostors and rascals. But what of that? The same thing can be said of Religion, of the

Medical Profession, and of a host of other things. We must discriminate between what is true and what is false. Religion is not labelled as "imposture and humbug," because unbelievable dogmas, as parasites, have fastened themselves upon it, and religious charlatans have endangered its reputation. Nor are the sciences of medicine and astronomy accounted as nonsense, because there are quacks and fortune-tellers.

The trickery and imposture which have sometimes been associated with spiritualism afford no argument against the latter, but only against the falsification of it. The true spiritualist, no less than the true Christian and the true scientist, deplores that the truth he holds should at times be subject to the invasion of misrepresentation and falsehood. But so it is. The experience of the past has taught us that no truth is so conditioned as to be safeguarded against an association with stupidity, error and evil.

The wise man is he who seeks for the truth, and is not misled and made purblind by any falsehood he may detect in company with it; but who discriminates between the two, and separates the true from the false.

III. The prohibition given by God to the ancient Israelites, that no communication should be held with "familiar spirits," is—to my mind—a proof that such communication was, and is, *possible*. But does not the prohibition also imply that *all* intercourse with the Spiritual World is contrary to the will of God?

The first of these two conclusions is right; the other is wrong. If it be acknowledged that God forbade persons to hold communication with spiritual beings, it must also be acknowledged that this communication *could be effected;* unless we commit ourselves to the absurdity of supposing that the Almighty solemnly charged men not to do that which they could not possibly do. If there be no such thing as communion between beings in this world and beings in the spirit-world, then there would seem to be no more sense in this prohibition than there would in one that commanded men not to jump over the moon. The point is an important one in regard to the attitude assumed towards spiritualism by many Christians.

There are many good and earnest persons

who profess to believe the statements of the Bible, and are also convinced that this prohibitory command is a Divine one, who, nevertheless, scout as being foolish the idea of communication with the spiritual. "The thing is an impossibility," say they. "The departed cannot under any circumstances or any conditions reestablish intercourse with those whom they left behind. An impassable barrier is set up between us in this life and all others in spirit-life." But, surely, this is a very illogical position to take! If it be true that there is this "*impassable barrier*" between the two worlds, of course, it cannot be passed. Then why tell persons *not to pass it?* A wholly unnecessary command! A restrictive law is not required, except in respect to things which men *can do.* Thus we account the prohibition itself as implying the possibility and fact of communication with spirit-beings.

There is another class of Christians, who perceive the illogical position of those to whom we have just referred, and endeavor to explain the matter by resorting to what, for convenience sake, we may term the "Diabolic" theory. According to them, the Devil is at the bottom of all intercourse between us and the Other World. Spiritualism is, therefore, of course, his direct work.

They tell us that communication is possible between terrestrial and spiritual beings; but that the spiritual beings who come into contact with us are *all bad ones;*—agents in the service of the great and very powerful Devil. No good spirit, no departed loved one, between whom and ourself a bond of love exists, is ever allowed by God (we are told) to come near us, to comfort us, help us, and affect us for good by the projection to us of the distillations of his ascending mind and spirit. Oh! no; such a thought is supposed to be a disparagement of the work and power of the Holy Ghost. (Though why it should be so in that case, more than in the case of those in *this* world who help and bless each other, we cannot see.)

No; only the evil spirits are permitted to come to us; the "barrier" between us and the Spiritual World is impassable for all the good, but passable for the crew of evil. "Did not God forbid all intercourse with familiar spirits, *because of this?*" ask they.

The answer which suggests itself to the ordinary, common-sense individual is,—"How strange! how very contradictory it seems, that God should let the veil between this world and the other be drawn *at all*, if only the bad, and

none of the good, are suffered to pass through it to us!"

Our friends have yet to learn that intercourse with the Spiritual World involves exactly that which is involved in our intercourse with persons belonging to this world; viz., we may come into contact with the good, bad and indifferent. Society in the Spirit World is not, as some have supposed, composed only of two great classes—the good and the bad.

Between the conditions described by these two terms lie "all sorts and conditions" of spirit-beings. There are men and women passed into Spirit-life, who exhibit there as much variety in mind, character and spirit, as do the men and women who move among us here. There are those who have passed hence with the spiritual side of them wholly undeveloped. They are "of the earth, earthy." Many of them, unfitted for the new life, are eager to re-establish relations with the old. There are others in whom as yet the spiritual is but slowly developing. These for a while, at all events, will retain many of their imperfect moral characteristics and their limitations of knowledge. There are still others who in the ascending scale stand at different altitudes of moral excellence, wisdom and spirituality. A great mass of widely-differing indi-

viduals is that inconceivable aggregation of beings in the Spiritual World; as widely-differing from one another in knowledge, thought and cultivation as are the men and women who constitute the population of a continent.

Now, if this fact as to the *variety* which characterizes life and experience in the Spirit World be realized, we shall be able to form some true ideas of the possibilities connected with intercourse between that world and this. The door between the two worlds has been opened—and is still open—in some cases and under certain conditions.

The denial of that involves the rejection of the persistent testimony of mankind throughout the centuries—a testimony more persistent and emphatic to-day than ever it has been; the rejection of the Bible statements which affirm the fact, and moreover, the rejection of the results of careful modern scientific investigation which go to verify the statements of that book. "Quite so," says the supporter of the "Diabolic" theory, "there *is* communication to us from the Spirit-World, but only the devils ever come to us from it." "But why *only they?*" we ask. Is it not opposed to all ideas of the fitness of things, that God should permit the opening of the door of the spiritual only to let loose on us the beings

who will seek to harm us? That is not what He does when, in this lower earth-life, He opens the doors of communication between us and others. That was not what His Christ did when He opened the door of the Spiritual on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the garden of Joseph. Through that open door came no devils to men and women, but departed Moses and Elijah and God's angels. What a dreadful state of affairs it would be, if God had granted us in earth-life only to associate *with the evil!* What a fearful conception of God is that which thinks of Him as opening the door of the spiritual solely to let loose the Devil and his crew on us! An idea such as this savors to us of dishonor to God.

How much more consistent is it to believe that our Father-God, in granting to those who are in spirit-life the power of sometimes coming to us who are in earth-life, has granted it not only to the bad, but also to the good and others! And may it not be that the reason why at times He allows to us in earth-life this association with good, bad and indifferent spirit-beings, is to bring home to our feebly-working minds the true significances of Life Beyond? And may not another reason be, that the contact of such with us will, in some way or another, be made

to contribute to God's great purpose of good in regard *to them?* Suppose it be so—suppose these constitute the two great objects for God's allowing of this contact of the Spiritual with the Physical World,—then how all-important becomes the matter!

From good, bad and indifferent spirits we may realize great truths which, perchance, we did but imperfectly realize from the earthly preachers and teachers—viz., that the Other-Life is but a development from the earth-life; that God's law and correspondence is inviolable, making men and women in spirit-life (for a while, at least) no more and no less than they have made themselves to be in earth-life; and that the pronouncement—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still"—is no mere sentence of punishment for the bad and reward for the good, but the Divine proclamation to us that all reaping will answer to the sowing. Yes, and these spirits, good and bad and indifferent, may come to us as God's object-lessons on these eternal truths. From those poor, debased, earth-bound spirits, who have been seen by many as haunting the scenes of their former vice, with the desire for the low, the sensual and the unspiritual still dominating them—we may learn,

better than from any manual on Hell-Fire and damnation, what an evilly-directed life really means. From the frivolous, silly, uninformed spirits, who startle us by their ignorance of those truths which our better-trained soul both knows and accepts, we may learn the danger—the awful danger—of starving in earth-life the spirit-part.

Transferred though they be to the world of mind and spirit, their knowledge of God and Divine things is less, as yet, than ours. Yes, and we may learn the same great significances of life from those higher ones in spirit-life who come to us at times—those souls who when on earth were loved and prized because, like the Master, they helped and blessed and exhaled sweetness. They, too, come, because the spiritual life is but a continuance, a development of the earth-life. Death has not changed their being; it did but alter their environment. The same thoughts of love, and the same desire to help and bless are within them as of old. Their present has been moulded by their past. Like departed Moses on the Mount with Jesus, they show that the trend of the mind on earth is the trend of the mind beyond.

And what (as we said just now) if this opening of the door of the spiritual to these de-

veloped and undeveloped ones on the other side, be made to further God's purpose of good in respect *to them!* The world of spirit is no province of life and experience detached from and unrelated to this Physical World. The two are co-related. The former is as much a part of the vast Empire of our Father-God, and as closely connected with this Physical World, as India is a part of King Edward's empire and connected with England. Nay, more so; for we, while still living on earth, have our being in two worlds—the Physical and the Spiritual.

Moreover this fact of the *consolidarity* of God's universe—that no part of it is detached from any other part, and that interdependence is the Divine Law of all being—should make us realize that all provision made by God for blessing is made in view of the *whole*, and not in view of *any part only*. The true conception of the Christ is a magnificent one. In the particular, He is God's Provision for blessing mankind. True, but the blessing is to affect the *whole universe*. How those words of St. Paul voice this truth as to *consolidarity*—"That God might gather together in one *all* things in Christ, *both which are in heaven and which are in earth*. . . . that He might fill *all* things" (Eph. i. 10 and iv. 10)! How they dwarf into in-

significance the notions of some as to the now salvability of countless myriads in the Empire of God.

And, of course, this view of the connectedness of each sphere of life with every other sphere of life, will considerably modify our idea as to why we should be Christians. The *raison d' étre* which is so commonly given is, that we may thereby be saved from a wrath to come, and receive a great blessing for ourselves. That is not the true *raison d' ètre.* The blessing which comes to anyone, individually, from union with Christ, was never meant to be an end in itself. The blessing was given to be extended. That blessed one is not a detached being; he stands related to others—to the whole universe. Never will he fulfil the reason of his calling, until somehow and somewhere, in this life or some other life, he has caused his blessing as a tributary stream of effort for others' good to run into that great mainstream of God's purpose of blessing *all.*

In the light of this truth of the connectedness of each with all others, and of this world with the Spiritual World, is it not likely that we on earth, by prayer and uplifting thoughts at all times, and by actual intercourse sometimes, may be able to help and bless discarnate ones?

There is another reason for believing that we may help these ones.

It arises from the fact of the enormous number there must be on the other side *who stand in need of help.*

It must be so, unless we are prepared to think that death forever fixes the character and unalterably determines the destiny of all who pass thither. The brighter theology of this age has discarded the old notion that beings must remain throughout eternity what they are at the time of physical dissolution. Though death works no miracle of moral transformation in regard to any, the mercy and love of God puts no soul outside the purpose of advancement and ultimate salvation.

According to the Master, the "lost" things are not forever to remain "lost," nor are the "dead" things never to be made "alive again." Now, the vast majority of those who pass from earth-life into spirit-life are either what Christ would have called "lost" or "dead" ones, or they are undeveloped ones, mentally, morally and spiritually. Millions face the realities of the Spiritual World with no sense of relationship to God, and are dead, or all but dead, to that which constitutes life in the spirit. Other millions there are whose minds, whose charac-

ters and whose spirits are such as to make the highest life impossible to them, so long as they remain unridded of imperfection. Think of an enormous ladder whose foot rests on the earth, and whose top touches the summit of an Alp. The ladder represents the ascent to that possible moral and spiritual perfection, defined by Jesus in the words—"Ye therefore shall be perfect *as your heavenly Father is perfect*" (Matt. v. 48). Its topmost rung represents that promised perfection; its bottom-most rung that point of moral and spiritual attainment which is reached by the great bulk of mankind at the time they pass into spirit-life; while the intervening rungs of that ladder denote those spheres of ascension through which every soul must pass on its way to the goal of being. The illustration will give us some idea of the greatness of the goal which a Father-God has marked out for the creatures His love enwraps.

The number of those rungs to be trodden will suggest the folly of neglecting in the earth-life the teaching of our spirit-self to do the work of mounting Godward; and it will divest those words of the Apostle of that ring of hopelessness which a certain theology has imported into them, and will invest them with *another* meaning—"*Now* is the accepted time;" the height is

great, and the rungs are many! Yes, and it may lead us to realize how great—how inconceivably great—must be the multitude of discarnate ones who cry to others—to *us*, perchance, —who have reached the higher rungs, to help them in their climbing upward.

An inconceivably great multitude? Yes; picture it, if you can. It has been estimated that about 44,000 persons die on this earth in every month of the year. Think of this death-harvest of the years, the centuries and the millenniums. Think of that mighty stream of human souls which has been pouring, and is still pouring, into the world of spirit, and then ask yourself—"How many of those souls have scaled the ladder and are ripe for Heaven?" The answer will be—"Very few, in comparison with the hosts at the base of the ladder."

Is it, then, a groundless belief to think that in a universe bearing the divine hall mark of consolidarity, we on the plane where the spiritual and physical intermingle, may play some part in the Divine Purpose of helping and blessing the world of the spiritual? We think not. We dare believe that that interview between the Christ in the earth-life and Moses and Elijah in the spirit-life on that mountain of Palestine, led the lawgiver and the prophet to mount to

higher rungs of Divine knowledge. We know of actual cases, in which poor, earth-bound spirits have been seen and heard by clairvoyant and clairaudient persons, and have asked the latter for their prayers and uplifting thought influences. "Pray for me! pray for me!" said one of these undeveloped ones from the World of Spirit, to a Christian friend I know. "I will," was the reply—"Every day I will pray that you may find light and peace. Every time I kneel at God's Holy Altar, too, I will pray for you." That gentleman saw that spirit once again, and heard these words—"I am not earth-bound now; the desire for God has come; the darkness has gone; it was *your* prayers for me which led *me to pray.*"

But further, the fact of being able to help our fellow-creatures in the other world is in accordance with that principle under which we know and see the redemptive and uplifting work of God to be carried on. No new principle of the Divine *modus operandi* is introduced thereby. "God blesses man through man," says the old adage, and the essential being of no one is changed because of the transference of him from the Physical to the Spiritual. God blesses the ignorant, the undeveloped and the base in this world through their contact with the more en-

lightened, the more developed and better ones. That is the principle which underlies all missionary effort and the work of social reclamation. Are we prepared to say that God, while acting on this principle in regard to saving work in *this* world, disallows it in regard to that Spiritual World with which we are so closely connected? If the fact of intercourse between that world and this be admitted (and the foundation-truth of the Christian Religion would be removed if it be denied) is it not the most reasonable of all thoughts to suppose that behind God's allowance of the intercourse lies His purpose of blessing man through man? The man who is God's instrument of blessing may be in this world, and the man to be blessed in the Other World; but that seems to us to make no difference in the power of the one to help the other.

The consolidarity of the universe remains. No part of it is independent of any other part. God and His love and His power for uplifting are not shut off from any quarter of it. The Psalmist was right when he said that if men ascended up into Heaven they could find Him there, or made their bed in hell, there also would He be. (Ps. cxxxix. 8). This world and the other are co-related. Influences for good and

evil are streaming in from the Spiritual to the Physical, and *vice versâ*. The good and Christ-like in spirit-life may project their mind and spirit-impulses upon us in earth-life, and at times may visibly manifest themselves to us, as the glorified departed "fellow servant" did to the aged St. John; while the good and noble on earth may, by prayer for the departed, by the sending forth to them of concernful thought, of soul impulses impregnated with the quickening power of a Divine love passed from God through them—help on to light and refreshment and advancement poor souls who have crossed the frontier-line of the Spiritual, undeveloped and unsaved.

I know, perfectly well, what some who read these lines will say. I can voice their reply in two words—"Danger—Devil!" I have dealt with that reply in another chapter of this volume. Here, I will only add this: Why do you not exclaim the same thing in respect to all evangelistic work? Is there no danger of baneful influence to those who for the cause of Christ and the love of souls suffer themselves to come into contact with all sorts of undeveloped ones —the revolting savage and the debased dweller in the filthy back-slum? Why believe in the principle of the bad being raised by their con-

tact with the good, as it applies to *this* world, and deny it in its application to the other and more needful world? God does not work under conflicting sets of principles in different spheres.

All that has been said above as to the possibility of and the reason for this intercourse between the earth-world and the Other World, will make it easier to answer the question which stands at the head of this chapter—"Does not the prohibition given to the ancient Israelites imply that *all* intercourse with the Spiritual World is contrary to the will of God?" We answer—"No; it does but imply that, at a particular time and under particular circumstances, such intercourse was forbidden to certain persons for special reasons." It does not follow that, if God forbid a thing at one time, He forbids it for *all* time.

Circumstances may alter the case. Take an instance. According to the Mosaic law, the Israelites were prohibited from intermarrying with foreign races. The regulation was a good one, in view of the fact that the Israelites were to bear witness to the true principles of religious morality; and the foreign races were steeped in Polytheism and vice. The prohibition was a necessity of the time. But is *all* intermarriage between nations, therefore, to be

accounted wrong? Is this law, which was made for special circumstances, to debar all persons from marrying foreigners? For sufficient and good reasons God may even for a while close the door of the Spiritual, as when in the time of Eli "there was no open vision," or during the few centuries preceding the birth of Jesus, no exalted spirit seems to have come to men, and no earthly teacher received that influx of spiritual inspiration which could constitute him a *prophet.* And yet, at the coming of the Saviour, the door was opened again, and intercommunion between the Spiritual World and this marked the earth-life history of the Son of Man.

If the prohibition given to the Israelites denoted that all intercourse with the World of Spirit is contrary to the will of God, how very strange and inconsistent that angels and departed men should have so identified themselves with God's Christ and His mission on earth! Can anything, more than this intermingling of the Spiritual and the Physical in the time of Jesus, establish the fact that *all* intercourse with the other side is not forbidden by God.

We have to consider the circumstances which rendered that prohibition to the Israelites a necessary one. The social and moral condition

of that race at that time was a very low one. The people had been but lately emancipated from all the demoralizing influences of Egyptian slavery. Their views of God were crude and chaotic, and their religious ideas showed the constant tendency to become assimilated to the ideas which characterized the religion of Egypt, and the still baser forms of the religions of those nations with whom they came into contact after the Exodus. The first Commandment—"Thou shalt have *no other gods* before me"—indicates the Israelites' proneness to Polytheism; while the commands not to kill, not to steal and so on, denote that the standard of morality among them at that time was of no high type. They had been chosen, in the Divine ordering of things, to pioneer in the world the cause of true religion and righteousness, but as yet mentally, morally and socially they were undeveloped. They were susceptible to every influence hostile to a true conception of God, and in danger from every contact pertaining to the moral undevelopment from which they were slowly emerging.

Both the hostile influence and danger soon presented themselves in a special form. In the progress of the Israelites to the land in which they were to subsequently settle themselves,

they encountered foes who resisted the invasion of their territory. Thousands of these foes were slain in the sanguinary encounters which ensued. Thousands and thousands of human souls, ignorant, morally base, and filled with the feelings of hatred and revenge against their slayers, were violently hurled by the Israelites into spirit-life. Some among the Israelites were "mediums;" their psychic powers were so developed as to make it possible for the ones in spirit-life to re-establish through them communication with their persecutors. Through these open doors came a host of malignant ones, thirsting for retaliation, and eager to harm. There was but one safeguard for a people, so little prepared for the attack of evil and who, moreover, had themselves provoked the attack. The door must be closed; the communication between the Spiritual and the Physical be broken *in that particular case and under those particular circumstances.*

Hence the prohibition. It was given not to proscribe *all* communication between this world and the other, but to meet the exigencies of a particular case.

But lastly, those who account this prohibition given to the ancient Israelites, as implying that all intercourse with the Spiritual World is con-

trary to God's will, prove too much. They cut away the foundation upon which the Jewish and Christian religions rest. Communication between this world and the spiritual is the fact upon which prophets and Apostles relied for their credentials.

Without such communication, Christianity, on its own showing, would possess no evidences of its preternatural origin, its spiritual inspiration or Divine vocation in the world at all. It has been accepted by men because of its vital relationship to the spiritual.

The history of the Hebrew race as narrated in the Old Testament, is indissolubly bound up with the fact of men's contact with the World of Spirit.

Are we to suppose that the experiences of that race in regard to spiritual visitants and phenomena, were in opposition to the will or command of God?

There would seem to be an inconsistency in God's proscribing intercourse with the Spiritual World, and then employing that intercourse as the foremost means of teaching men the highest truth. Again, in the New Testament, the life and work of Jesus and the Apostles are inseparably connected with spiritual intercourse. From the birth of the Saviour to His withdrawal

of Himself into the plane of sublimated and ascended life, inter-communion between this world and the Spirit World marks the whole track of His experience. And so, too, with respect to the Apostles and others associated with them. Almost every chapter of the Acts contains the record of a spiritual sign or wonder, an angelic visit, a spiritual vision or a spiritual voice. All this is inexplicable and contradictory, if the prohibition given under special circumstances, against communion with the Spirit World, denotes *that the thing itself is forbidden by God.* The contradiction disappears, if it be realized that God's opening of the door of the spiritual has been the great means by which He has instructed man in Divine truth; and that His reason for commanding certain ones not to open that door, was because the great law of spiritual attraction must always operate, and the danger to those morally and spiritually undeveloped ones of attracting to them evil influences, was greater than any likelihood of drawing the good.

IV. How can it be explained that many of the communications alleged to come from discarnate beings are unsatisfactory, misleading and untruthful?

This is a question submitted by one who admits the possibility of communication between us and beings in spirit-life, but rejects, as being wholly subversive of the main-principle of the Christian religion, the "Diabolic" theory, viz., that all such communication is "the work of the Devil." The difficulty confronts him of accounting for the fact that some of the communications received *are* of the character he has described. The questioner perceives how illogical is the position of those who accept the Christian religion, and yet regard as incredible all communication between us and beings in spirit-life. He is quite right. What, we ask, could be more inconsistent than to profess to implicitly believe that after death Moses, Samuel, our Lord, the saints who appeared to many in Jerusalem at the first Easter-time, and the Christian brother who visited St. John at Patmos—that these

manifested themselves to, and conversed with, the dwellers on earth a few hundred years ago, but that since then such an occurrence has been an impossibility; nay! that the mere thought of it is an absurdity! We argue, if such things really did take place in Bible-times (and the credibility of the Gospel narratives is destroyed, if they *did not*,) why can they not occur in the twentieth century? What was possible *then* is possible *now*. God's universe has undergone no change of constitution. If there be no intermingling of the life of the Spirit World with the life of this world *at all times*, we have little or no grounds for believing that there ever has been such an intermingling. "As it was in the beginning, is *now*, and ever shall be." Those Christians who deny the present possibility of communion with spirit-beings are piously shocked if an Agnostic or a Materialist asserts that all the Bible-records of such contacts are "nonsense." But why be shocked? Those persons who take that position cannot consistently find fault with the Agnostic. He and they both account as incredible the thought of communion between the two worlds. He is the more consistent. He says the thing itself is absurd; it never does, and it never did, happen. They say, of course, it happened long ago,

for hundreds and hundreds of years; but it could not possibly happen *now*. Those were Bible times, and all was very different then from what it has been since. We are told that everything the Scriptures state concerning the contact of spiritual beings with men is reasonable and on no account to be doubted; but that to acknowledge that anything of a like character could take place now is most unreasonable and incredible. Now do let us as Christians be logical! If communication between us and the Spiritual World be an impossibility at the present time, and has been so ever since the times of the Bible, then the Agnostic is right; we have no grounds for believing that it existed as that book declares. Consequently, we must reject the Bible accounts of Spiritual Phenomena as fabrications. On the other hand, if such communication is a present-day fact, we have an assurance that the principle upon which the Christian religion has been based is a *true* one. The good folk to whom we are alluding say—"We believe in the long-ago communication between the two worlds, *because the Bible asserts it was so.*" "Quite so," we reply, "and this means that although *you*, of course, had no experience of these happenings, and have no means of verifying the statements made con-

cerning them, you, nevertheless, unquestionably believe in them?"

