THE OPEN VISION

A STUDY OF

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

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BOOKS BY HORATIO W. DRESSER

THE OPEN VISION. A study of psychic phenomena. The purpose of this book is to distinguish psychical phenomena from other kinds of experience, and to point out the way beyond mere phenomena to clear knowledge of the human spirit and the spiritual life.

A HISTORY OF THE NEW THOUGHT MOVEMENT. An important study of the mental healing movement, by an authoritative writer who knows his subject from the heart of it. It is the first complete history of the subject, and of its leaders and healers. The account it gives of the more permanent, constructive ideas embodied in this system of applied metaphysical practice must make it helpful to those seeking practical answers from it to their own personal life problems.

THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW THOUGHT. "Dr. Dresser, dean of New Thought, herein does a service for the much-taxed general reader, who is enabled by means of this collection of representative papers to get his bearings and to discriminate New Thought from Christian Science and other allied 'movements.'"—*Sewanee Review.*

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THE OPEN VISION

A STUDY OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

BY

HORATIO W. DRESSER, PH.D.

Author of "The Power of Silence." "On the Threshold of the Spiritual World," "A History of the New Thought Movement," etc.

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FOREWORD

Interest in psychical phenomena has travelled very far since the days of the first crude manifestations which led to modern spiritism. The era of mere manifestations gave place to that of books purporting to tell us about the spirit-world and the wisdom of life on the other plane, and that in turn led to the day of psychical research with its long and patient investigations. The great war brought us to another period. There was not only greater desire than ever to gain new light if possible on the nature of death and the life beyond, but from the soldiers themselves on the battlefield there came evidences of psychical visions and guidances. To meet the new interest, books of many types have been issued, so that psychical experience has become one of the great subjects of the day in the world of books. So many messages and teachings have apparently come over the great border that none of us has time to read them all. What next?

If we assume that the whole subject has passed out of its preliminary stage and that we have assured results at last, what use can we make of these results? Granting the survival of identity, accepting spirit-return as established and

spiritual communion as a fact of real experience, what significance has all this for the individual, for those who may not themselves have indulged in direct experiments or had personal evidences of spirit-return? Has a body of principles been given us such that we may now adopt them and endeavor to live by them, or are the various teachings in such conflict that few of us can tell what to believe? Should a person have faith in communications from the other world, is the believing attitude right, or ought we to continue sceptical?

It would be claiming too much to undertake to decide any of these matters for the general public. But plainly we need to take the next step, and those of us who have in a measure seen our way through to conclusions and convictions should help others still in a questioning attitude. We may not be able to persuade any one to adopt our view, yet we may greatly assist the investigator and those who are heart-hungry by telling how we came to believe in the reality of certain psychical experiences while rejecting others. Indeed we may hold that our own experiences were given us that we might share their meanings and values with those whose interests are similar. And even if we should reject all mere phenomena as doubtful there would still be the question of the proper development of our own powers, sometimes called "psychical."

It is in this tentative yet on the whole hopeful spirit that this book has been written. The point of view advocated departs somewhat widely from that of psychical research on the one hand, and that of the average believer in messages from the spirit-world on the other. Personal experience and study have led me to believe in many matters as perfectly normal and the information acquired wholly natural, in contrast with the point of view which tells us so much about the abnormal and the supernormal. I have never been an investigator in the usual sense, have not consulted mediums, have stood apart when others sought to arouse my interest, and have for the most part concerned myself with other matters. My training has been in philosophy and I have applied the sceptical tests of the student who is determined not to be misled. All the more significant, it seems to me, are the results to which experience has led me. For granting that there is at the present time unusual openness to the life beyond and concerted effort on the other side to bring certain teachings to us on this plane, one should be far more impressed by what has come spontaneously than by any quest on our own part. There ought to be a way to show us what is real and a means of making clear what is true.

The point of view of this book is that when all the evidence that can be gained through investi-

gation or reading has come before the mind of today, it still remains for the individual to learn what is real and what is true for him. We are not likely to be genuinely convinced one way or the other until we too have had evidence. Strictly speaking, nothing is proved until it has been directly established for you and for me. We must either have experience or come into possession of principles such that we can tell what is true, what false. If we could be so fortunate as to follow direct guidance all the way along we might be spared the long process of research.

For there surely is divine wisdom in the matter. Each of us is led along a certain pathway and there is guidance for the path. If the time has come for penetrating more deeply into psychical reality, there is a sure way to find that reality. The eager quest of hundreds and thousands whose loved ones have left this world during the war has apparently made it possible to break down many barriers. Unexpectedly the intense experience of life at the front has led to the opening of the inner vision on the part of soldiers. Some of these have gone from our midst and they seem to be looking back. We on our part have been led to be more responsive. We have only to follow these leadings to the end in order to come in sight of clear principles.

Meanwhile there is every reason why you and I should grow into the open vision, should long without undue yearning, and listen without giving ear too intently.

The point of view of this book is neither orthodox nor scientific, as these terms are usually understood. It is simply human. Those of us who have been with people who are yearning and with soldiers over seas have grown quite naturally into this attitude. We had a splendid chance "over there" to know and more intimately to appreciate human nature in many of its most genuinely attractive phases. There one came nearer the hearts and minds of men in whom the childhood of the world was in considerable degree preserved unspoiled. One seemed to realize from such relationships with the frank-hearted men of the trenches what life might have been on this earth if civilization could have kept the first-hand realities of the human spirit. One saw what Bergson meant when he graphically described the nature and function of the intellect, and then told us that creative evolution might have proceeded differently, might have fostered intuition. This vision of man's spiritual possibilities gave one a desire to re-interpret life, to go back in thought to the childhood of the race, to recover the lost gifts and possessions of the inner life.

In our life at the front many of us found that the traditions which hamper and the creeds which keep men apart were set aside. One associated with the Roman Catholic on the same friendly terms as with Protestant or Jew. One saw that the simple-minded peasant had kept untainted some of the beliefs and values of Christianity which modern criticism has refined away into "pale negations." One asked if it were not possible to look back of the Protestant Reformation, back of all the churches, and in a way back of the Bible itself, to see how men first came to believe in the soul, in heaven, in a higher wisdom. The undertaking would be difficult, for each of us comes forward with a word of warning in behalf of some out-worn creed. A dispassionate study of human nature from the point of view of inner spiritual experience is indeed difficult. Yet this book has been written with the hope that just such studies are possible, that many of us care so little for organizations, or for anything that doctrinaires may say or scientific critics may invent, that there is reason to press forward to learn for ourselves what is true, what is real.

While then many of us returned from the other war-countries unsettled, unable to take up our occupations in the same old way, we bore within our spirits something very definite and promising. There actually is a new dispensation

in process. The war was part of it. The present class struggle is another. The interest in psychical phenomena is a third. The remarkable unity attained by the Allies during 1918 was a forerunner of the spirit of cooperation that is to come. We have a right to believe that there is such cooperation between the other life and this as the world has never seen before. Those of us who are ready can play a part. By so doing we shall put ourselves in line with the constructive forces. By so doing we may pass far beyond the stage of mere questioning and mere investigation into that of actual assimilation and actual use. And why on the whole should we not be free to acquire a philosophy of the relationship of the two worlds? Why not take seriously the teaching that man is a spirit already in the spiritual world in his inmost nature, while at the same time active in this world's affairs? Why should we forever make concessions to materialism and to orthodoxy? Why not be free spirits in quest of truth?

This book is addressed at any rate to those who are eager for personal evidences because they have lost friends during the war, and to those who are free to follow wherever the spirit of truth may lead in these days of unrest. Its point of view is unclassified. Its teaching is eclectic, not in any sense sectarian. It appeals

to the reader to think and believe for himself, and to cultivate his own powers. This seems like individualism, but it is the call of the new age. It seems like undue emphasis on the inner life, but we have been putting the wrong stress on outward things. Well may we conclude to press through to the deeper meanings of the new dispensation, the age of the recovery of the open vision and the realities which it discloses.

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THE OPEN VISION

I

THE NEW AWAKENING

One of the most popular and interesting chapters in the Bible contains the significant statement that "the word of the Lord was precious in those days," and then it gives as the reason the fact that "there was no open vision." The young Samuel, whose spiritual history follows, was unacquainted at that time with the inner voice or vision. When he heard the inner voice he mistook it for that of Eli. Being obedient and not by any means troubled with modern difficulties over auditory illusions, he called out "Here am I." Apparently he not only heard the voice but experienced some sort of vision which he was presently persuaded to describe. Others knew the conditions of seership under which a prophet arises, and Samuel was encouraged to give expression to his experience. The experience was no doubt genuine, however it may have been interpreted in accordance with tradition.

The more enlightened at least knew the difference between one who spoke from first-hand contact with spiritual realities through experience, and one who merely repeated the beliefs of the fathers with priestly emphasis. Plainly the word of the Lord was just then largely a tradition so far as immediate vision was concerned, but a tradition which looked back to that golden time when the inner eyes of men were still open. Doctrine was needed to take the place of direct experience and enable the priests to go through the motions; hence doctrine was highly esteemed. But then as now doctrine was a makeshift. The written word was needed for the same reason. Yet though precious it was a substitute. The open vision could never have come to occupy so great a place in regretful memories of a bygone time had it not been a genuine reality, a gift of surpassing value. The greatest men of the spirit were doubtless those who heard the inner word, although there may have been little appreciation of the values of that word. Far more important than any effort to secure a hearing for doctrine would have been the question, What is the open vision and why was it ever lost?

The tradition still prevails in some quarters that man was so created as to be able while living on earth to speak with angels and spirits,

to enjoy the open vision and behold what is real in the spiritual world. The same tradition tells us that in time men became so immersed in worldly interests as to care for little else, hence that the way was closed. This was not the "fall of man" as commonly understood, but the natural coming in of interests from the outside and the no less natural fading away of the inner vision. With those who hold that man is in reality a spirit, always in intimate relation with the spiritual world whatever his absorption in the things of the flesh and the world, this idea of a golden time in the childhood of the race is far more than a tradition. Indeed, the sure conviction follows that whenever worldly interests sufficiently recede and man regains interior receptivity the way to the open vision is once more disclosed. There are signs that we have entered such a period in our day.

The spiritual history of the race leads us to believe that there must indeed have been something like this directness of speech and this openness, otherwise there would never have been the great periods of awakening and illumination. The sacred books of India, Palestine and other lands must have had sufficient causes. They cannot be explained on the mere supposition that doctrines were handed down from the myth-making period and formulated by those in power

who wished to give them priestly authority. There have always been periods of relative quiescence and times of re-awakening. Naturally enough the priests and their devotees have given their attention chiefly to doctrines and traditions rather than to the realities of inner experience which led to these. But this need not blind us to the fact that there have been seers and prophets who enjoyed the open vision. Had it not been for these and the protests they uttered against doctrine and priestly authority the world would be much further from spiritual reality than it is. True psychology teaches us that experience precedes belief, formulas, rituals, dogma. There has always been a good reason why men worshiped and believed and prayed. No mere explanation urged from without can take the place of spiritual interpretation and appreciation from within.

To give thought to the vision and its possibilities, in contrast with the periods when the word of the Lord was precious and there was only tradition concerning the open vision, is to realize that there is an important chapter in human history from the dawn of civilization up to the great war which we have scarcely read. The Bible, for example, is full of references to direct speech with angels. The messages and the guiding presences of angels seem to have played a regular

part in the inner history, and were apparently so regarded and taken as matters of course. Prophetic dreams were given on momentous occasions. There were visions that disclosed the way. One might readily infer that all divine guidance or revelation came through mediation to man, and that there were several ways in which the text of the scriptures was given. To take the Bible with entire seriousness is to have these facts on our hands for explanation. But the same is true concerning the sacred books of other lands.

As a result of modern criticism it has become customary to pass by this inner chapter. We now relegate angels to the sphere of myths, having ceased to believe in unique beings with wings who never lived on any earth. Or we sceptically reason them away as mere "good thoughts." Sometimes too we appear to have classified them once for all among the wonders or mysteries of the past along with the "miracles" which were purely things of the past — until the modern interest in spiritual healing taught us that the theologians were mistaken. We have for the most part preferred to evade the matter rather than think it out. The Church too has frowned upon searching inquiry.

When we read the Bible as a whole and try to account for it as a whole, we must admit that

in the actual text angels play a significant part. The great idea throughout is the guiding presence of God. The central questions pertain to the wisdom which the book contains, hence to the idea of "revelation." Yet when we open our eyes to everything mentioned which is said to operate in connection with the divine presence, we find that from Genesis to the book of Revelation either the instrumentality of angels or the open vision on the part of men possessing seership is strongly emphasized. We can no more neglect these means of communication or expression if we would be loyal to the whole story than we can fail to consider the imagery or symbolism native to the Hebrew mind in which the great spiritual truths are clothed. When we read that "there was no open vision" at a certain period the reference is to a real spiritual condition. When Balaam the son of Beor is spoken of as "the man whose eyes are open" there is reference to a real fact concerning spiritual vision. When Elisha prays that the eyes of the young man may be "open" an actual kind of interior vision is in his mind. And by implication these and other passages give us a more direct clue to the interpretation of psychical phenomena than the manifestations of modern spiritism. For the decisive consideration is not the alleged projection or materialization of spiritual realities, but

the open vision by which those possessing it actually see these realities. So to be caught up into the seventh heaven with Paul the Apostle, or to be "in the spirit on the Lord's day" with John the seer whose visions recounted in the Revelation have so long baffled the world, would be to exercise an actual power, to be quickened to see and to feel with him. This subject may be considered apart from all topics usually involving doctrinal controversies.

It is difficult indeed to put aside the influences of modern scepticism concerning angels and the spiritual powers of man, and try in reconstructive imagination to put ourselves back into the life and times of those who enjoyed the open vision. The very idea of a golden age when men walked and talked with heavenly beings, when men received truth by interior revelation, has been discarded as a myth. The philosophy of evolution has persuaded the modern mind that everything golden is yet to come. It tells us nothing about a period of spiritual innocence and open-mindedness. Then too modern psychological criticism has refined away nearly everything of a psychical nature, and we seem in duty bound to explain even the spiritual life on the basis of the bodily states which accompany it. We have been put into an attitude of cold scrutiny. Psychology is so interested in the study of physical

sensation that it never gets around to the subject of intuition. We have been taught to classify as "abnormal" many of the best experiences in human life. We have put down our highest wisdom as "supernormal." The normal is thus reduced to the dead-level of experiences involving seven or eight physical senses. It therefore never occurs to us that it might once have been usual to enjoy the open vision of spiritual realities, and that it might now be natural and right to converse with angels and spirits.

Yet, as in the case of the little Samuel, we have little children ever with us and we might discern evidences of normal spiritual powers disclosing higher realities. We might learn from a more intimate study of their minds that in sensitive children especially there is a side to their nature properly definable as psychical. We might begin at last to see why it is that children at the point of death have described things seen in the spiritual world. We have only to follow the inner history of children round about us, from their early years through the period of the higher education and of contact with the world, when they begin to yield more fully to the world's enticements, in order to see the period of openness gradually giving place to a state in which the external life becomes largely triumphant. What still takes place all around us undoubtedly took

place under other external conditions in the childhood of the race. In each of us there are vestiges of this period in our childhood, vestiges which might be recovered. Life in a sense is a constant struggle to return to this the inmost part of our nature, in contrast with the effort of the external life to keep us absorbed in the things of the world. Nearly every one succumbs either to the enticements and demands of outward things or to some creed which denies the possibility of direct spiritual experience. But we have all known at least a few individuals who have kept unspoiled some of the qualities of this golden age of their youth.

There are signs that we have recently entered one of the great periods when men enjoy the open vision. We might deny every one of the manifestations of modern spiritism and yet have as many reasons for this statement. Psychical research, using the same persistent methods of analysis and criticism by which the triumphs of modern science have been won, has cleared the way for such a belief. But the great war accomplished far more at a leap than research could have gained in a generation. There have been too many visions of real value to deny them all. Too many messages purporting to come from soldiers who have "gone West" have stirred us into belief. Too many of us are spiritually hun-

gry with a hunger that has been quickened from within. We cannot return to the old scepticism. Everywhere there is eagerness for new light on death and the life beyond. Never in history have so many people received communications seeming to come from the spiritual world. Never before have such numbers of people come to believe in the reality of communion with the so-called dead. All these are signs of greater activity in the spiritual world itself, of more effort to get messages across. We may be exceedingly doubtful about the mere phenomena of psychical experiences, but we cannot deny these spiritual signs.

It is plainly not a time when a few seers or prophets may be expected to stand out above their fellowmen because of superiority in the open vision. As in all other fields of human endeavor, the powers of the individual at large are under consideration. It is a time of diffusion of every sort of knowledge. There are no evidences that we are ever to return to the leadership of a few men of genius or to membership in a few organizations supposably having a monopoly of spiritual knowledge. It is no longer a question of authority but of truth. Every one who is enteriorly guided and quickened is free to follow where the inner light may lead, to do his part in recovering the golden age. What is needed is

not a creed but enlightenment, not theology but a universal philosophy of the interior life verifiable by inner experience.

Moreover, new books are coming from the press thick and fast in response to this new eagerness for light. The subject of psychical phenomena has become one of the great literary topics of the day. Books abound no doubt which contain scant evidences of spiritual truth or spiritual reality. The greater the number of books the more need for searching scrutiny. But the significant thing is that they are being written and being read. One can no longer classify all books on spiritism or psychical phenomena under two or three heads. They vary all the way from crude attempts to describe the spiritual world to reasonable expositions of principles which are worthy of our most serious consideration. Prophecies abound and most of them are obviously wide of the mark, but there have been some remarkable prognostications of the war.

The most impressive advance, no doubt, in comparison with books purporting to contain messages from the great beyond of a generation or so ago, is in what some one has called "teamwork" as applied to spiritual things. Groups of enlightened spirits in the world beyond are apparently seeking communication with those most open on our plane. It is no longer a mere ques-

tion of proving spirit-return or establishing the work of psychical interchange on a scientific basis. Concerted effort is now being made to bring to us the teachings we most need for immediate application in this practical world. The question of the means of communication, for example, through mediumship or the pencil, has become wholly secondary. The fact that so many people are trying the ouija-board and the pencil is also secondary. There is something in store for us very much higher and better than these things. The time will come when we will no longer seek mere outward signs or agencies, but will look for direct evidences and interior impressions. This will lead to widespread interest in the open vision and the opening of the interior sight of numbers of people. The psychical awakening is incidental to the spiritual re-awakening. This is truly a new dispensation that is upon us.

II

PSYCHICAL EXPERIENCE

THE word "psychic" is on every lip today. Yet there are many who have no clear idea of the nature of the psychical realm in relation to the spiritual and physical. The word seems to cover the whole range from credulity to science. There is a tendency to confuse external phenomena with inner experience. It is well to draw certain distinctions that we may mark out the field of inner experience in general and within that field distinguish what is psychical.

In the larger sense the psychical is the whole sphere of mental life in contrast with the physical. In psychology a psychical fact is whatever is directly experienced by the mind in contrast with what science tells us by way of explanation of what we feel and otherwise perceive. Thus the fact of pleasure or pain is psychical, while the science that describes it and supplies what is lacking to make our knowledge complete is psychology. But this usage is too general.

In popular thought a psychical experience is mysterious or questionable. A person known as a "psychic" or "sensitive" is one supposed to

possess uncanny or supernormal power, such as clairvoyance, "second sight" the ability to read another's mind, or to fall into a trance. There is a tendency to classify all phenomena bordering upon spiritism as occult or abnormal. But this may be chiefly because we have tended to push these matters aside instead of marching straight up to them. We shall make headway if we now undertake to describe and explain them in the light of reason.

There are phenomena indeed which we may always regard as abnormal. Thus the mesmeric or hypnotic sleep although psychical is an experience against which we rebel in behalf of sound individuality and the cultivation of the intellect and the will. We object also to mediumship and disapprove of trances. Yet back of all this that is unsound lies the fact that many of us are to a greater or lesser degree sensitive, susceptible to impressions, mental atmospheres and guidances which seem to bring us higher wisdom. What we protest against is undue use of this the sensitive side of our nature. There undoubtedly is a perfectly normal use of our psychical powers.

We may perhaps define more carefully what we mean by psychical experience if we compare the psychical with other phases of our life. When we speak of worship, prayer, pious service in almsgiving, ministering to the sick, the

widowed and fatherless, we have in mind a distinct part of our individual and social existence, namely our religious life. In the best sense of the term "Christian" we mean by religion not only outward observances but personal piety, the response of the heart, a life according to the creed we profess in putting love for God and man above self-love. The word "psychic" does not enter in unless we associate with our piety something pertaining to the interior channels through which the experiences of the heart are said to come, unless we refer to other matters than direct communion with God or conversation through spoken words with men.

When we consider mysticism as a special phase of this life of the heart, however, we realize that the psychical always enters in. For the typical mystic is one who emphasizes inner experience as the primary means of knowing spiritual reality. The mystic may not hear voices or indulge in any activities in connection with spiritism, yet he surely has visions, he possesses psychical sensitivity to an unusual degree, and is likely to experience the ecstasy or uplift which leads mystics to believe they have direct communion with God. We fail to understand the mystic unless we take his psychical experiences into account. The mystic is in part a seer. He enjoys the open vision in some degree. His in-

ner life might be studied as a clue to the reality of psychical experience, apart from any particular belief such as spiritual pantheism which springs from his visions.

We might say that psychical experience is a phase of the whole spiritual life. But whenever you speak of the spiritual life nowadays you must explain what you mean, for you might mean spiritism or you might be utterly opposed to it. A person might be a psychic or sensitive and not by any means "spiritual" as most of us understand the term. We would all like to be sanely spiritual and grow in insight. We think of the spiritual in the best religious sense as implying a divine standard. The clue to the interpretation of the psychical must be spiritual, we insist.

The term "psychic" has been applied to the whole range of phenomena inclusive of materializations, raps, automatic writing, table-tipping, planchette-writing, the ouija-board, clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, psychometry, visions, apparitions, and the like. But we must distinguish between psychical or inner experience and external events, things or methods of activity connected with such experience. A rap is a physical happening if objectively actual at all. If nothing physical occurs, it is merely an auditory illusion. So the tipping of a table is a

physical occurrence. An experiment with a ouija-board is psychical only so far as the evidence compels us to look beyond unconscious muscular action or automatism for an explanation. The motions of a pencil held receptively in the hand may be purely automatic and may have no inner or psychical accompaniment whatever. What is psychical in connection with any of these phenomena when visible things are used is the inner experience of receiving impressions or the unwitting response to the activities of one's own subconsciousness. The inner impressions or responses are the psychical parts of the phenomena. This is probably always somewhat complex when, for example, the recipient contributes the requisite sensitivity and willingness to participate in the experience, in so far as the external memory is drawn upon, also the language that chances to be in one's mind as a whole, conscious and subconscious. If we could in all cases dispense with the external means, such as the use of a pencil or a board, what would be left would be the series of impressions with the feelings or words conveyed by means of these through the external memory.

We must distinguish between the inner or psychical reality and its associates or appearances, that is, the mere phenomena. There may be both outward associates, such as a tipping-

table or a moving pencil; and inward associates subject to misinterpretation or illusion. Thus an inner voice might seem to be heard outside when no sound is produced, yet the inner voice might be profoundly real. Thus a spiritual vision might have mystical associates round about a very genuine religious experience. Interpretations may vary and the names attached to an experience may be different, just as a vision beheld on a battle-field is variously interpreted and named by soldiers of various nationalities or faiths. An acute psychology would tell us what element in each case is inwardly real and this inner reality would be psychical.

The question of the abnormal elements of inner experience pertains to the given individual and is another problem, referring to the state of a person's health, for example, the presence or absence of a high degree of intellect offsetting or fostering the emotions. Psychical experience may be said to give us "supernormal" information, that is, information over and above that of our physical senses, but only because we know so little about the total environment of the human spirit. We may come to see that every normal individual regularly receives information or guidance wrongly classified as supernormal. It is wholly normal to be a spiritual being. It is perfectly normal to live in the spiritual world

and in the natural world at the same time. It is entirely normal and desirable to receive guidances from the spiritual world. It is in every way desirable to acquire wisdom from the other world by which to live in this—if it come according to divine order. The essential is knowledge, insight, intelligence in the use of wisdom from a truly superior source.

We may illustrate by telepathy or thought-transference. By this is meant direct communication between one mind and another otherwise than through the organs of speech or other physical means. It may involve the mere action of one mind on another or may also include definite words. Sometimes there is spontaneous transference, that is, without pre-arrangement or a direct act of will. Again, there is experimental transference under precise conditions as to time and receptivity. But the term has also been extended to include subconscious acquisition of memories from the minds of others present or absent. Thus a psychically inclined person may unwittingly read from another's mind thoughts which purport to come from spirits. A medium may draw on the minds of people present without intending to do so. Our minds may contribute subject matter without our consent. The tendency at present is to push this explanation as far as possible and to refrain from

belief in the reality of a spirit-message if one can. However that may be, we note that telepathic experience implies psychical power. None of us knows to what extent we may give and receive similar thoughts.

According to theosophy, telepathy includes the projection of "thought-forms" from one person to another. This projection involves the idea of etheric substance or force vibrating between human beings, as in wireless telegraphy. Whatever the interpretation put upon the experience, we ought properly to say that it is not thought that is transmitted but rhythm or vibration arousing an equivalent or corresponding thought, as we shall see more clearly in another chapter. What is implied on the part of the sender is power to direct the mind towards another at a distance. What is implied on the recipient's part is a psychical sensitive-plate capable of receiving rhythms or vibrations which set up equivalent thoughts. For my psychical state is always just my inner state, it does not travel. Your psychical state is just your inner state, it does not become an outer state. Granting that thought-interchange is the regular speech in the spiritual world, it is the normal and most direct mode of communication between any and all spirits whether still in this world or out of it.

Telepathy may be called the universal psychical language.

The ability to read another's mind wittingly or unwittingly is intimately akin to the power known as clairvoyance or second sight. This power was originally attributed to persons in a mesmeric sleep by which they were supposed to discern objects concealed from sight or to see what happened at a distance. Mediums in a supposed trance were found to possess the same power. Some operators who experimented with mesmeric subjects found that they too had this power of interior vision, hence that the surrender to hypnosis or a trance was not necessary. Clairvoyance is in fact dependent on neither spirits nor exceptional mental states. It is simply perception at a distance when this inner seeing cannot be explained by reference to another mind, when not due to mere thought-transference. It may involve reading another's mind at a distance or the perceiving of distant events. It readily runs over into what we vaguely call the prophetical faculty or sixth sense. It may include visions, hence it readily leads to mysticism. But while some who are psychically inclined have the power to "see things" others merely feel or discern them without the seeing. It is akin to intuition, a word which fortunately

we are never afraid of. Intuition underlies any number of efforts to read character, any number of clues which we spontaneously follow and regard as sane and worth while. At its best clairvoyance is inseparable from intuition and the open vision.

Thus too clairaudience or clear-hearing implies an inner power or spiritual sense akin to the physical sense of hearing. One may apparently hear another's voice with all the clearness of spoken utterance when no other person present hears a sound. A person at a distance may be thinking of the recipient with a half-uttered desire to summon him or a longing to communicate by some more direct means. Thus the experience on the sender's end may be an excellent instance of spontaneous transfer. One need not doubt the reality of the clear-hearing on the part of the recipient just because it is accompanied by an illusion that the voice is external and physical. There is a corresponding experience of inner hearing and sometimes of speaking in the case of real psychical communications. That is, one may experience the motor-impulse but may not speak, one may seem to hear a sound but become immediately aware that it is a thought arousing a motor-associate. That a real psychical experience may be accompanied by a motor-impulse need not surprise us at all. The point is that the

psychical experience on our part involves the possession of an interior or spiritual sense. We possess various spiritual senses and these correspond with the physical organs of sense.

Every person possesses a "sphere" or mental atmosphere which like the odor of a rose discloses the nature and conditions of the source from which it comes. We unwittingly exchange many sorts of influence through our spheres. Those of us who are sensitive know the differences between one presence and another, and we grow in inner discernment or intuition, well aware that some people are akin, some not. To be singled out as "clairvoyant" is to possess the same power in greater degree. Some have learned to depend on this visualizing intuition so that it has become a regular means of discerning the mental and physical states and conditions of people. Apparently we should all accustom ourselves to the conception of the human spirit as normally possessing these inner powers.

To take up the subject of apparitions and other physical phenomena would be to study the associates of psychical experience and raise the whole question of illusions and delusions. A credulous mind though desirably psychical may generate experiences that are objectively unreal. A "psychic" with mystic tendencies may project pictures and other imagery because of the ten-

dencies of that type of mind. These external matters have been before the world for a long time. We are all cautious. What is now needed is acuter knowledge of the psychical background, the inner core of reality.

Note, for example, the difference between alleged messages coming from spirits by the instrumentality of table-tipping, the ouija-board or automatic writing, and messages coming through direct inner impression. The physical instrument has apparently been used to arouse the recipient to the possibility of receiving thoughts by direct impression. Thereupon the use of material means has been given up and the great inner world has begun to receive attention. Others of us were fortunate enough to begin with direct impressions and so have not resorted to physical means save perhaps to help people to break away from them. There must always be direct impression behind the mere phenomena whenever the experience is real, whether or not the participants are aware of it. This after all is the real thing. We may throw the material accompaniment out of account and give ourselves over to a study of the processes going on in the mind, knowingly or unknowingly.

By psychical experience then we mean a kind of inner experience taking place because man is a spirit with interior senses, powers of talking,

hearing, seeing, discerning from spheres, from minds, from spirits, in the spiritual world as well as in the natural. If we were interiorly awake we would know that we have these powers and would look to them first as guides. Partly asleep as we are, absorbed if not imprisoned in physical things, we need to be aroused. The form which psychical experiences assume when they come to awaken us depends upon the type of person. Psychical experience may take on successively higher forms as we proceed. It is incumbent upon us to discover the real inner experience in each case, to seek its meaning and to distinguish it from its associates.

It is out of the question to judge of the reality and value of inner experience either by reference to the outward associates or by the character of the recipient known as a "psychic." We need not be at all surprised to learn that speakers and writers of a high degree of refinement are open to help through psychical experience. It is a question of the point of view of inner experience with its sources and values, the results to which it leads.

Inner experience is what I come to know about when I learn in some degree the difference between mind and brain, between consciousness and subconsciousness, between what I contribute from my personality and character and what is

from conscience, from God and from other men. I am unable to explain such experiences by reference to things and events outside of me as if I were a mere automaton with thoughts and feelings only apparently coming from myself. Nor am I able to explain away such experiences as if wholly produced within me by beings outside. I am a real participant. I may become as acutely intellectual as I like and still find that these inner experiences are untouched by my sceptical acumen. My experiences may continue while I am engaged in the usual daily occupations, in every way vigorously normal. There is no necessary conflict between such experiences and what we call "sound sense." Such experiences need not separate a person from the social world. As a social being, a person has inner and psychical relationships as well as external relationships. In the inner world we are all the more intimately "members one of another." If I would know myself as an individual in the profounder sense of the word I must understand these interior relationships. For in the inner world as well as in my external social life I have my affinities and dislikes, I am attracted or I am repelled, I close the door or I open it. For better or worse I accept or reject all matters of moment on the basis of my inner preferences. Fortunate indeed am I if aware of the personal equation in this its more

intimate sense, if I possess a standard such that I discern the psychical in relation to the spiritual. Well too for me if I am led to keep my spirit open, that I may grow into appreciation of the real sources of religious experience. For I may then classify the psychical element of experience in its proper place, and help my fellow-men to make the same classification.