"Of course, we do," is the rejoinder, "the *Bible* vouches for the facts." Well, those who believe in a *present-day* communication between the two worlds have a far stronger case for their belief than have the ones who believe that such communication existed only in *the olden times.* In the first place, the testimony of the Bible in regard to intercourse with the spiritual is very small, in comparison with the testimony which has been borne to the same thing apart from that book. The Bible is a selection of writings brought together by a church council in A. D. 400, and constituted the Sacred Canon. The writings comprise the statements of a small body of persons who wrote at different times during a period covering many centuries. From the time of the closing of the Canon to the present moment, hundreds and thousands of writers have narrated their experiences of the spiritual, as the Bible-writers did; and in a great number of instances the experiences of both classes of writers are coincident. The testimony borne by the men of to-day who have scientifically studied the phenomena of the spiritual, shows how, point by point, the present-day phenomena resemble those which we

read in the Bible. Moreover, we have an enormous amount of testimony from living persons who have had their experiences of spiritual things, and have never committed those experiences to writing. We ask, why accept the testimony of a few men who lived in "the hoary past," and account it most reliable, when an overwhelmingly greater mass of similar testimony, given subsequently and also at the present time, is rejected as unreliable and worthless? We have not one tithe of the evidence for the fact that intercourse with the spiritual existed in Bible times, that we have for the fact that it exists to-day. How absurd for any Christian to go to a non-believer and tell him that he must accept as absolute truth the statements of the Bible concerning spiritual happenings; and in the next breath to inform him that all present-day occurrences of the same order are nought but the outcome of distorted imagination!

In the next place, there is, of course, no possibility of verifying the statements of the Bible writers. We cannot come into contact with the ones who had the spiritual experiences. We can simply take their word for what they narrate. The case for present-day spiritual intercourse is in a very much stronger position. There

are numbers of persons living among us to-day —men distinguished in science and culture— whose word we should not dream of doubting, men whose experiences of the spiritual have been similar to many of those of the Bible writers. We can receive from their own lips the accounts of what they have experienced. And still more than this; it is possible for every open-minded enquirer as to the truth of spiritual communion, to obtain for himself the proof that the door between the two worlds is still open. The questioner, therefore, as a Christian, is quite right in dissenting from those other Christians who say that it is a mark of piety to believe that spiritual intercourse existed long ago, but that it is impious and foolish to think it can exist now.

But what perplexes many who acknowledge the fact of present-day intercourse between us and spirit-beings, is that the communications received are often of *an unsatisfactory character.* These communications do not come up to the preconceived idea of what they should be. Many have no conception of a spiritual being, except as an angel or a devil. It never enters the ordinary religious mind that there are millions in the Spirit World who, for a while at least, are extraordinarily like the men and women in this

world. "How absurd," say some, "to suppose that beings from the other world should come to us and talk 'common-places,' or display ignorance and mental incapacity, or in some cases even tell lies!" But why should it be absurd to suppose this? We are inclined to think that the absurdity lies in expecting that, of necessity, all communications from discarnate beings must be of a high order and tone. We do not suppose that if the repentant robber who was crucified with our Lord had appeared after death to persons in this world, as others mentioned in the Gospel narrative did—that his mental tone and conversation would have been of the lofty character of that of Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration. We believe it would have been the tone and conversation of one who had but just learned the A B C of higher thoughts and better life; and no more. We regard it also as bordering on the absurd, to suppose that the ordinary non-cultured and non-developed ones who depart this life, and afterwards manifest themselves to those left behind, should come with no traces of that which had previously characterized them. It is not reasonable. The idea is founded on a false notion of what is. The Bible itself and our knowledge of the laws of mind and being exclude such a

supposition. The established order of things would be broken, if it were so; the connection between sowing and reaping, between cause and effect would be at an end.

Now, a very common notion concerning the Other World is, that in passing into it we undergo at once a complete change of mind, character and disposition. The one who in this life may have been very silly, very ignorant, or very morally and spiritually imperfect, is pictured as becoming soberminded, wise and virtuous, as soon as ever he crosses the threshold of spirit-life. All frivolity and light-mindedness will instantaneously disappear, it is said, in that world where all is intense reality; all ignorance will cease in a light which reveals everything; and moral imperfection—well, that, too, will disappear with the physical body.

Of course, those who hold this view of the tremendous transforming power of death on our being, regard this sudden acquirement of mental and moral excellence as only accruing to those who die in the condition of "*saved* souls." Death, they suppose, works a transformation in the case of the other class; but it is a transformation into a condition which is hopelessly and irretrievably bad. For the "unsaved" ignorant and sinful ones, death gives the stereotyping

touch for an endless Satanic life. It is an awful thought! a thought which makes one shudder; but it is an idea which hundreds of thousands of sincere men have attached to the religion of Jesus, and labelled "Orthodoxy." Yes, and it is the thought which has caused many who acknowledge the fact of spirit-return, to account as a marauding force of the Devil those poor, earth-bound spirits who sometimes come to us, with all the disfigurement of a neglected past upon them; the ones who, although they have moved off the stage of the temporal, are less wise, less good, and less spiritually-developed than we are. Some of the truth-obscuring traditions of the past must be unlearned. Death is no transformer of the inner being of any one; nor does change of environment suddenly make a person excellently good or hopelessly evil. Death strips from off a man that physical vehicle through which for a while he expressed himself; but it does not alter *him*. It transfers him to another plane of life; but it effects no change in the bent of his will, the tone of his character and the nature of his desires. He commences his new phase of experience in the Spirit World at precisely the mental and moral point he had touched when he left the earth-life. If in this world he was silly or ignorant,

or vicious, or unspiritual, he will be so in the Other World; until the disciplining love of God shall have worked its results, and the soul, previously unborn to the Divine, shall feel the thrill of quickening life, and shall set itself with the tide of spiritual being which makes for the upward and for God. Yes, and the consequences of the past may be such, that only slowly and with difficulty can the mind be brought to hate the alienation, the shame and the swine, and to say—"I will arise, and go to my Father." The believer in the Bible should have no difficulty in realizing that death will not change the mind, the character and the disposition. The Samuel who appeared after death was the same in thought and feeling as he had been before he entered spirit-life. His words spoken as a discarnate one were but the echo of what he had said when in the flesh. Departed Moses, too, in his converse with Jesus, at that *rendezvous* where beings in earth-life and spirit-life met, showed by the subject on which he spoke, that his discarnate mind was in the same groove as his incarnate mind had been long before. The Saviour, too, in those manifestations of Himself after He had passed out of the earth-life, showed by the words He spoke to men and women who were privileged to see Him, that

none of the characteristics of His beautiful mind and spirit had undergone change or modification. The first Easter greeting—"Mary!" denoted that the bond of friendship and affection had not been broken. His words—"All hail!" "Peace be unto you," "I ascend to *my* Father and *your* Father;" His exposition of truth as He walked unrecognized with those two men on the road to Emmaus; His special appearance to St. Peter; His significant thrice-repeated question—"Lovest thou me?" and His reiterated charge to that same Apostle—"Feed my lambs"—"Feed my sheep"—all showed that entrance into spirit-life had not altered *the Jesus Himself*. The old love, the old longing to lighten burdened hearts, the old desire to impart peace, the old passion to make men realize that God is their Father, the remembrance of what had happened, and the principle which had dominated the whole of His earth-life, concern for others—all this remained unchanged in Jesus after death.

Many years after this glorious Easter-tide of close intercourse between the two worlds, a faithful servant of the Master wrote that he had "a desire to depart and to be with Christ." This statement of St. Paul has been taken by some to denote that death will usher

all believing souls into an immediately-acquired condition of perfection. "Prayers for the Faithful Departed," say some, "are wholly unnecessary: they have reached the goal; they go *to be with Christ;* St. Paul said so." Well, we do not believe that non-developed Christians—the ones who are selfish, petty, bad-tempered and lack the sweetness of love—go at death to "be with Christ," in the sense in which the Apostle meant the words. St. Paul was of a very different class from such. But suppose they do! The robber who died on the cross went that very day to be with Jesus in Paradise; but does that involve that that man, with his neglected and perverted past, in a few moments or a few hours acquired perfection of mind and character? That St. Paul and other developed souls should go at death to be with our Lord is only the corollary of their previous life. It is only in accord with the Divine law that one reaps as he sows. It implies no transformation of being in the act of dying. Mentally, morally and spiritually, such blessed ones at death become no more than they were. The changed environment does but afford them enhanced possibilities of adding glory on glory to their moral being, as their fuller life rolls on. St. Paul's expectation of being with Christ as soon as he should leave

this life, was based on the fact that for him "to live (here) was Christ." In a word, then, the Bible teaches that no moral miracle is worked by death, but that men and women on entering spirit-life are what they were on leaving earth-life. Now, if this truth expressed above be realized, there will be no difficulty in understanding why some of the communications received from the other side are unsatisfactory, misleading and even lying. Many attach to the utterance of a spiritual being an importance and authority which they would not dream of attaching to the utterance of any earthly speaker. But why? Do they not know that the world of spirit holds men and women whose mental and moral conditions are just as varied as are the conditions of men and women here? There are to be found good, bad and indifferent ones, some enlightened, others but partially so, and many, as yet, ignorant of Divine truth, and irresponsive to the vibrations of goodness. There are to be found those to whom cling the thoughts, instincts and tendencies which have been persistent in the earth-life. The physical body has been laid aside, but the character has been retained. The ones who have been debased, deceitful and untruthful on earth, possess the same pre-disposition and potentiality, until

the judgments of God shall have awakened them to better things. The closing words of the Canon of Scripture are no declaration of a vindictive God; but a statement of what *must be* under the inviolable law of cause and effect—"He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still; and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still." (Rev. xxii. 11 Revised Version).

In the face of this truth, how foolish to treat any statement as authoritative and true, simply and solely because it comes to us from the Other World. And yet there are many who do so. If a communicating spirit should declare that the great verities of the Christian religion are not to be believed, that, in itself, is quite sufficient in the case of some to cause those verities to be discredited. But that is a very illogical position to assume. The communicator may be an ignorant one, a deceiver, or a liar. In this world we come into contact with such persons, but we do not dream of accepting as truth all that they tell us, simply on the grounds of its being their *ipse dixit.* No, we exercise our judgment, and estimate the worth of any statement made, by giving due weight to the fact that our informant may be ignorant, mis-

led, or untruthful in regard to the matter about which he speaks. In just such a sensible way should we treat all communications which come to us from the Other Side. They may be true or they may be false. There are ignorant ones there; those who have carried their old habits and predispositions with them into spirit-life, and who still try to deceive, to lie and to mislead. Earth-bound, and not in tune with the higher life of the spiritual, they find avenues open to them whereby they can re-establish their connection with the Physical. Are we to believe and to account as authoritative all they may tell us? Not if we be wise; not if we obey the injunction of that Apostle who had a personal experience of the Spirit World, before he had severed his connection with the Physical World. (See II Cor. xii. 1 to 4). He bade us beware of "*seducing spirits.*" We must listen to the counsel of one—another Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ; the man who saw and heard Jesus, Moses and a Christian fellow-labourer after their departure from this world. "Beloved," wrote he, "believe not every spirit, but test (δοκιμάζετε) the spirits whether they are of God. . . . . Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not

that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." (I John iv. 1-3).

Are we to suppose, if a spirit came to us and told us that God had commissioned him to be "a *lying* spirit in the mouth of all his prophets," in order to compass the physical destruction of a wicked man, that that spirit was speaking the truth? We should know at once that he was a deceiver and a liar; because for God to forbid lying and then to sanction and enjoin it, would be on the part of God a breach of the law of righteousness. A personal friend of mine, who is clairvoyant and clairaudient and possesses great psychic power, and who is, moreover, a Christian and highly cultured, has received many audible and written communications from spirit-beings, of a high order, in the same way as the seers of old did. That person was one day much distressed and perplexed at being told by a spiritual communicator that he (the spirit) had had no reason to alter or modify the views he had held in earth-life, viz., that the Christian religion was *not* true. It seemed so incredible to my friend that a being in spirit-life should be ignorant of a matter which, if true, is of such vital importance to himself and others. "Surely," said he, "the statement of that spirit suggests the thought that the belief

we hold may not be right!" Our answer is, that such a statement points to no conclusion of the Christian religion being untrue; but only to the fact that one in spirit-life was still unenlightened in regard to higher truth; that the consequences of indifference, prejudice, ignorance and irreligion in this world, had blinded a poor soul in the beyond to the light of God as it is manifested in the Jesus who here and there reveals it. "A misleading spirit!" say some. "Yes," we reply, "if we who know the fuller truth let him mislead us. But not so, if we measure him by the Christ." The authority of the Jesus of earth-life, or the Jesus of anastasis-life, will be greater to us than the authority of any spirit who may come to us from Behind the Veil. We do not, in this world, surrender our faith, and alter our convictions of truth, at the bidding of an unenlightened and non-developed "casual" who may cross our path. "A *devil*—that one!" say others. "No;" we again reply, "only a poor soul living in 'the darkness without;' reaping the consequences of past neglect and wilfulness; not yet awakened to truth; not yet drawn to the Christ. *Curse* him not, though you count him an enemy. The cursing age for those who believe in the Great Lover of human souls is fast passing away. Discourage his visits to you,

if you be not strong enough to help him to God and light, or be weak enough for his ignorance to imperil your faith in Christian truth; but pray for him, tell *him* to pray; and tell him, too, that other spirits, wiser than he, grander and more developed than he, have come to some of us dwellers on earth from God's spheres of higher and highest spiritual-life, to help us and uplift us; to tell us that the unattuned and un-Christ-like soul cannot know the greatest truths of God, and that only as the soul of man is permeated with love, and is brought thereby into union with the Christ who is the embodiment of Divine Love, can it know the all of Truth, and reach the destined end of being.

V. Is there a danger in attending Sèances on the ground that at such meetings evil and deceiving spirits may be attracted?

There is; and we have to consider more particularly the character of that danger and the conditions out of which it arises. The possibility of evil and deceiving spirits coming into communcation with persons living in the earth-life has been discussed in the foregoing article. It has been pointed out that the mental and moral condition of persons in the Spirit World cannot be defined by the two terms—"good" and "bad." Between these two extremes there lie every conceivable type of mind and character. There are numbers of spirit-men and women, who may rightly be described as evil; though not in the sense of the popular idea that they are non-human beings; a malignant race distinct from humanity, and known as *demons*. They are evil in the same sense as those persons in this world are spoken of as evil, not when they are irretrievably bad, with no point whatever of goodness within them; but when in

character and life they are more attuned to what is wicked than to what is good. We describe as evil the immoral, drunken and debased person, the one of low tastes and habits, the scoffer at religion and virtue, and the one who finds a delight in lying, deceiving, and physically or mentally harming others. Not all of good has been extinguished in such ones, but the evil is predominant. There are beings in the Spirit World of this description who sometimes come to us. They are not devils; they are discarnate human beings who are undeveloped, unenlightened, and sufficiently morally bad to justify us in calling them "evil" spirits. We do not believe that they will everlastingly remain as such; we think they will advance. They are earth-bound in their ideas, their tastes and their seekings. They left the earth-life unfitted for the spirit-life, and their instincts and longings gravitate towards the former rather than towards the latter. It is only in harmony with the better theological thought of the present day, and with the recorded utterance of the Saviour as to "seeking and saving *the lost*," to think that the judgments of God will cause them to rise from this condition. Nay, further, we will venture to say that the reason why such evilly-conditioned ones as these are at times

permitted to renew their relationship with the Physical, is that they, by the very experiences they obtain through such renewal, may realize the futility of remaining earth-bound, and have enkindled in them the desire for better life.

A person who possessed in a very high degree the gift of clairvoyance, once told me that often as he passed the open door of gin-palaces in London and elsewhere, he could see spiritual beings intermingling with the half-drunken men and women who were thronging the drinking bars. Why were those spirits permitted to be there? it may be asked. We may account for it in two ways. First, the great law of affinity—the law which attracts like to like—was operating in regard to them. By their habits and mode of living while on earth, those spirits had moulded for themselves a certain character, and had so identified themselves with base things, as to make the taste and craving for those things the controlling power of their mind and the determining principle of their actions. While in the flesh, they had been drunkards and companions of the lewd and depraved. After death, they found themselves unchanged, except that the physical body, through which the perverted mind and will had expressed themselves, was gone. Earth-bound, and with,

as yet, no desire for, or possibility of attaining, higher thoughts and higher experiences, they were drawn by an impulse, which they had no power or wish to resist, viz., to re-visit the haunts and associates connected with their past life of vice. As discarnate ones, they themselves are no longer able to indulge in the intoxication or the grossnesses and vices of the physical; but a certain satisfaction is derived from mingling with and inciting others who can still do so. After death they have gone, as it was said of Judas, "to their own place." The evil of two worlds meet in such a scene as we have just described. The other way in which we may account for discarnate ones being allowed to re-associate themselves with evil physical surroundings, is as has already been suggested. It may be one of the means, one of the judgments of a Father-God, whereby his debased creatures may learn the folly, the futility and the horror of persisting in a course marked by the perversion of the mind and spirit. It may be one of His methods of bringing those wretched ones to see that no satisfaction, no sense of hope and restfulness can come to any soul until the thoughts have been averted from the evil and turned towards good. That beautiful parable told by Jesus justifies this thought.

Those very experiences of the Prodigal which connected him with what was base, degraded and shameful, brought him at length to the point of wishing for better things, and of arising and going to his father. Now, we have dwelt upon the fact of this law of being—this principle which operates, we believe, throughout the whole universe—viz., that "like attracts like," because it is inseparably connected with all that may take place in regard to Sèances. What is a Sèance? It is a sitting on the part of persons for the purpose of obtaining communication from spirit-beings. What class of communicators will be attracted thereby? it is naturally asked. "Devils, only devils," reply some, whose theology is characterized by a superabundance of the Satanic element. "That is wrong, of course," rejoins the questioner, "but will not such meetings attract evil and deceiving spirits?" We answer that that will depend entirely on the tone of mind and the character of the sitters. "Like attracts like." At one Sèance there may be drawn evil and deceiving spirits; at another, good and enlightening ones; at a third, mediocre beings who are neither very wise and good, nor very ignorant and bad; while at some Sèances the good and indif-

ferent from the Other Side may both alike make the effort to express themselves.

If the circle be composed of those who are frivolous, spiritually undeveloped and ignorant of higher truth, the spirits who will feel the attractive force, and will respond to it, if the door of communication be open for them, will be similar in mind to those who invite them. To look for communications of an exalted nature from *such*, is as absurd as it would be for a company of ignoramuses to invite another ignoramus into their circle, and expect the latter to enlighten them on subjects concerning which he knows nothing. If the circle comprise those whose moral tone is low, and whose ideas and tastes are essentially of "the earth, earthy," the spirits who avail themselves of their mediumship will be of the same type as they are. It causes astonishment sometimes, that spirits who come to a circle composed of irreligious, worldly-minded individuals, should say nothing but the barest commonplaces, and nought that has the stamp of spiritual knowledge and culture. "How incredible," says someone, "that a being from the Other Life should talk in *that way!*" "How incredible," we rejoin, "seeing his condition, that he could talk in any other way!" "Like attracts like." If you are able to diagnose the

character and disposition of those who draw him to their midst, you will be able pretty accurately to diagnose *his* character and disposition. Again, if the circle be made up wholly of those whose minds and lives are in tune with spiritual things, and who approach the subject reverently and prayerfully, the law of attraction will draw from the Other Side only those spirits whose minds are responsive to the minds of the sitters. They will be able to impart to us, not *full* knowledge of higher truths, but much which is in advance of our own knowledge. It will be in their power to guide, to cheer, to bless and to stimulate us in our efforts to grasp God and goodness. I have been present at many Sèances of this description—held in the house of a friend, who has himself now passed Beyond the Veil. Those present were all devout and prayerful persons, and the meetings were always opened with earnest prayer that light and blessing might be vouchsafed, and that no undesirable or evil influence might be allowed to intrude. And what was the outcome? At those meetings I have seen the manifestations of spiritual presences, and heard from my friend in trance-condition (in which state I believe his mind to have been controlled by a mind outside himself) such thoughts and ideas and magnifi-

cent conceptions of life, as he, unaided, was unable either to think or express.

Again, at a Sèance the sitters may exhibit dissimilarity in regard to mind and character. Some may be attuned to the drawing to the circle of good and developed spirits, while some may be an attracting power on non-developed and even evil spirits. What then? The result will be unsatisfactory. Confusion will arise. The presence of the spiritually-minded sitter or sitters in the circle may draw the developed spirit-visitant; but it will be difficult for him to express himself. The conditions will be unfavorable to his doing so. Another influence will be working against him. If, as regards the sitters, the predominating influence be on the side of the unspiritual, then the chances are that the Sèance will be controlled by the lower class of communicators. The good control will have suffered a repulse. We have been asked, again and again, "Do you recommend that anyone should attend Sèances?" We answer, "Yes, if the circle be composed of good, spiritually-minded, prayerful persons—those who hold God in their life and are seeking for truth. Their *combined* influence will constitute an attractive force, and supply the conditions whereby the good in the world of spirit may

be brought into uplifting and helpful communication with us. But no; certainly not, if the circle be that of the unspiritual ones. In doing so, you will be but helping to open the door to the ones you do not want, and saying to the tramps and undesirables of the Spiritual World —'Come in and make yourselves at home.' "

And lastly, if you possess, as Jesus and the early Christians did, the psychic power of "discerning spirits" (I Cor. xii. 10), and by chance (or rather let us say by God's ordering) you meet a poor unrestful spirit, whom you invited not, but who has crossed your path because the chain of the past is holding him down to the earth-plane—Oh! be like the Christ of Love and Pity; help him by letting him know that your prayer has gone up, the prayer that the light of the Holy Spirit of God may break in upon the darkness of an alienated mind, and that he may see, as God's beckoners to him, the Harbor-lights of higher spheres.

VI. Will the relationships which have existed between persons in this world be maintained in the Life Beyond?

That, in our opinion, will absolutely depend upon whether there existed, as the basis of the earthly relationship, the principle of spiritual attraction, or affinity. There can be no union between soul and soul, in the World of Spirit, apart from this. Dissociated from the Physical and from all the considerations of the Physical, the only bond of connection between spirit and spirit must be *spiritual.*

Now, many of the relationships connected with the earth-life are not founded on this spiritual basis. They spring from the Physical, and never rise beyond it. In this world, persons are often so connected with one another, that the spirit-self of the individuals comes but little, or not at all, into the relationship.

Take some of the instances which are presented in regard to the marriage tie. Two persons, we will suppose, from a consideration merely of money, or social position, or expediency, or fleeting fancy, enter into the relation-

ship of man and wife. The essential part of them—their spirit, with all its powers of love and sympathy—may but little, perhaps not at all, be called into play in the transaction. In regard to them, there may be no conjunction of spirit with spirit, mind with mind, and heart with heart. The man married the woman only because he wanted a wife, and she was socially and physically eligible. The woman married the man because her position and status in the world would be advanced thereby. Such a relationship, we believe, will not be perpetuated in the Life Beyond. Those two persons, there, will not stand in the relationship of wedded beings. Death, which launches us into a world where spiritual activities are everything, will remove from them the causes out of which their earthly relationship arose; and devoid of the spiritual basis of union, each will be no more to the other than any other spirit might be. It was due to the Sadducees' failure to perceive that the only lasting bond of union must be a *spiritual* one, that prompted them to ask our Lord, "In the Anastasis, whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her." (Matt. xxii. 28). Christ's reply to them was no declaration that the relationship embodied in marriage, if based on the *spiritual* union of two beings, would *not*

be perpetuated in the World of Spirit. He did but enunciate the principle, that no earthly marriage, contracted merely from considerations of the mundane (in the case in point, to raise up seed to a deceased brother) could possibly, in the Life Beyond, constitute the bond between spirit and spirit. "In the Anastasis," said Jesus, "they are as the angels of God in Heaven," i. e., they are *spiritual* beings; they live in the environment of the spiritual. "They neither marry, nor are given in marriage." The Physical will be superseded; no merely physical tie which linked two persons on earth will constitute their bond of union hereafter. Soul must be wedded to soul, or the earthly relationship will be broken by the disrupting hand of death. Spirit in tune with spirit is the only basis of relationship Beyond the Veil.

It may be asked—Will, then, the marriage tie be dissolved at death? Will those who have been connected in this life, stand disconnected and unrelated to each other hereafter? We think, not; if the earthly relationship was the outcome of, or has led to the development of, a spiritual affinity. The relationship which has maintained mutual love and sympathy and has caused the spiritual force of the one being to energize towards the other, will not cease to

exist with dissociation from the Physical. If that relationship be founded on the spiritual within us, its continuance is assured; because our spirit-self and its energies and powers are not impaired by physical dissolution.