We conclude then that psychical experience has no necessary connection with spiritualism or any form of occultism. In fact, we conclude that the psychical element of the inner life is in itself neutral or non-committal. It may be combined with any conceivable assemblage of human powers, in any temperament, in connection with any kind of belief in any age or nation. It is simply an element or aspect of inner human experience. The same spiritual senses or powers are used in any case, from the lowest to the highest type, and to condemn the psychical unqualifiedly would be to condemn our entire spiritual nature. It is a question of the type of person, the degree of intelligence, the use which is made of psychical power, the enlightenment in the given instance. In the psychical as such there is nothing to fear. What plays havoc is misinterpretation and misuse. We are capable of coming into clear light and seeing the true meaning and the true values.

III

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

We have now to consider whether the researches of those who have employed modern critical methods of investigation have brought us the evidences and standards we need to determine the value of psychical experiences. Doubtless we would all agree that the contributions of psychical research are highly important. Before the days of such research there was no general effort to discover the facts of experience apart from a particular type of belief such as spiritualism or theosophy. We did not then know how very large a percentage of men and women have had at least a few experiences in the course of a life-time which might be put down on the scientific list as psychical. Science had for the most part ignored the whole field of phenomena bordering on spiritism. The churches had little definite teaching to give, save perhaps to warn the public against communications through mediums. The founders of the Society for Psychical Research literally created a field for investigation by being willing to inquire into all phenomena of a psychical nature for truth's sake.

Moreover, its greatest contribution to psychological theory, Mr. Myer's view of our deeper nature called by him "the subliminal self," has greatly enriched our psychological knowledge. Under the name "subconscious" we have all come to take interest in this part of our nature lying below the threshold of consciousness and to make allowances for it in our thought and in our interpretations.

Some of us have followed the development of psychical research with great interest since its beginnings in America in the acute work of Richard Hodgson, and the suggestive tolerance and interest of Professor James. In the early years thought-transference had not yet been scientifically proved, but when it was satisfactorily established on a scientific basis the tendency was to explain every alleged spirit-communication by reference to it. There are devotees of psychical research today who believe that all such communications can be so explained. Next came the acceptance of the idea of spirit-return after persistent effort to detect fraud or illusion in the work of mediums like Mrs. Piper. The results were better after this idea was accepted, for an interrupting doubt was removed. Convincing evidence of spirit-return, of the persistence of identity after death has been obtained, and people who have had no direct psychical ex-

periences of their own have come to believe in the reality of spirit-communications. Furthermore there have been some remarkable evidences capable of manifold proof in the case of messages given in part through one medium and verified or completed by "cross correspondence" through another. Such evidences are now before the public in the works of Sir. W. F. Barrett, Professor Hyslop and other well known writers on psychical research, as well as in the reports of the English Society.

Some of us have expressed impatience that the work of the Society was so deliberate with such meagre results at first. We have looked for more conclusions. We expected more light on the nature of the life after death. We awaited inspirational teachings. But, as a member of the Society has explained, the Society for Psychical Research stands for investigations, not conclusions. A majority of its members now believe in thought-transference and many believe in spirit-return. There is a great advantage in limiting the inquiry to the effort to establish the persistence of identity, and apparently trivial facts in connection with efforts to prove spirit-return have real value. We have all profited by the investigation. We need not stop where this research leaves off. We are sure to benefit by reacting upon it.

Professor Hyslop's recent book, "Contact with the Other World," may be taken as an illustration of the values and limitations of such research. The author is himself convinced of the reality of spirit-communication through mediums. But he takes his readers carefully over the whole field from ancient times, discusses telepathy, also the processes of communications, and gives strong evidences in favor of messages from prominent men such as Professor James and Dr. Isaac Funk who were interested in psychical research before they left this world. The author also discusses such questions as reincarnation, obsession and mediumship. In brief, one has a complete view of the psychical realm as the man of science regards it. Some of the most prominent of the early members of the Society have now passed to the other life, and apparently their work there is being carried on in much the same way as when here, save that they are now in the position of spirits desiring to communicate. We seem actually to have bridged the chasm and to have a view of psychical research as carried on in both worlds.

When we have finished the book and have seen by what process of reasoning the author has been led to believe that there is satisfactory evidence for the survival of consciousness after death, where have we arrived? How does it

leave the question of psychical experience for you and me? Shall we say that we are convinced too? Or is an argument based on the evidences which have convinced others still mere intellectual testimony awaiting confirmation?

One must admit that many difficulties have been cleared away. The author has satisfactorily explained some of the confusions which have made it hard to get messages over. He is well aware of the complexities under which a spirit operates when trying to communicate and of the obstacles on this side. One questions whether any one could have become so intimately aware of the conditions and difficulties unless the experiences in question had somehow been very real.

For example, definite light is thrown on the means of communicating ideas from spirits which reduce themselves to a single process. There are to be sure two general forms of communication, sensory and motor, corresponding to the two channels known to all of us whereby the mind is related to the physical world. In the sensory field clairvoyance is most in evidence. But the voices heard are as real as the visions seen. Whatever the sensory form, whether pertaining to sight, touch, hearing, smelling or tasting, or even in the case of emotional experiences, all are reducible to the same type, "the

pictographic process." This process means that the communicating spirit succeeds in eliciting in the subject or medium a sensory phantasm or representation of his thought. This process of mental picturing in the subject's mind then leads to the several well known means of expression, for example, through automatic writing. The subject does not necessarily draw pictures and may not be aware of seeing any mental pictures, but this is the underlying process preceding the expression of the message through spoken or written words. The psychical experience in brief consists of the receiving of mental pictures impressed on the mind by the communicator and the translation of these into words which represent the imagery. The direct means of communication is through the subliminal or subconscious region of the subject's mind. The panoramic stream of images transmitted from the communicator may undergo some abbreviation or interpretation in the mind of the subject, hence there may be confusion and difficulty in the transmission.

"Though we can only name it without describing the intimate nature of the process, we can understand that it makes communication more intelligible than does the study of the mechanical devices or methods of communication. We are nearer the heart of the problem when we are

able to recognize a psychological process in it. We do not know in detail all that goes on, but when we can conceive that a mental picture in the mind of the communicator is transmitted, perhaps telepathically, to the psychic or to the control; even though we do not know how this occurs, we can understand why the message takes the form that it does in the mind of the psychic and why the whole process assumes the form of a description of visual, or a report of auditory images. The whole process of facts is thus systematized as a single process, whose specific form of transmission is determined by the sense through which it is expressed." [1]

There is no reason then for assuming that the whole process comes from the communicating spirit and that we must prove this in order to show that the medium is honest. Popular thought fails to take full account of the process of receiving and translating going on below the threshold in the subject. We overlook the fact that there is necessarily such a process, just as in sense-perception all our acquaintance with the natural world is obtained through the cooperation of our own organism. But when we understand that there is a cooperative process going on in subconsciousness in all cases whatever, and when we are able to conceive of this as pictographic on the inner side and as expressing itself through

[1] Page 117.

writing, speech, etc., on the outer side, we have a way to make the whole experience of communicating intelligible.

We already know about mental images. We know too that there was a primitive form of language employed by the ancient Egyptians and by the Indians which consisted of pictographs. Indeed we have at least a general idea of the whole language of correspondence once widely employed, that is, the representation or portrayal of ideas by means of pictures, images, forms of speech, symbols. We have direct clues to this correspondence in the case of our own mental pictures which are compact ways of putting before the mind the ends of action, the interests we propose to realize. These mental images, we know, precede and lead to action, that is, our motor images. What is more natural than that a spirit communicating with a mind in the flesh should convey through a succession of mental pictures ideas which can take form through words in the recipient's mind? For this process of translation from image to idea or to conduct is already in operation in our mental life. We would not expect that a communication from a spirit would occur save through a process already active. Thus far we seem to be wholly on the right track. What we need is further knowledge concerning spiritual speech, that which is

prior to the recipient state in the subject's mind.

What, however, shall we say of the results thus far, when we try to think in the terms and with the facts which psychical research gives us? Shall we depend chiefly on messages purporting to come through mediums? Shall we consult mediums or attempt automatic writing?

Without minimizing in any way the results to which psychical research has led us, let us consider whether we can think the subject through to the end. In common with psychologists of the day, Professor Hyslop, for example, uses the term "spirit" in the sense of "the stream of consciousness." He leaves us with facts which he says "indicate something supernormal." From these he "infers" the continuity of personal identity, although he says we do not know the conditions of existence in the other world. He places much emphasis on the limitations of our knowledge. He keeps close to the ground and never makes a flight in the free air to see if there be another point of view. Always keeping the materialistic point of view in mind as a point of view to be overcome, namely, that there is no such thing as spirit and that the supernormal phenomena in question might be explained as due to functions of the brain, he is interested to state the usual sceptical difficulties and to try to meet them. In fine, he works up from below. He never supplies a spiritual criterion.

Yet why, one might ask, should one forever be primarily concerned with sceptical difficulties, why make these concessions to materialism? Taking seriously the notion that the human spirit is a "stream," the critic might object that even if the stream should survive for a time it might run itself out and leave us in the mere realm of phenomena. We need much more than inference in order to believe. The author may have disclosed a point of "contact" with the other world. *But he does not give us that world as a reality.* It is the vividly spiritual world that we need, at least an idea of it such that we may all set about verifying the conception. We need a view of the human spirit which takes us beyond mere psychological description. We are concerned with the whole self. For many of us the spiritual world is already far more real than an assemblage of "mental states." We are not led to conceive of it as "mental and creative." This characterization suggests subjective idealism, as if space and time were merely in ourselves, as if each self projected thought-forms upon a world whose reality we could never know. To start with this philosophy would be to find difficulties all along the way.

Again, one is inclined to raise questions when invited to maintain the attitude of the devotee of psychical research. Nearly always the test or

experiment under precise conditions is regarded as of greater value than experiences coming spontaneously. Naturally research is pushed as far as possible and sceptical objections are raised as long as one can propose them. But the result seems to be that one is always dealing with parts of our nature, never the whole. The resulting conclusions are meagre too. We know from perfectly real and genuine experience that life is very much larger. It would be impossible, for example, ever to tell in evidential terms under precise experiment what love is and why. We always appeal to "values" surpassing analysis. The higher the experience in type the harder we find it to submit to tests and critical observation.

This explains why some of us have been unable to respond to the requests of investigators. In the case of thought-transference, for example, the researcher would have us try the experiment with a person who is a mere acquaintance, and would have us endeavor to transmit a thought of no interest to either party. He is doubtful about telepathy between friends. Yet it may be the friendly affinity and the personal interest in conveying a message which establishes the connection. A spontaneous experience involving matters of real interest might be worth a hundred experiments. One may not be able to describe all the conditions or state all the facts afterwards,

yet the experience may have been profoundly convincing.

Psychical experiences which come spontaneously, unsought, seem to belong to the more interior part of our nature. They come for a good reason or purpose. We are able to connect them with much that has gone before and with results presently coming to pass. One may need various experiences to have a conviction that they are real. Honest doubt may play an important part for a long time. But the attitude of mind is different from that of the researcher who has laid down the conditions of an experiment. It is not necessary to think so much of the subconscious mind as possibly playing the most important part and perhaps generating a message attributed to a spirit. On the other hand, one is carrying on a very different kind of research if you please: one is observing the experiences which come unsought through the years and comparing them to learn their meaning and value. One makes use of psychical power to some extent voluntarily, but always in line with what spontaneous experiences have disclosed. The facts and their implications put together seem to yield us a larger conception of the spirit, to give us a more real spiritual world, and to make it seem very near and accessible. The standard applied throughout is the Christian test: "by their fruits ye shall know them."

Experience with spontaneously given communications teaches that the believing attitude is the one into which the spirit must grow. One must pass beyond the point where mere proof or evidence is in question. One must overcome the desire for something marvellous or spectacular. When the last word through mediums has been uttered we shall still be left where we demand convincing personal evidence. But such evidences might come to us directly if we would give up mere experiment, penetrate beyond all such means as table-tipping, automatic writing and spelling by the ouija-board, and give heed to the inner experience, the real psychical experience. Meanwhile, we may make immediate use of the information which psychical research gives us concerning the psychological process, the pictographic series which underlies various messages. We may then look elsewhere for light on the nature of spiritual speech.

It becomes a question of studying the methods of communication to see what the implied psychical experiences are, and of following the development of psychical power in ourselves or in others in so far as its spontaneous activities put us in possession of a clue. Eventually we come to need a higher view of the human spirit than psychical research gives us, a higher type of science than commonly passes current. It ceases

to be a question of the application of sceptical tests and becomes a question of a spiritual criterion or standard by which to judge the value of various types of inner experience. In the last analysis every one needs such a standard, needs a definite idea of inner perception. For in the last analysis each of us is led to a consideration of psychical experience by direct impression as the higher study in this field. Hence each is brought to a point where he takes more seriously the teaching that man lives in two worlds at once, and can begin to know while still on earth something definite concerning his relationship with the spiritual world as a real world. Psychical research may have helped him to define his field, to distinguish it from the vague realm of spiritism, and may have given him the right to talk about psychical experiences without being classified as a fool. Yet eventually he must look rather to the growth of purposive inner experiences within him, and subject all his conclusions to the test of inner perception. This will not mean that he puts individual experience above science, but that inner perception itself implies science of another type, and a philosophy of the inter-relationship of the two worlds. We may then come to see that the values of psychical research were foreseen and surpassed long ago.

IV

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

THE preceding inquiry naturally leads to a distinction between the content of psychical experiences, the message said to come over from the other world, or the information gained intuitively concerning people and things in the flesh; and the modes and conditions through which the experience takes place. The intellectual activity in a spirit's mind, for example, might lead to a series of impressions on the part of the recipient and their translation into forms of expression dependent on the recipient's psychical constitution, the knowledge possessed, the symbols employed, the language commonly used. This recipiency and process of transmission or translation would be the psychical experience as such. The external modes of expression would be another matter, not properly psychical but psycho-physical in the form of motor reactions. The more we know about the human mind and the human organism the more accurately we should be able to explain the outward process.

We would hardly expect the outward expression to rise higher than the intelligence or mental

type of the recipient would imply. But we might find that external means serve a purpose for a time to bring to a person's attention the inner or psychical process. Thus an experience with automatic writing or other means might be inwardly genuine and might lead to good results. There is no reason why we should not acknowledge this and then point the way to its values.

For example, a physician in the West once took up a pencil and proceeded spontaneously to write without ever having seen automatic writing and without knowing anything about the process. Apparently, he was open to spiritual teachings but did not know it. He might have enjoyed direct inner experience, but again he was apparently unaware even of its possibility. To his great surprise he received a message advising him to prepare himself for the ministry. Inquiring what church he should fit for and mentioning the names of various well known churches, he was at length given the name of an organization of whose existence he was wholly unaware. Still greatly surprised he asked questions till he received further instructions, became convinced of the truth of the message, sought out the organization to which he had been referred and began his theological studies. He had no further experiences with the pencil. His psychical experience served as temporary means and was wholly

harmless. His case is perhaps typical of those who with good sense have regarded a message as they might any advice given by a wise person in the flesh, advice to be taken or rejected. In this case the advice was taken because on being put to the test it steadily led to good results. The initial experience was soon surpassed by the inner illumination which followed.

The phenomena of the ouija-board are not often so simple. People experiment with it who have no inkling of the nature of psychical experience or the involuntary phenomena likely to accompany it. The board is regarded not only as mysterious but as a means to omniscience, as if any possible information could be gained through it concerning the trivial future and what conduct one should indulge in under minor conditions. People vary in their attitude all the way from a scepticism which leaves the organism stiffly unyielding to a credulity which makes it possible for two subconscious minds cooperating to generate messages in which spirits did not play the least part. The most absurd questions are asked and advice is sought on the supposition that any word purporting to come from the least enlightened person in the other world is worth more than the greatest wisdom obtainable in this world. It is not strange that many in our day are seeking light on the life after death by means

of this misused board. But it is not to be wondered at that most of its gyrations are worth practically nothing.

In the first place, remembering that psychical experience is one thing and automatism in any of its forms another, let us note some of the phenomena of automatism. Either because there is a communicating spirit present whose mode of getting messages over differs from that of others, or because the two sitting at the board are unlike two others who try the experiment at another time, the gyrations are certainly various. Here is an alleged spirit for example whose motion is very slow, with each word spelled out deliberately. Here is another spirit coming to the same two people under the same conditions whose motion as expressed in the cooperative automatism of the sitters is very rapid. Again, two others trying the experiment in another place and without previous acquaintance with the ouija-board appear to summon up a spirit whose communication is expressed in a peculiar zig-zag motion from letter to letter never before witnessed by observers who have noted differences such as those mentioned above. On still another occasion two people receive what seems to be a real message containing excellent advice for some one present. A name is spelled out and the gentle motion of the little board as it moves

from letter to letter coincides with the character of the alleged communicator as known when on earth. This spirit apparently comes on two occasions. On the third occasion the motion of the little board is suddenly changed through no cause known to the sitters; it is full of rapid dashings, ellipses and circles, while the sentences spelled out are totally different in character from that of the message thus rudely interrupted. The communicating spirit explains on another occasion that a bothersome spirit who gave the name of "Mary" intervened and must be driven away. Probably all who have had opportunity to observe the phenomena of the board have witnessed such variations as this. What is one to believe?

One may of course take note of the messages and compare them to see if the results throw any light on their value. But such comparison does not seem to lead very far. Here are messages given on successive occasions by one whose motion is gentle. The messages are coherent. Their wisdom seems to apply to the need of the person to whom they are addressed. It hardly appears credible that the subconscious cooperation or automatism of the persons present has produced them. There is a prophecy even which is fulfilled in due time. The communicating spirit explains why she prefers to convey a message

through one of the sitters, namely, because she is "open," but advises this young person not to try the board often. She also gives an intelligible account of her present activities. But to the surprise of all she says on three Sundays when attempts were made to get a message through, that nothing will be given on Sunday: "we rest on Sunday." How can one reconcile this unexpected message with what we learn from other sources, that is, that in the spiritual world time as we know it is not in question?

Here are two other experimenters, one apparently as "open" as the young woman above referred to. Each receives a plausible message, although unconvinced. But there follows a prophecy and a warning, the day and the month being given, in which there proves to be not a word of truth, and the message carries no conviction whatever to the recipients. It was a sheer product of automatism. Other messages are so conflicting that the experimenters give up the board once for all. Neither participant seems voluntarily to have yielded either her organism or external memory to any communicating spirit. If the messages are to be explained on a psychological basis, it must be by reference to subconscious cooperation and automatism. But here are two persons receiving a message associated with zig-zag motions on the board,

when it is very evident to observant onlookers that the whole message might have been generated in response to the desire of the stronger minded participant. The only interesting fact about it all is the peculiar zig-zag motion through which the automatism expresses itself.

Still further, here is a person who receives messages when sitting alone at the board. The motion of the board is very rapid, so that the observers are hardly able to follow and to spell out the communications. The noteworthy fact about the messages is that they are all incoherent assemblages of detached words so that it is difficult to detect any intelligible meaning. Another person sits down with the recipient. The motion is much less rapid, but the wording is still absurdly incoherent. A third person tries. The motion is still more slow and the hands of the person in question are plainly a drag. Messages come during half an hour or more, but they are all fragmentary and wholly unconvincing. The motions plainly come through the instrumentality of the one who tried the board alone. She has no particular interest in the phenomena one way or another but is "willing." She possesses psychical power but has not yet learned its use. Nor does she understand automatisms.

Plainly, nothing definite can be learned from a study of the phenomena alone. One may in-

deed learn something about the psychical ability of the participants. One has a collection of facts concerning the various motions of the board, the contrasts and conflicts of alleged messages, and one is free to make use of any instruction which may be tested as any bit of mundane advice is tested. But one can place no reliance whatever on prognostications. The alleged spirits are obviously no wiser than we are. The interferences by deterrent forces simply give rise to a problem which cannot in any way be settled on the basis of a study of external phenomena.

What we seem to need to test the reality of such gyrations is another form of evidence given independently in the way known as "cross correspondence" and confirmed from within by actual psychical experience. For example, two friends of mine handed me ouija-board messages purporting to come from someone I know in the spiritual world. Two other friends claimed to have received messages in the same way from the same spirit. To my surprise, another friend using the pencil apparently received a communication from the same source. This looked on the face of it like a concerted effort to show me that a message received in this fashion could be genuine. But the first message was a warning and on the face of it looked highly improbable and it was never fulfilled. The second had no discoverable

relation with either of the others. The third contained no verifiable meaning whatever. It seemed strongly improbable that this spirit, long since gone, was once more present and using these means. What was lacking was inner confirmation and this could readily have been given by direct inner impression. Again, I was left with phenomena simply. The fact that the same name was given in connection with the several messages could be explained on another basis, namely, that each of these friends was interested to obtain for me a message from this particular spirit. There was no intention on their part to mislead, or to generate a message out of the subconscious. But granted a certain half-conscious interest on their part, and expectant attention concerning the movements of the ouija-board, then the rest readily followed. The name of the person was the one which any friend would be most likely to think of and to contribute involuntarily. I could not accept a message purporting to come from that source unless my inner consciousness in the form of guidance should give emphatic assent and bid me consider it.

There is plainly a disadvantage in any experiment with a ouija-board when one sits down with the intention of receiving a message. For inadvertently one puts the organism into a state to indulge in automatic movements, involuntarily

one gives play to one's subconsciousness. The minds of the participants or observers readily supply subject-matter, although unintentionally. Involuntarily, too, expectant attention plays its part in the case of those who are eager to learn about the welfare of friends in the spiritual world. There are several mental factors to allow for, also the fact that the human organism readily responds to automatic action. Hence there is basis for doubt and careful analysis, howbeit sceptical scrutiny is likely to interfere with the believing attitude. What one desires is evidence that can overcome all objections that can be urged within reason. Some of us are persistently doubtful about a means of communication involving so many grounds for question as the ouija-board. It does not seem worth while to press on through all the difficulties when there is a way that is so much more direct.

But now let us turn to a writer who met adverse and baffling conditions at times but who pressed on through the phenomena of automatism and arrived at better results. In "The Seven Purposes" Margeret Cameron describes the genesis of messages received through planchette and later by automatic writing developed to a high point of efficiency. The writer was not originally interested in such phenomena and took up the experiments with planchette without beliefs

or expectations. This was a very great advantage. She early noticed a "curious sense of vitality" preceding the motion, also differences in the motion, including that of a strong and brisk movement associated with a spirit differing in type from others who came early. The personalities of those communicating were recognized slowly, but after a time three individuals were distinctively noted, while the personality of an interrupting spirit or deterrent force early became manifest. When another hand broke in there was obvious evidence of something real in the messages. So too the change from planchette to the pencil afforded a basis of fact by which to judge.

One of the communicating spirits, Frederick, interspersed tricks with the pencil, such as "joy-circles" and inverted writing, in order to overcome doubts. Apparently, as in the case of psychical research, it was necessary to give convincing evidence that the same identity persists into the other life. It was plainly necessary too to overcome doubt, for although the recipient was described as "especially sensitive as a messenger" she had to be taught the believing attitude by repeated statements to the effect that "doubt breaks the connection."

Sometimes messages were conveyed to the recipient directly, before being written, and the

writer was one day told that the mind could be read directly, "if you will let me in, and learn." It was explained that fear of one's imaginings is deterrent. What is needed is a "relaxed and receptive mind—not a tense and resisting one," hence it was necessary to give much instruction concerning the mental states such as doubt, fear, grief, which hinder. Until "we are realized and recognized," so an instructing spirit said, there cannot be complete communion.

Persistently baffling difficulties were encountered in the effort to convince one of the persons in the flesh for whom messages came, and some of the statements made by the communicating spirit were misleading and unverifiable as they stood. But these difficulties overcome, a series of lessons was given, together with evidences that on the other side there was team-work to get instruction over to this plane. Despite this grouping "for a purpose," however, there was a period when the writer contended with persistently deterrent forces and a "deliberate drive by malign powers." This persistent attack continued for three days, and much faith was required on the part of the writer to press on. Later there were signs which made it possible to distinguish the personality by "the degree and quality of force applied to the pencil." Still later explanations were forthcoming on the part of the group to the

effect that even they with all their additional power were hindered for a time.

One might wonder why this group did not warn the recipient of these messages that a concerted attempt to interfere with the giving of messages was in process. But the explanation came that nothing must be done which might coerce or deprive the writer of her freedom. "In your individual struggle we may not interfere, even if it concerns our work. You must believe or doubt according to your own choice . . . we cannot tell you that disintegrating forces threaten you, until you have recognized them. Then we can help you repel them. . . . Details of your personal struggles may not be explained. They are your development. . . . Malevolent and crafty forces are about, striving to thwart progressive effort." What is needed on the part of people here is "a free heart, a free mind, a free hope to come into."

Evidently ignorance is a channel for disintegrating forces. One must become informed and learn how to close the door. The teaching of the book is that there are adverse forces trying to prevent the giving of such messages and teachings. But one is encouraged to persist through all difficulties. The experiences accompanying the messages are instructive. And definite information is vouchsafed in regard to the

means of communicating, as in the following:

"The subconscious mind is like the battery, but the connection is made through the hand. The motive power for the pencil does not come, as scientists claim, from the subconscious mind, but from the subtle force I mentioned, put into connection with the hand by certain sympathetic and sensitive conditions of the subconscious mind. . . . The force is not electric, and has certain definitely distinctive qualities not to be expressed in any terms now familiar on your plane; but in time words will be found—or coined—to express this connection." [1]

In another passage the statement is made that sometimes the pencil is pushed, sometimes the mind is approached directly. It is said to be easier to impress the mind, but harder for the recipient to learn that the message is from a spirit and not due to his own suggestion. This statement throws light on the experiences some have had when the propelling force seemed to be applied to the pencil from the outside. It may well be that the external movement of the pencil has been needed to convince automatic writers that a force other than that of their own minds was at work, that the message was really produced by a spirit. Possibly too the real use of planchette or the ouija-board is to attract attention to

[1] Page 251.

the phenomena, as baffling as they may be, that one may press on as did Margaret Cameron to knowledge of the conditions and then on far beyond these messages.

Nothing of course can be established by study of the phenomena of communication apart from the content of the message. The really evidential part of any book is the teaching which it contains. But granted the above acquaintance with the conditions we may put two and two together and connect the pictographic process with the facts concerning the external phenomena. We may then gain something like a complete view of the various conditions.

Surely, one cannot advise any one to seek communications by aid of the ouija-board, since the conditions are subtle and complex, and there is likelihood of being deceived. Nevertheless one must admit that when a young person who is "open," with no interest in the experiment for or against, receives messages whose meaning can be rationally tested, one should be free to consider the experiences as genuinely psychical, not mere products of automatism. The pencil has a distinct advantage over the board. Its phenomena may at least serve to attract attention and provoke thought. The messages which have been received in this way during the past few years show a decided advance in intelligibility.

These messages are not of course conclusive in themselves, apart from a study of inner experience. The possibility of real inner experiences uniting us with the spiritual world is after all the great consideration, and when we see this clearly we may pass beyond the study of phenomena. What we need is the highest guidance we can find, the highest source of consolation, the purest light on the life after death. We are not likely to find that which is highest while we linger on the psychical level. The psychical is always a means to ends, never an end itself. Not until we pass beyond it are we able to understand the psychical in relation to the spiritual. May we say then that our age is about to take this next step in earnest and to pass beyond the psychical into greater knowledge of spiritual realities? [1]

[1] In "The Hill of Vision," New York, 1919, an illuminating account of automatic writing is given which should be convincing to any one who thinks that consciousness is the determining factor. The automatist received continuous, intelligible messages while continuously reading a book requiring unbroken attention.

V

THE AWAKENING OF PSYCHICAL POWER

THAT a person may grow simply and naturally into knowledge and use of psychical power is shown in the case of P. P. Quimby, pioneer of the spiritual healing movement in America. We may consider his experience quite apart from any interest in his teachings or any objections to them. The example would serve as well if he had taken up any other form of spiritual work on an original basis. For the significant consideration is that he had an open mind, no beliefs that kept him from investigations for truth's sake, and no attitude towards life which closed the door to inner guidance so far as any of us know who have had acquaintance with his relatives and his followers. Again his experience is interesting because he was not in any sense a spiritist, and apparently had no reason for attributing any of his experiences or guidances to angels or spirits. He did not seek to cultivate psychical power for its own sake and the problems of psychical research did not exist for him. Such power as he acquired came in the course of investigations with purely practical interests in view.

Because of a strong personal desire for light on his own health, Mr. Quimby experimented for a time, beginning in 1838, with the phenomena now known as hypnotism but then called mesmerism. He found a responsive subject whom he calls Lucius in his manuscripts, a peculiarly sensitive subject who became very clairvoyant when under mesmeric sleep or hypnosis. This subject when thus clairvoyant would sometimes describe the interior states of people suffering from disease in such a way as to lead Mr. Quimby to believe that man possesses a deeper or interior mind whose contents throw more light on the real nature of a person's attitude toward life, his beliefs, and fears, than any study of man's mere consciousness. In fact, Quimby concluded that not until the inner mind is known can we be truly said to know the man, or be able to help him out of his spiritual troubles. For the inner mind was plainly more open to what we now call "suggestion." It also had a more direct influence upon the physical organism. This was Quimby's original way of discovering what we now call the subconscious mind.

Having found and followed this clue for a while, Quimby discovered to his surprise that by sitting silently by a person, intuitively receptive to the inner mind, he too possessed clairvoyant power and could not only discern interior spirit-

ual states but also conditions within the bodily organism not obvious to sight and not taken into account by the physician's diagnosis. This for Quimby was an epoch-making discovery, for it was no longer necessary to make use of the sensitive as an intermediary. It was unnecessary to put a person into a mesmeric sleep. This was undesirable and abnormal. But the clairvoyant or intuitive power which Quimby found himself in possession of was entirely normal. Nor need one have recourse to spirits or have anything to do with mediumship, since this intuitive power was found to be resident within the individual. What was important was to press forward in developing and using intuition. This Mr. Quimby did without trying to cultivate psychical power as such, because his discoveries had opened up a new world of helpfulness for people in spiritual need.

The peculiar beliefs about diseases and the method of cure which Quimby espoused need not concern us here. Suffice it that through long practice in rendering himself receptive to the inner minds of his patients Quimby grew in intuitive discernment and acquired a philosophy of the inner life which throws light on psychical experience. The first clue was the discovery of clairvoyance or intuition on his own part, and the fact that this power grew with use, that is, by

depending on it, by regarding its disclosures as of more value than what passes current as knowledge in the world but which is oftentimes merely opinion based on appearances. The second step was the discovery, made by sitting silently and receptively by the sick, that each person carries around him a sphere or atmosphere which discloses the inner conditions and states. This sphere differs with each individual, and shows a person to be sensitive or stubborn, hopeful or pessimistic, negative or positive as the case may be. It is the direct clue to subconsciousness and by becoming acquainted with it one learns how interior states and mental attitudes affect bodily changes. The process known as "silent treatment" operates directly through the subconsciousness of the patient, and the changes made disclose themselves in the mental atmosphere. The healer is thus able to see what his work is accomplishing and to perceive the forthcoming changes long before the patient becomes aware of them. An atmosphere or sphere can be discerned at a distance, also, and so the therapeutic process may be carried on absently.

Quimby does not seem to have regarded this discovery as remarkable, nor did he hold that the influence of mental atmosphere is at all abnormal or unusual. He was not acquiring supernormal knowledge of the human individual, but

merely finding out what is partly true of all of us and especially true of the sensitively organized, namely, that through the world of our mental atmospheres or spiritual spheres we are intimately "members one of another." He held that we all influence one another far more than we know, for we ordinarily judge by surfaces; we fail to take the inner mind into account. Quimby's great step was the one which took him beyond the realm of psychical influences on the plane where atmospheres meet and mingle to find a way to conquer such influences in so far as they prove undesirable.

Had Quimby merely rendered his mind open to the feelings and inner states of his patients he would have been no better off than those of us who are tempted and have no victorious faith by which to overcome temptation. Indeed he would have been in a worse state, for he was becoming more sensitive and he readily took on the feelings of his patients. But Quimby had come to the conclusion that the real man or self behind the atmosphere and what we now call the subconscious mind is spirit, is of finer quality and greater power than any mental atmosphere. His writings do not tell us by what steps he arrived at the conclusion that the spirit is inwardly open to the divine presence and is subject to guidance. One can only infer that he had grown

into open vision to some extent. He learned from actual experience that clairvoyant intuition is not merely a mental or human power, but that spiritual light illuminating the human spirit discloses what is divine and what is true. Moreover, Quimby was not, so those friends assure us who knew him best, a man who naturally attributed power to himself. He seems to have grown quite naturally into the belief, then the conviction, that the human spirit is interiorly open to the divine wisdom and that by giving heed to the signs and conditions of this openness the spirit can become more receptive and be more truly guided.

Consequently the discovery of mental atmospheres and the plight of a person in inner distress and spiritual need was merely incidental to the seeking of divine guidance to set the sufferer free. But this was not all. For if a sufferer's need voices itself as it were by means of vibrations sent out by the sphere which the person carries, the one who has learned to discern another's spirit can also send forth power from within. That is to say, the spiritual healer, learning that man is a spirit, also learns to talk directly to the spirit in the patient. This converse of spirit with spirit is not mere thought-transference in the sense of the mere transmission of words or sentiments, for the patient may

not be aware of the process at all, may not receive any thoughts, since the interchange takes place subconsciously. Furthermore the spiritual healer does more than simply to turn away from the patient's atmosphere, having discerned it, and from the negative thoughts, fears, haunting mental pictures and the like. He also rises above the level of these in a state of interior openness to divine power and divine wisdom, as one does when seeking inward peace and poise. The mental process consists in part of discerning the mental pictures that haunt and trouble the spirit, and of dwelling upon a higher grouping of mental pictures expressing the divine ideal. Thus there is a spiritual pictographic process which is said to efface the troublesome pictures which beset the patient's mind. In Quimby's view of the matter the efficiency lies in the divine power or wisdom, not in the mere process of picturing the ideal. The process is a means to an end.

Quimby's discovery concerning the influence of mental spheres led the way to this more important step, that spirit can converse with spirit by the direct inner way. For if atmospheres can meet and mutually influence so that there is "mental contagion," the rule of a positive mind over a negative one, so that there is a "crowd spirit," subconscious or involuntary interchange; then spirits can meet one another for still higher

reasons. If one is receptive, expectant, in faith; the other intuitively alert, seeking the divine guidance, dynamically strong and affirmative, the result will obviously be very different from that of a mere mingling of spheres. To Quimby the central interest lay in the spiritual power given him to quicken another and better state in the patient. For our present purposes the significance lies in the fact that Quimby was led to one of the great typical interpretations of psychical experience by a simple direct road which any one might follow.

Quimby did not stop with the conclusion that the inner mind is the clue to the nature of disease and its cure. Having seen that the inner or spiritual man is the real man, and that man as a spirit possesses "spiritual senses," as he called them, of which clairvoyance is one, he went further and concluded that spiritual life is real life, that man is a spirit living in the spiritual world now. He looked upon death as relatively external and incidental. He spoke of death in fact as no more of a change inwardly than would occur if he should move from his home in Belfast across Penobscot Bay to Castine, that is, a change within the same world, the real world in which we always live. At the time of his own death his spirit was partly separated from the flesh for a brief period and when he regained con-

sciousness for an even briefer period he told a member of the family that he had proved his theory of death. That was his last message to the world.

What inner experience reveals to us then, from this point of view, is the real life we are all the while living although unaware of it. The spirit belongs to and lives this real life. Clairvoyance, like other interior powers, simply reveals one of our permanent faculties, in contrast with the physical senses which we use only while in the flesh. We all possess these the real powers of our true self. We might all learn to listen within, discover what manner of being the self is and become open to spiritual guidance. It is this true self which God would have us realize. Our real life is constituted for it. But through ignorance we have been misled by opinions and appearances. We have been unaware that there is a true science of life, freedom, health and happiness, a science which all might acquire and which we might verify by the New Testament as divine, if we were able to see the spiritual wisdom which Jesus taught and by which he wrought works of healing.

Note that according to this simpler theory of the spiritual life each of us is immediately in touch with God as the immanent source of our life and our wisdom. Without any ado then we

may seek the inner guidance. Here Quimby's view coincides with the belief prevailing among the Society of Friends or Quakers that the inward guidance is "the light of Christ within the soul." Intuitive power is a kind of God-sense in us. It pertains to the whole of the inner life. It opens us to the divine presence without intermediary. It leads, not to quest for spirits or to conversation with them, but to desire to be led by the universal Spirit. By its beneficent light the heart with its longings is revealed. In that light a sufferer's needs are manifest. Through that light problems may be solved.

Whatever objections might be made to this view by those who hold a different theology, it plainly has a very great advantage. To test it one need not accept much by way of belief, but one may begin forthwith to look for signs that the inner life is prior and more real, one may put one's spirit into a certain attitude to see what follows. There is surely a strong reason for seeking communion with God by a simple normal method devoid of mysticism and symbolism, for the sake of practical needs and spiritual service, that spirit may talk with spirit. All that one need look for at first is signs of intuition. One's own experience will afford the clue. At the same time the growth of this inner power with the disclosure of what is real in the inner

life will lead the way for the understanding of all psychical experiences on a simple basis. One stands in need of such a directly practical principle in order to clarify the way in that region of our nature where it is so easy for the undiscerning to be misled.

To adopt this view that the power is vested in the self, that there are spiritual senses that may become open and active, is not to look outside to any extent but to learn all that one can about the inner mind and its disclosures. One learns, for example, that the mind functions in two ways or on two levels. One may be externally absorbed, giving heed to appearances, moving with the crowd, meditating on the opinions of men and subject to their spheres. Or one may be inwardly alert, open, clairvoyant, receptive, in a state to seek divine guidance. To become somewhat familiar with the contrast between outer and inner states, is to be able to disconnect one's consciousness from the ordinary run of mental states and connect it with the higher or inner activity. One is only partly oneself on the lower level, hence one is open to influences of various sorts. One begins at last to be one's whole true self on the higher level. In any time of need one may lift the mind to the higher plane and seek guidance, quickening power.

When spirit speaks with spirit the whole being

speaks. When the purpose in view is the spiritual healing of another person, the objective is to make that person "every whit whole." To be "whole" is to be in the affirmative attitude, sound, sane, strong. But to be merely functioning on the lower level of mental life is to be in considerable degree negative, subject to many kinds of influence.

The same receptivity in us which when open to spheres may draw us into difficulties and troubles might be dedicated to spiritual uses. The same powers in us which participate in psychical experiences, desirable or undesirable, in visions, mystical transports or conversations with spirits, are active in what we call religious experience when we commune with God. The form which inner experience takes depends upon the type of mind of the recipient. If emotional, tending to employ symbolical imagery, or calmly intellectual, or whatever the type, our inner nature contributes the mental forms. The belief enters in, too, the theology or mysticism, the theosophy or spiritism, or the reasoned philosophy. In Quimby's case there was one main interest, so the intellectual reaction was simple, and we see that he was very directly led by what to him was divine wisdom.

His mind did not lead him into the consideration of "auras" and "planes," besetting spirits

and deterrent forces, because he was directly and steadily interested in the welfare of the sick. He did not dwell on or cultivate psychical power as such, because he was absorbed in using it for spiritual ends. His experience did not lead him into psychical bye-paths, because life was too full of opportunities to help people spiritually. Nevertheless, he was all the while using his own psychical powers or senses and growing in awareness of them. The views he adopted are deeply suggestive, because they indicate a straight way through the difficulties.

To bring the whole view before us, we need to assume that our inner powers tend to develop or unfold and merely await occasions for quickening. By nature we all possess powers looking forward to the open vision. By nature, birth, inheritance from God, we are spirits dwelling in the eternal spiritual world. It is natural and normal for spirit to talk with spirit. We might all have been led from earliest childhood by spiritual perception or intuition. One power would have led to another in an orderly purposeful way. We would have found our needs met. Our outward life would then have very plainly corresponded with the inner. Each of us would have depended first and last on the spiritual senses, and we would have come to take the subconscious mind and the realm of spheres as mat-

ters of course. Life would have found us seeking our kind, doing our work in affinity with those in affinity with us. We would have possessed such health, freedom and power as few of us now dream of, or which we contemplate in ideal terms merely.

But ignorant of all this, surrounded by things which enticed and absorbed us, we became immersed in outward things, and the whole conventional system tended to keep us imprisoned, does so still. Even to talk about intuition is to be called "unscientific," and to claim that all men can acquire it is in the world at large to be called a fool. We assign the genius to a favored region where he at least is supposed to be inspired. To work our way back to recognition of the open vision we need to begin anew without creeds or doctrines, taking seriously the best spiritual teachings in the world.

In our ignorance, too, we have overlooked the language of correspondence, the speech of the spirit. We have been repelled by all that passes current as spiritism, and so have failed to recognize in our innate power of speaking in the spirit to another spirit the universal of all language, the interchange of soul with soul. Yet if Quimby is right we all live in a measure in a world of thought-interchange, and we might as well learn to know it and to seek the best.

Whatever is real in spiritism is doubtless as harmless and intelligible as that which is real in ordindinary thought-interchange. Much depends on what we are open to, what we are looking for. The spiritual world is brought very near us indeed when we realize that we already use its language when speaking to the heart of another, in our genuineness, our honesty, sincerity, whenever we send out the best that we believe and in a spirit of love, good fellowship and cheer. It is brought nearer with each discovery concerning this spiritual speech and the way in which it takes place. Life is rendered simple by the whole venture, for we do away with the intermediaries, we turn directly to the higher level of our true life.

Let us say in brief, in interpretation of this view, that there is an impetus from within and an impetus from without, that the spirit is drawn in two directions. We well know what the promptings to outward life are, we are all the while struggling to get free from them, those of us who love spiritual things. But suppose we say that the impetus from within is creative, that the spirit is so guided, protected, strengthened and sustained that in the affirmative attitude it tends to create circumstances instead of becoming subject to it. We realize that there is a movement of the divine life from within outward,

to carry us on into spiritual self-expression and service. What is called guidance is part of that impetus from within. What is called the psychical in so far as the psychical is good and desirable comes under this guidance. It is the impetus from within which supplies the motive power. This impetus tends to bring to us the conditions, and the opportunities which we need. It tends to bring all things into correspondence and harmony. Our part is to think with it, will with it, move with it, live from it. This gives us the needed standard. Into the spiritual light within our souls we may lift every need and every problem. In that clear light we may come to see what is human, what divine; what is merely mental, what spiritual; what from without, what from within. The essential is that each man should seek it and be tested by it for himself. This was the practical spiritual result Mr. Quimby was led to by merely following his own guidance wherever it led, but also, as some of us would add, because the time had come for the return to the inner vision. His experience shows that one may push through to that vision without in any way becoming involved in spiritism. It suggests that we need above all else to grow in intuition or inner spiritual perception. Granted this, we may be able to turn to the Bible, as did Quimby when his

experiences and insights afforded the clue, as the open book of man's spiritual progress on earth. Mr. Quimby's teaching is also interesting and suggestive in view of the fact that his use of spiritual power *without mediumship or spiritism,* set the example for all types of mental and New-Thought healers.[1]

[1] See "The History of the New Thought Movement," New York, 1919.

VI

SPIRITUAL SPEECH

Our inquiry has brought us to the point where we have gained light on the communications of spirit with spirit. Psychical research has afforded us a clue to the pictographic process of transmission. Mr. Quimby's investigations led by another road to knowledge of a similar process through the experience of spiritual healing. Quimby found among other undesirable contents of the mind of a person in spiritual need mental pictures associated with the inner trouble. His process of spiritual realization consisted in part of the substitution of a better series of mental pictures in place of those forming the old association. This pictographic transmission was not the whole process by any means, but we are helped toward an understanding of his curative speech from spirit to spirit, if we take our clue from this process. What we now need is a way of thinking about the actual process of transmission, that is, the means of dynamic communication, the inner efficiency.

Of all recent books purporting to contain communications from the other world, Basil King's

"The Abolishing of Death" has the most to contribute in this connection. The author has much to say about the entirely normal simple way in which Jennifer, the writer in this case, has received the automatically produced messages. The book helps to make clear the step beyond planchette, the ouija-board, and all other similar means, especially beyond mediumship in all forms. It gives one the impression that while mediumship has served its purpose in scientific experiment, it would be best now to give it up. This would mean a step beyond ordinary psychical research.

Thus the communicating spirit, Henry Talbot, is quoted as saying that "spiritualism is a sincere search for truth, but directed into the wrong channels. . . . Appearances and voices make use of the coarser senses, while this method —that of writing—appeals to that which is most divine in man, intelligence, and the divine passion of aspiration."

Of the mediums Henry Talbot says, "They are passive instruments in our hands, and can be possessed by different people; but we are not accustomed to that way of communicating and do not like it. It is often misleading for we have not learned the laws." He finds in spiritualism a feeling after God, emphasizes the desire to seek communication, but strongly advises against

consulting mediums. Of distinguished men on our plane who are going to mediums he says: "They must be persuaded to use other channels as soon as possible. They get satisfaction; but it is not in the best way. It is better than no way; but it is like a long-distance connection compared with a quiet talk. . . . Mediums should be discouraged from using their gifts in their usual way, and should try to write. This would do away with the accompanying physical effect of their trances, and with the mystery and awesomeness which surround their interviews. To that we are opposed, as all communication should be simple, natural, and in the light."

Advising still further, this spirit speaks of spirituality, or "the aspiration of the soul as expressed by the intellect," as a means which cannot fail to establish contact with those in the spiritual world desiring to help. Spiritual thoughts, he teaches, are in harmony with God's creation, and "are transmitted quickly by the waves of rhythm." The natural language of the universe being "thought-exchange," all can acquire it, and in our thought-lives we already possess the motor, the dynamic means of communication. Thought, in fact, is practically synonymous with force as he uses the term, and rhythm is the means by which thought operates, rhythm is the motion with which the universe is alive, the basic harmonious principle.

Putting this thought in his own language, Mr. King says, "Whether we know it or not—and in the incalculable majority of cases we do not know it—our thoughts are perpetually travelling on the rhythmic waves. These waves are living with a form of life we can hardly comprehend. They are always bringing us mental and spiritual food; they are always carrying mental and spiritual food from us to others. The thought in your mind is borne to another mind when you have no suspicion that any action has taken place. The thought in another mind is wafted to yours when you may believe that it originated in yourself. It has often been observed that similar impulses become manifest in widely separated directions all at once."

That is, Mr. King thinks that rhythm as the universal of all speech may be "the first expression of Creative Mind." If so, we have direct light on the significant fact that different minds in various parts of the world make the same discovery at about the same time. It does not follow that intelligence is always required to become open to these waves of rhythm, for being universal even the animals are open to them. "Beings that we generally estimate as low in the scale have an intimate sense of this rhythm, while man has lost command of it. Insects, fishes, birds, all vibrate to it, with a consequent height-

ening of their powers." Mediums, Henry Talbot tells us, have kept this sensibility to rhythm, their perception of it has not been blunted, howbeit they have not the intelligence to control and direct it. "They represent in some degree what God intended us all to be." The infant still possesses this sense in some measure, but education blunts it. Intuition, tact, sympathy, in so far as we still possess these powers, are indications of this sense of rhythm. People who are able to read another's mind also have it in some degree. What is needed is cultivation of this power through aspiration, a desire for the good. If we possess the same sense of rhythm we possess at least potential spirituality, and by recognizing it we might more intelligently seek harmony. A person with both a sense of rhythm and conscious spirituality has a distinct advantage.

The sense of rhythm being applied in all thought-exchange, "since the thoughts pass on the waves of rhythm from soul to soul," we are next told that love regarded as inclusive of all good is the only vehicle of transmission. Wireless telegraphy gives us a direct idea of the transmission, so does absent treatment as practised by present-day healers. So-called malicious animal magnetism would be an instance of a jarring or interruption, since according to Henry Talbot

"nothing evil can travel over the waves of rhythm, since that would be inharmonious, and thus would not accord with the unity of the whole. Evil would be powerless to progress." Whatever we might think of this view of evil, we find in what is said about rhythm a very direct appeal to recover it. This appeal is the very heart of Talbot's message.

Mr. King suggests that were we aware of this law of rhythm as the universal of all language, informed too concerning "the perfect naturalness of the intercommunion, and more harmonious with God, the communion might come to us as easily as singing to a bird. Knowledge of thought-transference directly helps us to this priceless sense. Indeed, thought-transference is spoken of as "the first heavenly sense," and it can "also be the last earthly one. It is the highest reach of this plane, just as it is the point to which that plane comes farthest down. In it, therefore, the earthly and the heavenly find a common meeting-ground."

Originally potential in us all, the sense of rhythm was possessed actively in ages when people were more elemental. The power was lost in proportion as men became self-conscious. With the growing knowledge that their thoughts were so frequently evil, men closed their minds against other minds, and for the same reason

found other minds closed against theirs. The loss of the faculty was thus due to fear.

To regain this power confidence must be re-established. We should begin by believing this recovery possible. This is a rather large undertaking, since the majority of us do not believe it to be possible. "The mind that was shut ages ago finds it difficult now to open. . . . We are like sightless men told that with a little trouble they could see, and who refuse to take the pains." But Henry Talbot assures us that practice, when we have realized the opportunity, comes easily. "The most difficult problem is to realize the opportunity."

Our evil thoughts are of course obstacles to be overcome. If we would cultivate this power by thought-exchange between this plane and the next, we must send out only such thoughts as have been purified, while those there have only purified thoughts to send us. It is said that all our good and kindly impulses with regard to those who have preceded us to the next plane have already reached their object. Mourning, grief, doubt, always hinder. Unwittingly we have cut ourselves off from those whom we would reach. Even honest doubt is put down as an obstacle. This book everywhere teaches the value of the believing attitude. We are taught that intercourse with the plane next above us is

part of our intercourse with God. Separation from our loved ones is no part of the divine plan.

Connecting this teaching about rhythm with what the Bible tells us about "the open vision," we have an illuminating clue as to the nature of that vision, and speech with the angels is made more plausible. "All through the Old Testament," writes Henry Talbot, "you can mark the degree of harmony and sensitiveness to rhythm by the communications with God. This has very rarely been the case since the days of established ecclesiasticism. Joan of Arc has been the most marked instance of comparatively modern days."

The trouble has been that we permitted the clergy to be our "religious brokers." We have not communicated directly with God. "That is why so many simple, uneducated souls acquire through rhythm a wisdom which is never accorded to the so-called wise. Knowledge has obstinate human attributes which at times prevent its use." "Simplicity," Basil King tells us, "directness, the lighted mind, the open heart, something akin to the receptive trust of those who are 'converted and become as little children' would seem, then, to be the necessary gifts of all who wish to speak this wonderful thought-language and hear it in response."

We learn that while spirits of lower intelli-

gence will speak through mediums, others a little more advanced use planchette and the ouija-board to attract attention. These are "easily manipulated, but do not lend themselves to the expression of coherent thoughts, unless the medium be very gifted. When that is the case, handwriting would be better. Then would come direct thought-exchange."

This book, unlike "The Seven Purposes," has has little to say about deterrent forces and nothing about the malign influences and positive efforts to interfere which Margaret Cameron encountered. Henry Talbot says definitely, "There are no evil spirits." Instead, he teaches that "there is a missing link somewhere which leads to messages being garbled. When that happens, we give warning to those who can receive it not to believe the apparent words. It is an imperfection in transmission which by perseverance can be overcome. . . . The imperfections arise from the human element. Either the transmitter becomes fatigued, or allows his or her personality to intrude, or is overcome by doubt or strong desire. The necessary requisite for good transmission is to keep the mental track cleared and allow our message to run down it."

In a most significant statement this communicating spirit says, "It is only when man resigns the direction of his mind that he becomes rhyth-

mical." This suggests that the great trouble with us is self-assertion, the desire to control for our own benefit. This produces discord, breaks the rhythm. We must become aware of the states in us that interfere, and seek to cultivate those that accord with what we are able to learn concerning spiritual speech.

We may take our clue from what is here told us concerning rhythm and endeavor to complete the idea of spiritual speech, putting together hints from various sources. If we were to listen to such speech in its purity in the spiritual world we would doubtless find that it is what Swedenborg calls "interior speech," and takes place both by conversations through the interchange of ideas and by the transmission of representations or symbols. Thus ideas represented in symbolical form might almost be said to be visible, and capable of conveying more meaning to the spirit than could be conveyed or even suggested of words as we employ them. Modifications of spiritual light would then communicate ideas and meanings in the most graphic manner, while the real inner feeling would be conveyed rhythmically. With life thus speaking from heart to heart, life appealing to life, spiritual speech might be called "living speech." In listening to it and following the imagery representing it, spirits would perceive both what is in the idea and what

is in the heart of the speaker, what the end or purpose is and by what motives it is conveyed. Where the whole spirit thus speaks, words, images, and rhythms would harmoniously express what our own languages on earth only imperfectly convey. This speech from the whole spirit, with no motives concealed, no self-interest marring the rhythm, would be the universal of all true language. Hence a spirit speaking with a fellow-spirit in the spiritual world or with a spirit in the flesh would be addressing the spirit in his native tongue while really uttering words or conveying rhythms intelligible to all. With the words and symbols perfectly expressing the inner intent, there would be perfect correspondence, each listener would perceive in accordance with his own response.

To speak this universal language would not of course be to reduce all language to monotonous cadences, but to add marvellously to the varied intonations which we know in part when human speech is lyrical and sweet. Indeed the language of rhythms and representations corresponding to interior ideas and the whole spirit of the speaker would be the first adequate language, it would give voice to the infinite variety, the endless shades of meaning of individuality. Just as we now know to some extent what part of a given country a person comes from by his ac-

cent, or even what city or town he lives in by peculiarities of intonation and the use of local phrases, so whole assemblages of spiritual beings united in work and idea might speak in cadences peculiar to them and might be so known.

We already have some inklings of what such speech might be. We know the language of goodness on earth, the speech of one whose whole being expresses devotion to good works, to what is called "the life of charity" in the sense of entire consecration. We have listened to men whose ringing voice, whose purity of tone expressed exceptional purity and power in the inward life. We have listened to women whose gentleness of speech, whose tenderness told us of a life unsurpassingly beautiful. There is a certain accordance between thought and life in such a person's utterance. We cannot be mistaken. We realize that this is reality. By contrast we note the discordant tones of those in whom heart and head are not yet one. We learn to read even more in the intonation than in that other representation of inner language, changing facial expression. We all speak "the language of feeling" to some extent. A mere hint or suggestion, a hand-clasp, a look, a gesture, admits us to the heart or meaning behind. One who has stood on "holy ground" tells us this by intimations which require no words, if we too have

stood there, or if we have at least discerned enough afar to have some inkling of the wondrous landscape lying beyond. If you and I have suffered together we give that intelligence to each other by a mere reference or reminder. Neither one could describe the experience or even tell another that it holds such meaning. We are scarcely aware of its significance ourselves. Yet tacitly we suggest that we know and have understood. We have both been there. We have both lived. And life speaks the language of rhythm, heart vibrates to heart. Moreover, music and poetry as well as the drama convey these deeper meanings to those with listening ears. Music speaks when the tongue itself is dumb.

Spiritual speech is of course from the interior memory and appeals to this heart-memory in another. We are scarcely aware that we possess such a memory, yet we might infer that we have it from our conviction that identity survives after death and with it power of recognition of one another, vivid consciousness on our part of what we were on earth and how we lived. We might gather many hints of its existence if we would seek them. We know interiorly, for example, what we have lived through, even though we have never found a friend so congenial that we can bare our heart's inmost feeling. With sympathetic souls we can disclose the true intent or

motive and we do this by letting life itself speak through us from within. What appears on the surface may have little to do with what we now disclose from within as the real effect upon the soul, the real struggle through which we have passed. In the course of a lifetime we have all met at least two or three to whom we could speak from the interior memory. Granted more and more before whom we would appear as the true full self we really are at heart, there would then be appeal to the inner memory as the usual thing, and everybody would take this memory for granted.

The open vision into things human is nothing less than this spiritual language. The speaking of heart to heart is part of the vision. It puts us in intuitive touch with the soul. Such language was not given us "to conceal thought," as we say of our polite and formal speech on earth, but to convey thought in all the richness of its reality. Granted the openness of the spiritual world where motives are laid bare and the inmost meanings are seen, there would be nothing to conceal thought, no reason for trying to hide it behind elusive phrases and hypocrisy. The guilty would shrink from the mere idea of such a language. The unduly sensitive, shy, self-centered and selfish would also shrink from it. But the genuine lover of truth, of God and man, of goodness and beauty, would welcome it.

We already know that deeds speak above words, for or against. We know that genuine acts truthfully disclose the soul. Beings possessing angelic insight would not need to be told but would read our hearts in our deeds. If we have guardian angels with us, they would merely need to know our motives, discern the ends. The rest would be mere detail. What we really care for after all is thus to be credited with what we actually are, all appearances having been put aside, all pretension overcome. We like utter frankness even though it seems to be inexpedient in this mundane sphere. We do not wish to mount on borrowed power or claim to be what we are not.

Those people who are "honest with themselves," as we say, who admit what they truly are in entire sincerity, have already come very near knowing what spiritual speech is. We know it in part as a visible language, and in part as the language of silence. Sometimes it seems almost drowned out by the noise of our gross external speech. To discern the interior language and to grow in it we need to still the outer senses and listen within. In some measure we might learn habitually to listen within though busily occupied without. Listening within, seeking "the inward light," as the Friends call it, praying to "the Father which seeth in secret,"—all these are varied ways of expressing the same idea. Unable to tell all

that we mean by it we turn to some of the great hymns and psalms which suggest it. When we read the twenty-third Psalm, for instance, we both feel the rhythm and perceive the imagery:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul."

Again, we apprehend another rhythm in such lines as these: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." We seem both to hear and to feel the very pulsations of heaven itself in these utterances. The twenty-third Psalm we can visualize in a measure, as we see men and women walking along the pathway of life and invited to turn into pleasant vales by still waters. But when our thought is lifted above to the city of God our imagery can scarcely follow, and we feel rather the broad sweep of the lines: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make the city of God." We can hardly realize what must have been the vision of the psalmist when he was quickened to give expression to such an utterance. But we are not by any means left without a clue. We already apprehend in some degree the very language of heaven itself.

VII

RECENT LITERATURE

THE reading of books on psychical experiences and messages purporting to come from the great beyond reminds us of the state of mind which some of us are thrown into when people undertake to discern signs of character in one's handwriting, lines of fate in the palm, or in other ways to tell one's fortune. There may be elements of truth in each of these descriptions, and an astrological reading of character may also be partly true. One may combine what one person says with what another pronounces and arrive at results of some value. But unless a man knows his own character far better than even the most persuasive person can read it he has no means of telling how far the reading is true.

The average book is little better than a prognostication which leaves the mind in doubt. One may conclude in each case that there is a core of reality in the collection of messages, but one is always minded to ask, What faith or philosophy goes with this element of truth to develop it into an acceptable whole? As in the case of a reading of one's character which includes a

prophecy that might suggest fear, one must guard against taking it too seriously. Ordinarily there is no sure principle in the book itself to show how far one may follow it. If sincere the writer is likely to admit a certain doubt whether to accept and publish the message. One must seek guiding light elsewhere. If the book be put into one's hands for a purpose, one may submit its teachings to the same tests which one makes use of in meeting life in general. *Everything depends, for us, upon ideas previously accepted as true from other sources.*

"Interwoven," for example, a book which purports to contain letters from a son to his mother given through a medium during ten years after the son's death yields no principle by which the truth it may contain can be discerned. In itself it is most confusing, abounding as it does in ideas which surely cannot be true. Even if we compare one of its teachings, the theory of reincarnation, with the teachings of other books and find apparent confirmation elsewhere, for example, in "Letters from a Living Dead Man," we have no assurance; for in books of still another class one reads that this theory is not the true principle of progression. Apparently people take over into the world of spirits the beliefs which they came to adopt while here. While the communicating spirits are earth-bound they are no more

to be followed than we would uncritically follow any theorist in the flesh. Each book takes us into the world of its own theoretical construction. There are types of belief, even national beliefs expressed in books claiming to contain wisdom from beyond. Thus a writer on spiritism, J. Arthur Hill, calls attention to the fact that spiritism in France is reincarnationist, while in England and the United States on the whole it is not. The reason in the case of France is found in the fact that an early writer on spiritism, Allan Kordec, taught reincarnation. So, he assures us, spirits communicating in France, regularly teach reincarnation, while spirits speaking in England as regularly deny it. Reincarnation being in general a theory on which people split, one must look for light outside of the literature of spiritism.

On the other hand, when we find writers of various schools agreeing that in the other world there is no sense of time as we know it we have an intelligible clue, for it not only appeals to us as true concerning the life of pure spirit, but we find it confirmed indirectly in communcations concerning mundane events and the future. To take such a communication too seriously is to find evidence that there really is no awareness of time and that we were at fault in proceeding on the assumption that a day and hour could

be foretold without error. If we were not on our guard in reading prophecies purporting to speak with confidence concerning future events as they may be known in this world, we might slip uncritically into belief in foreordination. But foreordination is a theory which would need to be subjected to critical study quite apart from any spiritist prophecy. Such a prophecy might be right in its other details, yet wholly fail in point of time. Furthermore, one may have seen in a wholly different connection that one must entirely drop our ideas of time in order to think philosophically about the spiritual world. We must also eliminate our ordinary ideas of space. There is remarkable agreement on these points.

Again, one would need to make allowances to some extent for the personal equation and the vocation of the person while living on earth. Just as the man who was engaged in psychical research on earth ostensibly continues the same interest and seeks out his former associates in this world, using the same terms when communicating with them, as Hyslop's book indicates, so those of similar interest are drawn together in any number of groups. Thus "Interwoven" is by a young physician and what he tells in his letters to his mother on the basis of his gradually awakening experiences in the other world is what pertains to his profession and is no more credible

than the exposition of any theory by one on earth whose views incline toward the fantastic. If on the other hand we read in "The Seven Purposes" that experience for us mortals is a warfare between destructive and constructive forces, and if we have learned from other sources that man is indeed held in equilibrium between opposing forces while in this world, that he may choose between them and acquire a prevailing love, we may find ideas that are enlightening. The language of this book is often philosophical rather than spiritual. It does not sound so high a note as Basil King's book, "The Abolishing of Death." It gives no clear idea of God. It leaves us in the realm of purpose. But the personal equation does not seriously enter in. It does not turn upon the technical interests of any single vocation, but is concerned with a supposed group of enlightened souls who made themselves known to a group here.

Again, in recent books one finds many statements concerning the great war from the vantage-point of the spiritual world, where motives are seen, where the war on earth is regarded as part only of that greater warfare which includes the struggle of discarnate spirits to impede the souls of men in their zeal for goodness. The war, we are told in "The Seven Purposes," was due to lust of power. As great and hideous as it

was, on the spiritual side it signified "the reawakening of the souls of men." At first, Germany had strong forces on her side. She possessed a unity of purpose not realized or attained among the Allies. But this was seen to be "the united purpose of fear, moving towards destruction, a movement which brought its inevitable consequences as the war drew to a close. Germany was seen as a doomed nation with no ally left on her side long before the war on earth reached its climax. The only danger on our part lay in a weakening of the offsetting purposes which were to carry us on to victory. While this contest was actually in process the message came, "We are your allies, answering your call and inciting you to endeavor . . . Every individual among you who fails to strive for victory with all his strength invites disaster."

After writing my own book on war-experiences in France, "On the Threshold of the Spiritual World," I read for the first time this view of the war as supposably seen from the other world, and its teachings concerning the war were so nearly in accord with what I had been led to believe while actually on the ground in France that one might have supposed I had taken my clue from "The Seven Purposes" and not from the war. One cannot help believing that there was intimate relation between the forces which

brought the war to a close amongst the armies actually fighting in France and the forces which we read about in this book. In other words, the great war must be understood from within in accordance with a philosophy of the relationship of the two worlds. One may approach this philosophy by means of a book like "The Seven Purposes," or one may feel one's way into it by mingling with the fighters, alert for every clue which may disclose the spirit animating them as a whole, feeling the events as it were while they are happening, feeling the turning of the tide as the Allies attain moral unity and establish a balance in favor of the constructive forces.