The husband and wife, whose souls have been in tune in the earth-life, will not, we believe, be unrelated in the life to come. The spiritual interaction set up will not stop at the incident of death. Conjoined on earth, by an indestructible principle, they will gravitate to each other in the world of Spirit. The Physical and the considerations of the Physical will have disappeared, but the spiritual union will remain intact. In that life the relationship created in the earth-life will become intensified and consummated. Those spiritually united souls will still be the nearest and dearest to each other. Like the Master, who loved all, but *specially* loved St. John and the family at Bethany, each of those two spiritually married souls will be more closely allied to the other, than either can be to any other spirit. In the light of such a thought, how significant and beautiful becomes the earthly relationship of marriage to mutually loving ones! "Till death *us do part*," says the Prayer-Book. Nay—"Till our death enhance and spiritually consummate the bond forever."

Take the case of a man or a woman who may have been twice or thrice married. Will all those persons who were the earthly partners of one having had such an experience, stand in the relationship of husbands, or wives, to that one, in the Hereafter? We think not for the reason that it is only the highest degree of spiritual affinity that can constitute spiritual marriage, and that, we believe, can only exist between a soul and *one* other soul.

The reason, we take it, why Christianity, as God's higher revealment of truth, discountenances Polygamy, is that earthly marriage was intended to prefigure spiritual marriage. A developed soul will love and must love other souls; aye, all souls; but there can be but *one* soul between whom and itself the closest affinity and union exists. The man and woman who have stood to each other in the earthly relationship of husband and wife, will, if there has been a real soul-union, stand in the same relationship in spirit-life.

Those whom God hath thus spiritually joined together will not be put asunder because the physical conditions of their union are removed. But it will not be so, apart from this union of soul. Without this intermingling of spirit with spirit, this spiritual attracting force exerted by

the one on the other, these two persons may stand altogether unrelated in the Life Beyond. The contact there may be no more than the contact which each may have with souls not known during earth-life. In a world of spiritual reality, the wedded couple of earth, unlinked in spirit, may find themselves in divergent spheres of life and interest. Apply this to the case of the one who may have had *several* wedded partners. In the World of Spirit, whose wife will the woman be who on earth had two or three husbands? Whose husband will the man be who had two or three wives? The question affects a large section of mankind—the polygamist, and the man who has married more than once.

"They neither marry, nor are given in marriage," said the Christ. The earthly sense of marriage will have been obliterated; the Physical concomitants of union between being and being will have disappeared; but the connection of soul with soul will remain. Every spirit, we believe, will be short of full development, and will not have fulfilled the design of its being, until it has found, and has been united to, that *one* other spirit; its spiritual mate, its complement, its *alter ego*. And they twain become one.

Did there exist between the man and one of

the women to whom he was wedded on earth that spiritual affinity, that mutual attraction of ego to ego, that union of essential being? If so, the relationship will not be dissolved by death. In the Beyond, they will be spiritually wedded souls. The bond between them, although in the past associated with the Physical, was not dependent upon it. It had its roots in the spiritual and it must remain. The spirit-man may still love those other souls who in earth-life stood in the relationship of wife to him, but his love for them will be different from the love he will hold for the one between whom and himself there subsisted this soul-union. The latter will be his spirit partner. The earthly marriages, unbased on any union of souls, will have been annulled by death; while the relationship which was rooted in the spiritual will be continued. That soul-linked husband and wife of earth, will be the spiritual husband and wife of the Beyond.

And what has been stated above in regard to the relationship of marriage, appears to us to apply to all other earthly relationships. It may be asked—Will a father and mother, when they have passed into spirit-life, stand in that relationship to the ones who in earth-life were their children? Will the relationship of brother

and sister and other family connections be maintained hereafter? Will not all ties of consanguinity disappear in an environment in which everything pertains to the Spiritual, and nothing to the Physical? We reply, it will depend upon whether the earthly relationship did, or did not, bring about soul relationship and affinity.

The mother, for instance, whose soul goes out to the undeveloped soul of the little child who is subsequently snatched from her by death, will certainly, we think, stand in relationship as mother to that child in spirit-life. But, it may be urged, there could be, in such a case, no affinity between the soul of the mother and the soul of the child. The child died with its soul undeveloped; there could be no response on the part of the child's soul to the soul of the mother. Quite so, for a while at least. But the soul-vibrations of love from the mother on earth can reach and affect the developing soul of the child Behind the Veil. Those vibrations, projected into an atmosphere pulsating with love, will produce love. The spirit-child will feel that love. Its soul will respond to it. As it spiritually advances, there will be inborne upon its consciousness the fact that the soul-force of an unknown *mother* is enwrapping it.

A longing for that mother will arise; an ex-

pectation of union with her; a praying that this may be gratified. We can picture the rest—can we not? A ministering-spirit leading a child-spirit towards a newly-emancipated woman-spirit. No word of explanation, no introduction! A look, a thrill, on the part of woman and child. Their souls have recognized each other. The relationship of earth has not been broken; the mother and child are reunited as such. The other earthly ties of relationship also, which make a person a brother, a sister, a lover, a friend, will not, we think, be obliterated in the Higher-life. If between that one and the other to whom he or she stands related there exists the touch of soul with soul, the tie will be maintained. The earthly relationships, which in time have ennobled and sanctified human lives and drawn spirit to spirit, are not designed to play no part in the experiences of eternity. In the World of Spirit, the maintained and spiritually accentuated ties which knit husband and wife, lover and lover, parent and child, and friend and friend, will be found to be the Divinely appointed means by which the mighty principle of love will the better energize in the human soul, attuning it for its highest and closest communion with the Father of Love.

It may seem a daring statement to make, but

we believe that many a husband and father, many a wife and mother, whose relationship with partner or children has drawn forth and combined the forces and sweetness of souls, will hereafter stand higher in the attainments of love and better adapted for God's Heaven, than many a canonized saint who in cell or cloister has divorced himself from the relationships of life. Love in a human soul will develop into *self*-love, apart from the reciprocal touch of other souls. And the relationships of earth, we believe, which effect this reciprocal touch, are Divinely appointed to remain.

Will there, then, be some in the After-Life whose earthly relationships with others may cease to exist?

Yes, alas! we think so. There are, for example, unfatherly fathers and unmotherly mothers, in regard to whom the only tie subsisting between them and their children is a *physical* one. They begat them: nothing more. No spiritual bond links them and their offspring. Death, we think, will snap, once and forever, that merely physical connection. There will remain nothing, in the Beyond, which can constitute a linking of the spirit-self of the parent and the spirit-self of the child. The work of the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society and Dr. Bar-

nado's Homes reveals the fact that there are such fathers and mothers.

Now, whatever may be the possibilities of repentance, amendment and development hereafter, in the case of such parents, they will not evade the inviolable law of God, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. vi. 7). Earthly parents who have never realized, nor sought to cultivate the *spiritual* bond between them and their children will reap the consequences. In the Spirit World they will be short of an experience and a joy which they might have had. An earthly relationship might have blossomed into a heavenly relationship. But it did not do so. Hereafter, the thrill and delight of spiritualized fatherhood and motherhood will be an impossibility to them. The mercy of God may cause them to develop, at length, into blessed souls; but for eternity they may be short of what they might have been, had the earthly relationship been sanctified for the development of the spirit. They may experience an "everlasting *damnation*" which means an everlasting *loss*. Forever, they may be spiritually less developed than they might have been: a department of their being may remain unopened. They may see the spirit-children of others clasped in the arms of their spirit-

parents; but no spirit-child is held in their embrace. The son or daughter, born to them on earth, may meet them and be known to them; but that one may be no more to them than any other stranger-spirit. The sense of relationship, unbased upon the spiritual, will have gone.

On the other hand, a beautiful and comforting thought suggests itself It is this: that many a soul, in the Life Beyond, may not, until then, realize the *full* possibilities of higher being, in finding the satisfaction of the yearnings of the spiritual nature, and the answer to the intuitions and aspirations of love. There are persons, capable of so loving another, that an earthly marriage relationship could only be to them the starting point of an indissoluble spiritual union in life hereafter.

But how many persons are there who never meet in this world, the one between whom and themselves there is this touch of soul with soul. If, by chance, they meet that one, there may have been all sorts of worldly considerations why their lives did not become conjoined. What of them? What of the gentle, loving, Christ-like woman, who longed for, but never knew, a true man's love? What of the good man, a department of whose soul remained undeveloped, because no woman-soul loved

him above all others? Will such persons never know the joy of loving *one particular* soul and of being loved by that soul, in a way which transcends all other possibilities of love? In the World Beyond will no true spiritual mate complete the being of such a man or woman? We believe that such persons, capable of so spiritually loving, although denied in this world the fulfillment of their spirit's longings, will meet in the Hereafter their kindred spirit. Somewhere, in the great universe of spirit, there is, we think, the *alter ego*, the complemental soul, for each loving, though mateless, one of earth.

Only will the purpose of God have been fulfilled, we believe, when "they twain shall have become one;" when these *alter egos*, drawn to each other by the irresistible force of spiritual attraction, shall have met, and combined in the highest relationship of spiritually-wedded souls.

Again, there are many women who, while possessing all the capacities for true motherhood, have never become mothers. A keen disappointment is felt by them; a craving of their spirit has not been answered; great resources of their nature have not been drawn upon; no being has stood to them in the relationship of child.

In the Life of Spirit will there be no possi-

bility of satisfying the spiritual instincts and aspirations of such persons? Will the thrill and joy which arises from the fact of being viewed as *mother*, by one or more, be never granted to the potentially maternal souls who have passed out of earth-life childless?

We hold the conviction that in the accomplishment of the All-Father's purpose of Love, the satisfying of this true spiritual instinct will be vouchsafed to such. There are millions of little child-souls who pass into spirit-life, unfollowed by the love and prayers of any earthly mother. What if those little ones should be assigned to the care and become the spiritual children of those women-souls who have never on earth, in spite of their longing, been a mother to any! Can we suppose that a Divine instinct, implanted in every true woman-spirit, though ungratified as far as *this* life is concerned, is destined to lead to nothing—to die out from lack of opportunity to express itself? Nay; we have different ideas of God's love and purposes. He never mocks His creatures by endowing them with noble instincts and longings for which no satisfyings have been provided. No woman possessing the spiritual capability of motherhood, will, we think, ever reach the possibilities of her being, until some child-spirit re-

gards her as *spiritual mother.* May it not be that, in this way, untold numbers of God's little ones, unblessed by a true mother's love while in earth-life, may in spirit-life be encircled by the arms of these spirit-mothers, and in the enfoldments of their love may move on to the development and perfecting of being? Such ideas may not be compatible with the notions which have prevailed as to the Life Beyond; but they *are* compatible with our growing ideas and extended knowledge of the love and purpose of our Father-God.

VII. Why do not *all* the departed manifest themselves to those whom they have left behind?

We can conceive of there being several reasons why they do not do so.

I. Many who have passed into spirit-life *have no desire to renew any intercourse with the world from which they have passed;* and apart from the question of a ministry to us, entrusted, we believe, to many of the Departed, the fact of having, or not having, a desire to re-establish earthly relationships will largely determine whether they do or do not re-establish the same.

Now, in the case of many who depart this life, the world they have left behind exerts an enormous attracting power upon them. Spiritually undeveloped and unattuned for their new environment, their tastes and desires gravitate earthward. This class experience a desire to renew, if possible, their intercourse with the mundane. But there are a great number who pass hence, in regard to whom the world exerts

no sufficiently attracting force to draw them back to it. Death has launched them into a new life, and they are devoid of any longing for the persons and things connected with the old. They resemble those in this world who are able to sever themselves from past associations, to betake themselves to another country and other surroundings, and never afterwards to feel any desire for that which has been left behind. This, we think, is so with regard to many of the departed whose earthly lot was one of predominating suffering, or difficulty, or disappointment. It is so, we think, in the case of those whose "sunshine of life" went with the dear ones taken from them by death. To them the new life with its reliefs and possibilities and its re-unions with those "loved long since, and lost awhile," causes all their interest in the old life to recede into the background of their consciousness, and at length to wholly fade away. If such as these come back at all, it is not from a desire to re-connect themselves with a world with which they have done, but to discharge some mission of good entrusted to them. Again, there are others of the departed who have no desire for renewed intercourse with this world, for the reason that they have never cultivated the qualities of love and sympathy.

The greatest of all attracting forces in the universe is love. It is the mighty power which, according to the Lord, will ultimately bring about the accomplishment of God's purpose to save the world. "I, if I be lifted up (if I make this supreme sacrifice of myself for the sake of love) *will draw all unto Me*" (John xii. 32). Love is that principle which can attract spirit-beings to the surroundings of the Physical who feel none of the attracting forces of evil. It drew the exalted Spirit-Christ from the highest spheres of life and experience to the circumscription of earthly existence. It has drawn angels to this world, and it can draw spirit-men and women as God's instruments for blessing and helping us.

Now, the departed ones, between whom and others in the earth-life there exists no bond of love and sympathy, will feel nought of that higher impulse of the soul which expresses itself in a longing for those who have been left behind. The attracting power of love, of spiritual affinity, will be wanting. There are many who answer to this; many men and women who go out of this world unloving and unloved; who are not bad enough (as in the case of debased ones) to be brought again into contact with the Physical by the irresistible attraction of evil;

but are not spiritually developed enough to experience any drawings of love.

II. Another reason why *all* departed ones do not manifest themselves is to be found, we think, in the fact that the manifestation of which the questioner is thinking, involves the re-connection of spirit-beings with the *Physical* world. This, we conceive, may in many instances *be incompatible with growth and advancement in spirit-life.* The conditions under which a spirit is able to manifest himself—using the term to convey the idea which is generally meant, viz., that a spirit should make himself visible, or express himself through the mediumship of the mind and bodily organs of another—implies association with the Physical. This is so with regard to materializations, trance-utterances and automatic writings. The communicating spirit in such cases of manifestation brings himself into close association with the surroundings of the Physical; and these surroundings are *lower* in degree than those of his new life and environment. This close association with the lower—especially if it be a maintained one, may constitute a very real obstacle to the discarnate one's adjusting himself to the higher spiritual experiences. His advance may be retarded thereby. By maintaining his association with the Physical

World, it may be harder for him to become *en rapport* with the Spiritual. God may see it to be as undesirable and harmful to him to re-establish a contact with the Physical, as a Principal of a College might deem it undesirable for a student, designated for high culture, to associate with the unlearned and unrefined. We believe that this is one of other reasons why those who pass out of the earth-life with some attunement for spiritual development, are not very often permitted to manifest themselves through those channels of communication which involve a re-contact with that which is connected with the Physical—such manifestations, for example, as are obtained at Sèances. The spirits who are able, through the instrumentality of the Physical, to materialize, are not, as a rule, advanced or spiritually developed ones. They are, certainly, not beings on the higher, or highest, planes of spiritual life and experience. Such communicators, so dependent on conditions pertaining to the Physical—whose efforts are rather to manifest themselves *objectively* than *subjectively*—are feeble and disappointing in their utterances, as compared with those spiritual communicators who speak to many on the higher plane of mind and spirit. The trance-utterances and the inspirational writings exhibit

the control of a higher order than any which is presented in a materializing circle.

Then, again, this view of the matter is supported by the fact that, although at the outset of spirit-life many of the departed find it possible to renew their association with the Physical, it afterwards becomes increasingly difficult for them to do so. Their advance in the Other World makes it so; and at length there comes a time when such intercourse is made impossible. Advance in the Spiritual places them altogether out of reach of the Physical. Communication in that case between them and those in earth-life can only then be on the plane of the Psychic and the Mental. Nor is this a mere conjecture. There are many instances which go to show that as a spirit advances to higher experiences in the Spiritual World, it becomes more and more difficult to adjust himself to Physical conditions which are necessary, in order that he may *objectively* manifest himself to those on earth.

I have personal friends who have seen once —in some cases twice—and no more, those who have appeared to them after death. One gentleman, known to me, had seen and spoken to his departed wife on many occasions, both by

night and day, during a period extending over a year. He was an unimaginative, practical man, a lawyer, and he prefaced his statement to me by saying: "I am going to tell you something which is a solemn fact; but which I hardly expect you will believe; although you are a parson, and teach people that there is a Life Beyond." He assured me that he had seen his wife after her death on many occasions. That at one of the appearances to him she had earnestly begged him to withdraw from a certain commercial enterprise upon which he had made up his mind to embark, because it would mean financial ruin to him. He was so impressed by what she said that he acted on her advice, and saved himself from that which, as was shown afterwards, would have been disastrous. After a while the visits of this spirit-wife became less frequent, and at last the reason was explained. On the last occasion she appeared to her husband, (he has rejoined her now) she told him that she felt that that manifestation would be her last to him in this world. She said that on entering into spirit-life her love for him, and his psychic condition had made it comparatively easy for her to objectively manifest herself to him. But as time went on, and her attunement with the World of Spirit had grown, she had

found it becoming more and more difficult to retain her relationship with the Physical. She felt that no longer would she have the power of objectively manifesting herself to him. But still she would be constantly near him; in closer communion with him than she had ever hitherto been. Her inability to any longer approach him through the mediumship of the Physical would only mean a still closer and more real approach. Henceforth, the communication between him and her would be on a higher level. Obedient to the demands of love, her rising and developing mind and spirit would constantly touch and help and bless his mind and spirit. Her prayers for him and his prayers for her were to strengthen and perfect the bond between them. The union of mutually loving souls could never be dissolved, because God is Love. In this world, he would probably never see her again; but on the border-line and Beyond, where the limitations of the Physical are forever cast aside, she would meet him, greet him, love him as she loved him now, and would be his pioneer to higher life.

From that day, until he himself passed Beyond the Veil, this friend constantly *felt* the presence of his departed wife, but never again *saw* her.

From what has been said, it will be seen that another reason can be assigned for the fact that not *all* the departed are permitted to visibly manifest themselves to us. But it must not be supposed that this inability of dear departed ones to do this, is to be interpreted as meaning that they are unable to approach us and unable to come into vital touch with us. The contrary is the truth. Their ascension to higher life and experience renders them capable of establishing a communication on a higher plane of being—on the plane of mind and spirit. Many communicators from the Other Side, denied the power of *visibly* manifesting themselves to us here, because their advancement will best be served by the denial, can come into a communication with us closer than that which any materializing spirit can effect. The concomitants of the Physical may play no part in the contact; but the mind and spirit of the discarnate one and the mind and spirit of the earth one may come into conjunction. The being on the earth-plane may receive all sorts of uplifting and helpful influences from the being on the spirit-plane. The sudden feeling of restfulness which comes to a poor distressed and perturbed one; the unexpected ray of something akin to the light of hope which darts across the darkness of a sad-

dened heart; the new impulse which challenges our right to surrender ourselves to despair and mental misery, and bids us to try to be brave and patient and unrebellious; the cause that leads us to make the earnest determination to trust God, to pray to Him amid the darkness of our grief and bereavement; yes, and that thrill of relief which comes from the thought of re-union—all this, we believe, may be the result of an impact of a spirit-mind, energizing under higher conditions, upon the mind of a dweller upon the earth. "Nonsense; a slight to the Holy Spirit of God!" say some who know little about spiritual realities. "Not so," say we. "The blessing and uplifting is all from God. If discarnate spirits lift us Godward and heavenward, the power of the Holy Ghost is behind that uplifting. God is only dealing with us, as He always deals with men: He blesses us through our fellows. Why consider it a disparagement of the power and work of the Holy Ghost, that a departed one should be God's instrument in teaching and blessing us, when no Christian would dream of entertaining such an idea in regard to an angel, or an earthly preacher or teacher of God and righteousness? Do let us be logical. God's principle of bless-

ing man through man obtains in the World of Spirit as it does here.

III. There is another reason why not all of the departed manifest themselves to us. It lies in the fact *that many of us are so psychically undeveloped as to render it impossible for them to do so.*

Love may attract them to us; they may have an intense longing to be with us; there may be, moreover, an earnest desire to help us, and yet they may be wholly unable to set up a communication of which we may be sensible. Why is this? The cause may lie with us. We may be so mentally and psychically constituted as to lack that which is a necessary condition of manifestation. Our spiritual self may not be sufficiently attuned to receive the impressions of the Spiritual. In regard to individuals it may be the same as it is in regard to Wireless Telegraphy—not *all* instruments can register the impulse which is projected, but only an attuned one. There are thousands of persons who have no experience whatever of any impact of the Spiritual, simply because they possess as yet no power of registering it.

May there not have been a significance in our Lord's selecting only three of the Apostolic men to be the witnesses of the manifestation of de-

parted Moses on the Mountain of Transfiguration? May not St. Peter, St. James and St. John *alone* of the twelve have possessed the psychic powers, which made the revelation possible to them, while not possible to the others? Thus, there are many who bemoan the fact that their dear departed ones never make their presence manifest to them. Part of that regret and sadness would disappear, if it could but be realized that, although *unseen and unfelt* by us, our loved ones on the Other Side are often with us; that when the sight of the empty chair in the darkened home recalls the painful longings for the sight of a vanished face, and reopens the fountain of our grief—

"Then the forms of the Departed
Enter at the open door
The beloved, the true-hearted,
Come to visit me once more.
With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine."

IV. There is another reason, I think, why not all of the departed manifest themselves to us. *Their knowledge of the fact that many have*

an unreasoning fear of the Spiritual restrains them. With some, the contact with a spiritual being, even with one who has loved and been beloved by them, calls for nought but a feeling of abject terror. Our spirit dear ones know this and it stays them from manifesting themselves.

I remember once trying to comfort a poor bereaved one who had said that she could bear her sorrow bravely, if only she could know that her departed husband was alive and still loved her, by saying, "Perhaps, it may be permitted to him to appear to you (as others have done) and assure you of this." "Oh! goodness, gracious! I hope not. It would terrify me out of my life were he to come to me," was the reply of the lady. "Then I do not think you will see him, until you yourself cross the border-line. He loves you too much to terrify you," was the rejoinder.

There are many of the departed, we believe, who do not manifest themselves to those whom they have left on earth for this very reason. Love draws them to them; love makes them want to communicate with them; the conditions are favorable—the visitants and visited are in psychic affinity; and yet an obstacle is interposed; the dread of the Beyond is present.

This intense fear of all that pertains to the Spiritual World is very inexplicable; at all events on the part of those who believe in the Christian religion. To profess a faith in continued life after death; to regard that life as being an advance on this present life, and then to be stricken with abject fear at encountering one who has passed into that life, seems to us to savor of inconsistency. But so it is with many. An old clergyman friend of mine once said to me: "If I believed as you do about the spirit-world, I should be frightened to go to bed." Not so, our knowledge of the Other World removes this unreasoning fear, and clears away a barrier which at present stands between us and many in that world.

VIII. Will the fact that beings in spirit-life are on different planes of life and experience, be an obstacle to re-union hereafter?

This is a question which has exercised the minds of very many earnest thinkers, and one which has again and again been submitted by correspondents. It is a question which does not, of course, present itself to those Christians who accept the old "orthodox" view, that for believers a spiritual transformation is wrought by death, and that for non-believers no salvation after death is to be expected.

Those persons, as far as they are consistent with their creed, entertain no hope of the re-union of themselves and those who have died as unbelievers. The theology they endorse teaches that a great gulf yawns between the saved and the unsaved, *which will never be bridged.* Re-union, in that case, is out of the question. Fortunately, the greater number who profess to accept this old notion, save themselves from the mad-house, either by not allowing themselves to think about it, or by secretly

hoping it may not be true. To such straits does a narrow theology reduce them. Those persons also, who believe in the morally and spiritually transforming power of death see no difficulty in regard to the re-union of souls. They suppose that all who depart this life in the Christian faith, whatever may be the point of development reached by them, are at death ushered into a condition of instantly-acquired excellence. Seizing the words of St. Paul and applying them indiscriminately to *all* believers, they imagine that every Christian, developed or undeveloped, will leave this world to be at once with Christ. Such an idea, of course, implies for all Christians on the Other Side, not different planes, but a uniform plane, of life and experience. If it be true that at dying all believers go immediately to be with the Saviour, then all such are in one sphere and on one plane of experience, and re-union becomes a foregone conclusion. But our advance in the knowledge of Spiritual matters has caused many to perceive that both these ideas referred to are un-scriptural and wrong. The great principle under which God is seen in everything to be working in the raising of beings and things from the lower to the higher, is that which shows that development

and perfection is never reached but by *slow* and *gradual* means.