One finds still another promising clue in messages purporting to come from beyond which assure us that death is not either the decisive or the terrible event it seems to be. Thus "Thy Son Liveth," despite its fallacies, helps to break down the barriers and to put death in a secondary place, as less painful, less significant, and on the whole incidental to the spirit's progress from plane to plane. In such a book the first experiences after death are spoken of as natural consequences of the experiences which prepared the way in this world. Turning to the natural world, the first desire of those who have "gone West" seems to be to clear away the grief and sorrow on the part of the loved ones here, that

spiritual communion may not be impeded. One feels a sense of life rather than of death in such writing. The spiritual world is brought nearer. This coincides with what one felt in France during the war where, indeed, death had taken on a new aspect, where the emphasis was on the life that carries on, even beyond the threshold. One cannot help believing that both from the point of view of individual experiences here and in the light of what is real in these messages the spiritual world has in deepest reality been brought nearer our comprehension and our feeling. Part of the meaning of recent messages seems to be that we shall come to realize that spiritual power has been active in the war, that the war was indeed a sign of spiritual awakening.

One is impressed also by the fact that our freedom is appealed to and we are asked to participate in a struggle by no means decided, despite the fact that the end of the war was seen in the spiritual world before we knew about the war as a whole on earth. There is strong evidence in these books that spiritual help is given us here on earth in so far as we are ready to respond to it, hence that much depends on our choice and action. Whatever we may think of "Raymond," "Private Dowding," or any similar book, so far as evidences in favor of the survival of a particular personality are concerned, we are brought

nearer the pathway of relationship between the two worlds. The mere events are secondary. So are the details, chiefly of interest to those who knew the soldiers in question. What concerns us is that we are brought nearer the view of life which regards it as continuous in spirit, in the occupations of those who have gone on before, and in the life-processes which connect us. We may throw out of account those matters which do not interest or appeal to us, and give our thought to the primary consideration.

Even in a confusing book like "Interwoven," written long before the war and containing only scanty evidences that an occupation begun here is pursued with greater intelligence in the other life, one finds at least an element of truth. It were better to seize upon this than to condemn the book outright. We are told, for example, that life on earth is seed-life centering about our own choices and leading through successive experiences to a point which prepares us to enter one of the lower spheres of the spiritual world. Naturally then we are told that will or love is the central power in us, while intellect alone is dangerous, that is to say, that love which quickens feeling so that it becomes "sight." "It only requires an intense vibration to make all the senses rise to equal pulse of sight." We can be drawn to be "together in soul with those we love, who are

in affinity with us. Mind thus quickened can leap over or through anything. It wills itself to the one it loves. . . . People must learn to love souls and then there will never be loss by death."

The teaching of this book narrows down to the type of effort we should make in order to draw upon the great resources open to us, including the help of "plan-angels." "Make little efforts," it is said, "but not strained ones. An effort is a push of the soul. . . . A prayer with effort is like a flash of lightning. . . . A soul rises in its needs just as a plant does. . . . Effort is the very thing that keeps the needs coming . . . by effort a kind of door is opened. . . . It is a sure law that effort finally brings the desire. . . . Your will is effort sent out in asking." "Poverty," we are told, "is lack of effort and being afraid to act." The first great need is that we should "try to get established, and try to have a purpose."

It is significant to find matters narrowing themselves down to the point where each of us should begin here and now. Hitherto, our interests in the spiritual world have often been merely intellectual, hence the messages were intended for our intellectual education. Moreover, there were many obstacles to belief. It was necessary not only to overcome the old ideas of

death and of the resurrection, but to acquaint the mind with a way of thinking about the life after death apart from the customary notions of space and time. Recent books and magazine articles have helped us to realize that there now is remarkable unanimity on these points in recent communications coming through various channels, namely, to the effect that there is no idea of time in the other world as we know it, that objects are not in space as we understand space but that outward conditions correspond with inner, that after death life continues in inner things as it went on here, that children grow to maturity, that people overcome the appearance of old age and express the real spirit of beauty or youth that is in them, and thus on through many ideas now practically taken for granted. We need not trouble any longer over the crude descriptions that have come to us, as if the other life were merely a continuation of the externals of this one; we may now proceed at once to a definite conception of that life in terms of these ideas now common to books of varying points of view.

Narrowing matters down to the response which we should make if we take the better teachings seriously, we realize that our best effort should lead to spiritual cooperation, a response equal to the occasion in view of all that is being done

for us on the other side. There is a certain quality about the better literature of this class which affords a clue to the open channel for communication.

For example, note the contrast between the ordinary things of this life and the power in the messages published in an English periodical a few years ago in an article entitled "Three Minds and . . ." "Vitality is the thing you need. . . . The currents are changing the nations, the people, the very lands themselves, but only those who keep the balance can feel and know it. . . . The more vital you let yourselves be, the more you spread to the joy of life, the easier it will be for me to come. . . . Joy is the key-note of my entrance. When you are swallowed in the great life you will not feel the small one. You are like children looking through peep-holes at the universe; reality flows by you unheeded. . . . On you life dawns by slow degrees, as, looking upward . . . you see the sunshine. . . .

"Let changes come and fear not; he who fears change cannot step forth to universal gatherings. Humans fear change, as limpets to their rocks cling tightly. Life fears no change, for life is onward pressing and remakes itself. . . . Meet changes as they come. . . . The world moves on by rhythm; by rhythm it is swung . . ."

Such statements give us contrast indeed, lift-

ing our spirits to that higher level where, looking beyond all change to its cause, we think in terms of rhythm, whose "measure is set by Him who sent" beings forth "to do His mighty will." In ignorance of this causality, human beings are said to scratch in turmoil, rushing headlong here and there. Whether or not we follow all that the communicating spirit says, we can hardly fail to note the majestic sweep of vision with the glimpse it gives of things eternal: "In that great world where changes are stability, I swing in vast untrammelled movements . . . I touch you all— a breath from reality. . . .You speak of union, but you do not know what union is. Union is strength to hold, and strength to fly apart and shatter. . . . And love is strength to hold, and strength to rive apart. . . . Great sweeps of life go round you, feel them . . . and you are out," that is, free.

These communications also suggest with great emphasis the value of silent meditation: "Keep still. All is quiet, and the region of great stillness is upon you. The silence calls, and speaks with her great voice, and power is with you. . . . In the great silence have I heard the voice say, Come! . . . And silence, which is the echo of the world-song, contains all speech, all movement, and all energy. And out of silence grows the active soul, nourished by harmony, content

to stretch its roots through space . . . with the silence of the soul ye first shall hear the great gods' silence. And when ye hear the silence, on your ears shall break the song, the song of all eternity. In that vast universe where now I stand, free and untrammelled, I seek to make you feel the sweep of pulsing cosmic breath, and mighty thronging movement. But, humans, if ye would reach and hear by silence, look up and out beyond the clatter of your little lives, and gain the silence. The loves and frets and jars of earth, so real to you, are nothing—such petty whorls within a whirl of life beginning small, yet stretching far, ringing through space unending."

We seem to hear a voice speaking from a greater vantage point of reality in such lines. We are impressed by the power of the appeal when we read such an invitation as this: "Enter the hushed spaces of the twilight that precedes the dawn, and listen. . . . Listen to the calling voices of the universe. Blend with the hurry-feet of mighty movement. Into the hushed spaces of your souls swings the thrilling moment." One is eager indeed to leave what is called "the measuring-tape" of the human mind by which we ordinarily judge, and "set out with me a step beyond the confines," that is, gain the sweep of this encompassing spirit which sees so far.

The point of vantage in these lines reminds us of the prayer of the psalmist that the Lord would put him in "a large place." It lifts us above our minor interests in desire to respond when we read, "Arise! and leave your earth-sphere. Swing with me into space where star calls star, and the great breath sweeps through the universe. . . . Humanity lies nearest the great heart of Him who gave you being. It meets with that vast heart in ever-widening circles. He closer joins Himself with those, thus comes the choices. . . . He is in very deed incarnate in His universe . . . It is a time for stir; humanity lies open to it and powers press through."

What is needed, to complete such teachings, is a definite idea of the secret place within us, that we may know precisely what kind of receptivity is incumbent upon us, that we may invite the highest inflow of spiritual life, and be guided through the mists and shadows. Hitherto, seekers after light through spirit-communion have perhaps been too eager for mere assurances concerning their own beliefs. They have brought too many presuppositions on points such as reincarnation or the possibility that spirits occupy houses like ours, or we have troubled over the presence of "elementals" and the earth-bound in the spirit-world. We have sought advice on

trivial matters. It has been fairly easy to read our own views into messages said to come from beyond. Some of us have sought information merely because of selfish grief.

These later utterances summon us to other things. They take for granted the laws and conditions of development through successive stages, instead of reincarnation, the fact that our prevailing love prepares the way for our future; and they advise us to learn as soon as we may what forces make for the constructive work which we are best fitted to do, that we may be alert, responsive, equipped to do our part. There is an impressive difference between books which have the demands of modern science to maintain and those which appeal immediately to the experience of the reader to put himself in a certain inner attitude, that he may spend no more time on mere evidences but may become the recipient of a directly vitalizing power.

In the last analysis what avails with each of us is the degree of recognition and cooperation which we have attained through actual life. Mere theory no longer suffices. Even spiritual knowledge of these matters is secondary. One who regards himself as a "receptacle of life from the Lord" may still remain inefficient in the realm of social conduct. Since life is an age-long contest between destructive and constructive forces,

such that even the great war was a series of incidents merely, it is incumbent upon us to make the actual dynamic change within, the change from neutral or passive states to productive states showing by their fruits in the realm of concrete deeds that we have proved the law.

It is no longer a question of mere phenomena. The spirit really survives. The ideals of immortality and the heavens are true. The spiritual world is real, contiguous with this one, approachable. It is the realm of causes, of true efficiency, and we can enter into dynamic relation with it. What avails is departure from merely intellectual matters into a spirit which invites the powers now offered us, the change from knowing to doing whereby we shall manifest our conviction that there is but one final source of life.

For true effectiveness, one may say, after studying these new pronouncements purporting to come from the beyond and connecting them with the lessons which the war has taught us, consists in a certain break with mere conditions, tendencies, problems, difficulties; even a break from social groups on earth standing for certain definite interests and creeds; and a gathering of our forces for a higher type of communion and of cooperation, surpassing the conventional loyalties of earth. The war was won by a unity of

this sort. These books supply some of the missing factors ordinarily unaccounted for, the activities in the spiritual world working to establish a new constructive balance. We on earth are advised to keep serene even in the presence of menacing social conditions as threatening as the war itself. For these are parts of the same age-long conflict. To doubt, to fear, to hesitate, is so far to invite the very forces of disintegration which we fear. We must be affirmative from first to last. There is an affirmativeness which will protect us both in the natural world and in the spiritual. The old barriers between the natural and the spiritual no longer exist for those who realize that, whether here or there, it is a question of working for a certain high end. This end becomes more clear for those of us who are able to read a book like "The Hill of Vision," and to see the whole process of social reconstruction now under way as a dynamic process due to the operation of vitally present causes in the spiritual world.

VIII

THE SEVEN PURPOSES

THAT a distinct advance has been made in messages purporting to come to us from the other world is shown by Margaret Cameron's book, "The Seven Purposes," in which we have the results of cooperation between a supposed group of spirits seeking to bring enlightenment to us and a number of people in this world responding to this effort. Whatever we think of the difficulties of communication encountered while the messages were given, we may examine the subject-matter by itself, testing it as we would the teaching of any book supposably the product of one mind only. We might find objections to the lessons here given and purporting to be the wisdom of enlightened minds in the other world. Nevertheless we are free to test these lessons for whatever they may be worth, putting them in relation with other utterances ostensibly from a similar source. It seems plausible, that there should be such concerted effort to bring teachings to us, and that in the endeavor to bring them over to us difficulties and opposition should be encountered.

What then is the main teaching of this book, and what is its value for those who are interpreting psychical experiences? We ask this question without regard to the customary efforts to prove the identity of communicating spirits and the personal interests of those to whom the messages were given. What concerns us is the point of view of life here disclosed, in line with the central statement coming from the other side, "This life is just a continuation of yours under happier conditions." For this proposition sends us back to contemplation of life as you and I know it here, to see if we can verify this idea of continuity of development.

We are bidden to regard the present life as a struggle between forces, not an ultimate struggle in the sense that the lower may triumph over the higher, that is, with uncertainty concerning the world at large; but a struggle which may have a happy issue, since its purpose is eternal progress. All growth is in fact a struggle between favorable and adverse forces. This life is in every sense of the word the beginning of the contest, and our growth will proceed the better in the other life if well begun here. All growth is according to law and is slow. There is no such thing as "punishment" in the other life, but "only consequences" of our life here. With many purposes latent in us at birth, the

great objective is the development of individuality. Hence the purport of the struggle is to bring us to the point where we may choose between these tendencies of our nature, that we may attain sufficient unity to acquire a dominant purpose. Character results from the purposes which we admit to consciousness. Hence very much turns upon our consciousness and choice. All forces tend to reach us. The negative or destructive do not wait to be invited. They steal in insidiously, hindering and seriously interfering with us. If we once admit a force to consciousness, make it our own, we have no choice but to abide by the result.

First one should become aware that there is a warfare in process within the soul, then begin to learn the differences between the forces and grow into wise choice. Unaware that there is such a contest within us, many of us are wavering between the disintegrating and the constructive forces, now responding to the one, now to the other. Some of us choose quickly. Others delay. Some of us work to build. Others are in league with forces that destroy. What we should seek to do is to find "the dominant call of progress to the soul," and follow that, leaving the rest behind.

Individuality is said to begin with human consciousness. That is, there are many tendencies

latent within us and these by wise selection can become one. But no one of these is originally absolute or dominant. The unity needed must be an achievement. It is necessary both to choose and valiantly to act, steadily to contend with those forces which impede our way. Originally all forces or purposes were good, that is, they were all balanced. Even now there is no evil that may not be good in proper combination. Evil is "the gathered force of undirected and not fully animated good." The essential on our part is awareness of our possibilities and persistent choice, with the realization that our own conduct is contributory. By the term "purpose," therefore, this teaching does not mean a fate-driven tendency. This book does not teach foreordination. "It is all a matter of forces, constructive and destructive. We serve our own purpose in this world or the other. The desideratum is to have a purpose, to achieve, to progress."

A man's purpose does not consist of what he believes or even what he desires, but of what he is and what he does. It is the purpose which leads to action that avails. Every individual must have a work and do it. Free development demands this free purpose and concentration. The integrity of our nature depends to be sure on the parts which make up the whole, but our strength lies not in the parts, but in unity. Part

of our whole development comes through our struggle to decide, a struggle which we have to put through in part alone. Yet we are also akin to those of like purpose, and the possibilities of working together toward a noble end are great indeed. Thus our actively constructive efforts will help not only those with whom we are in affinity here but will reach beyond into the other life where whole groups work toward a common end. "Be true to your purpose and ours, and help us build for light and progress," is therefore the great word.

The chief need on our part, after we have come into awareness to some degree of the warfare within and have begun to choose, is steady effort, concentration, readiness to put the process through to the end. We face the fact that our conflicts are increased by the number of forces to which we are subject. Yet every force playing upon us can be turned to account, every one can become a purpose; all forces being good, can become so again, if made intelligent. There has been a sundering of these forces, but now there is an effort for unity again. What we need to learn is the combination which makes for construction or progress. We cannot always waver between rebellion and progress, but must eventually face one way or the other. Life itself is purpose. Our very selfhood or person-

ality is purpose. What we need to do is to recognize the activities at work within and mount with them.

For force is life, life is active, and "force imprisoned becomes destruction. Good imprisoned becomes evil. All are fundamentally good, fundamentally beneficent, but have become powers for destruction through lack of progressive development and exercise. All men are fusions of many purposes, moved by many forces, answering to many calls. Each responds to the call of his dominant purpose, which flows and fluctuates with his life's struggle. One day he destroys, and cares not. One day he builds, and marvels at his power. One day he sleeps and forgets. One day he fights to the death for a purpose he had not yesterday, and loses tomorrow. This is the life of man, and this our field of battle. There are other lives, other struggles, other lessons to learn, but this is the first."

We are told that life in the spiritual world is "more expansive," happier, more beautiful and free, with a freer field for work, and greater love and cooperation. Whole groups are there said to be united in one purpose according to their kind, growth being a matter of experience, not of time, with "no age except experience." One member of the group speaks of himself as "vitally alive," engaged in far more effective service than

when here. Another one, endeavoring to suggest this greater vision with the power it brings, says, "We so long to tell those whom we love not to grieve. We are of you, as you are of us. Even more closely than we were when I was visibly with you." The life there is said to be "pure spirit." To those in the flesh who receive these messages there comes "new life, new force, new purpose, new faith" through the touch with pure spirit.

These spirits say that they do not see natural things as we view them but their significance. They see motives where we see appearances. They see intentions and their variations, vitality and its variations, disintegration or growth; and they help us as directly as possible according to what they see. They judge our purposes, for example, by the vitality shown when we are under strain. Thus they see the awakening purposes, those that make for progress and are able to help us in proportion to the vigor with which the purpose is put into action. They have the power to look ahead and foresee events to some extent, that is, to grasp results. But unaware of time as we know it, they watch and wait and remember, steadily working with the greater powers at their command to achieve their high ends.

What helps us most to do our part in response

to this cooperative endeavor in the other life, is awareness of the real nature of the struggle such that, learning what forces to shun, we hold fast to those that lead to God, that is, the forces of light, justice, production, truth, healing, building, and progress. The seven forces make for perfect fearlessness, understanding, honesty, sympathy, unity, growth, in short, for progress as the great end. "The Eternal Purpose," "The Force Beyond Perfection," or "The Great Purpose," is the universal efficiency, while unity or progress is the goal for the race. We need not only to become aware of these seven purposes as consciously chosen goals, making for eternal progress, but to know their opposites, the deterrent or destructive forces which try to defeat our efforts.

Thus envy, malice, doubt, falsehood, ignorance, fear, lust, cupidity, oppose themselves to the seven forces making for constructive development. Within the self there are personal motives impeding the higher promptings. Self-interest, for example, excludes sympathy and true unity, grief, resentment, bitterness, passivity, nervous apprehension, worry and fear bar the way. We are helped by faith, which is said to be a positive force, the thread that connects us with those in the spiritual world who are aiding us. Prayer "with an open mind" is positive

help, the prayer that "begins and ends with a determination not to yield to weakness, or fear, or the disintegrating powers." And we are helped by "actively constructive effort, consciously united purpose and force." What we call "nervous exhaustion" is due to a yielding on our part to forces of disintegration. What we need to acquire is the affirmative attitude. We need "to get busy and buck up against" the forces that we encounter in this effort to grow. We should let go of dread, misgiving, unhappiness. We should learn that true work is the conscious development of spiritual forces.

"The world fears purpose that is free and fearless. All the forces of humanity are turned against freedom. The church imposes its creed, the class imposes its caste, the profession imposes its etiquette, the moralist imposes his fear, the libertine imposes his folly. All men are bound by the conventions of church, caste, profession or moral status. Thus do they throw wide the door to forces of disintegration. Each man assumes a purpose not his own; a force that is his own deserts him."

It would be no real help if those in the spiritual world who see our situation in this struggle for freedom should try to save us from the consequences of our choice. They may suggest, enlighten, encourage, but cannot bear our burdens.

If we are perturbed it is difficult for those who would help us to reach our spirits. There is every reason to be calm and serene no matter what happens to disturb us. We should keep as free as possible from disturbing contacts, fighting ever with the forces of light and life, sticking to our central purpose with firm faith. The only possible failure comes from admitting doubt, disintegration, and fear. Doubt is always negative and deterrent. Sorrow is never constructive. A definite purpose in life affords great protective power. Love is the one great consideration, the love which lasts eternally and unites us according to our purpose. Love finds a way to make itself known to dear ones in this world even though malevolent and crafty forces intervene.

The central teaching of the book is called "a gospel of unity and cooperation." Cooperation is said to be the basic principle of all progress. The step from knowledge of the conflict we are under because of the opposing forces is to awareness of our freedom and its great possibilities through wise choice, then the really great step is brotherhood in fellowship with our kind working "for kindred purposes."

"Today, the first essential of brotherhood is freedom. Freedom to think, freedom to believe, freedom to strive, freedom to develop, from

highest to lowest. . . . The man who has freedom of thought, freedom of purpose, freedom of action, is free, though he is a pauper, and is free to choose whether he will build or destroy. The man who is bound by any tie that dictates his thought, belief, or action is a force of disintegration, because he may not follow his purpose freely and with all his force. The man who has freedom and wealth, and forgets his brother, is a force of disintegration. . . . There are many phases of development, each looking on to the next. If a man climb without envy, forgetting himself in his purpose, he shall climb far. . . . Bear ye one another's burdens is a command unchanged and unchangeable. Give unto each his opportunity to grow, and to build and progress. Freedom to strive is the one right inherent in existence, the strong and the weak each following his own purpose, with all his force, to the one great end. And he who binds or limits his brother's purpose binds himself now and hereafter. But he who extends his brother's opportunity builds for eternity."

There are many passages in the lessons which are already so concise that no further summary can well be made of them. Some of these strike deeply into the heart of the present social unrest, cutting right and left into cherished activities supposably making for brotherhood. The aim

of these instructions is to arouse each man to the manifold circumstances of life in which he appears to be working for his brother's good, and show him what true freedom is. No man is in reality free who fails to command himself in any emergency, who fails to carry his share of the common load and to find his way amidst all the tendencies to luxury and mere wealth. It no longer suffices to feed men "husks of brotherhood." We should forget the class and remember the man, forget the labor and remember the fruit, "forget the temple and remember God." We must remember that the forces of light are positive, therefore "shun negation . . . shun dependence" and work together as individuals, consciously cooperating, not as sheep. "A great brotherhood is possible only when its component parts are great. . . . Brotherhood is purpose of progress, not purpose of profit. Brotherhood is made beautiful by unity, not by schism. Brotherhood suffereth long and is kind. Brotherhood regardeth every brother, great and small. Brotherhood waiteth on brother and grumbleth not. All build together the common home of all."

To some the term "purpose" as used throughout this volume may seem abstract if not forbidding. When, for example, the human personality is identified with force and a strong person-

ality is spoken of as a force we seem to lose part of the idea of the self. So too when God is reduced to "The Force Beyond Perfection" we appear to have lost the idea of God as love and wisdom. But there is a certain advantage in using the same term throughout since it gives us an insight into the central state of affairs with man. We all stand in need of an intellectual scheme which simplifies matters so that we may see where we stand. Life is just such a contrast between the destructive and the constructive. We are all held in equilibrium until we choose. We are all making selective judgments for better or worse. Few of us realize to what a large extent we are negative. We need a definite principle to live by through which we may bring matters to a focus. Granted all this we may supply what is lacking from other sources, correcting the idea of "purpose" by our rich ideas of the self, and seeing in the purposes which make for perfection a sign of the divine providence.

The significance of this book lies in the advance indicated in contrast with other books purporting to contain messages from the beyond. It should help some who have lost friends by death to see in what sense a man can still be profoundly alive and full of power to help. The teachings given are obviously disinterested, although not by any means so important as might

appear. They are not theological in form, but may be useful in a non-doctrinal age. Little light is thrown on the real meaning of death and the spiritual life as a new birth. But granted the intellectual outlines, one may spiritualize them and show how far this teaching is acceptable. One could not rationally infer that it is necessary to seek messages from beyond. One finds in this book no substitute for interior growth and the cultivation of intuition. It takes us no nearer the open vision as the spiritual standard. But its publication at this time, and the wide reading which it has received, are signs that we are approaching a period of greater spiritual cooperation. It is significant too because in common with "The Hill of Vision" it discloses a spiritual view of the war. The latter book begins in a sense where "The Seven Purposes" ends, and substitutes for the idea of contrasted forces a more illuminating view of the contest between Matter and Spirit, Self and God.

IX

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

We frequently remind ourselves that a book containing truths of value for daily life is conditioned by the mind of the writer and the circumstances under which it was produced. If written several generations ago, we say that the book necessarily partakes of the age in which it was written, the customs and beliefs then prevalent, the language employed, with its peculiar terms and symbols. Narrowing matters down to a comparison between books, we say that any idea or teaching, however high its origin, is accommodated to the mind of the writer, and we find different books by writers of the same age differing radically. A book is likely to be free and impartial in certain respects, and biased in others. The peculiarities of the author's mind, his personal sentiments, his habits of thought, are likely to qualify all that he says. For better or worse he has a way of taking life, and this may influence his most dispassionate teachings. The language he uses depends on an author's education, his habits of expression, his modes of arranging ideas, his style. In short, he has temperament,

as the artists say. The personal equation must be understood and allowances made for it. So far as we can see this is true of even the most enlightened books, and it is noticeably true of certain books in the Bible.

Why should we not apply the same method of literary interpretation to books purporting to contain messages from the other world? And why not go still further and point out that the teachings of an alleged communicating spirit depend in considerable measure upon the ideas he held before he left the body? Thus a man holding a certain combination of views acquired during a life-time on earth might well produce such books as "Letters of a Living Dead Man," and "War Letters of a Living Dead Man." Thus men of prominence in the field of psychical research might turn about when reaching the other world and begin to communicate such views as we find expressed in recent works by devotees of psychical research. The question would be whether there is anything in such communications which may have been carried over the border.

Three hypotheses are open to us to consider with regard to books purporting to contain communications. Such a book may be a product of the mind of a writer in the flesh projected around the personality of some one formerly living here.

The ideas attributed to the person in question may have some basis of fact, and the author may have had psychical experiences of real value. But inadvertently the mind may have built a large intellectual structure on a slight foundation. The habit of conversing with oneself may have developed so far beyond self-conscious observation that a part of the self may have come as it were to speak for the alleged discarnate spirit, while another part may act as questioner, recipient and scribe. One is strongly inclined to believe that this is the case in a book like "The Open Door," which merely gives back a type of belief already held by the writer. So a book on vibrations attributed to a Dutch bishop of the seventeenth century may be the author's way of setting forth the theory in question. One is inclined to believe that any communication said to come from a person who lived on earth more than thirty years ago is a sheer product of the mind of the author here in the flesh. One takes little interest in alleged descriptions of life on twentieth century "planes" where, at will, the writer can summon famous men of the past as teachers.

Again, one may hold that the original message on the whole is from the communicating spirit, but that many of the subsequent statements attributed to that source are supplied by the

earthly penman. If, for instance, a writer receives a few sentences containing views in accord with those which he already cherishes as true, it would be a simple matter unwittingly to enlarge upon these and to produce a book based on them. Inasmuch as habits of thought go with a given theory of life, all that is needed to propound a theory is a cardinal idea sufficiently persuasive to arouse an author's mind into activity. Thus if an author, already accustomed to producing works of fiction and books on theosophy receives a brief message from the beyond and becomes accustomed to the process of automatic writing, it might be a simple matter to give forth a whole volume as if it came from the same source. Believers in theosophy might find it credible and apparently wholly genuine. Others, who adopt a different view of the future life, might find little in it that could be accepted as a genuine message from the other life.

One is perfectly free however to entertain the hypothesis that a book is wholly by the communicating spirit, that is to say, as much of the book as can intelligibly be regarded as from beyond, in view of the theory that only the pictographic process is transmitted, while the actual words are supplied by the earthly penman. The main ideas might come from the communicating spirit, while the secondary ideas, the modes of express-

ion, illustrations and symbols, might come for the most part from the scribe at this end of the process. One would be safe in making liberal allowances for the portions unconsciously contributed by the writer using the pencil or employing other means. A book like "Private Dowding," for example, might be mostly from the other world, might give a very genuine account of experiences preceding and following death. It would then have value for us according to our beliefs on the matters which it discloses.

In any case a book would take on prevalent ideas, and we would naturally interpret it by reference to the writer's mind and life. The fact that a book is attributed to some one in the other world is no ground for expecting that its wisdom will excel that of books produced on earth by gathering facts and drawing inferences. As long as books said to come from the beyond disclose radically different views of that life, we are in the same situation as in our ordinary comparisons of conflicting books on theosophy, religion, philosophy, and the like. A book propounding one's favorite view might tend to confirm us in that view simply because it is said to be supernatural in origin. On the other hand, we might well remind ourselves that *the test of any theory is truth,* not the origin of the book which contains it, not the authority of the writer

or the value of the method by which the book is produced.

We sometimes wonder whether a book containing alleged messages could be interpreted as pure fiction. We raise this doubt because we know what marvellous skill writers of fiction possess in their graphic portrayals. It is at least suspicious that some of the most widely read books on psychical matters were produced by writers of fiction. But granting for the moment that a work is fictitious, a writer would naturally make use of the best available material concerning the other life, that the book might seem plausible. Some of the ideas might be profoundly true, although the writer may never have had a message from the beyond. Others might be misleading and the incidents as far from plausible as those narrated in "Thy Son Liveth." The book might have a certain value in the present widespread effort to make the other life seem real. We might come as near reality in fact as in the case of books said to contain actual descriptions of the future life.

On the other hand, a book like Carrington's "Psychical Phenomena and the War," might appeal to us with greater force, since it contains incidents gathered from soldiers and others on this side of the border. It shows us that psychical experiences in war-time are like those of any

other time. For example, there are accounts of premonitions of events about to happen, guidances that came to the soldiers in danger, and evidences of inner visions. Whatever one may believe concerning the objective reality of such visions as "the Angel of Mons" or "the Being in White," one may hold that subjectively at least the experiences were real. Some of us who were in the war-zone learned that when a man is face to face with the greatest dangers, with death always near at hand, he may be more readily lifted above his ordinary consciousness than usual. For silence, or inner receptivity under favorable conditions, is not by any means the only open channel to psychical experience.

As readers we of course judge all books on psychical matters by our education, temperament, favorite ideas, and especially our experiences. We are all inclined to retain beliefs which interest us, which confirm what is familiar because it is familiar, because we have long held the beliefs in question without doubts, or because our creed is taught by people of whom we approve. All the usual standards of criticism are useful. But it is also profitable to renounce criticism and construct a conception of the future life to explain the difficulties of communication. If we gain nothing more from the attempt, we may at least grow in knowledge of the present

life. In the long run the more truly we know the present the better prepared we are to interpret views pertaining to the future life.

If we have concluded that there is no time in the other life, as we mark time, we no longer expect precise statements on temporal matters; and we see why prophets all through history have failed in so far as they undertook to tell the precise comings and goings of the realities of the spirit. If spiritual states or motives are the clues by which spirits judge and are judged, then the principle of correspondence between inward states and external expression undoubtedly holds true. Inasmuch as people differ enormously while here, we should expect at least as many types in the other life. Well informed in the idea of the discrete degrees or differences between natural and spiritual things, between the human and the divine, we should naturally guard against the tendency of many current teachings on psychical matters to blur distinctions.

Yet, whatever the contrasts between the worlds, there must be a sense in which the inner processes of life in the individual are continuous. The future life surely begins where the present ceases, so far as character is concerned. There must then be a period of readjustment before life under the new conditions can fairly begin. This would hardly be the sometime intermediate

state called "purgatory," but as a "world of spirits" it would hold those who have recently "gone West," who are getting their bearings, endeavoring to continue their customary occupations and to maintain their former associations. The idea of such a state was not theoretically necessary while people believed that spirits after death would easily drop into hell as a place, or as easily attain heaven by a running high jump. But now that we believe in law and order we have no reason for saying that a person could either drop or jump. Nor can we reasonably say that spirits bidding their old associates adieu may quickly select their new ones. We cannot postulate a high degree of self-consciousness on the part of our race as a whole. Indeed we may safely say that exceedingly few have any idea when they leave this world where they belong. The idea is unescapable nowadays that there must be a period of awakening, with surprises for many a new arrival. If we may judge in any way by the extreme moderation with which men and women come to judgment in this world, we may hazard the statement that the process of adjustment is a long one with the majority. For it would not be a mere process of self-knowledge but also one of choice between motives, the wise course to pursue, the associates to mingle with, the work to do, and the far-off objective to put before the eyes of the spirit.

It is reasonable to infer that in this awakening many spirits turn rather towards their former abode than towards those destinations popularly called heaven and hell. If we may judge by what writers tell us who claim to have learned most about the spiritual world, spirits seeking communication with people in the flesh are more interested in the life here than in any other, or more concerned at least to help people here.

This would explain in part at least the inferiority of many communications, and the low order of nearly every psychical manifestation through mediums. What comes to us through such channels may be compared to those curious first impressions which our friends write home from foreign lands, when their letters are filled with personal sentiments concerning peoples whom they have scarcely begun to appreciate. We know that our friends who remain for years in a foreign land return with ideas differing radically from their early impressions. So in the spiritual world, granting that something can be told about the life there, first impressions would be of very slight value in case of the average mind. Only the highly developed would have anything worth communicating, and these might be wise enough to say but little to us, save to make it known that life is progress for them.

If it be "the world of spirits" that is adjoined

to us here on earth, we would hardly expect to receive celestial wisdom, and what heavenly knowledge might come to us would be mediated to our present states. This seems disappointing at first thought, for we have not expected the angels to be silent. On second thought, however, the idea is illuminating. On earth we know that all knowledge is mediated to us, and we know that we cannot convey ideas even to our own children before their development enables them to respond to the wisdom we would give them. Our lips are often sealed when speaking with people in general, lest what we might say be profaned.

Of one principle we may be absolutely sure, namely, that no benevolent spirit would ever say or do anything to us that would deprive us of our freedom and rationality. Inasmuch as it is these priceless possessions of our nature which underlie individuality, and as individuality is sacred, we have every reason in the world to close the door against any psychical experience tending to deprive us of this the basis of our spiritual integrity. Whatever influence or teaching tends toward unqualified receptivity or mediumship is so far wrong. There is even greater reason for abstaining from such practices within the world of the self than for guarding against contaminations in the external world. If with good

reason we endeavor to keep ourselves "pure and unspotted from the world," with all possible reason we should dedicate our interior self to the highest sources discoverable.

Is it worth while then to read any of these new books on psychical matters? Certainly, that we may see whither thought is tending in this direction, and that we may help people through the psychical thickets, that they may see the light which has come to the world through the open vision. Moreover, we have standards by which to judge, when it is a question of teachings that are eligible. We have the inner or spiritual meaning of the better parts of the Bible: in the Bible we have the same contrasts here pointed out between the spurious and the genuine. We have the most rational and illumined teachings to be found in books devoted to inner perception or seership. We have the best wisdom our own experience has disclosed, when we have followed inner guidance instead of curiosity or the mere motive of the investigator. Then too we have knowledge of the fruits or consequences which have come to people round about us. All these considerations may combine to give us a standard or "inner dictate."

For example, if we hold that it is well for people to become aware of the inner war as "The Seven Purposes" describes it, we may then

raise the question, What is the step to be taken after we have learned the value of the affirmative attitude? What does it mean to be positive in the best sense of the word? Naturally, we cannot learn this lesson on the mere level of purposes. It is not a psychical question. One must come in touch with greater power than the psychical in order to close the door to all that is alien and undesirable in the inner world. Nor is it a mere question of success. It is in my spiritual integrity that I am positive, in my whole true self, and in this self I am veritably strong only so far as I choose God's guidance for me instead of my own or the world's. It is "the God and one who make a majority" that I seek. I am positive when I am unselfish, when endeavoring to live up to the normal ideal, when engaged in service quickened by love to God and man. I am positive when doing my own real work in the world.

If then I find through psychical experience or the reading of books on psychical matters that I am too yielding, that my spiritual life is mostly potential, my responses to opportunity mild and moderate; let me launch myself with greater impetus in work for others, meeting them more than half way. I need not linger in the psychical world. What I need to do is to live affirmatively by what I believe, realizing that in the

direction of the spiritual work I can do in the world there is no obstacle. Then psychical matters will adjust themselves. Then I shall see the more clearly what is sound and true, what people should seek in order to find their way through the thickets of the inner world into the light of the divine day.

X

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

THE endeavor to understand psychical experiences and press on beyond them to knowledge of the open vision is greatly aided by studying the human spirit. But there are two tendencies of thought in our day which make such study extremely difficult. We have tended to reduce the soul or spirit to mental processes, and then to explain these by reference to the brain. Thus psychology becomes physiological and we lose sight of the spirit altogether, there appears to be no individual worth studying and no soul to survive. Again, some of us have become so attached to the theory of subconsciousness that the centre of interest has dropped below the threshold of mental life. We seem to have persuaded ourselves that the submerged portion of our nature is more significant than the active or conscious self. Having shifted the interest in this way, we now try to explain every psychical experience on the supposition that the deeper self has somehow played us false. We are afraid of involuntary suggestions and the ideas which may have stealthily combined themselves in the

secret recesses of this wonderful subliminal region. It is almost as unfortunate to sell our souls to the subconscious as to sell them to materialism.

We may well disregard the physiological tendency for the most part, leaving it to be developed by those who have little interest in mental life save in its relation to sense-processes. The other hypothesis is valuable if not carried so far that we scarcely dare to say that our souls are our own. The larger part of our selfhood is of course at any given moment inactive, that is unconscious. Many of the activities of which we are conscious have unconscious correlates which we might inquire into to advantage. But we know nothing about the subconscious except by inference from what we discover through consciousness. The spirit as we gradually come to know it through the passing years is intelligible as a conscious being rather than as a hidden being. My character, for example, although not just now active in full degree, is chiefly what my most actively conscious deeds have made it. I must be conscious to be responsible. If I am to develop as a moral being I must choose. Even though I possess a secret place where God enters my interior selfhood without knocking, I am able to make use of this knowledge of my spiritual selfhood only

so far as I act, and regard my interior self as a part of my true personality in the sphere of conduct. I am never likely to know by direct perception whether the eyes of my spirit are open. But if I have evidence that there is such a power as inner sight, and if I learn to lift my spirit into spiritual light in order to receive guidance, this *conscious* activity on my part will be the decisive consideration; not those processes which are subconscious.

Indeed, the whole meaning of my experience in this world turns upon the fact that through consciousness what is within me is brought "into the open," that I may recognize and take account of hidden motives, desires, tendencies, and the ruling passions likely to determine my future. The idea of the spirit is built up within me as I proceed. On the surface of it the spirit seems so far dependent on the body that it is a struggle at times not to be persuaded that my mental states are determined as well as conditioned by the bodily organism. In actual feeling I tend to remain in that state of confusion between mind and body in which most people remain throughout their lives. But I am not persuaded by determinism, say what you will about the dependence of the mind on the brain. Something in me refuses to yield. I am unwilling to stop with a study of sense-processes. I insist that you

shall take account of every activity in my nature, including conscience, intuition, and all the evidences for the open vision.

Moreover, there are many respects in which the spirit is sharply contrasted with the body, and all these are profoundly significant. Everything in the body is in constant process of change or renewal, a process in which the down-wearing tendency may sometime triumph over the upbuilding and set the spirit free through the death of the body. The spirit must be at least potentially immortal, there must be an element in it which cannot die, and if the spirit is to enter "the everlasting life" it must be in some degree in that life now. Why should I not give heed to those considerations which point to the existence of the spirit as incapable of dying, that I may come to recognize myself as the being which spiritual wisdom declares I am?

If, for example, we are right in assuming that the inner experience is what is most real in all genuine psychical phenomena, if experiences by direct impression awaken the spiritual nature in us, we may infer that the spirit's interior powers function independently of matter. The simplest experience in thought-transference should show me that the inner senses can operate independently of space, and by an interior or higher kind of activity. Other developments, such as

the power to gain information intuitively at a distance or to see things clairvoyantly, will add to my growing conception of the spirit. If the spirit be in any way related to spirits in the spiritual world, it has at least a point of contact with the other world. If it also communes with the "saints" in the slightest degree, the spirit possesses much more than a point of contact. We have only to take one step farther to conclude that the most intelligible way to state our whole real inner experience is to say that in our spirits we already dwell in the spiritual world, we already function in that world in part.

Again, we learn to discriminate between the spirit and the body through intimate knowledge of the affections. Knowing that bodily instincts are strong and aware that there is such an influence as sexual attraction, we make manifold allowances, we learn to guard against subtle confusions between love and bodily desire. Desire we well know is insatiable and insistent, but the spirit restrains and regulates the desires, with an ideal in view. Those who love deeply live much in their feelings and are inclined to become creatures of passing states and transitory impulses, but the spirit seeks constancy as the goal. Infatuation simulates love, but the spirit is thereby aroused to know the differences between "falling in love" and being in love. Desires, expressing

the body, crave expression on their own level; but we learn to sublimate them and find modes of expression which we call spiritual. Self-centeredness is often largely physical and we readily tend to become selfish through the dominance of bodily desires; but in time we learn to draw sharp lines of contrast in favor of the better self we will to become. People of a highly conscientious nature often condemn themselves for evil impulses not in any sense due to the spirit, but they learn to attribute these to the selfish bodily affections. Fatigue settles down upon us and we neglect the heart-promptings of our better nature, but in time we make allowances for these transitory feelings. The feeling of age is chiefly from the body, and we know that by contrast the heart never grows old and love never becomes an old story. Finally, we are helped in all human relationships pertaining to the affections by noting what love is when quickened by ideals in quest of beauty, truth, goodness; when prompted by love for God; in the responses of the human heart to the Father's love for man. Such love is remarkably constant and looks forward to eternity for fulfillment. So might our friendships be if based on inner affinity. We might come to know and love people because of their spiritual spheres. We might grow into intimate knowledge of whole groups

of people with whom we are inwardly in accord.

This endeavor to discriminate the spirit from the body is furthered also by noting the differences between mind and brain. Let us ask, What is the use of the brain? It gathers and records impressions based on instinct, habit, memory. It is essentially a motor organ active in the care, welfare and continued existence of the body. It is the organ for the co-ordination of motor impulses and impressions for practical ends. It is the seat of sense-processes, to which sensations, feelings of pleasure and pain correspond in the mind. Thus the mind is brought in relation with the world, the mind is the sum-total of processes which relate the spirit with the external or natural world. But the brain is also the organ for receiving impulses from the mind and translating them into action through what we call "the sense of effort," the strongest motive or desire which is permitted to rule. Hence on the bodily side the brain is the instrument for initiating action, notably in the formation of habits. The mind issues the fiat or command, has the picture or thought of the desired end in view, pays attention and selects the objects in which it is interested in response to the prevalent will or affection within the spirit; while the resulting changes occur within the brain, the nervous and muscular systems. "The spiritual clothes itself

with the natural as a man clothes himself with a garment."

The processes of the brain accompany, influence and condition mental life, but the correspondence between cerebral events and mental states is inexact. Many activities occur in the mind which have nothing to resemble them in the brain. For example, when the body is in repose and the mind is given over to the study of a problem in mathematics or logic, that is, the comparison of ideas in the mind's own world, ideas which may indeed represent the relationships of material events but are different in kind from anything the outer world discloses as a "thing," a tissue or cell. Again, activities take place in the brain through its systems of habits to which consciousness or mind does not correspond. We once acquired our habits, but consciousness has ceased to attend them and is concerned with new or higher interests. Our ideas tend to express themselves in action, for man is a practical being; but, leaving bodily activities to care for themselves for the most part, man gives his thought to many matters which never find expression in conduct. On the side of the brain there is often conduct or action of mechanical types, while on the side of the mind there are preferences, feelings, radically different from them. The body through the brain is under

normal conditions a willing servant of the mind, which in turn is the instrument for control, efficiency, volition.

What is the use of the mind? It experiences sense-impressions, feelings of pleasure-pain, impulses struggling into action, and other states which correspond though not exactly with processes taking place in the brain. These sense-impressions, stored away, combine through association, are perceived, thought about, selected with reference to proposed lines of action, and are interpreted according to one's view of life. By choosing between diverse impulses, desires, images, plans for action, and paying attention to those that are eligible, the mind increases the power of the latter, while checking or inhibiting other plans. Thus the mind overcomes undesirable emotions, such as fear, anger, jealousy. The mind is to a large extent shaped by the prevailing interest. It is a dynamic selective instrument. It makes effort in favor of desired ends, at the behest of the spirit, and so initiates action—on its mental side. It is strongly influenced by instincts, such as the instinct for self-preservation and the sexual nature. Adaptation to environment is a considerable part of its function. Its ideas have less and less correspondence with outward things as its processes turn inward, for example, in self-observation,

self-consciousness, the weighing of motives for moral reasons, philosophical thought about reality in contrast with appearances, mathematical and logical processes.

That is to say, intellectual, moral and spiritual life goes on within us. This is what we call "the life of the soul" or spirit in the truer sense of the word. The presence of altruistic motives puts the inner life in greatest contrast with desires which connect the body selfishly with the world. The mind has a well-nigh inexhaustible supply of incentives and interests in its effort to overcome the flesh, to master the love of self and of the world. Thus regarded the mind is the series of processes which express and imply the existence of the soul or spirit. We may think of the spirit as the centre of all mental powers on the inner side, in contrast with the brain which is the centre for the co-ordination and distribution of motor impulses on the mind's outer side. The soul is the basis or centre of character in contrast with mere disposition or temperament, which may be largely physical. It is the seat of the will, the ruling love, the purpose in life. The soul is dependent on its mental processes for knowledge of the outer world, but its knowledge is partly due to its own contributions by virtue of its powers of freedom and rationality. So too character is partly the result of activities spring-

ing from within, as the soul meets and faces the impulses which are brought in from the body.

To make this contrast between mind and brain is to run counter to much that appears to be decisive in the phenomena of habit, hence we need to look more closely at the structure of habit as we find it described in Professor James' famous chapter on the subject.[1] What corresponds, we may ask, on the mental side to the plasticity of the brain through which habits are acquired at favorable junctures in a person's life? Let us call it spontaneity or openness, a factor which varies greatly with different individuals according to the degree in which education has been permitted to impose upon them. Since it is "the first step that counts," our habits must have been originated through effort in the pursuit of ends, as when the mind is applied in the process of learning to play a musical instrument.

On the lower side there is effort needed to set the brain into activity in the desired direction. On the upper side there is will striving to realize a purpose. If we keep our spirits young—that is, remember to live by the fact that the spirit always is young—if we keep our minds open to conviction and intuition, spontaneity finds expression in conduct throughout our life-time.

[1] "Principles of Psychology," Vol. I.

But the majority of us lose our inner freedom and literally become "creatures of habit." Although we still continue to fight, our choices seem more and more limited by earlier choices made when we were less intelligent and when we were too greatly influenced, either at home or in school, by the creeds of the churches or by the world. In the nervous system "function makes the organ, and the nervous system grows to the modes in which it has been exercised." We seem to be spinning the web of our own fate, never to be undone. But if with Professor James we "keep the faculty of effort alive by a little gratuitous exercise each day," we may make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy, preserving spontaneity and keeping our spirits open in the spiritual direction.

If when we gain a new impetus we "launch ourselves with as strong and decided an initiative as possible," if we "never suffer an exception to occur till the new habit is rooted in our life," we may make new choices and launch our efforts with success. Man is a creature of habits largely because old habit-systems, persisting from youth and later years, rise into activity in contact with new systems, and tend to become dominant as man grows old in the usual conservative ways. There is always a struggle for survival, and often it is the strongest not the most fit motive, force,

or habit that survives. The question then is, How can we make our new habits so effective that they shall triumph? Since habits survive partly by use and tend to fall away if unused through lack of attention or interest, we have a very definite clue to follow. Thus we come to realize afresh that the mind is a centre of struggle between destructive and constructive forces, and that we must become deeply aware of the warfare within us if we would foster the inner life with its spontaneities, its relationship to spiritual realities, and its possibilities of recovering the open vision.

But the end is not yet. Habit is so strong that appearances seem to indicate that the mind is merely an automaton. It is well to push the hypothesis as far as possible and see that in very truth the mind is selective, efficient, and actively pursues ends contrary to those suggested by the flesh. This makes of the brain "an instrument of possibilities," as some one has encouragingly called it, instead of a prison-house. The structure of habit as found in each of us is precisely what we might expect on the supposition that the spirit is really efficacious. The mind from a biological point of view is chiefly of use in enabling the individual to survive in the struggle for life. But from a moral and spiritual point of view its use lies in enabling the spirit to hold

its own and to rise to great opportunities. Sometimes the brain is indeterminate, and the spirit is able to act with decisive suddenness. Its great opportunity is to reinforce the favorable possibilities and repress the unfavorable ones.

We note then that on purely psychological grounds the question of interaction between mind and brain cannot be settled. No appearance can prove the mind to be an automaton. We always insist with good reason that we are not machines, that the mind is far more than a flame fitfully accompanying the brain. The fact that we make effort and that desired results come about must be accounted for. No mere study of the brain and its processes ever tells us what is right and wrong. Despite all efforts to ignore this truth, we feel that the spirit is free and responsible. The facts of habit can be reasonably interpreted in favor of the view here urged that habits are initiated through the mind and that we might with a better set of beliefs keep ourselves alive and open.

It is well, however, frequently to remind ourselves that many activities do indeed take place automatically, that automatisms tend to play us false; hence that we may generate new habits without intending to do so. Moreover, there is truth in the theory that thoughts well up out of our subconsciousness and influence action with-

out our awareness or consent. Thus the hand may automatically move a table, a ouija-board or a pencil; and the thoughts may be chiefly supplied out of our own minds and the minds of others present. What we need is a kind of sub-attentiveness such that we shall catch our organisms in the act of playing us false, as I have indicated elsewhere in describing experiences which might have been misleading.[1] If inclined to forget that automatic actions always go on, whatever else may take place in our mental life, it would be well for us to return to a study of books in which experiences ordinarily interpreted differently are explained on the basis of automatisms and unconscious cerebration; for example, Carpenter's "Mental Physiology," a work which was once profoundly influential in giving shape to prevailing views.

What we must insist on above all is that the spirit shall have full recognition, that we give place in our theory of the inner life to all sources of experience. In the last analysis the fundamental fact is the existence of our own consciousness, with its contents and its elements. That is the immediate fact. Hence the direct impressions or actual states we experience are matters of first significance. If we can narrow our analysis down to these, we shall have a sure basis

[1] "On the Threshold of the Spiritual World," p. 288.

on which to proceed. The rest is a question of interpretation. In our interpretation we have a perfectly good right to draw upon the best sources we can find for guidance in studying the human spirit. We have a right to believe in intuition and its deliverances, searching our own experiences for evidence. We have a right to believe in inner guidance and to follow it to the end. We have good reason for holding to our conviction that there is a secret place within us which God may enter. In fact, without this principle of interpretation on the higher side of our nature we can make no real headway at all in the effort to understand the human spirit; for everything turns upon the possession of a higher or inner nature which lies open to the divine love and wisdom, as the true basis of contrast.

If we say that "God is in man and, from the inmost, is his life," that "God has created in man receptacles and abodes for Himself, the one for love, the other for wisdom," and that these are the real sources of spirituality in him, then indeed we have ground for intelligent thought concerning the human spirit. For we realize that it is because of this priceless relationship to the divine mind and heart that man is in "the image and likeness of God." Truly to think and to live from the spirit in him, would therefore be to

live and think from the divine order, not from the psychical or the material. To possess the open vision would be intuitively to live according to this order, letting that vision disclose whatever is to be followed. For whatever else man appears to lack, he unmistakably possesses the power to close or open the door to inner guidance, to take the negative or the affirmative attitude, to act in freedom according to what he accepts as true.

The spirit in man, in brief, is that by which he truly lives, whatever appearance may seem to contradict this reality. The spirit belongs to the interior order or degree, while the body pertains to the outer or natural order. We should regard it in the first place from the point of view of man's capacity to receive life from the spiritual world, by "influx." Man has a *spiritual mind,* not a subconscious but an interior mind. That is the proper starting-point of our thought. The contrast is between inner and outer rather than between the subconscious and the self-conscious. Man is by no means conscious of the interior receptivity of which his spirit is capable, but he can become aware by experience of the difference between the inner and outer phases of mental life. He can at once begin to think in these terms, and so prepare himself to discern the differences. Granted some measure of thoughtfulness in this regard, man is in a position the better to consider

what part of his nature is active in psychical experiences, and how the psychical may become a means to the attainment of spiritual ends.

XI

DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS

INEVITABLY the mind wavers between doubt and belief in the realm of psychical matters. Most of us who have come into the light of clear conviction have passed through periods of conflict in which we have combatted the testimony, now of reason and now of experience, while hesitating amidst various explanations offered by leaders in this field. By common consent the psychical field is the region in all human experience most likely to be beset with illusions, if not delusions. Unluckily, impostures have entered in under the guise of the cruder spiritualism of the nineteenth century. Nothing would be more unfortunate than to believe what is not true concerning our departed friends. But in a way nothing is so important as to learn what we can for the sake of grieving and inquiring ones who have lost friends and are endeavoring to enter into communication with them. We are eager to share our convictions. Yet we are determined not to mislead. At one time we freely tell what evidences have been given us, admitting that we believe in spirit-return. At an-

other we are full of critical caution, lest we lead people into bye-paths. What we have to give might seem very nearly like "the higher spiritualism," and yet we qualify and qualify. Thus we come to believe in certain evidences and to reject others, to read some books with approval and to put down others forthwith as "dangerous."

The time has passed for generalizing. It is a question of finding what is good or sound, not of mere condemnation. It is no longer reasonable to put one's seal on the whole subject as sheer hallucination. Psychical research has shown that these matters can be investigated in the scientific spirit. What we need now to consider more specifically is psychical experience as known by the individual, that is, the inner phenomena in contrast with the material manifestations by which the world once judged. When it becomes a question of human personality with the illusions to which the self is liable, our problems are no more difficult than those which beset us on every hand when we try to be thorough in our psychology, our study of "mental cases."

The chief reason for informing ourselves concerning the illusions is found in the service we may render to receptively organized people likely to linger in psychical bye-paths instead of pressing on to knowledge of spiritual truths in the clear light of the new day that is upon us. Un-

less we have found our way through the shadowy places of the inner world, we cannot with sure conviction indicate the path to that transfiguring light which is the guide of every man born into the world.

It would be a simple matter, with the specialist in "mental cases," to classify everything psychical as sheer hallucination, then give our whole attention to the body as the source of all human disorders. The assumption would be that there is no inner core of psychical reality at all, no such power as intuition, no secret place of the soul, and no inner perception or vision. The individual who claims to have heard voices or to have had a vision would then be judged in advance of all attempts to find out how real his experiences seem to him. The sole difficulty would be traced to his brain. To hold this point of view is to classify psychical phenomena without a hearing. The report of scientific investigators to the effect that psychical experiences are widespread counts for nothing at all.

Yet, if the foregoing conception of psychical experience is the true one, namely, that the real matter for investigation is the inner experience as felt by the individual, not its psycho-physical associates and accompanying conditions, there is every reason for taking up the point of view of the individual and endeavoring to make it seem

as real to ourselves as it seems to one who is led to adopt it. There may be merely a core of reality, and associated with this core there may be illusions without number. But the question turns upon the interpretation of the part that is real. A person might for instance have an auditory illusion coupled with a real inner experience worthy in every way of careful examination and thought. As observers we might be exceedingly sceptical concerning the outward signs of phenomena, yet have very good reason for meeting the recipient of such experiences with illuminating sympathy. We might discard spiritualism in all its forms, yet have genuine problems to face when undertaking to develop an adequate explanation of the inner life.

We have been prone to judge inner experiences by what we have heard about ghosts and apparitions, and the trickery through which credulous people have been misled. Our scepticism has naturally been increased by all that we have learned about hallucinations. We have learned to our discomfiture that the average mind cannot be trusted to tell precisely what is objectively real even when circumstantial evidence is called for. Then too we are doubtful about introspection and the imagination, about any one who is in the least degree visionary.

Yet, who is able to cast the first stone? Every

ardent religious devotee of any persuasion whatever, intelligent or ignorant, is likely to take himself too seriously. In another way the advocate of science or of theology may be equally strenuous in insisting upon his particular interest. In the last analysis we are all in practically the same situation. For better or worse we use the same mentality whatever we do, when worshiping or driving a bargain, loving or hating, and in our wildest fancies. We are in process of learning what it is to be normal and sane. Within every phase of life there are realities and appearances, as in the typical instance of love and its counterfeits. Our affections may run through the whole scale from selfish passion to disinterested and devoted love. We find no one able to explain all mysteries. Experience is still our teacher. What is high and noble in us finds expression eventually.

To understand psychical experience in the case of the given individual, you should learn what level of intelligence he is on, and estimate his experiences accordingly, indicating the next step in his growth if you see it. He may be in a state comparable to the one who "falls in love" instead of rising, who is strongly inclined to put all the blame on the woman. Life sends us home to ourselves sooner or later, we come to know our own weaknesses, the channels left open, the

points of contact, the temptations that have a basis of appeal within our own unregeneracy. No one can persuade us of anything against our natures. What we are concerned with is what must be overcome, sublimated.

Psychical experiences which come to me unsought, that is, according to my guidance, are for me to recognize and be instructed by. If exceedingly sensitive and open, I may have more than my supposed share of such experiences. But if so, I shall have more protection too. But if I dabble in such experiences I shall have a high price to pay. I am supposed to have intelligence and to use it to the end. It is fundamentally a question of knowing one's own nature and the way it may be strengthened. We cannot close the door on evil intentioned beings and angels alike, on all visions, impressions and guidances, without defrauding our own nature. It is a question of noting the highest experiences that come. To understand these we must have a standard. We are not proposing to give ourselves to mere bye-play. There is a great difference between wisdom disclosed through the open vision and supposed spiritual entities "projected on this plane."

Is it then orderly or contrary to order to have communion with those who have entered the spiritual world? We can no longer say unquali-

fiedly that it is contrary to divine order, because we are learning that it is normal to have the open vision, that material interests recede and once more disclose spiritual realities when a new age dawns. Our experiences will be orderly if they come in line with the changes which have brought us to the new age, that is, changes wrought from the spiritual world in its higher degrees. It would not be orderly if men sought psychical power as such, without a guiding faith. We are concerned with the divine providence, not with motives of curiosity. We desire only those developments which will enable us the better to live our life on earth in service to our fellowmen. We close the door to all else.

It is doubtless true that the angels and spirits who are with us are for the most part unaware of this relationship, and wisely so, since havoc might be wrought were they conscious. The new arrivals in the spiritual world surely have sufficient occupation in the process of coming to judgment, and we would naturally refrain from breaking in upon them. But there may be more enlightened ones, still in touch with us on earth, who do know that they are present with us, who are permitted to cooperate with certain ones of us able to give teachings just now needed by the world. Intelligent effort is perhaps being made to explain the means of communication,

notably the pictographic process, the rhythmic speech or telepathy, and the difficulties encountered in the use of language. The result would be, not intellectual havoc, but spiritual enlightenment.

It has been said that if spirits were allowed to communicate with and aid us at will, their influential work would be the equivalent of a miracle and would deprive us of our freedom. We know very well that many have yielded themselves in unguarded receptivity, hence we emphatically object to any psychical experience which weakens individuality. But it is interesting to note that some who have received apparent communications have been warned against deterrent forces, and encouraged to preserve their freedom and rationality. Furthermore, direct impressions show us that there is a type of helpfulness which is on as high a plane of intelligence as any service shown us by wise men and women on earth.

It has been said that spirits communicating with men draw upon the external memory, and that in the far past some men have been so far possessed that they seem to be the obsessing personality. The notion of rebirth in successive bodies on earth is said to have arisen from obsessions when the possessed personality seemed to be the communicating spirit, seemed to have lived

before on earth. The idea of reincarnation, then, is a delusion due to ignorance of the fact that through the external memory one may take on the memories of the departed spirit. If this be a plausible hypothesis, we have real light at last on this doctrine accepted uncritically by millions of people on earth. This alternative is surely profoundly suggestive. Some of us may have been unaware heretofore that we had external memories. We may well be on our guard to keep people from any experience resembling possession.[1]

But the usual warning is that there are evil spirits round about us who try by subtle persuasions to influence us. The merest experiment with the ouija-board suffices to convince some people that there is truth in this warning, for there appear to be elusive forces giving such names as "Mary" or "Amelia," alleged "spooks" who intervene, impersonate departed friends, read names from peoples' minds, and otherwise mislead. Hence the majority of us would prefer to have nothing whatever to do with the phenomena. There are surely psychological matters not yet explained. It would be well however to use such a term as "deterrent forces" instead of "evil spirits." What we need is intelli-

[1] See, also, Professor Hyslop's objections to reincarnation, on psychological and ethical grounds, "Contact with the Other World," Chap. XXIII.

gence to think these matters through to the end, and clear up all the psychical illusions.

It has been said also that spirits with men have so filled them with their presence that the recipients appeared to experience the Holy Spirit. Thus men have made all sorts of claims for themselves as immediate recipients of heavenly wisdom. This is said to be the real explanation of mystical enthusiasm with all its excesses. If so, we have all the more reason for acquiring first principles as means of testing mysticism in all its forms. We must learn to discriminate between God and man, learn what elements of mystic experience are contributed from the human self, with its beliefs, emotions, enthusiasms, and tendencies to excess. In their own selfhood, quite apart from communion with spirits, people indulge in this world-old confusion between God and man. It is not surprising that it should enter into psychical matters also.

If there are spirits with man of the same character as the prevalent state of the man himself, so that covetousness for example, invites spirits who are covetous; then let man come to consciousness of his ruling love, let him purify and elevate the spirit. The problem would be the same, even if one were to conclude that there are indeed earth-bound spirits around us await-

ing opportunities to reinforce our ignoble motives. If these spirits haunt us, let us remember that there are angels too, silent ones who may help direct our higher affections without in any way intruding upon us.

After all, the situation is much like that which faces us in the world. A gambling den has no attraction for us because we do not drink and gamble. Other things are indeed close to us and we must be on our guard. If we would avoid temptation, we know that we must first cleanse the inside of the cup. The possibility of unseen influences likely to affect us merely adds one more to a long list of environing influences, such as the crowd-spirit, mental atmospheres, the dominating effect of personality. We are all subject to negative and positive forces. There is every reason why we should become aware of our true status with reference to these matters. We need to know that we are held in equilibrium and why this is so in the divine providence. Hence it is not primarily a question of influences but of the presence of God with us for our guidance. Some people seem to have been so led that they have scarcely known anything about evil spirits, or whether they exist. With them it has been a matter of direct leadings. Hence they assure us that if an experience is ever produced from the spiritual world the initiative must be

taken from that source according to the divine order.

Even if we believe that guiding spirits are with us, there is no reason for accepting them as speaking with authority. An experience has no necessary value because it is referred to the spiritual world as its source. If guidances which prove true are given us, each may be estimated for its own worth amidst all else that life holds for us: there is no reason for becoming dependent on guidances attributed to spirits. At best such leadings are of one type only. We are concerned with guidance as a whole in relationship with the divine wisdom. It would be well to look always to the highest source and not judge by the instrumentality.

The objection to making an effort to recall a spirit by the aid of mediums is well put by Dr. Holcombe, in a letter to a widow seeking consolation through spiritism. "There is one grand and perfectly conclusive reason why your husband cannot communicate with you, and why you should not even wish him to do so. After death the spirit undergoes various changes of state in the world of spirits, before it can be prepared for consociation with angels and entrance into heaven. These changes are made in part by putting off forms of external thought and affection which bind it to the natural world with

its limitations of time and space. Anything which would bring it back into those old earth-states of feeling and idea, would arrest its spiritual progress, draw it backward to earth, and violate the laws of spiritual evolution, which are so beneficent in their operation for the associated happiness of each and all, and for the final and perfect union of affiliated souls. The spiritualists seem to know nothing of the great organic processes by which the spirit thus puts off the natural sphere and becomes adapted to spiritual spheres—a fact which alone would make us regard their communications with suspicion and distrust, as coming from very immature, earthly, and external spirits.