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," said Jesus; and He was proclaiming the law which obtains no less in the Spiritual than in the Physical. Our recognition of this universal principle of being, our better understanding of the statements of the Bible, and our knowledge of the fact that very few depart this life in a moral and spiritual condition such as to equip them for adjustment to highest spiritual life—all this impels one to the conclusion that there are, and must be, in the Life Beyond different planes of experience; and that the sphere into which a soul will pass at death will be determined by the degree of development reached at that time. Like Judas, every one will "go to his own place." The one who has by faith connected himself with Christ, but in whom as yet the Christ-graces have not blossomed, will not, at dying, secure an entrance into that Christ-sphere of spirit-life, into which the Apostle so confidently expected to be admitted on leaving this world. The connection of that undeveloped one with the Saviour will have placed him in a "state of salvation," and will have disposed him aright for ascension to sphere after sphere of higher attainment; but

no more. The higher and the highest spheres of Spiritual life will not be reached until he shall have become spiritually adjusted to them. The spheres of the Other World are *conditions* rather than *localities;* they are constituted by *what we are* rather than by *where we may be.* "The Kingdom of Heaven *is within you,*" said Jesus. The narrow-minded, selfish, bad-tempered, ill-mannered and unloving Christians will not, as soon as they go hence, find themselves in the same sphere as that of the Christ and St. Paul. Many a selfish one, who has reckoned on his "orthodoxy" to insure him against judgment hereafter, may find himself after death in experiences akin to those of Dives. Now, it is the realization of all this which has caused the questioner to ask—Will not these different planes of life and experience present an obstacle to re-union? We think not; and proceed to give our reasons for holding that view.

First, if the spheres of the Other World be, as we have stated, *conditions* rather than *localities,* there can be no difficulty in believing that the departed in different spheres come into relationship with one another. To believe otherwise would be to commit ourselves to a thought which is unreasonable, and at variance with what we know. There is intercourse between

the spheres in regard to *this* world. Men and women on earth are on all sorts of different planes of life and thought. That fact constitutes no barrier to their coming into contact. In like manner, the spiritual condition of some of the departed is wholly dissimilar to that of others; but this dissimilarity is no obstacle to their association.

We have a notable corroboration of this assertion, in what is recorded in the New Testament concerning the experiences of our Lord after death.

When Jesus, in company with the repentant robber, passed into the Spiritual World, His spiritual condition, or sphere, as the Being perfected in moral grace, must have been vastly different from the spiritual condition of the man who had but a moment or two before set his soul in the direction of goodness. On that Good Friday evening, they were not on the same plane of life and experience. Yet as far as the contact of person with person is concerned, there was re-union. They were together. Christ's own words declare it—"Today, shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Again, on the testimony of St. Peter, our Lord, after death, went into the Spirit-World to preach the Gospel to spirits who in earth-life had been dis-

obedient, in order that they might "live according to God in the spirit." (See I Peter iii. 18-20 and iv. 6). The Preacher was on a far higher plane of spiritual life and experience than that of the ones to whom He preached; but that was no obstacle to His association with them. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Christ represents the two men as being in wholly dissimilar spheres of experience in the Spirit-World: the one was in "Abraham's bosom"—in a condition of restfulness; the other, in "Hades"—in a condition of painful discipline. As yet, until God's knife of discipline had pruned away the over-growth of selfishness from the character of the rich man, there was "a great gulf fixed" between him and Lazarus; and Dives was incapable of participating in the higher spiritual experiences enjoyed by Lazarus. But this difference in the spheres of these excarnate ones did not prevent them from coming into contact. There was inter-communication between the spheres: the one on the lower plane saw and spoke to those on the higher plane. So, we believe it to be, in the case of the departed. We, when we pass into spirit-life, may be on a plane of life and experience, higher or lower than the plane of those who have preceded us, and whom we have known and loved

in the earth-life. Will this dissimilarity in regard to planes render it impossible or improbable that we shall come into communication with them? We think not. We believe that, in the Spirit-World, the fact of being on different planes of life may, and does, cause some spirits who have been known to each other in this world, to be dissociated, for a while at least, in the Other World. But we do not think this to be so in the case of those between whom there has previously existed a bond of love or sympathy. Those whom we have loved on this earth, and who, perhaps, long ago, have gone into spirit-life, will have advanced to spheres of experience, to which we shall not immediately attain on leaving this world. But that will not involve dissociation from them until such time as we ourselves shall have scaled the moral and spiritual heights on which they stand. Love will draw those on the higher altitudes of being to us on the lower; as it drew Jesus and the angels from spheres of glory to the earth-plane. Those beloved and progressed departed ones will come to us when we "pass over;" and they will be with us at times; the old intercourse will be renewed; and as we move on towards attunement to their higher experiences, the bond be-

tween them and us will be strengthened and perfected.

Thus we think that while, of course, in the case of spirit and spirit, a perfect union—an accord of mind and heart, a mutual participation in the higher experiences of spirit-life—can only exist when *both* shall have become adjusted to exalted environment; yet, in the meanwhile, there is a very real contact and association between those who may stand in the Other World at different points of spiritual development.

Surely, it must have been to teach us this, among other truths, that the New Testament writers told us about the excarnate Saviour in company with an excarnate robber and old-world sinners who had repented after death!

Secondly. We can assign another and very cogent reason for our belief in the re-union of the departed, in spite of their being on different planes of life and experience. It is this: that God's method of blessing men is that of doing so through *the mediumship of others;* and that the principle under which He acts in this instrumental bestowal of blessings is, that "*the less is blessed of the better.*" This method of Divine blessing is followed both in this world and in the greater World of Spirit. God blesses us through the instrumentality of others. That is

so in regard to all earthly experience—is it not? Every blessing, whether physical, mental or spiritual, received from God by us here, is conveyed instrumentally; *others* are made His channels of communication. Has He blessed us physically? Do we possess a body, a house, clothes, food and a thousand other terrestrial things? Not one of them has come to us apart from the interposition of others. Has He blessed us mentally? Are we persons of extended knowledge as to the things which lie above us, around us and within us? Very little of that knowledge did we acquire, except through the instrumentality of others. Our fellows were God's agents in teaching us what we know; our lesser minds were blessed of the better minds. Has God blessed us spiritually, so that we have learned some of those great truths which centre themselves in Him, and have become thereby men or women of prayer and holy aspiration? Here, again, the blessing came to us through others. Fathers, mothers, friends, teachers, preachers, and writers—the ones better than ourselves in spiritual culture—were the connecting wires between God and us, through which the Divine sparks of grace passed to touch us, and turn our undeveloped spirit Godward. Consider, further, this method of God in

the case of *spiritual* beings who have been used by Him as the instruments of blessing the dwellers upon earth. The Bible abounds in the accounts of angel messengers sent to men. Patriarchs and rulers received their guidance as the leaders of great religious, social and national movements through the mediumship of them. Prophets and seers were inspired; men and women were helped and comforted; and even the Christ Himself in His hours of trial was ministered unto and supported through their agency. In all this, the method of God was the same; His blessing was bestowed through the instrumentality of others; and beings on the highest planes conveyed it to those on the earth-plane.

Again, the more enlightened views concerning God and His purposes in regard to mankind, which are held in this present age, are due, we believe, to the fact that a great wave of mental and spiritual influence is passing to us from the Other Side. The door between the two worlds has of late years been more widely opened. Departed ones, in the fulfillment of the possibility included in the "Communion of saints," have from their spheres of higher spiritual attainment touched us in the domain of mind and spirit. Materialistic Science has

received its death-blow; the phenomena of human existence is becoming inexplicable, except on the acknowledgment of the Spiritual; a new continent of life and possibility beyond the physical is being opened up to us; and the Gospel of Jesus is becoming re-invested with the glory which the religious misrepresentations of past ages has bedimmed. And if this be so; if all this advance to clearer light on Divine truth, be the result of the impact of higher minds Behind the Veil upon our minds, what is it but another illustration of that great law of God—that man is blessed through others, and that "the less is blessed of the better!"

Our argument will be complete when we think of this principle of blessing instrumentally and of blessing the lesser through the higher, in its application to beings in that great domain of life and experience—the Spiritual World. We believe the principle obtains with respect to the departed.

Our advancement in the knowledge of higher truth has remodelled men's ideas concerning the Spiritual World. We no longer think of it as peopled with beings who are all similarly fashioned, mentally and spiritually, and all similarly circumstanced. We know it to be a world of infinite variety, of many spheres of life and ex-

perience. Our Saviour Christ taught us this. He said, "In My Father's House are *many tarrying-places*" (*μοναὶ πολλαί*)—many different spheres of life, in which spirits must remain awhile, until they become attuned for the planes of higher existence. Our fuller knowledge of truth has taught us, moreover, more concerning the purpose of God in regard to all His creatures. It is to bless, and not to curse; to save, and not to damn. The "Father's House" Beyond the Veil is no less the domain of salvation and blessing than is this earth. The method He adopts to raise and bless men there, is the same as that by which He raises and blesses us here, viz., our fellows are His instruments, and "the less is blessed of the better."

Thus, there is presented to us the strongest of all reasons for believing, that the difference in the planes of life and experience of the departed constitutes no obstacle to re-union. Nay, this very variety in life and experience may be one of the greatest causes which promote re-union; for in obedience to that Divine principle to which we have referred, God, we believe, uses the ministry of souls in the higher spheres of spiritual-life, to inspire, to raise, to bless, to bring closer to Himself, the souls in lower

spheres. The Divine *modus operandi* holds good in both worlds; because God is unchangeable, and His Christ, "the same all through the ages."

IX. Apart from direct communications from them, how may we best realize that the departed are still living, and in relationship with us?

By the term "direct communications," the questioner is, of course, referring to the manifestation to persons in earth-life of those who have "passed over," in such a way as to cause themselves to be seen, or heard, or their presence felt. It has been shown in another part of this volume that this power of manifestation is not granted to *all* in spirit-life; and that, in many cases in which it is granted, the manifestation may not be made, because the necessary conditions may be lacking. The one on the earth-plane may be so psychically undeveloped as to render the departed one wholly incapable of making his presence realizable. The spirit-friend may be near us—so near, that were the faculties of our interior spirit-body opened (as were the spiritual eyes of the young man in the Bible story, and the spiritual eyes and ears of the three Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration), we should see him, and hear him speak

to us. But in the case of many who long for such a manifestation of departed ones, the interior powers are as yet unopened. Those dear ones may come to us, and we may not possess the ability to register their presence. By such psychically undeveloped ones, it is asked—How may we best realize that the departed are still living, and in relationship with us?

The answer is a simple one.

The first and greatest of all means for the attainment of this is *by praying for them.*

Those teachers of the Christian religion who discountenance prayer for the departed rob the bereaved of one of the greatest consolations that the Gospel can give. They deny to them the one thing above all others which is most needed in that experience of separation and loss which comes with death. A beloved one is taken from us; the bond which linked us to that one appears to have been ruthlessly broken; the being himself has passed beyond the reach of our sight and touch; and the teachers of that school of religious thought to which I have alluded, tell us that to pray for him is foolish, useless, Popish and wrong. Some of them will tell us (as they have told me) that the mere suggestion of praying for the departed arises from the Devil. And so the poor mourner is left to get

over his bereavement and distress in the best way he can. The most that the theology of that school can offer, is a hope that at some *distant day* we may see again the ones whom we have lost. Will this kind of teaching comfort and satisfy a poor saddened heart, or brighten a darkened life? We assert emphatically that it will not. If death removes from you one who is very near and dear to you, you cannot be comforted until you hold the conviction that that one is still *living* and still in relationship with you. The old theological notion as to death will not give you this conviction. I have received hundreds of letters from mourners in which it has been confessed that the thought of a resurrection and re-union *at a distant day* has brought not the slightest sense of relief to them. The mourner who is unable to realize that his departed beloved one is still living and still in relationship with him, is in much the same case as Martha was when her brother died, and she discovered that the doctrine of the resurrection of a *dead* man at the end of Time, was but a poor solace to her whose heart was crying out for a *living* brother.

How suggestive that Gospel story is! Lazarus had died, and Jesus was on His way to the mourning sisters. He is met by Martha, who

sorrowfully reproaches Him for His delay in coming—"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Note how the Saviour leads the mind of the woman to a conception of dying, not contained in the teaching of her day, viz., that death involves no cessation of being. From the starting point of the religious thought accepted by her, He will lift her to the perception of a far grander and more comforting truth. "Jesus saith unto her—Thy brother shall be raised." There is a ring almost of impatience and disappointment in the rejoinder of Martha, as if she said—"Oh! I know *that;* from my childhood I have been taught to believe *that;* I know that he shall rise in the Rising *at the last day.* But, Lord Jesus, it does not meet my case in the slightest degree. Is there nothing more you can tell me? It is of the present and not of the future I am thinking. It is the thought of a *dead* brother and our relationship broken by death which darkens my mind and breaks my heart. The last day is so far off, and so detached from my present life and experience. In the meanwhile—what? Oh! I want, I want a *living brother.*"

How splendidly was the answer to that cry of the woman's heart voiced by Jesus, in that declaration that physical death touches not the

man, but only "the tabernacle" of him. "I, Myself, am the Rising and the Life; he that is trusting in Me, though he be (as you call it) 'dead,' yet he shall live; and every one who is living and trusting in Me, shall by no means die all through the æon. Trustest thou *this*—this glorious truth I declare?" (John xi. 25 and 26.) Poor Martha! She did not answer that question of Jesus; but we can believe that henceforth she would no longer regard death as the Extinguisher of man's being, and the Destroyer of the relationships of Love. The truth unrealized by the Rabbis was disclosed by the Christ.

I have said that prayer for the departed, more than anything else—more than all the reading of devout books on Heaven and the Future, and all our fond recollections of those who are gone—will give us the conviction that the latter are still living, and that the relationship between them and us is still maintained.

Try it. Pray for that dear one whom God has called hence, and in whom your whole soul and life, perhaps, was wrapped up. Pray for him or her; not once, not twice, but every day and anywhere; and gradually there will come to your poor bereaved soul the glorious assurance that the one you love—though the earthly

body lie crumbling in the dust, is a being of life and thought, and of continued love for you. Gradually such prayers will make you realize that the World of Spirit is close to you now; that already you partly live in it; and that death which calls your dear ones more fully into it, does but usher them into a higher domain of life and thought, where nought begotten of love shall suffer loss.

There is another way, less potent than prayer, by which we may assist ourselves in realizing that our departed ones still live and are still in relationship with us. It is by making the effort *to calm the mind* when under the experience of bereavement and sorrow. Excessive grief, and still more despair, raise a barrier which prevents many a dear one on the Other Side from coming near to us. Rebellious and hopeless sorrow is a hindrance to them in fulfilling a Divine mission of comforting the broken-hearted. Uplifting and helpful thoughts and soul-impulses projected by them to us are often not received; because the receiving mind is so engrossed with its own thoughts and emotions, as to make it insensible to an impact from without. The "still, small voice" by which God would speak to us through the mediumship of spirit-mind, cannot be heard until there comes the calm after the

storm, the earthquake and the fire. Be quiet, be trustful, be expectant. Make the effort to get the mind, at times, into a condition of *passivity;* to take it off the thought of one's self; to thrust into the background of consciousness for a while the fact of one's own suffering and loss. Then, when the tumult of grief has thus been stilled, when the mind has been turned from the thought of self to the thought of the living dear one Behind the Veil—then let the words of prayer ascend. The calm, the love, the heroism, the determination to trust God on our part, will constitute the conditions whereby the departed, although visually and audibly unmanifested to us, may come very near to us, and touch us in the higher parts of our being—our mind and spirit. In this way, we may realize their presence and feel their maintained connectedness with us. Although we may not possess the psychic gifts that others have, our experience may be akin to the experience of a gentleman whose letter has reached me as I write this. He states—"Seventeen years ago, I lost my young wife after a week's illness. To my surprise, amid the depths of horror and loss, I found a strange exhilaration, and *a consciousness of her real presence,* which never left me. I speak of this as an ac-

tual experience of real life. I am convinced that the incident of what we call 'death' to our physical bodies is powerless to destroy either character or companionship."

X. Are not such expressions as—"The sea gave up *the dead* which were in it," "Them which *sleep*," and "Those that are *in the graves*"—an indication that the New Testament writers regarded death as a temporary cessation of conscious being?

No; the use of these and similar phrases to be found in the Bible must no more be taken to denote that the persons who used them accepted the idea which they *literally* express, than does our common use of phrases, which are scientifically inaccurate, imply that we endorse the inaccuracies contained therein. For instance, the ordinary way of describing the fact that the sun comes into, and disappears from, the view of us on this planet, is by saying it *rises* and *sets*. Literally, the statement is untrue. The sun does not rise, nor does it set. It merely appears to persons stationed on a revolving globe to do so. The statement originated with those whose astronomical notions were wrong.

Now, no one supposes that the scientists of

to-day who still use the phrases "sunrise" and "sunset," profess thereby their belief in the old error which those phrases connote, viz., that this earth is the centre around which the sun and the planets rotate. The use of the phrases is perpetuated, because they have become the popular and convenient method of describing certain solar phenomena.

Take another instance. If we are standing on the deck of a vessel travelling oceanwards and watching the shore, we speak of "the receding land." That is the popular way of describing an appearance which is presented to us. But the statement is inaccurate; and in making use of it, we do not imply that we think the land is receding from us. We know perfectly well that it is we who are receding from the land. We simply make use of a common idiom, which serves to express an experience, though it misrepresents the actual fact. No one finds fault with us for doing this; and no one imagines that we know no better, because we refer to things in the same terms as they are generally referred to. Take another notable instance of what I mean. Many who accept the Christian Faith, account it a most laudable practice to pray for persons who have gone out of this life. They do so, because they are con-

vinced that the latter are *not dead*, but consciously living. That constitutes the *raison d' être* of their prayers for them. When the world persists in speaking of these departed ones as "the dead," the Christian Church declares that the world does not realize a great truth which she does. And yet she takes hold of this very phrase which the world has so wrongly applied to the departed, and enjoins our "Prayers for *the dead*." Is that to be taken as denoting that the Church regards death as involving a cessation of being?

Moreover, we ourselves, who do not dream of confounding the departed ones who have passed into the fuller life of the Spirit-World, with the discarded and lifeless tenements which have been consigned to the grave, constantly find ourselves speaking of those *living* ones as "the dead." "My father, my mother, or my friend, has been *dead* a great many years," say we. Is our adoption of the popular idiom to be taken as implying that we do not believe in maintained existence at death? Now, the same argument holds good in regard to the fact that our Lord and the writers of the New Testament used the commonly accepted terms—"the dead," "those in the graves," etc., when referring to the departed. They did not thereby en-

dorse the popular definition as being a correct one; nor did they imply that they themselves believed the departed to be temporarily non-existent. They simply employed an established form of expression as the best means of indicating the class of whom they were speaking. The world called the departed "the dead;" and they used, as we do, the language of the world, and spoke of those who had gone hence in exactly the way in which all mankind spoke of them.

We cannot see how Christ and the Apostles could have done otherwise. It seems to us that in conveying higher truth to mankind, there was a necessity that they should make use of the terms of ordinary human language. How could they have made it clear as to whom they were referring, when making startling statements concerning the so-called "deceased," if they had described that class in a way in which it never was described? Before the fuller light had been vouchsafed by Jesus, the world had looked on Physical death, and it had seemed to them to be the destroyer of conscious being. The defunct body appeared to denote the defunct man. Consequently, those who had died were spoken of as "the dead," "the ones in the grave," or—more euphemistically and poetically—"the sleepers in the dust."

And such terms became the common way—the only way of speaking of the departed.

Presently, the Christ with His Gospel of Life and Immortality came, and disclosed the glorious fact that those whom men call "dead" are not dead at all. He taught that physical dying involves no destruction of the man, nor temporary cessation of his being. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—"dead" for ages, as the world accounted them—were all *living* unto God, said He. He told a dying robber that on the day the body of the latter and His own Body died, *they*, the men, should be together in Paradise. And Jesus forced home the truth by confronting some of His followers with a *living* Moses whose body had gone to the grave fifteen hundred years before. Moreover, Jesus disclosed another glorious truth, viz., that His mission of salvation was to be directed not only to men in *this* world, but also to those who had passed hence, and were living men in the Spirit-World. How could He make it clear to His hearers that He was really referring to the latter? If He spoke of them as "the living," it would be more than likely that His words would be taken to mean the persons who had *not* died. As yet, the world had grasped nought of the idea of any community of interest between those in

this world and those in the Other World, in regard to the saving purpose of God. If He spoke of them as "the departed," still His words would be open to misconstruction by many. And so the Revealer of Truth did the wisest and best thing He could do—He adapted Himself to popular language, in order that from the starting point of unenlightened thought, He might raise men's minds to truer ideas.

Take those words of the Saviour—"The hour is coming, in the which 'all that are in the graves' shall hear His voice" (John v. 28), and "The hour is coming, and *now is*, when 'the dead' shall hear the voice of the Son of God." (John v. 25). He was alluding to that magnificent fact to which St. Peter afterwards alluded; which is, that Christ is no less a Saviour to those in the Other World than He is to us in this world. St. Peter, having declared that Jesus, after crucifixion, preached to ones departed this life ("the spirits in keeping"—I Peter iii. 19), actually makes use of, as his Master did, the common term applied to them —"the dead." He writes, "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are 'dead,' that they might be judged according to (i. e. by the same standard as) men *in the flesh*, but live according to God *in the spirit*." (I Pet.

iv. 6). We have a notable instance of the necessity to Christ and the sacred teachers of adapting themselves to the common idioms of their day. Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, had physically died, and our Lord was conscious of it. Christ knew that the death of the bodily organization had not killed the man. The real Lazarus—the spirit-man encased in a spirit-body—while in a condition of temporary sleep, had left his dead earthly tabernacle. Jesus knew that he was still sleeping, and that although he had passed out of the Physical body which was dead, he had not awakened in the Spiritual. It was not the intention of Jesus that he should awake in the Spiritual. The spirit-man, without any experience of the Spiritual World, because he would be *sleeping* all the while he was absent from the body, would only awake when the power of Christ should re-incarnate him in a re-animated body which now was lying dead in a sepulchre. And so the Master said to the disciples—"Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth;* .but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." They did not understand Him. They did not know that Jesus was voicing the great psychic fact that every person in quitting the physical body at death, does so in a condition of sleep, and

only awakes when the detachment has been effected.

The disciples thought "He had spoken of *taking of rest in sleep.*" But here is the point—Jesus had to resort to the limitations of ordinary ideas and language, before He could make His meaning clear. "Then said Jesus unto them plainly—Lazarus *is dead.*" But he was not dead; and the Master said he was not dead. Those, then, who argue that the use of the terms we have been considering, commits our Lord and the Apostles to the endorsement of the idea that death involves the cessation of conscious being, are wholly mistaken. If their use of these terms *did* commit them to such an endorsement, then where would be the consistency of the Divine speaker and the sacred writers in representing the "dead" ones and those "in the graves" as capable of powers which only the *living* possess? It is only the living man, in this world or the other, that can hear the living voice of the Christ of Life. But all the difficulty connected with the New Testament writers' use of these old-world phrases, would disappear, if the words were expressed *as quotations*, and it were remembered that these phrases were used, because the ordinary language of mankind had to be spoken, if

the teachers were to be understood. Thus, when Jesus said—"The hour *now is*, when 'the dead' shall hear the Voice of the Son of God"—, He did not mean that lifeless, disintegrated physical objects lying in the grave, or in the sea, or anywhere else, would hear Him speak to them. Without mind, without ears, without any semblance to bodily or spiritual organization, and without life—how could they do so!

No; He meant that the glorious call from His Divine Lips to advancement and more abundant life in God should be heard, not only by incarnate men and women in the cities and villages and highways and by-ways of Palestine, but by the *living* discarnate ones Behind the Veil. "The hour is coming, and *now is*, when 'the dead' (i. e. the ones whom you in your ignorance call 'dead') shall hear the voice of the Son of God."

PART II.

I. As reported in the "Church Times" of March 9th, 1906, the Bishop of London, in answering in public two letters which had been sent to him, made the following statement: "The writers have been reading the work—'Our Life After Death,' and ask what they ought to believe. That book teaches *Universalism.* It leaves out the strong things Jesus Christ said. What is called 'the strong language of the Athanasian Creed,' is our Lord's own teaching. Are we, His Church, to water down what He said?"

These are statements, sufficiently grave and important, to warrant me in dealing with them in the pages of this book.

"That book teaches *Universalism,*" says the critic. Most undoubtedly it does so; and if the criticism had ended there, we should have had no reply to make to it, except that Universalism is most clearly taught in the Bible. But the following part of the criticism seems to imply that the Universalist belief is incompatible wth the doctrine of the Church of England.

We subjoin the following facts, which, in our

view, show that Universalism is not out of harmony with the teaching of the Church of England; however much it may be in non-agreement with the teaching of individual members of that Church.

I. It is not generally known that the Fathers of the early Eastern Church avowed their belief in Universalism, and emphatically taught that Christ will ultimately fulfil His mission as "the *Saviour of all* men." That evil would remain forever as the rival principle to God and goodness, presented itself to them as a thought inconsistent and intolerable. They regarded it as impossible, that an Almighty God, "Who is not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance" (II Peter iii. 9), should, nevertheless, in the case of countless millions of the human race, be never able to accomplish His will. The exaltation of Satan to such pre-eminence and power, as to regard him as a being capable of everlastingly frustrating the saving power of God, and of perpetually usurping the rule over the greater part of the empire of human souls, was to them an idea akin to the old world notion of rival gods—a god of Goodness and a god of Evil. A study of the Alexandrian and Carthaginian Theologies shows that it was the contact of the Chris-

tian religion with the *Latin* race, which caused the adoption of a *restricted* view of God's purpose and Christ's Saviourhood. That race was proud, exclusive and cruel in its instincts, and when, under Constantine, Christianity became the State religion of the Roman Empire, the characteristics of the race made their impress upon the teaching of the Church. The Church of England, in matters of doctrine, commends the principle of appealing to the first three centuries of the Christian era. She could hardly do this, if the Universalist belief, so widely held by the early Church Fathers, were incompatible with her teaching!

II. In the year 1552, a Body of Articles, known as the "Forty-two Articles," was agreed upon by the Bishops and other learned men of the Church of England. The 42nd Article was one which condemned those who asserted that *all* men would finally be saved. This article was *deliberately expunged* in 1562. Surely the Church would not have done this, had she viewed the Universalist position as an inadmissible one! "The 42nd Article was withdrawn" (said a Bishop of Manchester), "because the Church, knowing that men like Origen, Clement and Gregory of Nyssa, were Universalists, refused to dogmatize."

Again, at one of the revisions of our Prayer Book, a demand was made by the Puritan Reformers, to expunge from the Litany the words —"That it may please Thee to have mercy upon *all* men." The objectors asserted that as the purpose of God does not embrace the salvation of *all* men, it was manifestly inconsistent to pray for mercy for *all*.

The Bishop's reply was that the clause was perfectly Scriptural, and that we have no right to limit the mercy of God. The retention of this all-embracive petition in the Litany is therefore, surely, another indication that a belief in Universalism is not incompatible with the teaching of the Church of England.

III. But we turn to other parts of the Prayer Book in support of our assertion.

Do we not, in the same Litany, twice address our Lord Jesus Christ as the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of *the world*?" Do we not, in Holy Communion, repeat *three* times in one prayer this same address to Christ? We ask, are these words not a solemn exaggeration, if for ever, in hell, the sins of any men are to remain, *not* taken away?

In the Proper Preface for Easter Day, we say that Christ "by His death *hath destroyed death.*"

But to abolish death surely must mean to abolish all that sin has brought on man.

Death, in its Scriptural significance, stands for alienation from God. If souls are to remain everlastingly alienated from Him, is it true to say that Christ is the destroyer of death?

In the Prayer of Humble Access, we say of God—"Whose property is *always to have mercy.*"

Can that statement be harmonized with the idea of a hereafter condition for many, in which there will be *no exercise of mercy?*

One of the Ember Collects has these words—"To those who shall be ordained....give Thy grace—that they may set forward the salvation of *all men.*" Either the words contemplate the salvation of *all*, or they formulate a prayer which it is believed will *not be granted.*

In the General Thanksgiving, we bless God for our *creation.* If creation, for a vast multitude of the human race, will mean, as we have been told, everlasting ruin and suffering, is there any cause for blessing God for the creation of these poor, wretched beings? And was not the argument advanced by a certain one against marriage, a perfectly sound and logical one, from the standpoint of that theology which we reject?—"If I were to marry," said he, "I might beget children, and some of them might spend

Eternity in *hell.* There could be no happiness for me in Heaven, if I had to reflect that *I* was the instrumental cause of the existence of irremediably damned souls."

In the Church Catechism, the work of God the Son is defined in these words—"Who hath redeemed me and *all mankind.*" We ask, is this statement true, if *all* mankind is *not* to be redeemed? We must be consistent; if any, even one of the human race be finally and irretrievably lost, then Christ has *not* redeemed *all* mankind.

We might adduce many more statements of the Prayer Book to show that that Book sanctions the teaching of the "Larger Hope": but these will suffice.

My critic states—"What is called 'the strong language of the Athanasian Creed, is our Lord's own teaching."

In the first place, the Athanasian Creed stands on a very different footing, as constituting an authoritative statement of Christian belief, from that of the other two Creeds—"the Apostles' " and "the Nicene." These latter received the sanction of General Councils of the Church; the so-called "Athanasian Creed" never received such sanction. It forced its way, with its "damnatory clauses," into the formularies of the

Christian Church, in spite of no authority from a General Church Council, and in defiance of the stipulation laid down by the Council which authorized the use of the Nicene Creed—that nothing was to be added to this last-named Confession of Faith.

The contrast presented between the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and the "Athanasian" Creed is very suggestive. The Apostles' Creed ends with the words—"The Life everlasting," and the Nicene Creed, with the words—"The life of the world to come." The "Athanasian" Creed concludes with the awful words—"everlasting fire." That fact, in itself, gives a very good indication of its Western, rather than Eastern, origin. Without entering into the history of the "Athanasian" Creed, it will be sufficient to say that it is admitted by all scholars that it was not written by the man whose name it bears. It treats of heresies which had not arisen until long after his death. The origin of it is very obscure. The internal evidence points to the conclusion that it was probably composed by a bishop, in Gaul, about A. D. 420-430. It was first admitted into the Gallican Psalter, and was afterwards received into the Office of the English Church during the ninth century.

We mention all this, merely to show that the

"Athanasian" Creed is *not* of the same authority as are the other two Creeds. There are many of us who experience a feeling akin to pain, at being asked by our Church, on the great Festivals of Christmas and Easter, to publicly profess our belief, that millions of our fellow creatures will "without doubt, perish *everlastingly*," because, as yet, they are without Christ, or cannot see "eye to eye" with us in our conceptions of Him. An ever-increasing number is praying God that this antiquated "symbol," which "shuts the door of Hope" against nine-tenths of the human race, may soon be removed from our beautiful Service, and no longer jar on the spiritual nerves of those who come to church to bless God for His "inestimable love in the redemption of *the world*."

If the sweeping and awful words of condemnation in this "Creed" were true, they should call forth from the congregation a wail of pity and despair. Can anything, we ask, be more unseemly and more un-Christlike, than to feel *jubilant and ascribe "glory" to God*, at the prospect of wretched beings who will be doomed to the inconceivable horrors of "everlasting fire?" If we *really* believed these "damnatory clauses," instead of singing a Doxology, we should fall down on our knees, and with agonized hearts

and streaming eyes, cry,—"Spare them, oh! spare them, merciful God!"

There is something rather saddening, rather indicative of an insensibility to others' woes, in the fact that hundreds of thousands of Christians, on the birthday of the Saviour, glibly endorse the hopeless statements of this "Creed," and then go home with an unimpaired appetite for their Christmas dinner!

My distinguished critic says that the teaching of this "Creed" is "our Lord's own teaching."

Let us examine this statement.

The "Creed" starts with the words—"Whosoever will be (i. e. is willing to be) saved, before all things *it is necessary* that he hold the Catholic Faith." The Catholic Faith is defined —"That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance."

I pass over the fact that not one-half of Christendom understands the metaphysical meaning of this word—"Substance." That clause of the "Creed" is, therefore, unintelligible to them. Are they outside the "Catholic Faith" in consequence?

Again, there is a very considerable body of Christians who view Christ as the only possible manifestation of God the Father. They take

the words of Jesus literally—"He that hath seen *Me*, hath seen the *Father*" (John xiv. 9). They believe that when our Lord walked this earth, the *Father* was incarnate in that human Body. We think they "confound the Persons." They love Christ, serve Him and worship Him, but, according to the "Athanasian Creed," they do not hold the Catholic Faith. Will they, "without doubt, perish everlastingly"?

We take another instance—a very common one.

A man of business, religiously disposed, comes to church, and says his prayers, because he sincerely desires to do the right, and to live in communion with God. We tell him, in this "Creed," that if he wills to be saved, he must believe that "the Father is God, the Son is God, and that the Holy Ghost is God; and that yet there are not *three* Gods, but *one* God." That mystifies him. "Three times one are not *one*," he says. He does not understand it; but he goes on praying to the great All-Father, in the Name of Jesus Christ. He sets the mental subtilty aside; and, according to the "Athanasian Creed," he does not hold a foremost Article of the "Faith." Will he "without doubt, perish everlastingly"? We do not think he will.

Further, this "Creed" asserts—"The whole

Three Persons are co-eternal together and *co-equal.*" Here is a man who detects, or thinks he detects, a contradiction in these words and the words of Scripture.

He remembers the words of Jesus—"My Father *is greater than all*" (John x. 29); and the words of St. Paul—"Then shall the Son also Himself *be subject* unto Him that put all things under Him, that God (the Father) may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28). He, honestly, cannot reconcile Christ's and St. Paul's words with the idea of co-equality. He is not "in tune" with the "Creed's" presentment of "Catholic Faith." Will he, "without doubt, perish everlastingly"? We do not think he will.

But we ask—Did our Lord Jesus Christ ever teach, that in order to be saved, "before all things it is necessary to hold the Catholic Faith," as defined by the "Athanasian Creed"? Did He ever teach that a man's acceptance by God depends upon his assent to a number of metaphysical ideas concerning Himself? Many came to Christ for blessing, and received it, who had very imperfect ideas of Him as the Son of God; many whose conceptions of Him had risen no higher than the thought that He was a Prophet invested with extraordinary powers. One has only to read the Gospel narratives to

perceive that the only pre-requisite He laid down for the obtaining of blessing from Him, was that men should have *trust* in Him. They obtained His blessing, because they relied upon His goodness and power. He focussed the mind of men *upon Himself*, as He stood manifested to them; not upon any particular abstract ideas which subsequent ages might form of Him. The "Athanasian Creed" makes the salvation of men to depend, not upon the glorious fact that Christ will "save *to the uttermost* them that come unto God by Him" (Heb. vii. 25), but upon the acceptance of definitions, not formulated by Jesus, but by a document drawn up by an unknown author in the long-ago.

So, in answer to our critic, we as positively deny, as he has asserted, that the teachings of this "Creed"—which rests the salvation of mankind upon the acceptance of certain Christological ideas engendered in the atmosphere of controversy—is the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He never defined the Trinity. He presented Himself as the Embodiment and the Manifestation to men of Divine Love and Compassion, and said—"I and my Father are one" (John x. 30); "The Father is in Me, and I in Him" (John x. 38); "He that hath seen Me hath

seen the Father" (John xiv. 9); "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me" (John xiv. 1); and there He left it. Men looked at Him and recognized Divine Love shining through Him, and were drawn thereby to the Father-God. It was left to later ages to bedim men's vision of the beautiful Christ, by a cloud of metaphysical speculations; and this "Creed" substitutes, as a condition of salvation, for a simple trust in a Divine Person, the holding of a certain set of theological ideas concerning His Personality. We contend that our Lord, while He did teach that upon *Himself* depended the salvation of mankind, never taught that anyone would perish, unless he should keep "whole and undefiled" the mystifying doctrinal pronouncements of the "Athanasian Creed."

But it is in respect to "the strong language" of this "Creed," i. e., the "*damnatory*" clauses—that we take a still greater exception to our critic's remark as to their being "our Lord's own teaching."

The clauses which come under this heading are these—"He shall *perish everlastingly*," and "They that have done evil (shall go) into *everlasting fire*."

The concluding paragraph of this "Creed" accounts these two clauses as a part of "the

Faith" necessary for salvation.—"This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."

Let us see to what this paragraph just quoted commits us.

We must "believe faithfully" that there will be some who will "perish everlastingly" and "go into everlasting fire." What do these pronouncements teach? There can be no doubt on that point. They teach, plainly and unequivocally, the doctrine which has lain for sixteen centuries as a dark shadow and an incubus upon the Gospel of Christ.—I mean the doctrine of an everlasting Hell of suffering and misery, and of awful and irretrievable ruin to human souls. These phrases connote the idea that there will exist forever in the universe a discord, a horror, a condition of things utterly abhorrent to a Being of Holiness and Love; which condition will bear witness that Evil is so strong and permanent a Principle, that even God Himself, though He hate it, cannot *abolish* it.

These "damnatory clauses" teach the doctrine of unending pain and woe for all who do not hold this "Creed's" presentment of the "Catholic Faith."

That was the idea of the unknown author of the "Creed." He voiced the theological con-

ceptions of Western Christendom at the time he composed it. Then, again, these clauses have always been regarded as bearing the signification we have expressed. Romanists and Protestants alike have used them as main-props of the horrible dogma of everlasting Hell-fire. Those in the Church who have been the staunchest upholders of this dogma, have been the ones who have most resented any interference with the "Athanasian Creed."

We are aware that many recite, in Church, these awful words of condemnation, with a sort of mental reservation, which leads them to think that they cannot mean anything quite so dreadful and incredible as they seem to express. They are quite mistaken. The "damnatory clauses" *do* teach, and they were meant to teach, the doctrine of everlasting woe. Those who reject this doctrine are not consistent in reciting words in which that doctrine has been intentionally embodied.

But is it true that these awful clauses are "our Lord's own teaching"?

We submit that Christ never taught that souls will "perish *everlastingly*," or that they will go into an "*everlasting* fire." We admit, of course, that there are a few passages in the Authorized English Version of the New Testa-

ment, which, as they stand, give a sanction to the idea of unending perdition. But the words *have been mistranslated,* and made to express something they were never intended to express. Our Lord *did* teach that those who rejected Him and truth and remained impenitent should "die in their sins" (2 John viii. 24), and that for some there should be terrible experiences, symbolized by the terms—"the Gehenna of Fire," "the Darkness without," and "the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth;" but He never said that souls should perish *everlastingly.* His parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus shows that His view of future punishment was, that it is *disciplinary* and *remedial,* and not *vindictive* and *final.* Terrible as were the experiences after death of the selfish rich man, Christ represents him as developing, in Hades, the God-like qualities of sympathy, unselfishness and concern for others. Such a representation is compatible with the idea of the "*saving* so as by fire," and that these terrible experiences into which human souls may plunge themselves, are the "sterner resources of Divine Love" for the recovery and not for the final damnation of any; but it is wholly incompatible with the idea of *perishing everlastingly.* We can conceive of nothing more contradictory in regard to God's

Almightiness and desire that none should perish, than that the judgments of God should *improve* a man, and yet, nevertheless, that he should remain *everlastingly lost.*

The texts, we suppose, upon which our critic would pre-eminently base his assertion that the "damnatory clauses" of the "Athanasian Creed" are "our Lord's own teaching," are Matt. xviii. 8 and xxv. 46.

In their mistranslated form they stand—"To be cast into *everlasting* fire"; "These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment." The Greek of those passages is—"To be cast into the fire which is *aionial,* or *age-long*"; "These shall go away unto an *age-long pruning.*" There is an infinite difference between "age-long" and "everlasting," and "pruning" and "punishment;" and no intelligent person doubts that Christ used the word "fire" in a *figurative* sense.

But after all, the strongest argument we can advance for denying that "our Lord's own teaching" was identical with that of the "damnatory clauses" is, that if He taught that there is an everlasting Hell-fire in which human beings will perish everlastingly, *He contradicted Himself,* and set forth two teachings absolutely irreconcilable. He said—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all* unto Me" (John xii. 32).

There is no escape from the conclusion. If this statement of Christ's is true *none* will "perish *everlastingly;*" unless we commit ourselves to the inconsistency of supposing that some may be *drawn to the Saviour*, and yet remain perpetually *lost.*

"Are we, His Church, to water down what Jesus said?" asks our critic. Most certainly not; but at the same time, we are not so to mistranslate and misinterpret some of His utterances as to make them directly negative other of His utterances. This has been done, for the sake of bolstering a dogma which outrages every true conception of Love, Justice and Mercy.

A very few words will answer the critic's charge that my book—"Our Life After Death" —"leaves out the *strong* things Jesus Christ said." The statement is incorrect, as may be seen by reference to the book itself. The "strong things" spoken by Christ are quoted again and again throughout the work, and in particular, on page 240 and onwards, under the heading —"Passages referring to Future Punishments, as they appear in the Greek New Testament." No, it is not we who hold the Fuller Hope of Christ's Gospel, who "leave out" any of the "strong things" He said. It is true we strip His utterances of some of the Roman and Puri-

tanical significances subsequently imported into them, and translate His words in accordance with the original Greek. We minimize no statement made by Him, as to sin, its judgment and its consequences; and moreover, we take into our survey of Divine truth (as those who differ from us do *not*), those surpassingly *stronger* utterances of the Saviour and His Apostles, than any words of condemnation spoken by them—e. g. "The Son of Man is come to *save* that which was *lost;*" "I will draw *all* unto Me;" "The Times of the Restitution of *all* things;" "That God may be all *in all.*"

We find it impossible to think that our Lord and the men who received their teaching from Him, could have made *exaggerated* statements in regard to the *final* outcome of the saving Purpose of God. If the condemnatory pronouncements of the "Athanasian Creed" be true, the word "*all*" in the passages just cited must be taken to mean no more than "*some.*" Whether that is in harmony with our ideas of Christ as the Divine Teacher, we leave our readers to determine.

NOTE.

It is only right that I should mention that when I wrote to the Bishop of London, and pointed out to him that his statement that my

book, "Our Life After Death," "leaves out the strong things that Jesus Christ said," was an inaccurate one, his Lordship replied—"It is a pity you went by the 'Church Times' report, which is so shortened as to be misleading. Here is the 'Guardian' report, and when you read it, you will see that I go a long way with you. The only expression I regret is 'left out.' Those questions had only reached me a few minutes before, and therefore had to be answered at once. But what I meant by 'left out' was 'failed, in my opinion, to give adequate weight to.' It is here that you do not carry me with you. Nothing was farther from my thoughts than to misrepresent you in any possible way." The Bishop subsequently embodied this qualification of his criticism, in a public statement made at Kentish Town.

In order to avoid any misrepresentation of the case, I append the following extracts from a work of his Lordship lately published—"A Mission of the Spirit" (Wells Gardner, Darton & Co.). It is the account of an important Mission in North London during Lent, 1906.

On page 27 of this work, the Bishop writes:—"The most serious question, in conclusion, is contained in two letters about the life after death. The writers have been reading a book which I know, but have not read myself for ten or fifteen years—'Our Life After Death.' They say that the book has made a great impression upon them, and has been a comfort to them in many ways, and they ask what they are to believe about the life after death. As to that particular book, I

cannot say that I followed it in all its conclusions. What seemed to me to be left out—for it preached a kind of Universalism—were the strong things that Jesus Christ Himself said. It was He who used the strong language: it is not the Athanasian Creed; that hymn repeats in nearly all its statements what is in the Bible. It is Jesus Christ's words that are the difficulty; and if He speaks about 'the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched,' and with tears in His voice entreats us to beware, who are we to water down what He says? And therefore, I would recommend you a book which I believe to be thoroughly sound, and which I have read to-day, called 'The Life of the Waiting Soul,' by Canon Sanderson. I would recommend this to the two questioners, and you will see there all the sound conclusions which there are in the other book, but it seems to me to be a more balanced statement of the truth."

The other statement of his Lordship, in which he qualifies the foregoing is to be found on page 132 of "A Mission of the Spirit." He writes:—"Here I will say that when I said that Mr. Chambers, who wrote a book called "Our Life After Death," leaves out the strong sayings of Jesus Christ Himself, I did not mean to say that he did not consider them, because he considered them very carefully, but I meant that in my opinion he did not lay sufficient stress upon them, although there is much in the book that I heartily agree with, and it is well worth reading." As it is possible that some of the readers of the Bishop's

book may see the first of his statements, and fail to see the second, it appears to me that a damaging public utterance, acknowledged to be inaccurate, and which was subsequently amended, should not have been re-published at all. Its embodiment within the book of a distinguished and honored man is likely to perpetuate the misrepresentation of my teaching.

II. I contend that the passage in Acts III. 21, "The Times of the Restitution (or Restoration) of *all* things," will not bear the construction you put upon it. The "all" only means a *limited* "all." Thus, "Whom (Christ) the Heaven must, indeed, receive until the Times of the Restoration of all things, of which things God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old."

The "all" is limited by the words "of which." The passage then reads, "The Times of the Restoration of all things of which God spoke," i. e. not of a universal "all." Consequently, this passage does not support your view that evil will not be everlasting.

I will pass over, in this place, the consideration of the impossibility of reconciling the thought of the everlasting continuance of Evil with the thought that God is loving, merciful, opposed to sin, and almighty. The idea is as inconsistent as would be the idea that the light of the sun is powerless to dispel the shadows of night, or that the waters of the ocean could not extinguish a blazing fire.

We are shut up to one of two conclusions; either that there will be a Restoration of *all* things to God (which excludes the idea of per-

petuated Evil); or that Evil will be everlasting, in spite of God's hating it, and being *almighty*.

The questioner's point is, that the passage quoted above implies that not *all*, but only *some*, will be finally restored. "The 'all' is limited by the words 'of which,' " he states. But why may not the words "of which" (ὧν) refer to "the Times?" The passage would then read—"The Times of the Restoration of all, of which (Times) God spake," etc. If the statement was only intended to convey the meaning that the Restoration will include *some*, why, unnecessarily and misleading, use the word "all"?

The questioner's interpretation reduces the significance of the verse to this—the Restoration of *certain particular* things of which God spake.

The Greek of the passage (ἄχρι χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων, ὧν ἐλάλησεν ὁ θεὸς) has been rendered in the Revised Version, as, "The Times of Restoration of all things, whereof God spake." The question, however, of what is the true meaning is set at rest by other Biblical statements, which *define* what shall be the character of that "Restoration" of those Times to which the Apostle referred.

Isaiah writes—"By Myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from My mouth in right-

eousness, and shall not return, that unto Me *every* knee shall bow, *every* tongue shall swear" (Is. xlv. 23).

Our Lord said—"Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore *all* things" (Matt. xvii. 11).

St. Paul wrote—"The *creation* itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 21). In the next verse, he defines what he means by "creation;" he uses the phrase "the *whole* creation."

If the contention of the questioner be right, these statements of Isaiah, our Lord and St. Paul must be labelled as extravagant and untrue. None can remain finally unrestored, if *every* knee is to bow to God, and *every* tongue is to swear to Him, and the *whole creation* is to be delivered from the bondage of Corruption.

III. You have no grounds for believing that *all* will ultimately be brought to God, from the words—"As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive." (1 Cor. xv. 22). The "all" is a *limited* "all." The limiting phrases are, "in Adam" and "in Christ." These are not co-extensive terms. The "all in Adam" means quite a different multitude from the "all in Christ." We are in Adam by natural birth; we become in Christ by new birth. That makes the "all" of the second clause a very different thing from a *universal* "all," as you assert.

Quite so; your interpretation and limitation of this passage most certainly do make a vast difference between the two "alls;" to the exaltation of the power of Evil, and the depreciation of the power of Christ. The old theological conception accords to Adam the power of evilly affecting the *whole* human race, and to Christ the power of blessing and saving *some only* of that same human race. *All* die in Adam; but *not all*, only *some*, will be made alive in Jesus. Is this compatible, we ask, with the statement of Him Who said—"I will draw *all* unto Me" (John xii. 32)? At the Consummation of the Divine Purpose, will the destroying and alienat-

ing force of Adam be found to be greater than the saving and drawing power of the Son of God? If so, has not the Scripture assigned too much to Jesus, in declaring Him to be "the Saviour of *all mankind;* more especially of those that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10)?

In that grandest of all St. Paul's Epistles—the Epistle to the Ephesians—the Apostle writes—"That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times, He might gather together, under one Head, *all things* in Christ, both those things which are in the heavens and those things which are upon the earth; even in Him" (Eph. i. 10). Here, we have a presentment in which the Christ is shown to be as co-extensively connected with the human race as was Adam. By reason of its relationship to Adam, that race became ruined and debased; by virtue of its relationship to Christ, it is ultimately to become restored and exalted. The terms "in Adam" and "in Christ" are in contrast. *All,* through the one, have been cursed; while *all,* through the Other, will be blessed. Adam stands as the Federal Head of the whole of humanity in regard to death; while Christ stands as the Federal Head of that same whole in regard to life. To assert that the "*all* in Adam" must be read in the sense of the universal, while the "all in

Christ" must be taken only in the sense of the particular, is to make Christ less a Saviour than Adam was a Ruiner. According to this, Adam can exert an influence on the *whole* of mankind; Christ only on *some*. What is this, but to make the First Adam more powerful than the "Second Adam!"