"The spiritualists also ignore one of the fundamental truths of Swedenborg's system, viz., that the spiritual and natural worlds are discretely separated from each other—that each has its specific forms and forces and its special life resulting from them. The other life is far more perfect than this in all its forms of public, social, and private uses. But these things cannot be communicated by the mere guidance and instruction of spirits. They grow out of ourselves after death, according to what our life has been in this world, by a process of evolution. That life is the fruit, of which our earth-states are the leaves and flowers. The two lives cannot and

ought not to be mingled upon the same plane . . . Our natural life must be governed by science, reason, and the wisdom of the Word of God, and not by advice and control from invisible sources, either good or bad. Nothing could be more disastrous to his spiritual welfare, and to your own welfare both spiritual and natural, than for your husband to appear regularly to you and give advice and direction in all your worldly affairs." [1]

This looks disheartening at first and seems to put our loved ones far from us. If however we say that the worldly interests which tended to keep a husband and wife apart in their special occupations gradually fall away from the one who is gone, that he is elevated above his old habits, customs, tastes, and peculiarities belonging to his life on earth, it follows that these no longer stand between, hence that the two may draw ever more close in spirit, despite the fact that there are few verbal communications. The ties which truly unite will then grow more strong. There will be more in common, not less. "These are the sacred interior bonds which unite the angels of heaven."

Hence Dr. Holcombe continues, "How are you to attain this spiritual oneness with your husband? Not by thinking continually of his

[1] "Letters on Spiritual Subjects," p. 234.

dead form, and brooding over the solitudes of the grave. He is not there; he is risen in a spiritual body; and you will never find him, or come within the sphere of his ascended soul, among the habitations of the past. Not by clinging to him as he was in the past, and preserving his thoughts, opinions, prejudices, affections, etc., as sacred things which you must cherish for his sake. . . . You will probably not find him in his past life any more than you will find him in the grave."

We conclude therefore that it is never primarily a question of the objections and difficulties but of the positive wisdom we can gain on the life after death. The spiritual ideal is so much more worth while that there is no reason to linger. We need to guard both against the grief, the personal feelings and secondary experiences which might hold us back; and the teachings concerning the spiritual world of those who know only a little about the "planes" and "auras" and other psychical matters about which they talk so confidently. There is direct spiritual teaching for each one of us if we want it. "The pure in heart shall see God," that is the primary consideration. It is the open vision of heavenly wisdom that sets the standard. "Nothing produces spiritual presence but through affinity and similarity of affection and thought." Unworthy motives, pre-

sumption, idle curiosity, breed their like. Fallacies, delusions, mischief, pretended revelations, spring from low motives. There are signs of the coming of power from on high that are unmistakable: states of humiliation, the purifying of the tastes and inclinations, abstention from evils, the loving of the neighbor better than oneself. The differences are discoverable all along the way, in the motives which actuate us secretly or otherwise, in our thoughts, our conduct, in all external affairs. There are signs too of regeneration: self-disclosures, temptations, wrestlings and self-renunciations. At any given time we are somewhere on the road toward spiritual judgment and rebirth. What avails is knowledge of the point we have attained, that we may make intelligent choice and press on. There is guidance for us at each juncture on the pathway of the soul. The same is true of a given age like our own, with the newer evidences that communication between the two worlds has become more open, hence that there are fewer objections to the idea of spiritual communion.

XII

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

INASMUCH as personal experience is more interesting and instructive to most of us than volumes of argument and theory, I shall without apology tell how I was led into the realities of psychical experience by following clues which life itself disclosed. It is to be hoped that more people will give heed to the leadings of experience in this unpretentious way. There should be no more objection to the description of experiences and what they appear to imply than to an account of an experiment in a laboratory. The inner life is the laboratory of the soul. What is observed there should be at least as significant for human beings as any discovery one might make in chemistry. In a scientific laboratory we learn to make allowances for deflecting influences, and later we submit our results to searching criticism. In the inner world we should be able to make equivalent allowances and arrive at results no less sure.

Born and reared in a household where the teachings of P. P. Quimby began to prevail before my birth, I grew up without the traditional

teachings concerning salvation and the exclusive privileges of the Church. I was not taught to read any views into the Bible, but was permitted to read it in my own way when I became interested to do so. Mr. Quimby's view of the spiritual world as near at hand and that death is incidental, prevailed in the household, although the subject was not often mentioned. The experiences and beliefs I grew into were those which any one might enjoy who is equally free to follow where he is led. If this statement is correct in the main, the chief difficulty is that we give no thought to intuition or the promptings of personal experience. It should be said in my case, however, that with a keenly sensitive temperament and an early tendency to introspection, I turned rather more naturally than some to the examination of inner states. If this seems like an advantage, it should also be said that one tends in a measure to become self-sufficient. One must guard more resolutely against the imagination and any phase of consciousness likely to lead to mystical self-centeredness.

The first intimation I had as a boy that one possesses other senses than those obviously physical, came through spontaneous impressions regarding things mislaid or lost. One of these impressions was more distinct than earlier ones. I had been almost indifferent when a member of

the household lost a diamond out of a ring, while every one in the household save myself had tried to find it. Then after two days I started up with a spontaneous inclination to find the diamond, and went immediately to the place where it lay concealed. This experience led me to believe that I might put my mind into a state to receive impressions, and I found that often-times by a process of elimination it was possible to discover "a live clue" and to follow it successfully. Thus began the life-long habit of turning to the inner world for impressions before seeking information by asking questions or by external observation. I found that with some measure of success I could gain impressions at cross-roads or obscure points in a path, concerning the right road to my destination; and that in a strange town it was possible to get leadings by sending out my thought in various directions to determine the one to follow. This endeavor was fostered by visualizing the face of the person whom I was expecting to see or by calling up the mentality or sphere. Once in New York City I started out apparently at random with the hope that I might meet a friend who was surely in the city, although I had not the least clue to his whereabouts. Threading my way along a main thoroughfare for a while, I followed an impression to turn down an intersecting street and in

a few minutes I met my friend walking towards me. My friend did not know I was in town and was not looking for me. He was well acquainted with the inner life, and I knew him as an "inner friend." This interior relationship apparently accounted for the fact of the impression to turn toward him. On several other occasions impressions consciously sought came in the same way.

There also came spontaneously a sufficient number of experiences in thought-exchange to show that a spontaneous experience is ordinarily better than an experiment under prearranged conditions. Once however, by appointment with a member of the family while two hundred miles away, I received the exact words of a complete sentence amid conditions which would have satisfied any scientific demand. Noting the sentence and that afterwards I could catch no words but only a blurred feeling, I communicated with the sender; and learned by a letter which crossed mine that after transmitting this sentence the sender hesitated what to say next, and so conveyed no distinct thought. When a thought came spontaneously from another's mind, in contrast with an experiment, I found that I need not be troubled lest my own mind had projected it; and if there were any doubt I could make note of day and hour, and ascertain the facts at the

sender's end. When another person received a thought corresponding to mine, I also had evidence that there was actual transference of mental activity or vibration. It was natural to conclude that telepathy would take care of itself and might be noted for any value it should prove to possess.

Once, I apparently heard my name called, although a member of the family who was present heard no sound. Going to another part of the house to find the person who had supposably called me by word of mouth. I learned that the other had been thinking of me and was about to call when she remembered that I was occupied with important matters, and so she did not call. I had not only received her thought but distinctly heard my name. Plainly, the supposed sound was an auditory illusion. But the experience showed that one need not be disconcerted by such an illusion, since it might be associated with a real inner experience. In this case the significant fact would be the inner experience. Thus in the case of a younger member of the family out at play there was an actual thought but no sound, howbeit the illusion was perfect. This time the mother was really trying to call the boy mentally. The boy received the thought with such vividness that he exclaimed to his playmate, "Did you hear my mother call?" The

other boy heard nothing, but so strong was the auditory illusion that the recipient went home in response to the call which seemed to him the actual sound of his mother's voice.

On another occasion M—— was several miles from home, and eagerly wishing that she might return, I unintentionally called her. Although perceiving no words and having no impression regarding my need, M—— felt the outreaching so strongly that she came home to ascertain "the trouble," as she said. From this experience I learned not to disturb a person unless the need were urgent. Plainly, this precious power of communication at a distance should be reserved for special occasions.

The following instances I will quote from an account contributed anonymously to a magazine after the incidents occurred. "Again, on September 3d, 1890, I boarded a steamer at Liverpool bound for New York, incidentally noting that it was exactly 2 P. M., and quite naturally directed my thought toward my friends at home but without any attempt to communicate definitely. No one at home knew at what day, or hour, or by what steamer I was to sail, as the letter announcing my departure was still in mid-ocean. . . . On the above day, M—— suddenly said to another member of the family: 'W—— has just boarded the steamer at Liverpool.' The

experience was so marked that M—— took careful note of day and hour. In a few days the letter came announcing the time of my departure which, allowing for the difference of time, corresponded exactly with that given above.

"At another time I had made an appointment to call at an artist's studio at 3 P. M. to see a certain picture. At 10.30 A. M. on the same day I had a strong impression to go at once to the studio; concluding to obey it, I arrived there at eleven o'clock. I was received as if I came by appointment, and learned that the artist had sent a note at 10.30 asking me to come at 11 instead of 3 P. M. When I came at the hour of this second appointment he took it for granted that I had received his note and greeted me accordingly. But I had left the house several hours before, and at the time he wrote the note I was out walking. As nearly as we could determine I had received his thought at the precise moment when he sat down to write the note announcing the change of appointment."

The communication at the time of my departure from Liverpool was instructive because it showed that on a comparatively slight clue by means of telepathy the recipient might, if clairvoyant, actually see the distant person and tell what he was doing, and give the full reason for the spontaneous communication. But a spon-

taneous experience does not necessarily surpass one that is consciously sought, as I learned once when in the case of serious illness I actively tried to communicate with M——, at a distance of more than three thousand miles, to inform her that I was in distress. M—— was awakened from deep sleep during the night, recognized the call and responded to it with the sure conviction of one who is perfectly at home in the inner world. I am wholly unable to agree with those who maintain that thought-transference is best established when the persons in question are not well acquainted and when there is nothing personal in the communication; for it is precisely the opportunity which inner affinity and special needs afford that gives the best evidence, with the rich and deeply suggestive values which such an experience implies.

The intimate relationship of minds at a distance having been established, I also received spontaneous evidences that guidances may come in time of need. Once when in imminent danger from an oncoming train in a railway "yard" into which I had wandered with the recklessness of youth, and when I was momentarily confused by a train approaching around a curve, I received a sudden impression to stop. Accordingly, I obeyed and the passing train went by leaving me in safety. During the same year I ran an even

greater risk, for I was walking toward a railroad track where an embankment at my left concealed a train backing down without warning: that was before the days of safety signals. When, unmindful of the danger, I was on the point of taking the fateful step that would have brought me to the track, there came a most distinct warning to stop. I obeyed the impression, and was then brought to a realization both of the very great risk I had taken and of the protecting care which surrounded me even when I was careless. Plainly, I ought to be more cautious. But how comforting the thought that one could be warned in a moment of need! It was natural to conclude that these experiences were given for my instruction concerning inner guidance.

If we have had premonitions of this sort we are at least sympathetic towards people who have had similar experiences. Thus one is prepared to believe the instance is true concerning the locomotive engineer on an express train at night who received an inner warning to stop his train, and who was so strongly impressed to obey the premonition that he yielded despite the apparent absurdity of doing so. Stopping the train and walking ahead to see what might have happened, he came to an open draw-bridge only a short distance ahead. His premonition was plainly a real psychical experience.

Some would at once infer that guardian angels sound these warnings in the inner ear. But if so there appears to be no consciousness on our part of their presence. The experience is usually a simple impression, like "a feeling in the bones," and is susceptible of varied interpretations. The best result that comes to us is belief in the divine protecting wisdom which includes all our needs and is made known to us through various channels.

This belief in the divine protection was further strengthened by an experience in which I was in very grave danger from an influential person whose power over me I did not understand. At the moment of gravest danger I felt a superior presence apparently coming between my tempter and me. I seemed to see the face and form in part. The experience was as distinct and vivid as if I had been stopped when my own power was not sufficient to resist the pernicious influence. It was an impressive surprise to have this objectifying vision, for I am not ordinarily clairvoyant and do not see forms or faces. Quimby's teaching led me to turn away from spiritism, and to explain all experiences on the simple basis of intuition or impression. Yet here was an experience which stood out by contrast, and which I here describe for whatever it may be worth. It was doubly impressive in view of the

fact that an intuitive friend, a few miles distant, realizing that I was in danger, came to search for me in response to an impression. In this two-fold guidance I saw evidence of a protection so sure that it became the basis of a faith which has many times been confirmed since then.

On another occasion during the same year I apparently saw the same face when there was special reason for guidance. Rarely in the course of many years of observation has any similar experience occurred, and never in connection with any words or messages, or in response to any effort on my part. These experiences were the more interesting in view of the fact that the teaching in which I had grown up led me to look for intuitions or impressions only, and to explain all guidances on the basis of the operation of my own nature.

Such a vision might of course be a mere projection of one's own mind. But it comes with the force and imagery of an objective guidance almost as real as the physical presence of a person. It stands out in contrast with experiences which have no such visual accompaniments, and because of its quality and the conviction that it is real. Even if one should conclude that the vision was purely subjective, the inner experience would remain in memory as a spiritual fact to be accounted for. It might be argued that such

an experience is the more credible when it comes to one who by training is sceptical about any experience of a visionary nature. There is at any rate no reason why we should not report that life has yielded a guidance of this profoundly convincing sort.

Having found from early experiences that one can sometimes discern the sphere or atmosphere of people, I grew naturally into an explanation of the impressions one feels when writing letters to individuals of various types. I found myself inclined to write in diverse ways to different people, according to the type and the knowledge of language, unless I made an effort to overcome this inclination. Once when writing to a stranger I was strongly tempted, much to my surprise, to dissemble. Throwing aside the influence, I wrote what I had to say and thought no more of the matter until a letter came from this stranger which impressed me as insincere. Later, I learned through a mutual acquaintance that this man was indeed a dissembler, and I saw that he had as far as possible concealed his real thought from me. I have found by long experience that impressions are less likely to come when writing to men of affairs on business matters, since there is no personal or inner relationship to establish the psychical connection.

Naturally enough, one whose sensitivity

grows through observation and use has his problems to meet such that it becomes difficult to push on to sure knowledge of reality. He is likely to become so sensitive to atmospheres that he must learn to close the door and seek to become more positive. The problem was to keep sufficiently open that one might be of service to others in the discernment of inner states, and yet to avoid mere mixing of atmospheres and unguarded receptivity. It simplified matters when one reasoned that in the case of undesirable influences there was *a point of contact within the self,* hence that one was solely concerned with oneself, not with possible influences from spirits. It was then a question of correcting one's own nature, not of reforming the world. It was plain that by persistent cultivation of the intellectual life one could offset and eventually outgrow undesirable sensitivity, and that experiences which disclose inner relationships are given for a purpose.

Hence there grew up the habit of testing all significant matters in the light of keen intellectual scrutiny, while one continued as usual to believe in inner guidance. Just as I early learned to wait at the cross roads when travelling through a strange country, so I submitted all plans to the inward test. Always when about to board a train, for example, I paused to become recep-

tive for a few moments, that any premonition of danger might come to consciousness, or that I might be open to any desirable change of plan. I came to believe that a first general impression would apply to an entire journey, such as a voyage to Europe, and that impressions from point to point along the way would enable one faithfully to carry out the initial guidance to the end.

Thus one grew into the expectation that if in any undertaking one encountered no check or impeding impression he must be moving in the right direction. If on the wrong road one would expect to receive negative impressions from the first. Yet he might sometimes receive unfavorable impressions with a conviction that these refer to difficulties to be overcome, hence one should press on. Thus in a war-zone one might have impeding impressions without number, yet above them all a leading to push through to victory.

Only once in the course of many years did a negative impression come regarding a railway journey. When about to board a train the words came to me unexpectedly, "There is going to be an accident, but you will be all right." I therefore started on my journey in confidence. The negative impression was confirmed by a minor accident two hours later. On another journey I had one adverse impression after an-

other, but without words and mingled with a feeling that it was right to continue. The sequel showed that I was not to carry out the project on which I had set out, hence the unfavorable impressions; but there were other ends to be attained which I had not foreseen. Inasmuch as I received no premonition of dangers along the way, it was right to persist despite the adverse impressions.

Another phase of these inner experiences began to come into view in connection with a plan to move to another house in the same city. During the two weeks in which members of the family were house-hunting and consulting advertisements, I felt as indifferent as in the case of the lost diamond referred to above. Then suddenly one evening I announced that I would find the house we were to live in. Going rather directly to a vacant house not half a mile away, I distinctly saw the family living and carrying on a certain kind of work there. Returning home, I informed my parents that I had found our new home. After some delay and further exploration, this house was decided upon and the work I foresaw was carried on there. From this experience I learned to wait until the impression came before seeking a dwelling-place. On two other occasions separated by intervals of years I was led to our next home in the same way, and

in each instance on the day when the impression came. In neither case did I make any effort to find the house that was "for us" by any conscious activity on my own part. In still another instance of house-hunting the place to which we moved was found by another member of the family, but I knew it was the right one because on entering it for the first time I saw the family living there.

Deterring impressions, I early learned, are often as significant as those that are positive. In one instance I embarked on a certain enterprise because a good adviser insisted that I should. But everything went at cross purposes, and I gave up the venture because it brought no inner response to the effect that it was right. I learned from instructive experience not to disregard a negative impression. For once I persisted in mailing a letter despite the fact that when about to post it I felt a warning to the effect that it would breed trouble. The trouble came indeed and I lost a whole year in point of time by my refusal to stop when checked. At another time when about to post a letter I heard the words, "Do not sell your soul." I posted the letter nevertheless, for the import of the warning was that I should proceed, although with thoughtfulness.

Much then depends on one's interpretation

and on one's will. Guidances do not deprive u
of our freedom although they may come wit
great persuasiveness. One may disregard the
and take the consequences, thus learning fro
experience how to know guidance from perso
inclination. Judging by the experience alon
there is often no reason for inferring from th
impression that an angel guide was the media
ing presence through which the guidance cam
Not even when words arise into mind, has o
positive evidence that a guardian angel w
present; for our own minds sometimes brin
thoughts to us in the form of words heard wit
the inner ear as if spoken, or our minds co
tribute the words in which a guidance takes for
It may be wiser that we should not know that
guardian is with us. For the primary conside
ation is always the divine basis of guidance, wha
ever the means it assumes. Moreover, one see
to avoid taking oneself and one's experiences t
seriously. One's experiences are merely so ma
signs and so many tendencies in the laborato
of the soul. There is no reason for haste
arriving at conclusions. There are tests a
teachings outside of one's nature to which pe
sonal experiences may be submitted. Subje
tive experience alone is not and never can be t
decisive test. Nevertheless, inner experience
followed as a gift, not as a process which o

seeks to control, may lead the way to an altogether convincing theory of inner guidance and divine providence. So too spontaneous experiences may point the way to the adoption of a method of seeking guidance which will yield better and better results as the years come and go.

XIII

DIRECT IMPRESSIONS

THERE is a distinct advantage in following the developments of inner experience without indulging in experiments to test the idea of the survival of personal identity or spirit-return On learns to keep an inner door open for guidances that may be vouchsafed for a purpose, yet one makes no personal effort to attract experiences of a psychical nature. One has a method of awaiting impressions, submitting everything consequential to inner guidance; and one believes profoundly in inner responses as a test of reality and truth. But there is no outreaching, no eagerness, hence no tendency to create an experience out of hand. One believes that if there be any experience to be given for good reasons from a higher source it will come, if not in one way then in another. This belief gives the incentive, prepares the way without interference. The result is that by experience itself one learns to know the difference between an intuition arising within the mind as ideas come and go, and a direct impression due to activities outside the self. The direct impression coming thus spontaneously, brings its own evidence with it.

Naturally we differ in type and experience in these matters. It might be wise for some of us to ask for evidences of the continued presence around us of friends who have gone across the threshold, although this seems contrary to order. But for some of us it plainly would not be wise despite the fact that we have grown up with the conviction that the spiritual world is near. In my own case a premonition of the passing of a loved one came, as I believe, to prepare me to meet the experience, that there should be no sense of separation, no break in the continuity or inner relationship. Hence to my surprise I felt no impulse to keep A—— with us. With him the transition was apparently of the gentlest, most natural kind, without serious interruption in consciousness. For me it was the closing of one chapter and the opening of another, in which experience itself was still to lead the way. It would have been unwise to invite communion with him. Indeed it was necessary for some time to refrain from rather than to welcome this communion. Hence when it came it brought convincing evidence of its reality, and led me to believe that experience by direct impression is the surest proof that death is no real separation.

There was no effort whatever on my part to reach out to find A——. My belief in the life

after death was such that I should have had no reason for this outreaching. I thought of A—— as alive and near by, going on in his development under freer conditions, but in no way separated from us in spirit. While he was still with us in the flesh I had communicated with him mentally at a distance, and I had no reason for thinking that this interchange would be broken. Nor had I any reason to guard against subtle attempts to conjure up A's presence, since there was no notion on my part that his spirit was removed from us. My belief simply was this: that if it were right communion with him would be vouchsafed according to the higher law.

It is difficult to tell what followed so as to share with others what may be shared and yet make the statement as convincing as it might be if one could tell all. At first I simply felt the presence of A—— as usual, as if he had not gone at all, without awareness of guidance and without receiving any words. Then when I received a few words they came as naturally as any thought detected through telepathy with a person in the flesh. I felt the presence coming towards me, knew the direction from whence it came and whither it went, although I saw neither form nor face. Rendering myself receptive without eagerness, in the manner which I had found from experience to be desirable, I distinctly perceived a

very brief message of a personal nature for some one in the family. It was a word of advice which conflicted with what the other person believed was right, but which proved its value in contrast with an attempt to disregard it. One could hardly imagine more satisfactory evidence of the reality of a communication.

On several other occasions I received a warning impression and made myself as receptive as possible, although the result was never so distinct as in the first instance. Then after the lapse of months I realized that my mind tended to generate and objectify a message before I could become genuinely receptive, and a doubt intervened. This seemed unfortunate, for apparently the doubt closed the door upon a very real experience. But this doubt passed and I once more found it possible to receive a word or two which I believed came from beyond my own mind. And it was shown me by conclusive experience that receptivity on our part is not always essential.

One day, while absorbed in the study of Spencer's "First Principles," in my room at college, I felt the presence of A—— as before. Coming as it did amidst intellectual concentration, I was convinced that the presence could overcome mental and other obstacles. A few days later, I distinctly felt the presence again,

when engaged in a very different occupation. Later still, I learned to recognize the presence in connection with my work, when no message was given, when there was no reason for special guidance; but when I felt a spirit of helpfulness that came as one might hold a brighter light over another and aid him to see his own way. This kind of helpfulness, I have come to believe, is the best sort in the world. One is entirely free to act contrairiwise, and thus one may come to learn by experience the superior value of wisdom offered us which we are at first disinclined to accept.

After a time I ceased to feel the presence of A——, and very naturally as it seemed to me, inasmuch as an enlightened individual would probably go on to higher spheres of activity and would not return except in cases of special need. This did not mean a sense of separateness, and why should we ever think of ourselves as cut off from our loved ones? It simply meant that one had one's own life to live amid conditions close at hand, while the other had found superior conditions.

Then after the passage of years there came the first message I was able to associate with another personality, under circumstances which made the communication doubly persuasive. I had never seen this man J—— in the flesh, although I had

corresponded with him before his death and was well acquainted with people who knew him. I also knew that he was working to free souls. A few weeks after his death, he apparently made his presence known to a group of friends through automatic writing. Some of these messages were shared with me, and one was addressed to me; but I was not impressed, because I had come to believe that any communication destined for me would either come through direct experience or would be confirmed by inner impression, and no such evidence was forthcoming. I had no reason to expect a message from J——, and I was not acquainted with his psychical quality. Surprising indeed then was an experience that came when I was conversing with a friend in great distress and in the midst of which I perceived a presence decidedly unlike that of A——, whom I knew so well.

One might ask what reason I had for accepting this presence as real. I answer by its quality and by the fact that J—— gave me his name, and that he came in a time of need to perform the same service he had done for people while in the flesh, namely, to help them overcome adverse conditions when the struggle was very great. There seemed no reason for doubt, and his help was most welcome, despite the fact that my general belief led me neither to desire nor to look for

any help or guidance save through endeavor to live by divine wisdom. No message came except the name by which this man was known. The rest was matter of feeling or presence. I was not attached to him personally. He held beliefs which I did not in any way share. Yet there was a common bond for the time being in the effort to free people in distress.

A few months later, J—— came again, advising me, but without words, not to take an important step which I forthwith proceeded to take because I had little faith in his advice, although I regretted my decision. Once afterwards, J—— again sought to be influential. He came when I was absorbed in conversation with a friend, discussing a plan of action. Quick as a flash the message came into my mind amidst my own thoughts but unlike them in quality: "Don't do it, J——." This message was particularly interesting because wholly unlooked for, because it came without any warning impression to be still and make myself receptive, and because I was neither receptive nor still but intensely active. The experience tended to strengthen the growing conviction that any message or guidance that was intended for me would reach me in any event, under any circumstances whatever. Then this spirit passed apparently into another sphere and has never come again, so far as I know.

The next advance brought to me the presence of a more enlightened spirit than either A—— or J——, although accompanied by one of the type of A——, that I might know the import of the presence. No words came this time. No cool wave upon the face preceded the experience. I saw the form and perceived the light dimly, and intuitively received the clue or intimation of the meaning I was to derive from the experience. The wisdom thus given me was unmistakable, for it pertained to a change of work which I did not then understand, and it was several months before its full import began to dawn upon me. I distinguished this experience from a vision which came at the age of eighteen and which disclosed to me the nature of my work, because the first vision was a symbolical representation of ideas given me by way of instruction without any evidence that a spiritual presence was giving it to me; while the second was a vision of one who said nothing but whose presence was there to lead to a long train of thoughts. For all I know every vision of a mystical or semi-mystical nature may be induced in our spirits by an angel. But being by nature and training extremely cautious about believing without direct inner evidence, I can only say that but once in a life-time has a vision of this sort come when I felt and saw the angelic presence. I must dis-

tinguish such an experience from an ordinary spiritual "uplift," from "cosmic consciousness" or mystic ecstasy, because of its quality. It was sufficiently moderate to enable me to apprehend its spirit without any of the mystic responses or emotions which have led devotees of mysticism in all ages to insist that mystic immediacy simply cannot be described. I hold, from experience, that such immediacy can be analyzed into its elements, and that there is a great advantage in the coming of moderate visions, those that leave us in great inner clearness so that we may analyze them. Far less mystical than our superiors in this region of the inner life, by no means ecstatic, those of us who are moderate are able to avoid mysticism from the very beginning. We accord to the inner experience the privilege of developing in its own way without intruding our own emotions. Those of us who have had two or three calmly moderate visions in the course of a life-time, and all these emphatically for a purpose, are able to connect them with what we believe on other grounds in behalf of divine guidance; and thus we are able to escape being "visionary." [1]

By following such leadings one may cultivate the intellect to the full and become as sceptical as

[1] I have developed this view at length in "The Philosophy of the Spirit," Chap. XII.

one likes, yet find that the evidence for direct inner experiences is unmistakable and beyond all philosophical assault. By following such leadings one may live in the natural world like other men, eating one's three square meals a day, enjoying life in the open, in every way "normal." One concludes that the wisdom vouchsafed from a higher source is in every way right, not "supernormal," not implying that one's life is "abnormal." For such guidance comes unsought amidst the usual activities, with which it does not in any way interfere. One neither seeks visions nor presences. One awaits the development of inner experience, however that experience may come. Thus there grows up a consciousness of the differing qualities of experience, and one learns to know these experiences that come for a purpose in contrast with any voluntary outreaching. If one has not even prayed for anything of the sort, one has the more reason for belief.

For example, one learns from experience that sometimes on awakening at four o'clock in the morning the mind is thrown more readily into spiritual light. Plainly, there is less resistance on the part of the physical organism at such a time. Intellectually speaking the mind is less active. Finding the mind in a state of partial illumination, one can bring various matters into this light and gain insight into them. This state

does not seem to be induced by an angelic presence, although it may be so. It may not come for any special reason, hence it is especially serviceable. One may seek light on questions at will, as long as the state continues. A—— used to say before he left us that if he could so arrange his life he would like to wake up at four o'clock every morning, that he might grow in spiritual knowledge. For he found that the illuminations which came at this hour exceeded those of all ordinary intuitions, and A—— was very intuitive in type.

By experience once more, there has grown up the conviction that in case of extreme need, if I were obtuse and unyielding during the day, if all efforts to attract my attention were fruitless, the mind could be awakened at four in the morning with the needed guidance or message. This is a very comforting belief in this overactive life of ours when, despite all our good intentions, we lose some of these inner powers for the time being, as the years pass. I hold this faith because on a notable occasion when I was externally absorbed and inwardly unreceptive when the mind otherwise seemed closed even to the presence of A——, I was awakened three mornings in succession at four o'clock. The first two mornings I was still obtuse and unyielding. The third time my mind was sufficiently open

so that I received the message at last, saw its wisdom and determined to act upon it at once. It was one of those crises when if ever in life one needed to be aroused, warned and emphatically influenced. No similar experience has ever come again. But, as in the case of the warning of danger from an approaching train, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, there has been no similar need. This experience reinforced the conviction that what is for us will come. This being true, it is not necessary to seek these experiences. The most satisfactory aspect of them consists in their ideal possibility, in the fact that they might come if needed. In the absence of them one assumes that it is better to press on without them. For, plainly, we are left without distinct guidances when there is need for experience on our part. When the guidances come, they are for our best development; they do not deprive us of our freedom.

That there may be help for us in our work without the least interference with our freedom, is well known among writers who have had evidences of assistance in producing books of direct value to humanity. Such helpfulness may be said to belong to the level next above automatic writing. That is to say, no words are dictated, there is no form of automatism, certainly no form of coercion or the desire to control. By

such "helpfulness" one means that a light is cast through our minds by which we may be more directly led to express our own ideas. In so far as our ideas coincide with those of our friends cooperating with us, the helpfulness may be increased. On occasion we may be more definitely aided, for example, in eliminating a statement not in accord with the spirit of the literary production as a whole. Yet such aid is in the nature of a suggestion simply, and one is perfectly free to disregard it. More writers and speakers may have been helped in this way than we realize. Those of us who are the more conscious of this inward assistance are able, perhaps, to propound an explanation for the benefit of others, namely, that there is communication through direct impression.

If we still prefer to believe and to say that such impressions are simply evidences of the working of intuition in us, there is no objection to be made. Those who would avoid spiritism in all its forms naturally would attribute all higher operations of their spirit to the immediate influx of divine wisdom. The difficulty in my own case would be that while for the most part this idea is simpler and seems to accord with most of the facts, occasionally an experience has come where the evidence, however analytically examined, has compelled me to believe that a spirit was present

also. Ultimately speaking all efficiency belongs to the divine wisdom. But that wisdom is mediated to us, and it may well come through the instrumentality of those in affinity with us in the spiritual world.