Again, St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 28, states that, at "the end" (i. e. the end of those æons through which God will have been working out His great Purpose of salvation in Christ), He shall be "all things in *all beings*." If Christ will ultimately save only some, and not all, an insuperable barrier will be presented to the fulfillment of that glorious prophecy; for it is inconceivable to imagine God as being "all things" to irretrievably *lost* souls, and consequently, the Apostle's forecast would be wrong.

Every soul to whom God is "all things" is a saved soul, and every soul drawn to Christ is a blessed soul, and therefore we contend that His saving work will ultimately embrace *every* human creature, or His statement—"I will draw *all* unto Me," is untrue, and the statement of St. Paul also, to which we have just referred, is a glowing expectation never to be realized.

"We are in Adam by natural birth; we become in Christ by new birth," states the ques-

tioner. We admit that; but what if the Purpose of God be that *all* shall ultimately become in Christ by new birth; that, after the punishment for sin, the pruning and the disciplining, all the lost sheep, the lost coins and the lost sons should be restored by Christ to the great All-Father!

That, surely, is a grander conception of the Gospel, than the one which pictures the Christ as unable to accomplish His mission as "the Saviour of *all* mankind!"

IV. In quoting St. Paul's words—"Who is the Saviour of all men" (1 Tim. iv. 10), you omit the additional clause—"Specially of those that believe." In doing this you give a wrong meaning to his words. The word used by St. Paul is not "Saviour," but "Preserver;" for he adds "specially of believers."

My omission of the clause—"specially of those that believe," is due to the fact that it was not required for the purpose of the argument with which I was dealing. I was endeavoring to show that those who deny that the *whole* human race will ultimately be saved, altogether ignore a great number of the statements of Scripture, which declare that this will be so. I cited St. Paul's words—"Who is the *Saviour* of *all* men" (among other equally as strong passages) in support of my assertion. There was no need for me to adduce the latter clause of the verse, as no question was raised as to God's being the Saviour "specially of believers." That fact is admitted by all Christians.

The questioner attempts to destroy the all-embracive significance of this text, by substitut-

ing the word "*Preserver*" for "Saviour;" so making the passage mean that God is the *Preserver* of the entire human race, and in an especial sense of the believing section of it. He wishes to exclude the idea that God will *save* all men; but admits that He is the Preserver of all.

But can He, we ask, with any consistency whatever, be called Humanity's *Preserver*, if multitudes are to be left forever in a condition of irreparable ruin and misery? We think not. We think that to describe God as the "Preserver" of *all* men, is equally as strong a statement as to describe Him as the "Saviour" of *all*.

There can be "no variableness, neither shadow of turning" in regard to God; hence, if He be the Preserver of all men *now*, He will be the Preserver of all men *forever*. If the old theological idea be right, that multitudes of human beings will "perish everlastingly," how will it be possible for God to be their *Preserver?* Thus, in denying the Final Restoration of *all*, we must deny to God this title of "Preserver of *all* men."

The questioner asserts that the word used by St. Paul, in this verse, is not "Saviour," but "Preserver." The Greek word used in the text is σωτήρ (*Sōtēr*). The primary meaning of

that word is "Saviour," and its secondary significance—"Deliverer," "Preserver."

We contend, therefore, that if it be not right to translate this word as "Saviour" in the passage with which we are dealing, it cannot be right to so translate it in other passages of the New Testament. The questioner, by his line of reasoning, therefore robs Christ of that highest title by which we love to think of Him; and Luke ii. 11, must be read only as, "For unto you is born this day. . . . a *Preserver* (σωτήρ) which is Christ the Lord," and 1 John iv. 14, as, "The Father sent the Son, the *Preserver* (not *Saviour*) of the world."

And so on, in regard to a great number of passages in which this word σωτήρ is employed. In thus attempting to evade the force of St. Paul's statement, the position of Christ in regard to humanity is depreciated.

With regard to the clause—"Specially of those that believe," in respect to its relationship to the antecedent clause—"the Saviour of *all* men," no difficulty presents itself to our mind. We believe that the great Purpose of God, in Christ, is ultimately to bring all human beings into union with Himself, that he may become "all *in all.*" In this sense it is true to

assert of Him that He is "the Saviour of *all* men."

The assertion is *not* true, if salvation will not at length embrace the entire human race. God is *specially* the Saviour of "those that believe," for the reason that His saving work has *already commenced* in such, and their identification of themselves, in this life, with the Purpose of God will save them from many a painful and distressing experience in the Life Beyond, which will befall those who, like the Prodigal, turn their backs upon the Father, and only after suffering and shame, "come to themselves" and find their way to the Father's Bosom. It is because, in this sense, God is *specially* the Saviour of those that believe, that St. Paul wrote, "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

V. Do not the words—"Our God is a consuming Fire" (Heb. xii. 29)—conflict with the teaching that *all* will finally be restored?

No; on the contrary, we regard this statement as being one of the strongest supports upon which we base our conviction that the Universalist position is right, and that the Bible's prediction of "the Restoration of *all* things" (Acts iii. 21) will be fulfilled. The ultimate elimination of evil from the universe seems to us to be guaranteed by the fact that God *is* "a consuming Fire."

But what do we understand by this term?

As applied to God, it can only, of course, have a figurative significance. It cannot denote that God is *fire*, anymore than the words—"I am the Vine," and "I am the Door"—denote that Jesus is a tree or a piece of dead wood. The term signifies that there exists in God a Principle which can be *likened* to consuming fire. That implies the destruction, the burning up of something.

Of what? The "Fire" of a God of supreme Goodness will, assuredly, not burn up anything

but that which is evil and worthless. "He will gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up *the chaff* with unquenchable fire," said John the Baptist.

The *"chaff!"* But the Theology of the past has got into a muddle, and created a host of Biblical difficulties for itself, by giving a wrong signification to the word "chaff." It has made the "chaff" symbolize *men themselves,* instead of *the evil in men.*

God as "a consuming Fire" has been interpreted for centuries to mean, that the Almighty will presently consign countless myriads of human souls to endless ruin and horror.

This particular text is seized upon in support of his theory, alike by the upholder of the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment, and also by the believer in the less revolting, but equally illogical, doctrine of the Annihilation of the wicked.

The former's argument is that as "God is a consuming Fire," sinners will be consigned to the burnings of an everlasting Hell. The suffering, whether mental, or physical, or both, according to some, will be endless.

Those who hold this appalling idea deny that *the evil* in the ones in Hell will be consumed. Necessarily so; they are cute enough to see that

a perpetual Hell would be no suitable condition for any being ridded of evil. But they do not perceive the inconsistency of describing as "consuming" a Fire which leaves its victims *unconsumed* forever and ever.

The Annihilationist is very much more consistent. He teaches that the "consuming Fire" will destroy the Sinner; that the man will be wiped out of existence.

But what does this latter theory involve? Plainly this, the defeat of God, and that evil is strong enough to effectually frustrate forever God's Love and Purpose.

God's Love! According to Christ, He "loved *the world*," i. e., all His human creatures in it. God's Purpose! The salvation of *all*. His Christ was declared to be "the *Saviour* of *all* men," and "the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of *the world*."

Yet, according to the Annihilationist, God's Purpose will never be fulfilled, and His Love for untold numbers of the race He loves will come to an abrupt ending. We are told He will stamp out the evil in millions by sweeping them into nonentity. Is He not "a *consuming* Fire"? it is asked.

Surely a strange way of bringing about "the *Restoration* of *all* things," and of justifying

Christ in saying He would "draw *all* men" to Himself!

Will God deal with His evil-stricken beings as we deal with our plague-infected cattle—kill them to get rid of the disease? Is this compatible with the thought of Divine Love and Almightiness?

And yet this, and far worse than this, has been taught, and is even now being taught, by some who have read this text in the lurid light of a narrow theology. Thank God! the world is fast moving on to worthier conceptions of God. Men are refusing to allow any longer their minds and their moral instincts to be enslaved by the traditions of the past.

The Gospel, as the Universalist understands it, presents none of these difficulties to faith and none of these shocks to reason and the moral perceptions.

Our God is "a consuming Fire," we say, *because of His Love.* That "Fire" will "burn up" the evil—the "chaff" in human souls, just because He *loves* those souls. All souls are God's, and no soul in this world, or in any other world, to whatever extent it may be a "lost" thing, can be beyond the radius of the Love of the Father. The "lost piece of money" comes from the royal Mint of Heaven, and although it may have

rolled away into the dust and defilement of evil, and become a rusted and tarnished thing, with the superscription of the Divine on it all but obliterated, it still belongs to God. He has handed over nothing which is His to a Devil. That evil-defiled soul is still loved by Him. The mission and work of His Son is "to seek and to *save*" the lost things, and on the showing of the Christ Himself that mission will never be accomplished until the last of the "lost" shall have been found, and restored to the Father.

It is the evil in men and women which makes them "lost" souls; and God hates that *evil;* not *them.* Evil is selfishness, and selfishness is the antithesis of Love. It interposes a barrier between God and the objects of His Love. It thwarts for a while the purposes of that Love. His "Fire" will consume it. By His judgments, by His disciplinings in this world and the next, by the very hells which men make for themselves, God will "burn up" the evil in them. Thus, the very judgments of God become the pledges of His *Love;* and thus, a passage of Scripture which has been supposed to confirm the idea of unending doom and horror for the greater part of the human race, becomes to us, in the light of Universalism, a message from God which scares away the awful shadows that

men have flung on the Being of the Father, and lifts us to infinite hope.

In the light of such thoughts, how luminous become the words of the Psalmist—"I have *hoped* in Thy *judgments*" (Ps. cxix. 43)!

VI. In your book—"Our Life After Death"—you contend that the word αἰώνιος (aionios) will not sustain the meaning of "everlasting." What other Greek word could the New Testament writers have used to express that meaning?

This question, which is submitted by a clergyman, is a very important one, for the reason that if this word αἰώνιος does mean "everlasting," and there are no other terms in the Greek language to convey the idea, then that greatest and most awful of all doctrinal errors—the dogma of unending woe—finds a support, as far as the *letter* of Scripture is concerned.

But, fortunately for the chance of doing away with this great stumbling-block to the Christian Religion, and of dispelling a grim and terrible shadow which has bedimmed men's vision of God and His Purpose—this is not so. The doctrine of unending woe is in opposition to the *letter* of the Bible, no less than to the enlightened moral instincts of mankind to-day. It is still held by some, but it is as an article of *credulity*, rather than as an article of *faith*. It is an ugly thing—a skeleton in the theological

cupboard, which must not be brought into the light of day. It is a doctrine which must not be thought about, talked about, and argued about. It begins to disintegrate and to disappear from the region of the real and the true directly it is discussed. The only chance of retaining it as a belief, and of still remaining a God-honoring, loving and unselfish Christian, is not to face it and not to attempt to justify it. It cannot, without horror and doubt, be faced by any whose mental powers have not in regard to Divine love and justice been anæsthetized; and its justification is impossible.

Now, there will be no need for me, in this answer, to substantiate the assertion that the word *αἰώνιος* does not denote the idea of everlastingness.

The reader will find this point carefully and fully dealt with on pages 222-233 of the book—"Our Life After Death." The word is an adjective derived from a noun (*αἰών—aiōn*). This latter word signifies an age—an age which may be long or short; but which, however long, is *terminable*. It is never in the Bible, or elsewhere, used to denote endlessness. *Αἰώνιος*, its adjective, therefore means "age-long," or "that pertaining to an age or epoch;" and nothing more. There cannot be predicated of an

adjective more than is predicated of the noun from which it is derived.

The questioner asks—"What other Greek word could have been used (in place of this *αἰώνιος*) to denote everlastingness?

There is the word *ἀεί*, an adverb—ever, always, forever. With the article, this word was used to express unendingness; e. g. *ὁ ἀεὶ χρόνος* (the unending time; i. e. eternity); *οἱ ἀεὶ ὄντες* (those existing forever; i. e. the immortals). Moreover, this word *ἀεί*, conjoined with other words, imports into the latter the idea of non-ending. Thus, *ἀει-βλαστής*— ever-budding; *ἀει-βρυής* — ever-sprouting; *ἀει-γενεσία* — perpetual generation; and so on.

The Translators have rendered our Lord's words, in Matt. xxv. 46 *απελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον*) as, "These shall go away into *everlasting punishment.*" The true rendering is—"These shall go away into an *age-long pruning.*" A vast difference, surely! Why did our Lord, had He meant what the Translators stated, not say, "These shall go away *εἰς την ἀεὶ δίκησιν*" (into the unending vengeance, or punishment)? There could have been, in that case, no question as to the signification of His utterance. And we have to remember that what has just been stated in regard to this par-

ticular passage, applies to *all* those passages in which the word *αἰώνιος* has been mistranslated, in order to make it bolster an erroneous and pernicious theological idea.

But there is another Greek word which the writers of the New Testament could have used to convey the sense of unendingness; and as a matter of fact it has been used by them for that purpose. I refer to the word *ἀΐδιος*. It is an adjective derived from *ἀεί*; and consequently there can be no question as to its signification being "everlasting." St. Paul, in Romans i. 20 uses the word in reference to God— *ἥ ἀΐδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης*, the translation of which is given in the Revised Version as "His *everlasting* power and divinity." This word *ἀΐδιος* was commonly employed by the Greek writers; thus, *εἰς ἀΐδιον*— forever, while *ἡ ἀΐδιος οὐσία* (that which exists everlastingly) was a phrase employed to denote *Eternity*. Moreover, the noun formed from this word—*ἀϊδιότης*—is the Greek word for "Eternity."

The New Testament writers, therefore, could have used this word *ἀΐδιος* instead of *αἰώνιος*, had it been their intention to convey the idea of unendingness. St. Paul *did* intend to convey that idea when he referred to God's "power and divinity;" and consequently employed the word.

We can only suppose that the writers who used the word *αἰώνιος* (a word which is used hundreds of times in the Bible in the sense of *terminableness*) did not mean *unendingness* thereby. If, as the Theology of the past has asserted, they did mean *that*, then why, we ask, select a word open to doubt, when other words, whose signification is unquestioned, were available for their purpose? Reverting to the passage we have already quoted—"These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment," it would have been perfectly easy to convey that awful significance by the phrase *εἰς ἀΐδιον δίκησιν.* Thus we see that other words *were* available to convey the idea of everlastingness.

A difficulty which presents itself to those who have not sufficiently studied this subject, has been dealt with on pages 271-275 of "Our Life After Death." Briefly stated, it is this: "If the word *αἰώνιος* does *not* mean 'everlasting' or 'eternal' in regard to punishment, then neither does it in regard to reward and blessedness; seeing that the same word is used in reference to the righteous—'The righeous shall go *εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιαν* (into an age-long life)' What basis have we for a belief in *everlasting* life, if in this and similar passages in the New Testa-

ment only an *œonial* or *age-long* life is promised?"

Our Saviour Christ in His reiterated promises as to this æonial-life, and the writers of the Epistles in their constant reference to the same thing, were focussing their mental gaze upon that great Epoch which St. Paul, in Eph. iii. 21 describes as "*the Æon* of the æons;" a particular Æon, the great Æon, the consummating Age of all the ages, the Age whose closing shall see the fulfilment of God's "Purpose of the æons" (Eph iii. 11), viz. the "Restitution of *all things*." It will be an Æon of blessedness and of perfected being and life to those in affinity and union with Christ. "I give unto them this Æonial (*αἰώνιος*) life," said He. But this Æon of blessedness and perfected life for the righteous will include its epochs of pruning and disciplining and even spiritual death for the unrighteous. Though it will be a terminable period, it will be a vast one, as is indicated by St. Paul's words —"*all the generations* of the Æon of the æons" (Eph iii. 21); and Christ spoke of "æonial pruning" and "æonial death." This great Æon will close only when the great Purpose of God in Christ shall have been accomplished; when the epochs of pruning and death shall have passed away, and the last "lost"

and "dead" beings shall have been found and made alive to God. To those who pass into that great Æon, identified with Christ, it will mean an æon of enhanced and superabundant life; a life which will place the participators of it beyond the reach of æonial disciplining or æonial death. That is what our Lord meant, when He said—"If a man keep My word, *he shall not see death all through the Æon*" (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) John viii. 51.

It may be asked—If that great Æon will close, will not the *life* and *blessedness* of that Æon also come to an end? Nay, that cannot be. Like a mighty river which has gathered the waters from the smaller rivers and brooklets, and then discharges itself into the great ocean, so the "Æon of the æons" will merge into Eternity; and the life pertaining to that Æon, because it is God-life and Christ-life, will last forever.

Not, then, upon the promise of Jesus to give us the blessing of the Æonial life (grand as that promise is) do we base our hope of immortality; but upon the fact that linked with Him we are linked with God. The God-life will be in us, and *that* can know no ending. "Because *I* live," said Jesus, "*ye* shall live also" (John xiv. 19).

What has been said will be sufficient to show how superficial is the argument, that, in rejecting "everlasting" as the translation of the word *αἰώνιος* we demolish not only the awful doctrine of everlasting loss and misery, but also that of everlasting life and blessedness.

We should consider ourselves as being in a pitiable plight, had we to build our hope of immortality only on a word (*αἰώνιος*) which has been applied to the doors of a temple no longer in existence (Ps. xxiv. 7); to a certain order of priesthood (the Aaronic), which has long since passed away; and to conditions of social and national life that have ceased to be.

VII. Is there a danger, in regard to the Universalist belief, of making the Benevolence of God dominate His Holiness and Justice in such a way as to constitute Him the Tolerator of evil?

This is the form in which the question has been submitted; and although it is based on wholly illogical assumptions, it represents one of the most common, as well as easily-disposed of, objections which are urged against the view contained in the Bible—viz., that ultimately God will be "all *in* all."

Two false propositions are implied in the question—

(*a*) That the Benevolence of God could only compass the final salvation of all men, at the cost of *lowering* the claims of Divine Holiness and Justice.

(*b*) That God in finally saving *all* would be tolerating evil.

These are, assuredly, startlingly strange conclusions! Let us examine them.

First, with respect to the Benevolence—i. e., the Goodwill, the Love, of God. The question pre-supposes that there may be a danger of un-

duly exalting *that*. It is feared that God's Love may be assigned too predominant a position in regard to other attributes which pertain to Him. That if the Love of God be accounted too great, His Holiness and Justice may be reckoned as too little. But can we, we ask, over-estimate the Benevolence or Love of God? In the face of what Jesus and the writers of the New Testament said, we should have thought it impossible to do this. Christ represented God as *loving all*—"the world;" as being benevolent to "the evil and the good," to "the just and the unjust."

St. Paul wrote that he was persuaded "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God." St. John, whose Epistles are saturated through and through with the thought of God's Love, reached the highest point of Divine Truth, when in his definition of God he wrote—"God *is Love*" (1 John iv. 8).

If this declaration of the Apostle is true, it follows that Love lies as the essential Principle of the Being of God, and consequently must not only dominate all those other attributes and qualities and powers which go to make up the

perfection of the Godhead, but is the root from which they all spring. Thus Love determines all that God is and all that God does. Is He holy, and hates sin and loves goodness? It is because He is Love. Is He just, and will reward the righteous and punish the wicked? It is because He is Love. Does He extend His pity and mercy and pardon? It is because He is Love. Is He "a Consuming Fire" that by judgment and discipline will "burn up the chaff" in men? It is because He is Love.

Thus, so far from agreeing with the questioner, that the Benevolence or Love of God must not be made to dominate His Holiness and Justice, we assert, on the authority of the Scriptures, that it *does dominate* both; and that neither of those qualities in God will be rightly understood by us, until we realize that they are the offspring of the Parent-Principle of Divine Love. God Who is holy, is not *Holiness;* it is but a characteristic of Him: and God Who is just, is not *Justice;* that, too, is but a characteristic of Him: but God Who is loving, *is Love;* and therein is to be found the key which will enable us to unlock the door of Truth in regard to His purpose of salvation in Christ.

Now, it is owing to men having failed to perceive that the Love of God must dominate and

determine the exercise of all other qualities resident in Him, that has given rise in the past to those doctrines which have so misrepresented and disfigured the Religion of Jesus. I refer to the doctrines of Predestination and Everlasting Punishment. The former represents the Love of God as exercising itself only in the direction of a certain selected and privileged few; making all others not only of no concern to God in view of salvation, but even the objects of His hatred. It was an idea which commended itself to the narrow and exclusive mind of the ancient Jew, and found expression in those words cited by St. Paul,—who shows in his Epistle to the Romans a bias towards Rabbinical thought—"Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord. Yet I *loved* Jacob; but Esau I *hated*." (Mal. i. 2 and 3). This is not the representation of the Love of God, as made by Jesus and by St. John, or even by St. Paul himself, after he had advanced to the full understanding of the Gospel of Christ.

The doctrine of Everlasting Punishment excludes, of course, all thought of God's *loving* the wretched beings who will suffer that experience. The good earthly father may love his son, though he punish him for his wrong-doing. But that is because the punishment is viewed as

remedial. It is a means adopted by the father for bringing his child into accord with himself and his love. But no such thought lies behind the idea of God's infliction of everlasting punishment upon His creatures. It is not an infliction of Love, but of awful and unmitigated wrath, we are told. It contemplates no betterment and no recovery of the victims. It is a final and irreversible act of Divine vengeance. Thus, the School which has propagated this teaching, has made what has been regarded as the Holiness and Justice of God to so dominate His Love, as to cause the latter to disappear altogether in regard to an enormous section of the race.

In reference to both these horrible dogmas, we ask—How can all the theological ingenuity in the world make them to harmonize with the statement of Christ that God loves *all*, and with that still more penetrative statement of St. John, that "God *is Love*"?

When will the Christian world understand that the Election we read of in the Bible is not the Predestination of the Calvinist; nor is the Hell of which Jesus spoke the Hell of Mediævalism and Protestant Theology?

Such doctrines as these outrage the idea of *Love.* If countless millions of human souls are

never in this world or Beyond to feel the movings of Divine grace, because the All-Father never intended that they should do so; if it be true that men will "without doubt, perish everlastingly, and go into everlasting fire," then alas! for the thought of God's Love. These things, if facts, would mean the disappearance of the Sun of the universe behind such lurid cloud-banks of horror and despair, as it would baffle the mind of man to conceive.

It may be asked, how could such dogmas as these have even been accepted by men who accounted as true the words of St. John—that "God *is Love*"?

It was in consequence of mentally placing God's attributes of Holiness and Justice out of all true proportion to His main great attribute —Love. Those who have taught these doctrines, instead of accounting God's Love as dominating His other qualities, have accounted His Sovereignty, Holiness, Justice and Power as controlling, restricting and even extinguishing His Love.

So in answer to the objection against the Universalist belief, as to the danger of making the Benevolence or Love of God dominate His Holiness and Justice,—we reply, that that which some are pleased to call "a danger," we account

as the most glorious *fact* pertaining to the Gospel of Christ; and that if what the believers in Everlasting Punishment teach were true—viz., *that God's Holiness and Justice dominate His Love* —it would be a catastrophe to the human race. There would be no salvation.

But there is another point in connection with the question which demands attention. It is that which implies the possibility of *under-estimating* the claims of Divine Holiness and Justice. The Universalist is charged by those who believe in the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment and Loss, with exalting the Love of God at the expense of His Holiness and Justice. It is alleged that not *all* men will be saved—in spite of that promise of Jesus to "draw *all*" to Himself—because it would be incompatible with the fact that God is holy and just. Those who accept this view adduce, as the main-prop of it, the argument that Divine Holiness and Justice demand the irretrievable ruin and misery of human souls; and that were the Love of God to avert this, the claims of Holiness and Justice would not be satisfied.

It is a terrible thought to suppose that two great qualities, which go to make up the perfection of God, should ever have been regarded as the cause why countless millions of the

creatures He called into being must suffer forever and ever. But, thank God! the thought is as illogical, as it is dishonoring to Him Who is Love. Thank God! it is but that which a great pioneer of "Larger Hope"—the late Dean Farrar—once described it as being—"an ebullient flash from the glowing caldron of men's heated and perverted imaginations." It has arisen from an altogether untrue and exaggerated notion of what constitutes Divine Holiness and Justice.

We submit that the idea of creatures remaining forever in a condition of ruin and alienation, *is completely subversive of any true conception of God's Holiness and Justice.*

The Holiness of God must presuppose God's hatred of and hostility to *sin.* "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity," wrote the old-world Seer, Habakkuk. He did not, of course, mean that God was unconscious of the existence of evil. He could only have meant that it is impossible for God to look with complacency and toleration on it. It is this antagonism of God's Holiness to evil which constitutes the *raison d' être* of His Purpose of saving the human race through Christ. "For this purpose the Son of God was

manifested, that He might *destroy* the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8).

But, we ask, does not the acceptance of this doctrine that some—the great majority, according to the old Theology—will suffer everlastingly, involve the consequence that the Holiness of God *will never be satisfied?* God's Holiness desires the abolition of evil—does it not? But everlasting punishment involves the everlasting perpetuation of evil. Those who went into an unending Hell would remain unendingly *evil;* since to conceive of God's perpetually punishing souls who had ceased to be evil, would be blasphemy. What, then, is the corollary? That if beings are to be punished everlastingly, evil will remain, and He Who is of purer eyes than to complacently behold sin, *must contemplate it forever and ever.*

Which, we ask, is the more reasonable belief, and more consonant with the thought of Divine Holiness—that embodied in the Mediæval notion, that sin has the potency of everlastingness; or that of the Universalist, who believes that sin will be finally annihilated, because God hates it, and God is supreme?

As I write these words, I am reminded of an incident which took place at a gathering of clergy whom I was addressing on this subject.

One of them—a representative of the old school of thought—was so piously shocked at the idea of God's Purpose embracing any but the few, that he said to me—"I suppose, Sir, you would tell us next that the *Devil himself* might be finally saved." My reply was—"That, I think, is not improbable, if the Bible is true; for if you believe that the Devil is an immortal being, and that God will one day be (as St. Paul asserts) 'all things in *all* beings,' then it seems very unreasonable to suppose that the Holiness of God will tolerate immortal evil, even in the Devil."

We turn now to the subject of Divine *Justice*. The opposers of the Universalist belief allege that the *Justice* of God calls for the endless suffering and ruin of those who depart this life not in a state of salvation.

The stock argument is, that sin, being an offence against an *Infinite* God, is in itself an *infinite* offence, and therefore demands an *infinite* punishment. This line of reasoning is accepted by some as being very profound and conclusive. It is really inconclusive, and very illogical.

We grant, of course, that sin *is* an offence—a very great offence—against an Infinite God; but that does not constitute sin as being infinite. How, in the nature of things, can it pos-

sibly be so? The person who sins is a *finite* being—how can he wield a power which presupposes *infinitude?* How can his action be an *infinite* one? Sin is not invested with infinitude on account of its being an action directed against an Infinite God. Unlike Goodness, sin is not an infinite and indestructible Principle.

Goodness is of God; while sin is not of Him. We rightly predicate of God infinitude, and we may predicate of Goodness the same thing, because it is of Him. But we wrongly predicate of sin infinitude; for sin is not of God, and consequently lacks this characteristic of the Divine.

The idea of evil as a Principle which is infinite, i. e., boundless, endless, is not in accordance with the teaching of Christ. It is an importation into Christian Theology of the old Eastern Dualistic notion of rival gods, or rival Principles, contending for the supremacy of the universe.

No; sin is a dislocation, a disarrangement which has taken place in the Eternal Order of the universe; a discord which has been struck in the orchestra of Divine Harmony, by beings who have wrongly used God's grandest gift of Will; but sin is no blighting curse which must remain forever, no awful shadow which can never be lifted, no everlasting reproach to God

for making man *as man.* Thus, it seems to us that the very *Justice* of God to Himself and to the universe over which He must reign supreme, demands the final abolition of evil.

On the other hand, the thought of Everlasting Punishment outrages every true conception of Justice. The ones who talk so glibly and complacently about an endless Hell, but little realize what it means. It is a mercy that this is so; for if all the Christians who profess to believe this doctrine really believed it, suicide would be rife and our mad-houses full. The doctrine is accepted without any appreciation of its awful import. I give as an instance of this, a remark made by one of the Congregation to whom I was preaching. I had been speaking of the "Larger Hope." After the service, this gentleman was heard to say—"I don't agree with the preacher. I was always brought up to believe in everlasting Hell-fire; it was good enough for my forefathers, and it ought to be good enough for *me.*"

If the remark had been made to me, I should have replied, that although this terrible conception of an unenlightened age may have been good enough for his forefathers, and may be good enough for him, it is not good enough for

God, in view of Divine Love, Holiness and Justice.

It can produce no *love* of God in a human soul. How can it? Does the child *love* the parent whose principle is to punish, not in order to correct and bless, but to ruin and curse? There are those who assent to this doctrine, and still love and trust God in spite of it. But they can only do so by thrusting this article of their Creed into the background of their consciousness. They put the ugly thought away in one of the dark cupboards of the mind; and there the fearsome mummy remains as the bugbear of their faith, until God lets in the light and air of Truth, and the ugly thing crumbles into dissolution, and is buried with the mental errors of the past.

And further, this Mediæval conception of Future Punishment is not accepted by the intelligent thought of the present age; and unless the Church of Christ can show that the Gospel of Jesus demands no such belief, men will betake themselves for spiritual guidance and comfort to other systems of Religion. As a matter of fact, many are doing so; and the fault lies with those teachers who take the limits of the ideas of men in the past as the standard of truth for men of to-day.

In the light of advancing knowledge, and with the growth of the Christ-like and humane instincts, men cannot, and will not, believe that for offences committed against a God of Infinite Love and Holiness, during a brief earth-life, souls will be hurled into unending woe and irretrievable ruin.

There is no *Justice* of God in such a thought. Rather, is it an imputing to God of an implacability and an insensibility to suffering, as would amount to a slander, if alleged against the humblest Christian. Let it not be thought that we minimize the gravity of sin, or that we deny the fearful and awful consequences to those who wilfully persist in it. That is one of the favorite misrepresentations of the Universalist belief. We do nothing of the kind. We simply declare that the *Justice* of God—to say nothing of His *Love*—points not to the everlasting conservation of evil, but to its extinguishment, and also to the final abolition of the Hell into which it may plunge sinners—when the dark shadow of evil shall have been lifted from God's vast empire, and "the former things—all that is not of God—shall have passed away."

There is one other point connected with the question which remains to be noticed. It is that which sees a danger in the Universalist belief

of accounting God as the *Tolerator of evil.* God, we are told, were He not to punish men everlastingly for their sins, but were, ultimately, by His judgments to deliver them from the power and consequences of sin, would thereby be tolerating evil. But why? Does anyone suppose that a judge is tolerating evil, who sentences a sheep-stealer to imprisonment with the possibility of amendment, instead of to capital punishment? That old savage law of the land, which set a greater value on property than on life, was seen to be inimical to Justice, and it was abolished. But the State is not accounted the Tolerator of the crime of sheep-stealing in consequence. Nor will the consistent thinker imagine that the God of Love is less opposed to sin, because He does not consign the sinner to unavailing misery forever. Did not the Christ say—"The Son of Man is not come *to destroy* men's lives, but *to save?*"

And lastly, it is not the teaching of the Universalist, but that of those who differ from him, which presents God as the Tolerator of evil. What could constitute a greater toleration of evil, than that sinners are never to be saved, and that sin is to remain throughout the rolling æons of Eternity a deathless Power, which even Omnipotence Himself cannot extinguish!

What, we ask again, can be more in harmony with the thought that God is *non-tolerant* in regard to evil, than that belief, which by the eye of faith sees the great accomplishment of the Mission of Christ—the drawing of *all* to Himself!

VIII. Is it right for me to pray for a dear departed one, who did not accept the commonly taught views concerning the Christian Faith? If so, what kind of prayer could I use?

This is a question put by a devout Christian lady, whose grief at the loss of her husband was terribly accentuated by her belief that the condition and destiny of every soul is determined for eternity at death. The great obstacle to her acceptance of the Gospel of Hope and Comfort was that misinterpreted text—"In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccles. xi. 3). She had been taught to think that these words excluded all possibility of enlightenment and salvation beyond the grave.

Let us, in passing, consider this passage. In the first place, it is the utterance of a man who lived "in the twilight of Divine revelation;" who was not morally exemplary; and who, at times, was ultra-pessimistic. It seems to us extraordinary that the statement of such a person should have constituted the main-prop of a theory

which shuts the door of hope against at least nine-tenths of the human race. Yet so it is. The glorious words of Christ concerning "lost" ones, and the statements of those after Him who reflected the truth as taught by Him, have been stripped of their far-reaching significance, because of that saying of this man of "the twilight." Theology, in the past, has placed the utterances of Solomon on the same level of inspiration as the utterances of Jesus and His Apostles.

In the next place, we do not believe that Solomon, in making this assertion, had the slightest idea that he was saying anything which after-ages would construe into a Divine declaration that there can be no salvation after death. The context of the passage makes it very questionable whether he was thinking at all about future existence. But even if he had been thinking of that; even if he had imagined that the Love and Purpose of God were so circumscribed as not to be able to operate in regard to humanity beyond the earth-life—what of that? Surely, nothing that Solomon or any of the Old Testament writers may have said is to be accepted as truth, if it be in conflict with the teaching of Jesus.

The New Testament abounds in statements

which flatly contradict this utterance of Solomon. "There can be no recovery, no salvation after death," say some; "the words of Solomon exclude that hope." We reply—"Very well; but to what does this commit us?" The vast majority who pass out of this life are certainly not at the time *saved* souls. Was Christ wrong in prophesying that He would draw all men to Himself? That prophecy will never be fulfilled, if the myriads who are undrawn at death are not drawn afterwards. Again, St. Paul predicted a time when God shall be "all *in all*." Was he, too, wrong? God can never be more than "all" in *some*, unless His work of saving is continued after death.

But the greatest disproof, perhaps, of the interpretation put upon Solomon's statement is to be found in that fact recorded in 1 Peter iii. 18-20; and iv. 6. The Apostle distinctly declares that salvation after death *is* possible. He asserts that a crowd of old-world sinners who had physically perished in the Flood, had been brought by God's disciplining in the spirit-life to a condition which was no longer "disobedient;" and that to them, when morally and spiritually attuned to receive Divine enlightenment and grace, the discarnate Jesus "went and preached His *Gospel*," that they might "*live ac-*

cording to God in the spirit." We ask, Which statement are we to take—that of St. Peter, or that of Solomon? If Solomon's words exclude all hope of salvation after death, as the old Theology has said, then St. Peter was mistaken. The discarnate Christ did *not* preach *the Good Tidings* (εὐηγγελίσθη) to the ones who in earth-life had been disobedient, because the restoration of them (according to some) is impossible.

The old Theology has taken this passage of Scripture concerning "Christ's preaching to the spirits in keeping," and has brought every conceivable learned device to bear upon it, in order to obscure its plain and natural meaning, and make it fit in with what Solomon said. It does not see, however, that the denial of the *post mortem* salvation of mankind, involves the labelling of hundreds of the utterances of the Christ and the New Testament writers as exaggerated, incapable of fulfillment and, therefore, untrue. What we have said may, perhaps, "clear the ground" for the answer to the question with which we are dealing.

Is it right to pray for the Departed who do not leave this life in the Christian Faith?

The attitude of the Christian community with regard to Prayer for the Departed is a curious

and an anomalous one. One great section of Christendom—including the Roman Catholic Church and a large and influential Party in the Anglican Church, maintains that it is a Christian duty to pray for those who have gone hence; but considers that such prayer should be restricted to the "Faithful Departed." On the other hand, a great section of believers, comprising what is curiously termed the "*Evangelical*" School (as if their particular tenets constituted the only true presentment of Gospel truth), views with disapproval, and even horror, all prayers for believers or unbelievers after death. So Christendom is divided on this point. We agree with neither Body. Both, in our opinion, are attaching more weight to the utterance of Solomon, than to the teachings of Christ and His Apostles.

This is what we mean. The Romanist and the High-Anglican believe—and rightly so—that as no one departs this life with his mental, moral and spiritual being fully developed, a continued work of Divine grace will be necessary after death, before the goal of salvation—perfection—can be reached. They consider—and rightly so—that physical death will work no miracle of spiritual transformation, nor will it constitute the imperfect saint on earth a being

without imperfection in spirit-life. They admit that the person most advanced in Christ-like character at the time of dying, has still to scale many a height of moral and spiritual excellence, before he can touch the point of resemblance to the "perfect man—unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." They believe, moreover, that the prayers of us on earth will help on these souls Beyond, just as, in this life, the prayers of Christians are uplifting influences on others. And so, in accordance with the Christian and sensible idea embodied in the article of the Apostles' Creed—"the *Communion* of Saints," they pray for the *Faithful* Departed.

We are in entire accord with them up to this point. Let us keep an "All Souls' Day" by all means. It will do us a world of good to set aside a day in the year on which to fix our thoughts on the eternal interests of *others*, rather than on our own *personal* advantages in regard to salvation. Only let us be consistent. Do not let us call it the Day of "*All* Souls" when we mean only *some* souls; only those who are "in the state of salvation." And, moreover, do not let us express our faith in the possibilities of advancement Beyond, by adopting a *black* ceremonialism which is suggestive of Pagan unbelief and hopelessness.

The Romanist and the High-Anglican have nothing to say in respect to praying for the *non-Faithful* Departed. They look very "sideways" at the mere suggestion of it. Without their perceiving it, the old interpretation affixed to the words of Solomon is influencing them. As far as the "Faithful" are concerned, they believe that progress and development after death are possible; and, consequently, reject the teaching that Death unalterably determines the moral and spiritual condition of souls. As far as the non-Faithful are concerned, they accept that teaching, and offer no prayers for them, on the assumption that it is impossible, or very doubtful, that they can advance to light and salvation. It is here that we part company with the Romanist and High-Anglican on this question.

Turn now, for a moment, to the attitude of the Low-Churchman and Nonconformist towards Prayers for the Departed. They reject *in toto* the principle of praying for "faithful" or non-faithful ones after death. The meaning which they read into those words of Solomon causes them to suppose that Death is the great Stereotyper of mankind for a future of eternal bliss or eternal woe. "What," say they, "is the good of praying for any, 'faithful' or non-faithful, when once they have passed that boundary-

line which renders any change of destiny impossible! Our prayers for the saved are unnecessary; while those for departed unsaved are wholly unavailing. The latter in dying went outside the sphere in which the Love and Mercy of God can any longer operate in regard to them." And then comes the quotation of another text of Scripture, which, when the sense of it has been narrowed so as to make it agree with the words of Solomon, is supposed to clinch the matter—"*Now* is the accepted time; *now* is the day of salvation." It is useless to point out to such persons that "*Now* is the day of salvation," is not the same *only now;* and that, although a person by his disregard of God and goodness in *this* life may make the work of his salvation a very painful and difficult one hereafter, the work will not necessarily *never* be accomplished. Our Lord's inimitable parable of the Prodigal, and St. Peter's record of what the Saviour did after death in regard to ante-deluvian sinners, negative this notion.

The passage in question does not exclude the hope of recovery Beyond the Veil. It simply declares that the cultivation of the God-life within us is not to be postponed; that "*now*" is the time, and that no soul in this world is answering to the purpose of his being, apart from God.

But, to revert to the theological position of our Low-Church and Nonconformist brethren, is it not a very "big" assumption to assert that the Love and Mercy of God are brought to an ending for countless millions, at the grave? We think so. How many persons go out of this life possessing that knowledge of God and Christ, which we believe to be essential to salvation and future blessedness? Very few; certainly not more than *one* in every thousand of the earth's population. Does God *love* them all? Oh! yes. His Christ said He "loved *the world,*" and that, of course, must mean *all* the persons in the world. "Is it true that God loves them?" asks the logically-minded man who looks at facts. "You Christians of a certain School of thought tell me that there will be no saving work after death; and that this means non-salvation for the bulk of mankind. You tell me your God loves *all.* How very strange that (according to you) He should love *all,* and yet place *the many* under such circumstances in earth-life, from geographical, national and social considerations, as to preclude them from obtaining a *saving* knowledge of Himself! Is this compatible with the thought of a Divine Love for *all* the world?"

There appears to us no escape from the answer—"No; it is incompatible—absolutely,

hopelessly incompatible with any idea of Divine Love; if so be there is no salvation of this greatest portion of the human race after death."

But there is another very formidable argument which we must bring to bear against those Christians who deny the exercise of God's saving grace beyond the grave. It is this. If it be denied that those who departed this life unsaved may, in the great Purpose of God, be finally brought to salvation, how is it possible for there to be a fulfillment of those hundreds of glorious prophecies found in Holy Writ, that Goodness is ultimately to triumph over evil; that Christ is to overcome sin and spiritual death, and that God is to be "all in all"? We contend that these prophecies can never be fulfilled, apart from the "Restitution of *all* things." If there be no salvation after death, it means that only a tiny proportion of the human race will possess "eternal life." In regard to inconceivable myriads, God, at the time of their dying, was *not* "all" as far as they were concerned; and according to some, this condition of things can never be reversed. The corollary of this is plain to the logical mind—viz., that Christ and Holy Scripture promised far and away more than would ever come to pass.

Whether our friends can upset this conclusion, we leave it to be shown.

In the meanwhile, all that has been written above will indicate how reasonable, how consistent with the spirit of Divine Love and the principles of Christ, are Prayers for the Departed. The "Protestant" theology discountenances the practice. It has done its best to divorce the idea from Christian thought and worship. From the Prayer Book of the English Church it has cut out all those beautiful Prayers for the Departed, which stood in the Communion Office and the Burial Service of the first Prayer Book of 1549. It has altered (for the purpose of teaching men *not* to pray for the Departed) the words of the Invitation, as they stood before what is commonly called "the Church Militant Prayer." In the 1549 Prayer Book, the Invitation was—"Let us pray for the *whole* state of Christ's Church." The "*whole* state of Christ's Church" includes those believers who are in this world and the far greater number who have passed hence. To pray for the "*whole* state" would embrace the latter, and so the Reformers altered the clause to what it is in our present Prayer Book—"the whole state of Christ's Church *militant here in earth.*" The alteration is not a very ingenious one, be-

cause the "Church militant here in earth" is not "the *whole* state of Christ's Church." It is but a very small part of it. The mainstay of Jesus is on the Other Side.

The theology of the Romanist and the High-Anglican, on the other hand, countenances Prayer for the Departed, though only for the "Faithful" among them. That, too, fails to grip the essential principle of the Gospel of Jesus, which is the seeking and saving of that which is "lost." One would have imagined, in face of the Master's teaching in regard to leaving the folded sheep and going after the wandering one, that His Church, if she can only pray for *one* section of departed ones, would have chosen the non-faithful, rather than the "Faithful."

Pray for *both*, we say: for the Christians who have gone hence, that a spiritual stimulus from us may be given to that perfecting work in them, which, begun in the earth-life, will be continued until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. i. 6); yes, and for those countless millions of non-Christians in the Spirit-World, who may receive through us those telepathic influences, those vibrations of the Christ-mind and the Christ-spirit which may be contributory causes to the development of the God-life in them.

Our questioner asks—What kind of Prayer

can I use for one of these? We would suggest a Prayer such as the following:—

"Eternal Father, I come to Thee pleading for Thy blessing upon that dear one of mine whom Thou has called into other Life. I am sorrowful, and the shadow of bereavement rests darkly upon me; and I know that shadow cannot be lifted except by the light of Thy truth. O help me to realize those great facts taught by Jesus, that all who have passed hence still live unto Thee, and that Thy Divine Love enwraps them all. Grant to my heart the assurance that he whom I love is loved by Thee; that he whom I long to help and bless will be blessed by Thee; and that the life, so linked with mine in past years, will not be a life detached from me in the Hereafter. Father, my love for him cries out for some possibility of expression. I want to bless him *by my love.* Wilt Thou grant me this power? Thou hast revealed to us how mighty are the influences of mind and spirit. O let the vibrations of my love (sanctified as they are by association with Thee) reach my dear one in his spirit-life. Let them be the humble means whereby he may be better attuned to receive the in-

flowings of Thine own love, and better able to love Thee. I pray, too, that it may be permitted to him to know that I am praying for him. Let that knowledge help him as his spirit advances; and let it tend to enkindle in him the desire to pray also. May his prayers for me and mine for him maintain that bond of love which united us here on earth.

"And O, dear Lord, I pray for his advancement and happiness. Grant that all imperfect ideas of Thee and of Thy truth may disappear from his mind. Deliver him from all the warping influences of prejudice and doubt and make him receptive to Divine light as Thou mayest vouchsafe it to him. May Thy Holy Spirit so illuminate him as to enable him to 'know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.' Grant, too, that whatever in him is good and noble may be expanded and perfected, and that whatever is weak and sinful in his character may be eliminated. Give him, I beseech Thee, rest and peace; that passing from moral and spiritual glory to still higher glory, he may at length become 'the spirit of a just man

made perfect,' and grasp the crown of everlasting salvation.

"I offer this prayer, Eternal Father, in the Name of Him Who told us Thou art Love. "Amen."

IX. If Christians depart this life *to be with Christ*, how can our prayers benefit them? Does He not know exactly what to do for them without our intercessions on their behalf?

This question has been submitted to me again and again by correspondents. It is based upon two suppositions—first, that the departure of Christians from this life involves their *immediate* presence with Christ; and next, that their presence with Christ renders all prayer for them unnecessary.

But are these suppositions correct? Let us examine them.

Does the departure of Christians from this life involve their *immediate* presence with Christ? The idea which is commonly held on this point is, that all who die in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, however small may be their spiritual attainments, and however little their character may have been developed, pass at the time of death into the highest sphere of life, and enjoy the companionship of the Saviour. The words of St. Paul, spoken in regard to what he himself anticipated—"Absent from

the body, and present with the Lord," "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ"—are supposed to denote what will be the experiences of *all* Christians on leaving this world.

The assumption is not logical. It is a *universal* conclusion drawn from a *particular* premise. Put into syllogistic form, it would stand thus: St. Paul, at dying, went to be with Christ; St. Paul was a Christian; therefore, *all* Christians, at dying, will also go to be with Christ. The reader will detect how inconsequent this reasoning is.

We admit that St. Paul *did* on leaving this world go to be with Jesus, and that every other Christian who departs this life with anything like the moral and spiritual attunement of that Apostle, will also go to be with Him; but that is a very different thing from supposing that *all* Christians pass at once from the earth-plane to the Christ-sphere. In the case of hundreds of thousands of Christians, their spiritual condition would render it impossible. The law of the Spiritual World is that a person must be morally and spiritually adjusted to the sphere in which he lives, moves, and has his being.

In the case of St. Paul, we have one whose moral and spiritual development while still in the flesh was such as equipped him for the high-

est experiences of spirit-life. He was a man in whom the Christ-qualities of love and unselfishness energized so magnificently, that years and years of his life were characterized by the endurance of all sorts of hardship and self-denial for the sake of others. No grander words, denoting the height of moral excellence to which he had attained, were ever written by him than those in which he said—"I could wish that *myself* were *accursed from Christ*, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3). What a contrast is presented in the moral development of St. Paul and that of a once celebrated preacher, whose published sermon records the awful remark—that he believed one of the joys of the redeemed in Heaven would be to everlastingly contemplate the miseries of the damned! Again, St. Paul was a man who was absolutely in spiritual touch with Christ. He could write—"I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*" (Gal. ii. 20); "For to me *to live is Christ*" (Phil. i. 21). He was, moreover, one who, before he left this world, was so spiritually and psychically developed as to enable him to come into close association with the higher spheres of Spirit life. He was "caught up to the *third Heaven*, and heard un-

speakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter" (See 2 Cor. xii. 1-4).

That such an one should, at death, go at once to the presence and companionship of the Saviour, appears to us to be the most reasonable of thoughts. The Apostle in whom was the Christ, when he was yet in the earth-life, would, of necessity, be in the Christ-sphere as soon as he had stepped into spirit-life.

But in regard to that great number of Christians who exhibit all sorts of moral defects, in whom, perchance, exists the spirit of selfishness and unlovingness; who could not say—in spite of their belief in the Saviour—"For to me *to live is Christ*," can we really think that Death will usher such into the Christ-sphere—the Sphere of highest Spiritual experience?

Nay, we think not. Their faith in the Saviour will put them on the King's highway to that blissful experience; but there must be the ascension from sphere to sphere of higher moral and spiritual attainment before the goal will be reached. There may be vouchsafed to them at times a Vision of the Christ as they move onward and upward; but only, we believe, will they "be with Christ," in the sense in which St. Paul used the words, when they, by the grace of God, shall have become fitted for the Christ-sphere.