Again, one might push as far as possible the hypothesis that the uprushes from below the threshold of consciousness account for the ideas to which we find ourselves giving expression, in cases where we have not consciously developed precisely those ideas. It is well at times to give full play to this hypothesis. I have done so. At other times I have been so absorbed in purely technical matters that for months I have not had so much as one experience of the nature of guidance or direct impression, for example, when engaged in the study of a philosophical subject requiring close concentration and the reading of abstruse works. But as I have looked back over such periods I have seen that there was no reason for aid from higher sources in any way, that my own mind was regularly producing by well established methods whatever my pen found to say. But no sooner have I finished such a piece of technical work and yielded to spontaneous impressions than inner activities have been resumed, and new evidences have come that the mind really is open to other sources. One could endeavor to drive out every vestige of evidence

of higher things. One possesses intellectual power enough. But the process would be like analyzing out of being the last trace of love, the last of those higher values which for many of us are the things supremely worth while.

I had an experience one time of great value in this connection. I was present with one who lay apparently at the point of death, and naturally enough I wished to remain as calm and strong as possible, that I might be of real service. More vividly aware than ever before that anything I might say was insignificant in contrast with what one might feel if one could truly realize the divine presence, I experienced an incoming of rhythms such that I could have written a hymn. In fact, the first stanza of a new hymn came into my mind, but I could not then give attention to literary production. Reflecting on this experience when at leisure, it seemed that in apprehending these rhythms one was open to the universal element underlying all forms of inner spiritual helpfulness, including the activities of "genius." Granted this interior openness on the part of individuals of different capacities and talents, one man would write verse, another would compose a symphony, another would paint, one would design, and so on through a long list. Each would express the rhythms in his own way, contributing the imagery, the lan-

guage and even the thought. If all were aware of the underlying element, all could compare notes on the universal or spiritual speech. The experience on its human side would in each case take the form of direct impression. This might be the universal element in all higher guidance. It might be the basis of communion with angels and spirits, save that actual words might be conveyed in some instances also. Throwing the intermediaries out of account, we would have spiritual communion in its simplest form. Taking the different mediating means into account, we would have a principle on which to explain all genuine relationships with the spiritual world.

In so far then as one has had evidence of the reality of direct impressions, one is in a position to acquire a spiritual standard by which to judge all psychical experiences. For it is the higher quality that is evidential, not the psychical element. To have this clue in some measure is to discern at least dimly the heavenly light into which we may lift all matters for their better testing. When the spontaneous illuminations come at four in the morning, we may observe and follow with the sure consciousness that a higher power is really active within us. And those who have not yet put to the test their belief in the nearness of the spiritual world may know how to begin.

Doubt if you will the objective reality of the foregoing experiences, they were the ones which one individual followed during his formative years. In any case you have on your hands for explanation facts which withstood all sceptical tests. The outcome was a theory of guidance which one could live by, a theory that psychical experience is inner experience and may be followed to see whither it leads, quite apart from external associates and spiritism. Any one is free to interpret the facts in another way. One can never rightfully insist upon one's own experience as authoritative. One may only say that the experiences yielded a certain spiritual value, chiefly personal, but similar on the whole to the values which others find in the inner life when they push through all refining analyses to the clear light of conviction. Belief in divine guidance would remain as the great value, even if one should come to doubt the reality of all alleged presences and messages. The mind is of such a nature that it can be guided—that is the great fact. Other matters are secondary and depend on our type and on our work in the world. These matters may have transcendent value for us, indeed we may have had visions which almost overwhelmed us with their beauty and truth. But it is the universal element which may be shared, which each may come to know

and to test in his own way. If found within the soul, it can be found elsewhere too. Hence one is not limited by personal experience and may regard it as chiefly formative and preliminary to deeper knowledge of the divine love and wisdom.

XIV

INNER PERCEPTION

If we conclude that psychical experiences are known by inner impression, our first need is for a philosophy of inner impressions which shall do justice to the spiritual life, with its guidances, its ideals, its relationships. The starting-point is with the soul or spirit and its powers, the world of experience implied in the spiritual life on its inner side. We may proceed with the development of such a philosophy on the basis of inner impressions, just as we construct a philosophy of our relationship with nature on the basis of outer or sense-impressions. We are well aware that there are rival philosophies of the relationship of the soul to nature, such as empiricism and rationalism, idealism and materialism. So too there are rival interpretations of the soul's relationship to the spiritual world, although our thought is very immature in this direction. On the whole, most of us who proceed thoughtfully are likely to adopt a philosophy akin to empiricism, that is, one in which experience takes the lead, which shapes itself gradually in our minds during the passing years. What we most object to is any doctrine or dogma which undertakes

to define in advance what we may know and what we may expect by way of inner experience. If we have narrowed our own experiences down to inner impressions awaiting interpretation, we are in a position to follow wherever truth shall lead.

We note for one thing that inner impressions, like sense-impressions acquainting us with sounds and sights in nature, are neutral. Telepathy, for example, is obviously neutral. It might take place between thieves, for all we know. Apparently, self-love could as readily give expression to mental transfer as disinterested love. It is not a question of good and evil till we look more deeply into the inner life. For, we must distinguish ordinary communications between mind and mind, which we may compare to vibration in the world of sound; and harmonious communication of a spiritual type, which we call rhythm. We are well acquainted with this distinction in the case of physical sensations. Discords, for example, may be as readily transmitted by sound waves as music or harmony. The atmosphere surrounding our earth is neutral and free. So is ordinary human speech. Hence we learn to penetrate beneath it to real intentions and inner sentiments. Our intonations are only in part rhythmical. Much of the time we talk prose, often a very harsh prose. The same is true of our life as a whole. Telepathy should

reveal this fact more deeply and truly than we have ever understood it. But telepathy may ascend from level to level in the mental world. Between spiritually minded people in affinity it becomes, rhythmical, harmonious, poetic. An inharmonious vibration would hurt or jar. The ideal is to overcome all inharmonies within oneself, that one may send out only "harmonious waves of rhythm," that one may speak the language of heaven.

To the extent that I differentiate between discord and harmony in my own life, I am likely to detect the contrast in other people. As I advance, I of course seek to overcome all smallness of spirit, all envy, hate, bitterness, sarcasm, adverse criticism and condemnation. These mental states belong on the level of mere vibrations, are negative, destructive. In their stead, I try to cultivate largeness of spirit, charity, sympathy, disinterested affection. These states belong on the level of rhythm and open the spirit to spiritual power. The more these states rise into power in my life the less thought need be given to discords. These I may pass by as we would turn from mere noise to music in the natural world. What interests us is music, harmony, rhythm. What we need is a standard or ideal by which to attune our spirits to the higher harmonies.

While then inner impression in itself is merely immediate or given, and simply awaits interpretation, our consciousness naturally becomes more and more selective. As we ascend the mental scale from the psychical into the spiritual, we realize that desirable inner impressions belong with integrity and beauty of character. The mere fact of having inner impressions counts for very little. The merest "psychic" or sensitive might have an impressionability far surpassing that of a person of culture and refinement. Indeed a psychic might have clairvoyant power which would make us almost envious. But there might be little intelligence, no refinement, and hence no power to distinguish between discord and harmony in the inner world. What we want is not mere clairvoyance but insight and the ability to bring uplifting influences into daily life. Hence we distinguish between mere clairvoyance and seership, between mere impressions and intuitions. Insight requires intelligence. Intuition belongs with ideals. It is "the pure in heart" who shall see God.

Let us say then that inner impressions call for inner perception, and that by inner perception we mean a unifying, clarifying or interpretative power by which we pass beyond mere receptivity to active use and development. Inner perception is an activity of the human spirit in its less

dependent guise, that is, more free from the body, more open to spiritual life, to the divine love and wisdom. In fact, inner perception unites us with the divine mind so that we often think and will and love better than we know, so that we become open to guidances surpassing self-conscious thought. In inner perception we transcend our bothersome self-consciousness and forget ourselves, that is, attain to higher levels, respond to purer motives.

By the operation of inner perception in its purest form, a person would intuitively know what is right and what is true without being instructed. He would at once know what wisdom is divine, what human; what love is from God, what is from man. By it man would intuitively realize that in God he lives, and moves, and has his being; not in his mere self. Hence he would take no credit to himself for power or wisdom. By it a man would know what is inner and what is outer in his experience, would intuitively discriminate the spiritual world from the natural. This perception would disclose the inward light regarded as heavenly or divine in origin, the light which yields spontaneous insights, guidances; that is, it would be the channel in general of what we call illuminations, inspiration, revelation. It is the power of the open vision, and such vision is "open" because immediate, direct

or intuitive; in contrast with external observation, analysis, inference, the forming of hypotheses and arriving at conclusions based on natural facts and limited by facts. There are "facts" too for inner perception, but these are clothed in beauty and illumined by a light which overcomes all mere prose and the halting efforts of our painful self-consciousness.

In the golden age of inner perception man has no need either of doctrines or books, but possesses the divine Word in his heart. Later, indeed perception may mean knowledge of the true and the good based on wisdom previously acquired. But we think of it in its purity as disclosing by immediate vision "the way, the truth, and the life." In its best estate it yields the unblemished reality itself "by an internal way," whereas that use of spiritual wisdom which leads to the formulation of doctrine is by an external way, namely, through the employment of intellectual terms and figures of speech adapted to the age. In its best estate man also has constant corroboration of the truth which has been previously disclosed to him, so that he constantly knows spiritual realities and can always turn to them.

By the operation of inner perception man might have guidance from infancy to manhood in what is good and true, initiation from within

into all the wisdom and power needed for living "the fulness of life." Thus if man kept the open vision in its purity he would need no other source of instruction, would steadily and actively possess within himself the realities of faith, the ground of all true hope, the source of all belief in God, freedom, and immortality. Man would then believe in spiritual realities as matter of course, that is, as a consequence; instead of arriving at belief as a conclusion. If presented with a book such as the Bible he would know what there is in it of divine goodness and truth through prior possession of the same goodness and truth in immediate form. The goodness and truth would therefore be self-revealing. There would be no need to reason from facts alone, since the mind would possess the principles which explain facts. The mind thus quickened would believe in God and speak of God because of intuitive awareness of the divine presence as a living reality in the actual present, in contrast with any claim in behalf of historical revelation. Freedom would be taught as a possession because of immediate awareness of it. Belief in immortality would spring from *touch with eternal reality within the soul.* Sight or possession would be the equivalent of "proof" and would be very much more. Yet no one possessing such sight would deem

himself especially gifted or wise in his own mere self, since "the understanding heart" would disclose to the one eternal source of wisdom.

Such perception would be both immediate and compelling to the one apprehending its disclosures, and communicative in relation to other men possessing it. From it there would spring spiritual speech which would be intuitively known by both speaker and listener, for both would have the law "written on the heart" which would give direct evidence of the realities communicated. Both would be able to live from this interior revelation, and life in accordance with it would be heaven on earth, that is, life on earth from heaven. This social revelation would in a word disclose the revelation behind all revelations, and yield the universal reason for the existence of scriptures, for belief in God, freedom, and immortality, wherever these beliefs are found on our earth.

We need not presuppose a golden age of any extent or enlightened men of great number possessing the open vision. The open vision in the period which led to the writing of scriptures and the giving to the world of spiritual teachings in the far past may have been childlike or primitive in form. All we need presuppose is sufficient perception to account for such teachings as we possess, sufficient to give us the ideal of the open

vision as man's purest response to the divine mind and heart. For us it is not a question of the past but of the possibility of awakening out of our dogmatic slumbers into inner perception as a reality today. The mere fact that we possess the ideal is profoundly significant. The more thoughtfully we consider the ideal the more reasons we find for holding fast to it, the less we care for the doctrinal substitutes which have been imposed upon the world.

What was the next step supposably taken by man after he had enjoyed the open vision? The term "inner dictate" has been used to characterize the residue in the period when man became self-conscious, interested in his own powers, aware of inner conflict, in need of conscience and of doctrine or moral commandments. That is, conscience "dictates" that there is truth and righteousness, but leaves man to discover what is right and what is true. It bids man meditate, consider, putting higher motives over against lower. Through it man learns that he must take responsibility. His better nature rises up in protest despite the fact that he has become immersed in the world and has yielded to self-love. Reason "dictates," we say, that this or that is right because the moral law decrees it, "because the Bible says so," or because society so decrees. Thus reason tends to be more and more

external, and man ceases to act from inward awareness based on experience. Thus too authority becomes more and more external, until finally it degenerates into the mere word of those who stand for it in the churches and other institutions. "Thou shalt not" is now the commandment. Doctrine takes the place of vision. Priests take the place of seers. The churches take the place of God. History usurps the place of the eternal present. No one knows what inner perception is. It has become a mere question of doctrines and their interpretation. The authority on spiritual matters is the one skilled in interpretation. A really enlightened interpreter would recover the idea of the "inner dictate," and following this clue would work his way back to inner perception. Thus the seer would lead men back to the sources of spiritual belief and encourage people to look within, to meditate, to break free from authority and tradition. The spiritual history of the race is just such an alternating of periods of doctrine and seership. Thus in the course of time we come to see the meaning of history and to acquire a standard, a "sense" for spiritual truth.

We pass through similar periods of change or development in many of our interests and vocations. Thus a person possessing "a musical ear" has a power akin to the open vision, and then

through training acquires a dictate or standard which enables him to estimate musical compositions according to the acuteness of his aesthetic intuition. By a "gift" or talent, by "genius" we always mean something akin to the open vision, that is, the power or talent in its native purity; and we are endlessly discussing the relative values of genius and training, talent and discipline. The standards by which most of us judge are partly native to us, partly acquired, and it is difficult to tell what is really innate, what is due to education. Suffice it that sooner or later in any field where man attains excellence he possesses or acquires a standard. Thus the literary artist has an eye and ear for beauty of form in spoken or written discourse. He may become so acute as a student of a great writer like Shakespeare that he can tell in a flash what lines in Shakespeare's plays have been introduced by another hand, what ones came from the hand of the master. Such a literary faculty is not exactly a feeling, an idea, or an experience; it is rather an implicit standard borne within the spirit whereby one knows at a glance and knows surely.

If one has had experience of religious realities one carries a certain implicit something by which worship in a given church is tested, faith is discerned for what it may be worth according to

one's enlightenment, and a value is put upon charity or service. Moral experience lays down a certain wealth in us in the same way. We appreciate in others what life has taught through us in our touch with moral integrity, our contact with people of uprightness, people who have the courage of their convictions. We naturally recall what we have seen and felt and heard, and this sums itself into a whole as a means of testing what is just, and what is right. We possess as our own whatever has been taught us at home, in school or church, or what we have learned from the Bible, only so far as life thus gives it back to us as a standard emphasized by experience. The rest is mere theory.

A musician catching a theme such as that of Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony" and hearing the whole as it were in an intuition, may be said to be in a state of mind comparable to that of inner perception. The symphony orchestra, playing Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony," may also be said to be in touch with musical reality at first hand. So are we in a measure when we listen and seem to rise above mere space and time in touch with "the world of appreciation," the world of values or Platonic Ideas. Later, bearing the memory within our spirits as the years pass, we have a standard or dictate. People hearing us tell what we have heard in "the world of wonder-

ful reality" are in a state comparable to that of listeners in a church hearing the minister tell his views of what some one in authority has said by way of interpretation of authorized doctrines accepted on tradition. We often wonder why a symphony concert impresses us as so much nearer perfection than religious services, save perhaps the music. Here is the reason. Music is still produced by those who are in touch with first-hand sources, while religion is often discussed at third hand and exemplified in a corresponding remoteness from reality.

If we did not possess vestiges of inner perception we would not of course be so disappointed with the churches. We intuitively know far more than we realize. We scarcely dare even to think because it is not popular or is not permissible. We might acquire a spiritual standard of our own, by venturing to believe in inner experience, and we might recover the vestiges of inner perception. Then the golden age would be no mere tradition but an ideal for active pursuit. We might acquire a philosophy of inner perception, and thereby grow into the ability to interpret this whole field of psychical reality which has been so long misunderstood.

Man, let us remind ourselves once more, is a spirit dwelling in the spiritual world, in the interiors of his selfhood. It is normal to know

heavenly reality at first hand. It is normal to acquire truth and to receive guidance at first hand. We need build no walls between ourselves and the eternal world. By implication, our desires and ideals are already direct expressions within our spirits of heavenly reality seeking to make itself known. We should be as free to believe in that reality and to respond to it as to open our mouths and sing or to play upon a musical instrument. Even if our spiritual eyes are not in any sense open, something in our inner nature is open, we may at least respond in spiritual feeling. By this feeling we already know through subtle affinity what is sound and what is true in many of the people we meet. By it we are drawn and repelled. What is needed is recognition of the activity of this higher power in us and responsiveness to it.

All that we need is a clue or leading, some indication of inner impressions yielding guidances. For out of the clue may come truth without limit, out of the initial guidance may come leadings extending through a period of years. Then we may learn to let the guidances come in their own sequence, interposing no obstacles, making no effort to shape them to our own ends. Still further, we may learn to do creative work, letting each detail develop as a musician might develop a symphony out of an original theme.

Thus inner perception may accompany us as a standard throughout the years to the completion of our work on earth, as the composer perfects his theme till every note is complete in the finished symphony.

A standard tells us both what is sound and true, and what is spurious. In spiritual matters it gives us a certain ear for that which "rings true." Our spirits grow in power to follow "leadings." We learn to listen more deeply, truly, with less interference of intellect or will. We are more confident that we really receive guidances, over and above our mere thought. We are no longer troubled by doubts lest in our inadvertent subconsciousness we have generated the whole content of these inner deliverances. We are not only aware by experience that a guidance has a certain quality but also aware of the fruits or results.

Thus our thought passes beyond the region of doubts and difficulties. We had to pass through that period because our intellectual training made us critical, and because there is much that is spurious on the road from the psychical into the spiritual. But now at last we have reached a period where, believing unqualifiedly in intuition and daring to follow the clues which our experience has yielded, we appeal directly to the inner standard and ask, Does my inner self

give assent? Does this teaching ring true? Does it accord with the best my life and thought have yielded? For what is foreign to my inner constitution is no concern of mine. What is for me I am likely to acknowledge at once. Many other matters I may pass by as of no more moment than mere noise. What is really for me belongs with my guidances, for these have a coherence or unity not of my own making. Far indeed from me is the open vision in its purity. But I at least contemplate it as an ideal. I am not cut off from the realities which it discloses. I possess at least a residue of inner perception, awaiting recognition and development. Best of all, I see at least in a glass darkly that this is a residue of the divine presence. As a child of God, made in the divine image and likeness, my very nature is akin to the Reality of realities whence has come the true, the beautiful, and the good.

XV

HOW TO KNOW INNER GUIDANCE

By the term "guidance" one means an impression, leading, prompting or warning which either indicates the wise course to pursue or restrains us, bids us take thought and direct our efforts more carefully. Guidance may come spontaneously, unsought and unexpected, in the form of a positive check or a premonition; or, it may be consciously sought through conditions with which we become acquainted when impressions or warning come spontaneously. In the latter case, it is usually sought through silence and meditation, by receptive listening or waiting, and by taking the whole matter in question under advisement amid the conditions most favorable for dispassionate thought. It may come in response to a half-felt desire on our part or in answer to prayer. It may pertain to the incidental action of the moment or to the purpose one seeks to realize in a life-time. It may come like a vision out of a clear sky or amidst conditions which when intimately understood disclose the way to seek it consciously. It is best understood in the long run by reference to its sources, the channels

through which it comes, and its meaning in connection with a spiritual philosophy of life. We may also study it in relation to man's higher nature as qualified by the personal equation, for we find that in some people the coming of guidance is a strongly marked characteristic implying unusual receptivity or special fitness.

Guidance believed in as divine in origin implies the living presence of God with us, as in biblical times, through the Spirit made concrete to man in the developments of inner experience. Thus regarded, guidance implies a purpose for each of us inclusive of all that is essential to our eternal welfare and work. The basis of guidance is therefore the divine providence conceived of as a continuous manifestation of love and wisdom for our care and preservation. As thus understood guidance exists for all men whether there be any awareness of it or not, since we all belong to one spiritual race, with the possibility of becoming brothers and co-workers in actual consciousness. Regarded as social, guidance involves our relatedness to one another in the inner world, and hence it is known by its high quality.

The presence of God with us as providence or guiding and sustaining Spirit includes what is known as spiritual light, "the inward light" as it is usually called. To obtain divine guidance is to lift our problems into that light

with the admission that there is a higher way than our own. To be led by the Spirit is to perceive the heavenly light on life's pathway. There is in deepest truth a way of life, a pathway of the soul leading from the infancy of our experience to maturity. To know that light which shines on our pathway in its fulness would be to behold heavenly reality face to face, in the open vision. The inward light if faithfully followed would lead us to the reality behind all appearances in such a way that we should individually know it, feel it, live by it; and have no need for secondary sources of instruction on spiritual matters save as reminders.

The inward light, humanly speaking, is the individual's participation in that heavenly light which, like the sun, shines universally. The source is the same for all. The human spirit receives what it may under the prevailing conditions. The light is divine but it is mediated to man through his own nature and the states of life through which he passes. Man listens with the inner ear, thinks with his spirit, responds through the promptings of the heart. Then his inward prompting takes shape through his mentality and his outward life.

It might be said that guidance is simply the awakening of our own higher nature. Plainly, some of our deeper incentives to action arise from

within the self, especially when our better nature is aroused in protest. Thus Emerson assures us that "the soul's emphasis is always right." "That is right which is according to my constitution, that is wrong which is against it." "The soul contains in itself the event which shall presently befall it, for the event is only the actualization of its thoughts. It is no wonder that particular dreams and presentiments should fall out and be prophetic." But one might overdo this individualism. It is imperative that one consider how our guidances relate to the welfare of other people and accord with what other people are led to do. We have also to consider the nature and sources of those guidances which bring evidence of relationship to the divine presence as the real efficiency of the inner life. Naturally we explain as many experiences as possible on the basis of our own intuitions, just as we take into account the deliverances of our subconsciousness. But, again, we are minded to ask, What is the ultimate basis of intuition?

As I have tried to show in a lengthy discussion elsewhere,[1] the line between ordinary thought and guidance is difficult to draw. Guidance is essentially an experience. It is obtainable through the whole mind, and when one seeks it one brings to the experience whatever wisdom life has given

[1] "The Philosophy of the Spirit," p. 300.

us up to that time. Hence in a large sense of the word it may simply be a clue or leading for its recipient to follow according to what life has previously taught him to believe. Much will depend upon the interpretation which he puts upon his leadings. The same experience which one man would interpret as a guidance, another would explain as a mere instance of inductive reasoning. Yet we need not be disconcerted because there are varying interpretations or by the fact that many people are totally unaware of guidances. In the life of those who follow the developments of experience with observant responsiveness, without desire to control where control would be an intrusion, there are unmistakable signs of guidance, signs which lead to the classification of impressions and leadings according to types. Thus guidance is classified with reference to its sources, the means through which it comes or the ends to which it leads. Its origin may be obscure to us at first, but we may have strong reasons for distinguishing it from ordinary thought. Or the result to which it leads may be so impressive that we are led retrospectively to its origins with new insights into the providence of God.

Guidances are knowable by their quality, and through the fact that they are capable of being tested in contrast with mere inclination, desire or

self-interest. Thus a guidance, coming unexpectedly like a gift from a person who knows our inner or urgent need, may bring a certain conviction that it is from beyond our mere selfhood. This may be either on account of its disinterestedness, because it is social, pertains to the welfare of other people and lifts us above all petty motives; or because it checks our proposed action sufficiently to give us a wholly different view, because it calls us to account, stands out in unmistakable authority and power. Again, we recognize guidance because it comes infrequently, when especially needed or at the eleventh hour, when we have drawn upon every resource at hand, when faith has done its best. Often too, its coming is an instance of such precise correspondence between supply and demand that we are deeply impressed by its implications. People engaged in religious work have most impressive experiences to tell about resources put into their hands from unexpected directions when they most needed what came. Sometimes the relationship is precise to the very dollar.

Thus guidances often point to a spiritual connection between people working together toward the same end, and a relationship with those in need whom they can help, which reaches beyond all consciously acquired information. Guid-

ances coming to the same individual in the course of twenty years or half a life-time may so prove to belong together as to point very directly to the divine purpose, in an ideal direction which is seen to be best or wisest in contrast with all appearances. Therefore one is prompted to make fewer plans as the years pass, and to hold more matters open for true solution through guidance when the time shall come. In our eagerness and impatience we would like to know just how we are to reach our goal. The fact that guidance is so long withheld but that it comes in time, indicates its character or quality.

Moreover, guidance not only leaves us full opportunity for experience by withholding much that we would like to know till the time comes, but grants us a chance to make mistakes, and by disregarding its leadings to see how strong and true they were after all. Guidance does not coerce us. It leaves us free. It appeals to our freedom and in no way absolves us from responsibility. There is still room for faith. In fact one must often proceed more or less in the dark, awaiting the developments of each day when the day comes. Faith is required to believe in guidance in the first place, and every act of responsiveness to it is an act of faith. Guidance always comes as an alternative which might be rejected. It appeals to individuality. It grows more pro-

nounced with recognition or wanes if ignored and denied entrance. It indicates a way in which we may walk, if we will, with successive leadings for successive steps; but we may continue to try our own way if we prefer. Thus guidance stands out in the course of years because it pertains to our eternal welfare, what is spiritually essential, leaving us free to add the particulars as we proceed. By its presence we come to realize more clearly that there really is "a way everlasting."

Those who note the contrasts of inner experience and learn to listen for leadings also find that guidance increases with use, becomes more impressive and effective with the passing of time. Thus the conviction grows that there is always with us a true inward light by which ideas and plans may be tested. Naturally the increasing definiteness of guidance depends to some extent on the interpretation put upon it, hence if believed in as divine the recipient makes more effort to purify the inner life that guidance may come in purer form. Then too something depends on one's view of success in the world. If one believes that true success means fidelity to the divine purpose, more effort is made to overcome every obstacle which might interfere with guidance in its purity.

Guidance in the higher sense of the word may

also be known by contrast with other mental activities, for example, what we call prudence. By noting bodily sensations such as fatigue, we infer that we need rest or change. We also take our clues from nerve-impressions indicating tension, excitement, disturbance of the normal rhythms, and impeding conditions of the brain. We do not always take rest, food, or sleep when needed; but the conditions are present which show the need. In the same way the body warns us against inordinate desire, carnal passions, excess in all its forms. The instinct of self-preservation is strong in us, and any number of signs which, if heeded, would guard us from emotional excitement and other detrimental states. We discover tendencies to relax in case of injury to the organism, also other promptings that help us to overcome pain. The knowledge from experience which we gain by being prudent and observant aids us to acquire the art of life with regard to bodily welfare. But all knowledge gained in this way is mere subject-matter for guidance in its higher form. Observing, for example, that the body needs rest, that the nervous system is exhausted, we take the need "under advisement," awaiting the opportunity which guidance discloses in its own way, in its own time. Guidance may be akin to instinct, but it yields far more. Bodily instinct often relates

to physical self-preservation alone and might be harmonious with selfishness. Guidance relates to spiritual service and leads to unselfishness.

Life in general under guidance might be compared to a journey through a forest. Sometimes there are roads plainly marked, sometimes mere paths. Again, the way is obscure, the paths cross and one must proceed tentatively. With a general direction in mind, we endeavor to keep the way, each according to his experience and insight, his knowledge of life and its leadings at various junctures. Coming to a place where the roads divide, we pause to observe and consider. Some men judge largely by signs and indications and by what they know in general about the woods. Some proceed experimentally, now on this path, now on that, awaiting evidences that point to the right one. The more open-minded ones try by inner impression to discover the right direction, while a few with a directness akin to that of the Indian who has kept unspoiled the instincts of primitive man turn to the right road without hesitation. Becoming more accustomed to the whole experience of finding our way, some of us make our way through thick woods, over hills and across mountains where there are no paths. We depend less upon signs and guesses or inferences, and more on intuition or inward impression. The higher the form of

guidance the less need there is for external observation and inference.

Guidance, like the promptings of instinct, is discovered in the first place through spontaneous impressions, such as the feeling that a given road is right, a prompting to look in a certain place for a lost article, or a sudden warning of approaching danger, "a feeling in the bones." Again, it may be a first-hand impression of human character, favorable or unfavorable. We may have a feeling that a surprise is in store for us, that a change is coming into our life, a great sorrow or joy, yet we may be unable as yet to tell what the forthcoming event or change is to be or when it is coming. A deterring impression regarding a proposed plan of action may arise, but without any reason for it. A reaction may arise within the self against the work we are engaged in, although we are still unaware why our better selfhood should protest against it. Thus a deterring impression may disclose the fact that we stand at the parting of the ways, howbeit we have no idea what is in store for us. Those of us who note and welcome these spontaneous impressions and follow them, find that guidance in its distinctive sense presently discloses itself.

The believer in guidance awaits impressions which shall indicate whether a proposed plan of action be right. "If the way opens," we hear

them say, let us go on; if it does not open, we shall know that it is not right. If one is prompted to proceed despite all promising signs, one concludes that it is because there is a wisdom in pressing on till a more distinct leading shall indicate the way. Unexpectedly the way may open for the realization of an ideal cherished for many years but not insisted upon in one's own mere selfhood. One may have what some one called "a wave of happiness" as a sign that the way or plan just embarked on is the right one. One may even "see" oneself engaged in a particular work under contemplation, or may see oneself actually arrived at the desired destination. From this strong impression one may conclude that the way is indeed right.

Some believers in guidance say that when they have a "conviction" that a way under consideration is the right one to embark on they know they should go ahead, and that each step will disclose itself when the time comes. Hence they confidently anticipate success, even in the face of circumstances which point to failure. Accordingly, they lay aside the anxieties which beset most of us and give their minds more fully to the inner leadings, realizing that both receptivity and faith are essential.

Furthermore, knowledge of guidance increases with study, by endeavoring to work out the laws

which they imply, to think out the philosophy of life which they call for. Retrospect may show, for example, that guidances came from stage to stage of one's journey when needed at the time, with sufficient wisdom for those occasions, and so one may increase faith in the principle of supply and demand, looking elsewhere in life for confirmations of this principle.

One may supplement these studies by contacts with nature. We learn, for example, the value of returning for a time to the simple life in which we drop out of our tensions. Walking in the woods alone, or otherwise adapting ourselves to conditions that bring rest and freedom, we at the same time observe without realizing it the inner conditions which bring to us the guidance which could not arise into our consciousness while we were so actively absorbed in the world of external affairs. Such contrasts make us better acquainted with guidance as opposed to any plan of our own. Help may come to us through any change of scene or environment, from city to country or back again from country to city; in a crowd or away from " the madding crowd;" through travel or by learning to be truly "at home." Different ones of us have our ways of dropping out of our over-activities, that we may pick up the detached lines of activity, come to ourselves, return to our spontaneity, get a

fresh impetus; and make ready to be more true to guidance. Every one who becomes progressively aware of guidance, learns how to rise above conditions and processes, above localisms and associates, in quest of new perspectives and broadened vision.

"Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still," says the psalmist. Turn from outward matters with a sense of turning to something very high and noble, with quiet inner expectancy. Believe convincingly that what is in line with your high purpose in life will disclose itself, that the way will open. Be ready to receive light through any instrumentality, yet above all expect it from the highest source. If your guidances in the past have come in connection with an uplifting consciousness indicating the presence of higher power, endeavor to regain this consciousness as a means to the guidance you would now seek. Consecrate yourself anew, willing to forego even the most cherished plan, ready to change your residence, your occupation, your co-workers, and any condition that may not be in full accord with the divine purpose for you.

You may learn to know guidance from all its opposites, if you will. You may find that as it comes in the course of the years it classifies itself under various heads or types, so that your phil-

osophy of guidance will enlarge to fit your experience. Most guidances may seem to call for no further agency than your own intuition or inner perception. But others may bring evidences that the divine presence is more intimately with you. Still others may seem to come to you through intimate relationship with those akin to you. Thus a friend may come to you, with a warning or advice, which is like a word from heaven to you, although the friend may be unaware of serving as a messenger to your soul. A whole chapter in your life may stand out from all others because of guidances coming in what we call "a remarkable way." Or, more rarely, a guidance may associate itself with the spiritual world. Whatever the channels or instrumentalities, there is one ultimate source. He comes to know guidance best who comes to know God most truly.