The Christian Church, therefore, in bidding us pray for the "*Faithful* Departed," is quite right. She implies thereby that Christians, when they go hence, do not at once attain such perfection as to place them in no need of our prayers for them.

But the supposition that there is no necessity to pray for those Departed ones who may enjoy the Presence of Christ, on the grounds that He knows exactly what to do for them, without our intercessions on their behalf—is a very unfounded one. If it had not been so often put forth as an argument against praying for departed Christians, we should have thought it impossible for any believer in Prayer of any kind to seriously advance it. The supposition proves too much; it amounts to an argument against *praying for Christians who are in this life.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, without our intercessions on their behalf, knows exactly what to do for Christians, whether they be here on earth, or have passed into the Spiritual World. Are we, therefore, not to pray for the Christians in *this* life? Let us be consistent.

If there be no need for us to pray for *departed* Christians, because Christ knows what to do for them without our telling Him, then, by the same reasoning, there is no need for Christians

in this world to pray for one another. The supposition, as we have said, proves too much.

A conception of the true significance of Prayer—that it is no expedient for *informing* Christ of our wants, and no means of *inducing* Him to be gracious to us, but that it is a Divinely appointed method whereby the soul of the one who prays, or that of the one who is prayed for, may be made receptive of blessing—a conception of this—would sweep away the erroneous notion which is present in the mind of this questioner.

We pray for Christians here and for Christians There, because Prayer is a Mind-impulse which, when touched by the Holy Spirit of God, can affect other minds, and move them towards growth and attunement with the Higher.

"Brethren, pray for me," wrote St. Paul in whom was the Christ. "Pray for us," say those saintly ones who have gone hence to be with Jesus, "we are amid the Alps of the Celestial, but there are still higher peaks on which the Master has bidden us meet Him. Every prayer you breathe for us sends a God-vibration to our advancing spirit; and from the heights above us, and from the earth-plane below us; we catch the impulse that constitutes the very inspiration of our being—'Excelsior.'"

X. On what grounds can we base our belief that Jesus is not only, pre-eminently, *a* son of God, but *the* son of God, in the sense of being *Divine?*

This question is submitted by one who experiences a difficulty in maintaining his belief in our Lord's Divinity, in the face of such facts as that Jesus said—"My Father *is greater* than I," "I ascend unto *my God* and your God;" that He Himself prayed to God, just as He taught us to do, and that in His agony on the cross, He cried —"*My God, my God,* why hast Thou forsaken me?" etc.

Is not this, it is asked, incompatible with the thought of Christ as Divine? In praying to God, was Jesus praying to Himself as the Godhead?

Now, the most satisfactory way of arriving at a conclusion on this all-important question concerning the Being of Jesus, will be, we think, to ascertain what it was that Christ actually stated in regard to Himself. Did *He* claim to be *the* Son of God in the sense of being Divine? Did He assert that He stood in such close and intimate relationship with God, and possessed

such super-human prerogatives, as lifted Him above the position of all men, however exalted? In a word, did Jesus teach, plainly and unequivocally, that although He walked this earth as "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," He was, nevertheless, a Being Divine in a sense in which no other man can be? Do His words justify the statements concerning Him, made in the Nicene Creed—that He is "God *of* God, Light *of* Light, Very God *of* Very God"? It will be acknowledged that if we can know what Jesus said of Himself, *His* statements must be of infinitely greater value in forming a true opinion of Him, than any statements concerning Him subsequently made by others.

The Church's witness to the Divinity of our Lord—borne as it has been all through the centuries, and reaching as far back as the times of the Apostolic writers of the New Testament —is of immense value as affording the evidence that the Apostles themselves—the ones who were in the best position of knowing what Jesus said—believed Him to be the Divine Son of God, and founded Christian Churches on this belief.

"In Him dwelleth all the fullness (the Pleroma) of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9), was St. Paul's definition concerning the Being of

Christ; and it was accepted by all those early Christian communities from whom the Churches of Christendom afterwards developed. It is inconceivable that this view of Jesus, so unparalleled by anything that had ever been attributed to a religious teacher, would have characterized Christianity *at its starting point*, had it not expressed the teaching of Jesus Himself.

We can understand and account for the fact that, as the centuries rolled on, doctrines which were not truthful representations of what the Master taught, were imported into the teaching of the Christian Churches; but we cannot imagine that Christianity *started* its career on a huge misunderstanding concerning Christ.

It must be remembered that the ascription of Divinity to *a man* was abhorrent and blasphemous to the mind of a Jew; and it is recorded that Jesus was once in danger of being stoned for assuming for Himself a Name applied to God. Consequently, it appears to us, that nothing will account for the fact that St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, and other early Christian teachers placed the Divinity of Jesus in the forefront of their teaching, except that the authorization for their so doing came from Christ Himself.

Further, it is not conceivable, in view of the unquestioned moral and intellectual excellence

of Christ, that He could either have supposed Himself to be that which He was not, or could have suffered others whom He taught to entertain an idea concerning His Being which was flagrantly erroneous, or could have spoken so ambiguously as to leave it uncertain what He meant.

If Christ led men to account Him Divine, when He knew He was not so, then He was not good; if He proclaimed His Divinity, not because it was a fact, but because He was under an hallucination, then He was no dependable Teacher of truth.

Moreover, Jesus did that which no other teacher of Religion had ever done, and which no one since has ever dared to do. He focussed Religion *in Himself*. He made *Himself* the Gospel He preached. "*I* am the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Door, the Light, the Bread of Heaven," etc. This exaltation of Himself; this concentration of men's thoughts on His own Person; this assumption of a dignity pertaining only to God, which so shocked and outraged the ideas of the Jewish High Priest, is wholly inexplicable, except on the supposition that Jesus was the Divine Son of God.

If He were *not* Divine, the Jews who crucified

Him were right in accounting Him the greatest of all egotists, deceivers, and blasphemers.

The Christian Religion, founded by Christ and propagated by His immediate followers, was started on the belief of His Divinity. This conception constituted the Foundation Principle of the Christian Faith. Whence this idea so alien to the Jewish mind? Whence this persistent conviction on the part of those who consorted with Jesus, and of those who subsequently came into contact with the latter?

Surely, there can be but one reasonable and logical answer, viz., that Christ Himself *must* have taught, and did teach, that He was the Son of God in the sense of being Divine.

It is on this ground we base our belief in His Divinity. The testimony of the Church on this point throughout the ages is of weight only as we can regard it as being in agreement with the utterances of Jesus.

But this view of the matter suggests two other and very important questions—Have we a record of what Jesus said on this vital point concerning His Being?—Have we sufficient grounds for believing that the record is a *reliable* statement of what He said?

With regard to the first of these questions, we claim to possess a record of a great number

of the statements made by our Lord Jesus Christ; and among them many—far more than is commonly realized—which deal with the question of His own Being and position.

I have carefully gathered and systematized these particular statements of His, in order that it may be seen at a glance how great they are. They appear in the following pages. They have been collected from the four Gospels; which books were written by men whose opportunities of knowing what the Master actually said must have been far greater than those of others who lived at later periods. The Christian Church has always regarded these Gospels as being the most precious and most authoritative part of the Holy Scriptures, because she has viewed them as containing a truthful representation of what Jesus actually taught. For this reason she has enjoined upon her members to stand at the reading of "the Gospel;" and in this way, and in some cases by the association of solemn ritual with the reading, she has marked her belief that the Gospels possess a value and an authority far and away beyond that of any other book of the Bible. And if it can be reasonably believed that these four books *do* faithfully embody what Christ taught, then, surely, they must be the best court of appeal

to which we can betake ourselves in the settlement of the question of what Christ really is; for in the very nature of things, what Christ said of Himself is of far greater importance and weight than anything which individual men or bodies of men may have said concerning Him.

The other question—Have we sufficient grounds for believing that the Gospels are *reliable* records of what Jesus said?—is also of supreme importance.

We believe that in the Gospels as they stand in the Greek—the language in which they were originally presented—with the correction of certain mistranslations which were introduced to support preconceived ideas of the translators, we have a faithful representation of what Jesus taught. The grounds on which we base this belief are these:

(I.) The writers of the four Gospels were persons *who were in the position of being able to give a truthful record of Christ's teaching.*

They were men who were contemporary with Jesus; and three of them—including St. Peter, whose amanuensis only St. Mark was—were His Apostles, and for several years His constant companions. The other—St. Luke—although not an Apostle, was in close association with the Apostles, and his prefatory remarks in the

Gospel and in the Acts, show how he, a highly educated and cultured man, carefully gathered from those "who from the beginning were *eye-witnesses*, and ministers of the word," "all that Jesus began both to do and teach."

It would be difficult to conceive of any persons having been more favorably circumstanced than these four Evangelists, for giving to the world a true account of what Jesus taught.

We are aware, of course, that attempts have been made from time to time during recent years, to show that the Gospels were *not* written by the ones whose names they bear; but the testimony of the Christian Church in the past on this point has not been upset. The Post-Apostolic Church accepted without question these Gospel records as the genuine work of the four Evangelists; and that Church embraced many who had been in contact with the writers themselves.

Had a fraud been practised, in attributing to distinguished leaders of Christianity works which they had not written, it is exceedingly improbable that the fraud would not have been exposed.

Further, when the Canon of the New Testament was defined, A. D. 400, by a Council of

Christian Bishops, presided over by Augustine, a large number of narratives concerning the life and teaching of Jesus, as well as many epistles written to Christian Communities, were placed before the Council. From these, the books to constitute the Canon were to be selected. The principle adopted by the selectors was that only such writings should be admitted into the Canon, as could be shown to be the work of Apostles, or of men who had been in close association with the Apostles.

Subjected to this rule, great numbers of the writings were rejected, and even books which are now accounted as parts of the New Testament—viz., the Epistles 2 Peter and James, and the Book of the Revelation—were placed outside the Canon, on the ground that the Council was not satisfied on the point of their authorship.

But the four Gospels were unhesitatingly included in the Canon, as being the genuine works of those with whose names they were identified.

Surely, this is an indication that these books are, indeed, authentic records of Christ! The exclusion of the three books mentioned above from the Sacred Canon, shows that a careful sifting process characterized the proceedings of this Council; which renders the fact of the re-

tention of the four Gospels the more significant.

(II.) Our enhanced knowledge with regard to Psychic and Spiritual realities and ascertained facts as to the powers of Mind, render it absolutely credible that the four Evangelists *received such mental illumination as to make them truthful recorders of our Lord's teaching.*

An objection against accepting the statements contained in the Gospels, as embodying the actual teaching of Jesus, has sometimes been urged in the following way.

"If it be granted that the four Evangelists wrote these books, how can we be sure that what they allege to have been spoken by Jesus, was really said by Him? With the full intention of writing 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,' may not these men have *unconsciously* misrepresented His teaching? We know from experience how easy it is for those who report the utterances of another to obscure the significance of what was said. May this not have been the case with the Evangelists? Writing, as they did, after a lapse of several years, may not their memory on some points have failed them? May not their own imperfect notions of truth have colored their account of the Master's presentment of it? As members of a Christian Community which held *exalted*

ideas of Jesus, may not their minds have received a bias which caused them to import into the words of Him a meaning which He did not intend?"

This is a perfectly honest and reasonable objection; and unless it can be satisfactorily met, there must always linger behind the fact that certain writers represented our Lord as having said that He was Divine, the thought that they may have misunderstood the true significance of His words.

Have we any grounds for supposing that these recorders of the words of Jesus were in any way safeguarded against a misrepresentation of His utterances? Can we, in the light of present-day Scientific knowledge, based on facts which it is possible for us to verify, believe that these men received such mental guidance, illumination and control as equipped them for being the reliable witnesses to the world of One Who knew the truth as no other has ever known it?

We answer—Yes, those Gospel-writers, we believe, did receive the help of which we have spoken; and we ground this conviction on no *vague* theory of inspiration, but on an idea which is able to appeal to existing facts in support of its credibility.

Psychology is a subject which has been scientifically investigated of late years. The result of that investigation has been to demonstrate that it is possible for the mind of one person to project itself as thoughts, sensations and impulses to the mind of another, in such a way as to produce a mental conjunction between projector and receiver. All considerations of time and distance are obliterated in this possibility. Persons physically separated from one another are able to be in mental and psychic touch. The distinct thoughts of the one may be transmitted to the other.

Even the feelings and sensations of the one may be registered by the other. A person may be at the Antipodes, and yet may convey to another, who is in spiritual tune with him, a definite idea, an impression, an actual *physical* sensation corresponding with a sensation experienced by the projector.

There is no need to give illustrations in substantiation of this statement. Those who are abreast of present-day Science know perfectly well the possibilities connected with Telepathy and Telæsthesia.

Those who do not know these facts, and are open-minded enough to wish to know about them, can refer to Professor Myers' work—

"Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death."

Now, these facts as to the possibilities of Mind, appear to us to present the very best of reasons for believing that in the Gospel-narratives we have a reliable statement of what our Lord actually taught.

Take the circumstances of the case.

It has been scientifically attested that thoughts and impressions from the mind of one can be conveyed to the mind of another. If this is possible in regard to men and men, surely it must be possible in regard to *Christ* and men. No one will be prepared to say that Jesus' mental possibilities are inferior to those of ordinary individuals.

Further, the advancement of a being to Spirit-life enhances the mental powers, because of the removal of restrictions connected with the Physical.

When the Evangelists wrote their accounts of Jesus, He had freed Himself from the restrictions of the Physical, and had passed into Spirit-life.

Consequently, He was *then* better able to mentally influence them, than He had been before. His words—"It is *expedient for you* that

I go away"—are more significant than many suppose.

Again, it is unthinkable that Christ, after passing from earth-life, was *not* desirous that men should know the truth about Himself; and if He possessed the power of directing and illuminating the minds of those who were to be the recorders of His sayings for the centuries, is it not the most reasonable of all thoughts to suppose He exercised that power?

Lastly, He actually promised that He would mentally assist the writers of the Gospels in their work—at all events as far as the three Apostolic narrators were concerned.

Shortly before the close of His earthly ministry, He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you; but the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He *shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you*" (John xiv. 25 and 26).

This promise, and those words of Jesus spoken from the plane of Spirit-life—"Lo, *I am with you* all the days until the consummation of the age"—conduct to a conclusion which appears to us an incontrovertible one.

It is this—that when the Evangelists sat down

to write the story of what the Christ of God had spoken as He moved across the stage of Time on His mission to bless man for Eternity, He from the domain of enhanced being flashed upon the minds of those earnest, Christ-loving men a mighty influence from His own Mind; an influence which for the time being mentally abstracted them from the present, and transported them to the past, so that in thought they were listening again to the words of One Who spake as never man had before spoken; an influence which quickened their memory, unravelled the entanglements of their ideas, made clear to them the significance of what He had said, and limned upon the sensitive-plate of their spirit a faithful portraiture of Himself.

In this way, do we regard the four Gospels as being invested with an authority which surpasses that of any other sacred writings. They claim to be, not the statement of what distinguished men conceived the Christ to be, but a record of what He Himself said He is.

In the following summary, which will show how great and embracive were the statements made by Christ concerning Himself, we do not give *all* the references to the several points to be found in the Gospels. Our aim is to cause

the Reader to realize, with ease, how much was said by Jesus.

Christ's Statements Concerning Himself—His Being and His Powers—As Recorded in the Gospels.

1. That He is the Son of Man. (Matt. xvi. 13; Mark x. 45; Luke ix. 22; John i. 57; etc.)
2. That He was greater than the Temple. (Matt. xii. 6.)
3. That in Him the Law, and the Prophets had their fulfillment. (Matt. v. 17; Lu. iv. 21; xxiv. 44.)
4. That He possessed supreme authority as a Teacher, with the right to re-interpret Divine Law. (Matt. v. 21 and 22; Mark ii. 28; Lu. vi. 47-49; etc.)
5. That He is the Christ. (Matt. xvi. 20; xxiii. 8 and 10; Mark viii. 29 and 30; John iv. 25 and 26.)
6. That He is a King. (Matt. xix. 28; xxvii. 11; Mark xv. 2; Lu. xxiii. 3; John xviii. 36 and 37; etc.)
7. That He had power to appoint a Kingdom. (Lu. xxii. 29.)
8. That He was sinless. (John vii. 18; viii. 46.)
9. That He possessed prophetic powers.
   (a) Foretold His betrayal. (Matt. xx. 18; xxvi. 24; Mark ix. 31; x. 33; xiv. 21; Lu. ix. 44; xxii. 22; John vi. 70; xiii. 21; etc.)
   (b) Foretold the denial of St. Peter. (Matt. xxvi. 34; Mark xiv. 30; Lu. xxii. 34; John xiii. 38.)
   (c) Foretold the details connected with His

death. (Matt. xx. 19; Luke xxii. 37; John viii. 28; etc.)

(d) Foretold His rising and perfecting through Physical death. (Matt. xvii. 9 and 23; Lu. xiii. 32; etc.)

(e) Foretold the martyrdom of St. James, St. John and St. Peter. (Matt. xx. 23; Mark x. 39; John xxi. 18.)

(f) Foretold that the circumstance of the woman's anointing of Him would be universally and perpetually remembered. (Matt. xxvi. 13; Mark xiv. 9.)

(g) Foretold the incident of the man and a pitcher of water. (Mark xiv. 13; Lu. xxii. 10.)

(h) Foretold the particulars connected with the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem. (Matt. xxiv. 2; Mark xiii. 2; Lu. xix. 43; xxi. 6; xxi. 20 and 24.)

10. That He possessed highly-developed Psychic powers.

(a) Cognition; surpassing the power of the physical senses. (Mark ix. 33-34; John iv. 17 and 18.)

(b) Clairvoyant power. (Lu. x. 18; John i. 48.)

(c) Sensitiveness and responsiveness to Psychic influences. (Lu. viii. 45 and 46.)

11. That He possessed the power of speaking to the Departed. (John v. 25 and 28.)

12. That He is the Son of God. (Matt. xvi. 16-18; xix. 17; xxii. 42-45; xxvi. 63 and 64; xxviii. 19; Mark x. 18; xii. 35-37; xiii. 32; Lu.

xx. 41-44; xxii. 70; John iii. 16, 17 and 18; v. 19-23, 25, 26; vi. 40; viii. 35 and 36; ix. 35 and 37; xi. 4; xiv. 13; xvii. 1.)

13. That He proceeded from God. (John viii. 42; xvi. 27 and 28; xvii. 8.)
14. That He had been in Heaven. (John iii. 13; vi. 33, 38, 51-62.)
15. That He had seen God. (John vi. 46.)
16. That He is one with God. (John x. 30, 38; xii. 45; xiii. 20, 31 and 32; xiv. 1, 7, 9, 10, 11, 20; xvii. 11, 21, 22.)
17. That He is the sharer of God's glory, power and honor. (Matt. xvi. 27; Mark viii. 38; Lu. ix. 26; xxii. 69; John v. 23; viii. 58; xvi. 15; xvii. 5, 10.)
18. That He is the possessor of inherent Divine-life. (John xi. 25; xiv. 6.)
19. That things done by the Father are also done by Him. (John v. 19.)
20. That the mystery concerning God is known only to Him, and that He is the Revealer of God. (Matt. xi. 27; Lu. x. 22; John iii. 11 and 12; v. 20; viii. 38, 40; x. 15; xii. 49 and 50; xvi. 25.)
21. That He assumed the Divine Name, and called Himself "Lord." (Mark v. 19; Lu. vi. 5; xix. 31; John xiii. 13 and 14.)
22. That He holds the Headship over everything. (Matt. xi. 27; xxviii. 18; Lu. x. 22; John xvi. 15; xvii. 2.)
23. That He wields authority over Angels. (Matt. xiii. 41; xvi. 27; xxiv. 31; xxv. 31; Mark xiii. 27.)

24. That He could exercise power over evil spirit-beings *δαιμόνια* who obsessed men and women. (Matt. xii. 27 and 28; Mark i. 23 and 25; v. 8; ix. 25; xvi. 17; Lu. v. 33 and 35; xi. 20.)
25. That He had control over Physical nature. (Matt. xvii. 27; xxi. 19; Mark iv. 39; v. 41; xi. 14; xvi. 18; Lu. v. 4; x. 19; xiii. 12; xvii. 14; xviii. 42; John iv. 50; v. 8; xi. 43; xxi. 6; etc.)
26. That He is the Drawer of men. (Matt. xxiii. 37; Lu. xiii. 34; John xii. 32.)
27. That He is the Rewarder of men. (Matt. xvi. 27.)
28. That the judgment of mankind has been assigned to Him. (Matt. xxv. 32; John v. 22 and 27; ix. 39.)
29. That men's hostile attitude to His teaching will lay them under judgment. (John xii. 48.)
30. That He holds power to exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matt. vii. 21 and 23.)
31. That men's attainment of honor hereafter is dependent upon their confession of Him. (Lu. xii. 8.)
32. That hereafter He will advance men. (John vi. 39, 40, 44 and 54.)
33. That He could bestow the Holy Spirit. (John xv. 26; xvi. 7; xx. 22.)
34. That the Holy Spirit should glorify Him. (John xvi. 14.)
35. That He can quicken the dead. (John v. 21.)
36. That He has power to forgive sins. (Matt.

ix. 2 and 6; Mark ii. 5 and 10; Lu. v. 20 and 24; Lu. vii. 47 and 48.)

37. That He can answer Prayer. (John xiv. 13 and 14.)
38. That Prayer in His Name is accepted by God. (John xvi. 23 and 24.)
39. That, although He would pass out of earth-life, He would still be able to be constantly present with men in that life. (Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20.)
40. That He is the imparter of Divine life. (John iv. 14; vi. 35; x. 10; x. 28; xiv. 19; etc.)
41. That He is the Giver of Rest and Peace. (Matt. xi. 28; Lu. vii. 50; viii. 48; John xiv. 27; xvi. 33; xx. 19, 21 and 26.)
42. That He is the Spiritual Food of men. (John vi. 33, 35, 51, 57, 58.)
43. That He is the Light of the world. (John viii. 12; ix. 5; xii. 46.)
44. That He is the Saviour of the whole human race. (John xii. 47.)
45. That His mission of saving extends to *all* that is lost. (Matt. xviii. 11 and 12; Lu. ix. 56; xv. 4, 6, 8, 9, and 32; xix. 10.)
46. That man's union with God will be possible only through Him. (John xiv. 6.)
47. That Divine Truth is personified in Him. (John xiv. 6 and 7.)
48. That the Anastasis (advance) of man at Physical death, and his attainment of "the super-abundant life" are identified with Him. (John xi. 23-26.)

49. That Immortality is an impartation from Him. (John vi. 50; xiv. 19; xv. 4 and 5.)

Such, then, is the Christ, invested with all this grandeur and dignity of Divine Personality, as He created, we believe, the concept of Himself in the minds of the men and women who listened to His words in the long ago.

Such is He, also, as He stands forth on the pages of the sacred Gospels. Upon the minds of those chosen Evangelists He brought the impact of His own all-powerful Mind, that this concept of Himself might be fixed by them as an abiding witness to the centuries. When, as the Son of Man, He passed across the narrow stage of earthly existence as God's Missioner of Love, His glory was bedimmed. To bless man, and to bring him into closest contact with the Divine, He Himself had to become Man. The glorious Spirit-Son of God had to circumscribe Himself within the limitations of the Physical. The Divine in Him had to suffer a temporary eclipse, as He came within the shadows of earth.

His Divine power might be used for the blessing of others, but not for the blessing of Himself. It was the price he paid for Love.

And so Jesus, although He was Divine,

was hungry and thirsty, and grew weary, and wept, and was tempted, and agonized, and prayed, and cried despairingly, as only a *man* could do. And thus the "emptied" Son of God lived out His beautiful life of Love among us, unrecognized and misunderstood by the many.

But that Jesus is living now in a World of fuller life, where the restrictions of the Physical do not exist, and nought bedims the glory of His Being.

Many are turning their spiritual eyes to Him; and one day He, as the Divine One, shall draw to Himself—as He said He would—the love and devotion of *all* men; for the old and crude ideas of God and His Purpose are passing away, the horizon of knowledge is becoming wider, the Morning Stars of the Spiritual are gleaming more brightly in the firmament of human experience. And when the night-shadow shall have gone, and the mists of narrowness and error shall have been scared away by the Sunrise of Larger Hope, then shall the Christ be revealed to all as "The Desire of the nations"—the "Light of the World," the Light of God Himself.

THE END.

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