Many guidances doubtless come to us through psychical means. Probably all guidances have psychical associates or relationships. But it is a question of the criterion or standard and that is the open vision. It is a question of the source and the providence or purpose and that is divine. Hence we may place little stress on the means or instrumentality. Undoubtedly the best result that can come to those of us who have made our way through the thickets of the psychical world

is our faith in guidance. For guidance not only gives a working principle to live by but a principle by which to interpret inner perception or the open vision wherever found, it not only discloses the meaning of man's spiritual history on earth but reveals the pathway into the future life.

XVI

A DOCTRINAL OBJECTION

THERE is a certain attitude of mind which sets itself squarely against any effort to return to the original sources of guidance. Everything that men should know concerning spiritual matters is said to be contained within the creeds and doctrines of the particular church to which the representative of this attitude chances to belong. The doctrines are said to be inerrant, the church in question a divine institution to be accepted as found. There could not be errors of doctrine because in God's providence all errors were prevented. To question the creeds would be to follow the dictates of one's own intellect. To question the authority of the church would be blasphemous. The intellect likes to rule and is reluctant to yield supremacy. It accepts what is pleasing and is fond of searching for errors. But the intellect should submit itself to doctrine, seeking only those evidences which confirm the creeds and sustain the church, endeavoring to expound the revealed doctrines as absolute truth. For revelation is closed. No further evidences are needed. What we possess is complete and

final. To seek alleged truth in psychical experiences, for instance, is to dabble in "the new black magic," as a recent Roman Catholic writer calls it.

The answer which most of us make nowadays is that we believe in the continuous presence of God and the spiritual world, with the possibility of new disclosures of truth. These new utterances may not carry us beyond what is universal in the teachings of the past, but they may be better adapted to our age. We believe in the *living* Word of God. We believe in *the living Christ,* risen and glorified. We hold that God still has guidance for us and that in His providence it will be adapted to our needs.

It is well, however, to press the matter further than this and to raise objections to this doctrinal position. In the first place, it claims more for the church, Catholic or Protestant; for the creeds and doctrines, whatever their source of authority, than can be claimed for the Bible itself. The Bible was deemed inerrant or infallible before modern scholarship taught us to take the personal equation into account, before we realized the fallibility of language, the variations of texts, and the influence of custom, belief, tradition. Now we realize that all these human elements are found within the same book which also contains divine truth. The Bible may still be re-

garded as inspired in so far as we penetrate behind appearances to the reality within them, the reality which requires inner perception for its discernment. We are no longer able to maintain the theory that the text is inerrant as it reads. The value of any principle of interpretation lies in its applicability, through discovery of the inner truth or living Word. This Word will not conflict with universal truth as disclosed in human history at large, or with human reason enlightened by spiritual experience.

The second objection is found in the fact that for better or worse men use their intellects both in the process of accepting a principle of interpretation, a creed, or the authority of the church, and in searching for truth in the Bible. At best we are left with mysteries not yet explained. We must make headway as best we can, endeavoring to use our powers to the full, guided by the highest spiritual light we can find. Authorities still differ in all the churches. There are always "two wings." The Christian Church is still divided into sects which place as much emphasis on the doctrinal differences which sunder as on the love which is supposed to unite. On many points of divergence there is no decisive teaching either in the Bible or in the creeds or doctrines. The text of the Bible contains gaps and ambiguities, some of which will prob-

ably never be resolved. At best, we are progressing toward divine truth. No one is in a position to call others to account for using reason as a guide.

The third objection turns upon a discovery which might almost be regarded as a truism today, namely, that all things divine are given through human instrumentality, hence that the divine cannot be understood by itself but is intelligible through its mediating conditions. This is the meaning of the profound change of emphasis from the transcendence to the immanence of God, from the inaccessible to the immediate or divine in the human, "the divine human." Back of the whole question of truth as opposed to error lies this deeper issue pertaining to the human means through which the divine is adapted to our needs. To continue to believe in the Bible as containing divine truth despite all modern criticism is to be prepared to show, however imperfectly, how the Bible might have been written as a divine-human book through various means at different periods. To discern the divine truth is to understand the part played by the open vision, by inner perception, the psychical element, the figurative element of language, the place of myth, symbolism, tradition. What we need is a profound philosophy of the correspondence between the natural and the spiritual.

Unable to maintain their position in behalf of inerrant doctrines, the critics try another approach. They now charge the liberals with an attempt to use subjective experience as the test of truth. This objection is urged in several ways. Any one who claims to have been led by experience is said to be seeking means of religious development outside of the churches, with their authorized means of regeneration. To believe in one's own experience is to be a mystic, and mysticism is of course "heresy." To look to experience for wisdom is to try to invent a substitute for Christianity. Subjective experience can never be a test of truth because it is full of illusions, if not delusions, through taking one's inner life too seriously; hence it leads to false ideas of God and many other errors.

Granting that there is truth in this criticism in the case of some who make special claims, it is hardly fair to judge current teachings by that which is least sound in them, ignoring all the rest. The larger consideration is that no one ever really believed anything religious except on the basis of personal or subjective experience. We have not all made this clarifying discovery but the sooner we make it the better; for we will then be able to avoid undue claims in behalf of the human self. The critic may be challenged to produce any item of effective belief not con-

ditioned by what experience has led men to accept. We have indeed reached the period of exact science as opposed to individual opinion, and in the special sciences we make allowances for the element of experience in so far as it may be an interference. We have made some headway in the development of spiritual science as opposed to speculative theology. But in spiritual matters it is still a question of the best use to make of powers or "gifts," and knowledge ripened by experience. For better or worse we are all in the same position. We either start with the needs, longings and clues of inner experience, and seek an explanation of them; or, we accept certain teachings for the time being and then seek their deeper values when experience has corrected or verified them.

Especially in matters pertaining to the life after death we find that doctrine falls so far short of what the heart longs for, namely, the experienced nearness of the spiritual world, that we come to realize the test of experience as the real test of what we actually believe. When death comes into the household with its deepening experiences, we often find that those who urged the doctrines of conventional theology upon us have the least spiritual food to give. But others who speak from the heart because

they have lived and experienced may bring that wisdom which touches the heart, may open up a new gateway to experience. And so with the new birth. It is not that people have sought substitutes for the methods of the churches, but that when the real inner upheaval with its tests at last arrives men begin to learn realities from experience which surpass the doctrines and show their inadequacy.

The religious devotee should be the last man in the world to protest against the appeal to experience, for it is he who makes most use of it and should be most concerned to interpret it aright in all its bearings, psychical as well as spiritual. How, it might be asked, did any one at any point in the race's history come to believe in spiritual things save through experience, notably those experiences which spring up spontaneously outside of the institutions? And how did any one else ever come to accept what the first man believed save through some experience or inner clue in his own life? What is the value of religious instruction if not to acquaint people with *the realities of experience* that they may come to recognize principles which seers have disclosed? How shall we take our seers in earnest unless we look for equivalent evidences within individual experience? And why not judge in-

ner experience by the best results which it yields, instead of dwelling on the mystical delusions of those who take themselves too seriously?

What we need is a philosophy of human experience in the light of its successive states throughout history and leading up to two-world experiences as foundations for understanding the natural in relation to the spiritual. Such a philosophy would lead us to look in each age for the wisdom needed in that age. Thus in our own times we would look for new quickenings in response to the restlessness and searchings of heart coincident with the war. We would not rebel against but would welcome the awakening of interest in psychical phenomena, asking ourselves, What is its meaning? Why are people heart-hungry? Why have the churches failed to meet the new needs? What if we should turn about and try to put ourselves in imagination into the point of view of an enlightened spirit in the other life seeking to be of service to his fellowmen here? Would it not seem pathetic that many of God's supposed representatives on earth are so closed in spirit to present-day guidance that not by any possibility could an enlightening idea be put in edgewise?

It is refreshing to turn to the clarifying article by Mrs. W. Hinkley, in an English periodical, in which the writer subtly rebukes the con-

servative in the Church of England by quoting sentences here and there from recent automatically received messages. Note, for example, the yearning to reach people on our plane expressed in the following. "If I could only reach you, if I could only tell you. . . . I long for power. . . . Oh, if I could get to you, could give you proof positive that I remember, recall, know, continue . . . all that we imagined is not half wonderful enough for the truth, that immortality, instead of being a beautiful dream, is the one, the only *reality*." [1]

If any one still doubts that there has been an advance in such messages, that they give definite ideas about the future life which we may put with the best we already know concerning this life, let him read the excerpts made by Mrs. Hinkley, among which are these:

"You can hardly by any stretch of the imagination realize what a change it is to live in a place where the only test is character, where property, station and work do not count, no, nor religious profession. We see things as they are, not as they are labelled. We have such surprises to encounter, such amazing revelations of the estimates in which men and women are held."

"The man (arriving here) finds this world very much what he has made it. You see the

1 *Nineteenth Century*, Nov., 1919, p. 930.

results of your life's work, thoughts and deeds. You make your next life, you do it day by day, hour by hour. There is no sudden transformation. You are as you were. There is no break of continuity; you start where you left off, what you are you remain."

"He who will not trust his own soul has lost it. And he who will not trust the voice of God in his own soul will seek for it in vain in the voices beyond the border."

"The whole of the evils that affect human society arise from the lack of seeing things from the standpoint of the soul."

"Take time to think of those you love. Without thinking of people you lose vital connection with them. For love dies if you never think of the person loved."

"What burdens the soul most is selfishness; what helps it most is love. You do not always realize that you can bless or curse with a thought. . . . By thinking kindly and lovingly of persons, not dwelling on their failings but on their virtues, you can help them to throw their faults aside."

"You cannot estimate the value of true prayer. To us it seems as if you were like children set down in a great power-house, not knowing the importance of the switches and electric forces around you."

"All that we value in the old life, all real

things, love, friendship, beauty, understanding, thoughts, feelings, you will bring here with you to weave into the new life, which is full of beauties and joys which have not entered into the heart of man in your state yet."

"You do not feel as if you had come to a strange place here, but as if you had come home. Nothing will be lost. I can see from here the various kinds of links which bind people together, none of them breakable by such a thing as death. Of all the real things that we have loved the life and likeness will be gathered and kept for us. One of the things I have learned in these months is the immense power of thought; you can see from here how people change and mould themselves by their thought. Every hard thing you say or feel for another makes your path and his harder."

"I had no notion how much effect we have on each other . . . the living and the dead. . . . Your pain is ours, our joy might be yours. The more you realize our nearness so much the nearer we can come. Pray for us all, living and resurrected; there is a great bond between us."

"I think it is as hard for us when people cannot realize our union with them as it is for them when they can think of us only with pain and regret. It is an attitude of mind which could be changed by an effort of will."

"Believe that there is always perfect strength and perfect understanding waiting to be strongly claimed. . . . How can I make you see the great power of prayer? It is far the strongest thing in the world, yet no one seems to use it except in the most tentative way."

Do these messages have anything significant to say concerning the doctrines of the churches? Yes, they indicate the short-sightedness of many of them. For example, some one says: "Never think of Christ as the Divine scapegoat: think of Him as Love incarnate taking men by the hand. It is the doctrine of the substitution of Christ, the sinless one, to satisfy the laws the sinner had broken, that has done so much evil. Christ's death does not remove the effects of sin from any human being. Every man here goes to the place he has made for himself according as his life has been. But however feeble the glimmerings of goodness and truth, here they are fostered and strengthened."

After a study of such messages, Mrs. Hinkley strongly emphasizes the moral continuity of the future life with this one, the fact that we go on in that life where we left off here. She also emphasizes the persistence of human responsibility, which has been "terribly blurred, indeed practically denied, by the . . . theory of the atonement, and by the doctrine of imputed righteous-

ness." The Church, she thinks, has failed to describe the future life in such a way as "to make it seem real or desirable to a world of living, energizing men and women." By its many omissions, the Church has repelled innumerable souls. In truth, religion should "enlarge her outlook until she gratefully recognizes as co-workers with her *every* means of grace that the universe offers, all the experiences that shiver our stupid satisfaction with the things of the flesh, and pierce our too-absorbed preoccupation with its poor needs." What we need is the dawning of the deepening sense of the incomparably keener joys and griefs of the spirit.

It is indeed "a commonplace today that men are reaching out with great desire for a vaster, more comprehensive and harmonious conception of the Author of the universe, one congruous with the whole of life, than is offered by orthodox theology." We have outgrown the orthodox scheme. We need a view of man's inner life founded on knowledge of the two worlds. We need to understand the principle of correspondence or relationship between inward states and outward conditions. Above all, we need a vitalizing conception of the divine in the human.

It is well to remind ourselves once more that doctrines began to be needed in an unfavorable time when men had lost the open vision. Doc-

trines were not and never could be substitutes for real life or experience. They are means to ends only, the highest end being love to God and man. Doctrines are of no value unless man lives by them in such a way to experience the realities for which they stand as mere abbreviations. They are not faith itself but reminders of what faith may become when introduced into the will and carried into effective conduct.

True doctrine may indeed serve to unite men with God and to lead the way to experience. Hence it is important to inquire more and more deeply into the relationship between doctrine and experience, to see if the doctrines which still have life in them are large enough to represent the newer meanings of the inner life today. It is through the spirit that man is united with his fellowmen. On doctrinal grounds alone men differ. If the various sects of the Christian Church shall sometime unite, will it not be on the basis of the Christian life, through genuine return to the original teachings of the Gospels, in contrast with the theological systems which have been imposed upon them?

If in accord with the above messages we should begin to teach universally on this earth, as liberals already teach, that character is the test, that our moral experience here continues into the future and shapes it by spiritual law, and that the next

life is an attractive life, the whole face of things would be changed. We might then begin to live in all seriousness according to what we truly believe in our hearts, but which we hardly dare express because it conflicts with the creeds. Prayer would become dynamic, vitalizing, and the whole emphasis would be put on the power which prayer sets free, on the vitalizing result. We would all trust the voice of God in the soul. We would all view social problems from the standpoint of the soul. We would all "take time to think of those we love," that we might keep the connection strong. And we would look forward to the future life with confidence, knowing that in very truth all that we love from the heart will survive. This would be a realization of the ideal which Mrs. Hinkley suggests when she speaks of "an undying and everpresent tenderness, to which death can make no difference."

If such messages accomplish nothing else, it is to be hoped that they will tend to destroy once for all the notion that death is in itself a decisive event. For with the downfall of that doctrine will go a thousand and one notions about hell. Life will then be simplified into the successive states of the soul in its progress into freedom and the more abundant life. We will then see that it is never a question of time or place, either in this life or the next; but of our deeds and their con-

sequences. In place of the alleged "eternal punishment" which was read into the New Testament by the translators, we will adopt the teaching of the literal Greek text, "age-everlasting condemnation," that is, the moral consequences needed to fit the deed in the given cycle, however long that may be. The theory of eternal punishment will go the way of all unnecessary doctrines. Instead, we will begin to appreciate at last the power of Love incarnate, God in the human.

XVII

TO A MOTHER

Because I was in France when your son was killed in action, you ask me how death may be regarded as it comes in war-time, and what I think of the efforts now so eagerly made to enter into communication with "the dead." I will answer as I should wish any one to write to me under similar needs, out of the heart, whatever the apparent conflict with prevalent beliefs.

Although not in action in the front lines, I spent months in a cantonment behind the lines where the wearied men awaited summons to the next attack; hence I had opportunity to converse with those who had come as near as possible to death in all the forms in which it is known at the front. As a result, death seems less real, far less important than ever before, and not at all to be dreaded, despite the fact that it may come under terrible conditions. I think of the soldier-boys who have "gone West" as living, splendid souls with the supposed "mystery" put behind them, as they left their uniforms and their fleshly garments, as they left the war behind. I think of them as going on in moral and spiritual de-

velopment from the point attained here, at first with interests and occupations similar to some they followed here, but eventually with higher activities growing out of their more real knowledge of life.

I had never thought of death as decisive, and now it seems literally incidental. I had always thought of the real life as spiritual and of the future as interiorly continuous with this. Naturally then I had fewer fears to battle with when I crossed the dangerous seas. No one escapes such mental battles, however, and I suspect that they are useful; since they are tests of our faith, since each new situation gives us opportunity to face the great realities as we have thus far interpreted them. I must confess that death seemed a momentary possibility one terrible night in a bombarded city when I was exposed to an air-raid on a lonely street, far from a "shelter," and without protection from incendiary gas-bombs. Yet under such conditions what better attitude could one take than to believe in guidance to fulfil one's part, whatever the consequence? I learned then to realize the meaning of the sense of law or "fate" which makes so many of the soldiers fatalists but which I prefer to interpret as guidance. Arriving at the place where I was assigned for duty, I had a most distinct feeling that I had passed through

the real dangers and could settle down into relative quietude, although exposed to dangers which as the months passed proved more threatening than those of the first few nights. I cannot convey to you the reality of that feeling. I can only say that it was unmistakable and strong, so strong that I felt renewed faith in the presence and reality of spiritual forces as the truly decisive forces in human life, even in war-time, even during an attack by the enemy and during air-raids at night when death-dealing bombs fall so quickly that one scarcely has opportunity to think before it is all over.

I speak of this personal faith in spiritual realities by way of introduction to the greater thought of death as an event in spiritual living. For I believe that under the pressure of circumstances many soldiers felt this same sense of higher reality, however they may have interpreted it, and that some were sustained by it, by an awareness of life that made of death itself a wholly different experience from what we commonly anticipate. It was perhaps on account of this interior nearness to spiritual realities that some of the men beheld, or thought they beheld, angels or "the Being in White," or supernatural soldiers fighting on their side. I do not know that it matters whether their spiritual eyes were open so that they saw anything or not. It would

be futile perhaps to inquire. What does signify is the sense of reality, the fact that when hard pressed our spirits are in more intimate touch with what is spiritually real, with what we call the presence of God, the presence of Christ, or the spiritual world. Doubtless our views color what we seem to see or to feel. I merely suggest one possible view when I say that for me, when dangers were most threatening, what I call "guidance" seemed of a piece with a long series of inner impressions starting with the first night of imminent peril at sea and continuing till I arrived at Brest en route for home. The inner feelings may be very much the same with all of us while the interpretations differ. For example, the French soldiers of peasant types, whom I came to know particularly well, seemed to have retained unspoiled the primitive faith of early Christianity in the nearness of the spiritual world and the presence of guardian angels. Knowing nothing of the critical tendencies of modern thought which have refined angels away into "good thoughts," and removed the spiritual world into the pigeon-holes of dogma, they had kept the simplicity of heart of the childhood of the world, that simplicity which we associate with the open vision. It mattered not that they were Roman Catholics with manifold beliefs which I could not share; what signified was the untainted-

ness of spirit which led me to believe that death for these simple-hearted "poilus" would be a beautiful transition, to which their beliefs would be no obstacle.

I am led to speak of death, therefore, as a fulfilment and a beginning; not a calamity or interruption. Hence I think of it in terms of beauty surpassing our prosaic speech. It seems to me an unfolding, a disclosure following upon a transformation scene in which the ugliness of the battle-field gives place to a vision of other realities hardly to be hinted at by our material terms. If this imagery be truthfully suggestive, then death is an awakening such that during the earlier moments the participant hardly knows that he is what we call "dead." For there he surely is, with all that he cares for most in his selfhood, with his character, affections, faith, and the impetus of will which carried him forward to meet his death. There too are his associates and comrades in the wondrous transition. Soon he will recognize friends who have long preceded him, and he will begin to look back with yearning to those who will call him "dead," who will grieve over him as if they had no faith whatever in the human spirit as a being of life and power, as if they really did not believe in immortality.

"Dead!" How strange a word to apply to one who was never so much alive before! Why

should we cling to the word? Why not think and live in spirit with our loved ones, not as if they had really lost or suffered anything by the transition, but as having gained so much that we might almost wish we could lay aside our uniforms too?

Why should you not live with your son in spirit, in tender nearness of heart, *as with you,* despite all appearances and separateness? Picture him then in his best state of life and love and thought. Do not let any thought of war's horrors and disfigurements mar your mental picture. Call up your best and dearest memories of his childhood and young manhood, and put with these blessed recollections your thought of his bravery and faith in entering upon the last battle and meeting death—not in defeat but in spiritual victory. Continue to think of him in this way and without any reference to his age as the years pass. Keep close to him as a living, progressing spirit, full of a new helpfulness, better able than ever to be of real service in the world of his present comrades.

As for the possibility of communicating with him through a medium, I fear that what I have to say is disappointing. I am not a spiritualist and have never seen mediums receiving any of these communications. I do not write automatically and am very sceptical about the reality

of any messages coming through the ouija-board. Nor have I even investigated spiritism in the manner of the psychical researchers. It has always seemed to me that one should never seek communications *unless unmistakably led* by one's guidances to do so, and I have never received any such guidance. But if the door has always remained closed in these directions it may be open in others. If you ask me whether I believe in spirit-return, all that I need say is that I have never believed in spirit-departure. Why should we if we hold that we are spirits now, and that we are interiorly akin to and related with our dear ones in the eternal life?

What reason is there then for yielding to despair, as if we simply must have a message, must know that our loved ones still live? What is desirable is not anxiety, not out-reaching or effort to call forth a message through one channel or another. Let this activity cease and with it all grief and all ideas of death as mere death. What you should cultivate, rather, is calmness, quiet constancy in your daily life, in your thought of your son, who has not "gone" but is here in the eternal present, in the spiritual world which might always have seemed a reality to us had we not been hampered by other ideas.

You need no medium between your love and his. You need no message to quicken your

power of thought. Let yourself live your own spiritual life. Think of this life as God's gift to you, that you may be a true mother, here and hereafter. Keep the thought of God close to you, in your heart, in your daily needs, as guidance, as providence, as ever-present wisdom and love. Then extend this thought of God to include your son in his new life, as the union between you, the Heart within your hearts, the love within your mutual affection. Realize that you will keep closest to him by living here in this world as he lives there, that is, as a spirit, as a child of God.

If you cultivate this attitude, whatever guidance may be needed will come. As eagerly as you may have longed for a message, realize that you possess the open door to another kind of recognition. It might be difficult for you to obtain a satisfactory message, after months of searching. At best the communications would be relatively external, and you would need the confirmations of inner impression, you would need to feel the actual presence, to be thoroughly convinced. Why not then think of the inner relationship as in no way broken? If that relationship ever comes to mean something more real to you, it will be because of your inner silence or calmness; because you will be more at home in the inner world, no longer distraught by outward

searchings. For your son is present with you when he thinks of you, and you are with him when you think of him, although no conscious message pass between you. In the stillness of perfect companionship, of simple presence, there is a relatedness of heart which no uttered or written word could ever equal.

I say this with greater conviction after contact with the dangers of the war-zone. I did not know from actual experience that one could continue as open to guidance, that one could feel as near spiritual realities. It seemed possible that the environment of a war-zone would greatly interfere, hence that the spiritual world might seem more remote. Now I speak from experience when I say that the spiritual world seems far more near. For what is that world primarily? Surely not a "place," as if environment were more real than the beings whom it environs; but rather a relationship or union, the bond between souls. We know that our love-relationships grow with interchange of tenderness, sympathy, through mutual sentiments and community of interests. Consider then how many the interchanges when thousands of souls have passed what we call the border and are looking back, and thousands here are yearning. Would not that bring the spiritual world more near? Would it not melt supposed barriers? And what kind

of interchange is more immediate than the one you are now partly aware of when you turn in loving, life-giving and joyful thought to your son?

Do I personally believe in such nearness with my own loved ones? Yes, because I cannot think otherwise and be true to what life brings. I hold that it is life itself which quickens these convictions in us, according to our several needs, in the divine providence. Personally, we might tend to think otherwise, we might even try to disbelieve and disavow, because of the misjudgments to which one is subject in the world. But convincing beyond all question is that transfiguring experience which makes death seem to us forevermore a change into a greater sense of life, bringing with it the belief that our friends in the other world are not separated from us. For us who are "left behind," as we say, there is a realization that theory has given place to reality, that *now we know,* now we have a sense of power and with it new leadings for work in the world. From this added sense of power one comes to believe that there is greater wisdom in the mere presence than there could be in pages and pages of communications. For each of us must live out his life as it is now proceeding. It would not be wise to see things before our time. The mere glimpses which some of us have had into

the other life are enough, are all that we are able to bear now. We must first receive "the spirit of truth" which will lead us gradually into all truth, into all that we need to know.

There is a Comforter for you. There is every reason why you should be at rest in this beautiful thought of death as a transfiguring of the soul, this thought which the soldiers have brought us anew. The wonderful disclosure will be made to you scene by scene, thought by thought, if you will permit it to come in its own way. Think of the spiritual world as most real in the living present moment. Think of God as near, and the Christian gospel of the fullness of life as being realized now. Put no barriers of theory or history between yourself and biblical times. Read the Bible as true now. See in this growing nearness of the spiritual world the second coming of the Lord.

XVIII

THE FUTURE LIFE

I

At no time do we more keenly realize our ignorance and helplessness than in the hour when friend is sundered from friend by the experience which we call death. The questions that would be most eagerly asked we cannot adequately answer. The comfort we would most gladly give we cannot bestow. Touched by the deepest sympathy, we wish to be a friend indeed, giving spiritual counsel, indicating the best attitude of heart and mind, bestowing new life where help is most needed. Prompted to express ourselves in some way, we give voice to sentiments gathered here and there, or appeal to personal experience, well knowing that what is of value to us may convey no meaning to another. With the same sense of incompetency the public teacher approaches the great theme, addressing himself in general to people who ask for light in a very special way. Here, as in the message of comfort sent to the bereaved friend, the best that can be done is to bring together various considerations that help

us a stage on our way, frankly admitting that we are all learners together.

An important point is gained, however, when we learn what questions may rightfully be asked, in what directions we may reasonably look for light. It is safe to assume that he knows most about the future life who best understands our present existence. Hence it is not necessarily the one who has investigated mediumship or devoted years to psychical research who will be most likely to guide us aright. The unknown must be approached from the known or no sure headway can be made. If we have no philosophical knowledge of human personality we should not expect to learn anything of consequence about the future life. Genuine self-knowledge should enable us to make safe inferences, and the more we know about moral laws the greater should be our assurance with respect to the future.

There is of course no experimental or psychical proof of human immortality. We have grown weary of arguments in favor of it. The best of these is the insistence that a future life is required in order to readjust the inequalities and wrongs of mundane existence. It is widely agreed that the moral cosmos must be eternal in order to be moral at all. That the moral life shall persist until all human needs are met and all moral ideals fulfilled is an item of our faith,

however, not a fact of our knowledge. To establish the survival of the soul after death, or the fact of the spirit-return, would not be to prove immortality, although such evidences would render our faith more secure. Our first interest is to show that essentially the same man survives the great change. If so, there may be good ground for believing that the same individual will always survive. To live forever would be the only way conclusively to prove immortality, and each of us shall know it for a fact through actual life. The mere survival of states of consciousness associated with our present existence would not establish immortality, for these states might be diffused after a few years, just as a man's influence fades here on earth. Nor would the persistence of the acquired deeds which make up a man's present character, prove that the soul's identity would survive, since there might not then be a soul in the sense in which most of us employ the term. What is sought is sure belief in individual identity, with the conviction that this self will outlive all changes in consciousness, all phases of conduct and character, all development from level to level. Many of us would like to believe that as sons of God we possess an immortal selfhood which will endure despite the mutations of all possible modes of existence. We do not wish to be "merged in the absolute,"

or have our friends diffused as atoms are scattered. Nor do we like to believe that a man does not become immortal until he chooses the eternally moral life. If this be asking too much, at any rate the main point is established, namely, that it is not a question of mere proof.

If our arguments in behalf of the future life are limited by our present faith, the same is true of our statements concerning the actual mode of existence of friends who have gone before. The best information that purports to have come from the most trustworthy psychical sources is meagre indeed. In so far as our friends are able to communicate they are most likely to convey brief messages of helpfulness and love of special import for you and me. Able to care for themselves more wisely than when here, they appear to be most concerned to help us to live our natural life. Those who are wisest would be least likely to tell us what the actual conditions of their experiences are. Hence it were well to be content with what is given us, manifesting no curiosity to behold heavenly glories before our time. As great resources as the angels may have, whatever wisdom or power is bestowed upon us must be mediated to us precisely where we are. We could understand very little of their mode of life if told. Far better is it that we should be given the practical word for to-day. Those who look

down upon us in their greater wisdom would doubtless be glad to share this wisdom, but refrain because they know that like children we must work everything out from the point of development now attained.

It is probable that whatever guidance may be our due is most likely to be received under conditions that enable us to live a normal life in this present world. Hence it is not likely to be those who are seeking to acquire psychical powers who will receive the greatest wisdom. The present life necessarily stands first in importance for us as long as we live here. He who takes an abnormal interest in the future life will be abnormal in experience and thought. Hence when you meet the typical "psychic" of to-day you will naturally receive what she says with the greater allowance for the personal equation in so far as you find her approaching the abnormal. Occult or unusual powers, extreme sensitivity, and a neurotic temperament, may well be channels of communication, but the test for those who would know what statements to put reliance on is conformity to the conditions of natural existence. Hence we insist that every one who claims to have supernal wisdom shall show it by living more sanely.

On the other hand, the man who goes quietly about his affairs, with an inner door left open,

may well find that spiritual experiences are added to natural without disturbing the conditions of normal life. By this quietude one means trustful expectancy based on knowledge of the laws of moderate development, the absence of ecstasy or of any emotion that upsets the ordinary processes of consciousness. The spiritual life may then grow up almost "unconscious and unbidden through the common," for a man's life will be simple, free, and reposeful so that whatever rightfully belongs to him will be vouchsafed. Under such conditions it might be as natural to feel the presence of angels and spirits as to participate in any ordinary experience. Such a life would be inspired by a purpose which includes the natural world and the spiritual as parts of the one moral order. Hence we may dismiss the possibility that one who is thus in a wise way interiorly open might be at times beset by devils. Heaven is life with a purpose, and he enters it at any point in any mode of existence who attains order, its first law. Hell is confusion, inconsistency, the scattering of power. To enter heaven is to become open to all that is uplifting and outgoing, closed to the subtle enticements of self-will and self-centeredness.

While, then, there is strictly speaking no proof of immortality, or even of the future life, there is a wealth of reasons for believing that the soul

survives all changes. Hence we may well undertake to give the reasons for our faith, still relying on the moral argument as the best one. The moral order, one holds, guarantees that justice shall be accorded to all and our moral purposes completely realized. This need not mean that those only who have a moral purpose become immortal, for if the present life were the sole testing-ground heaven might have a comparatively small number of inhabitants. Let us rather say that so far as we can tell moral possibilities are endless and there are no temporal limits. The probability is that in the future life every possible opportunity will be given every soul to arrive at moral consciousness and become spiritually constant. The best evidence we now have of these possibilities is found in the fact that moral consciousness already exists in the heavenly present, while the men who refuse the gifts of the Spirit are already in hell.

Considerations in favor of immortality are more strongly persuasive than alleged scientific proofs. The future life, let us say, as an act of faith, includes every soul without exception that has ever left this sphere. It is most likely to be a realm or concourse of souls in which the inhabitants gather into groups according to their type. Hence a man may choose his company as when here. More truly, the power of attrac-

tion is constantly gathering his like to him wherever he is.

The most reasonable belief appears to be that the spiritual world is as near as the atmosphere itself, and related to our natural life by intelligible correspondences. An angel is not a being of a totally different type, dwelling in a different sort of world removed from ours. There is no space between the worlds, that is, space should not be thought of at all. What separates us from an angel is the goodness which even now separates us from enlightened men in the flesh who are more advanced in development than we. Heaven is constituted of the beings whose inmost states accord with righteousness. Heaven begins wherever and whenever a man acknowledges the wisdom and love of God, responding in heart and mind to that love and wisdom. Consequently the heavenly ties that bind are already uniting us one to another in this earthly sphere. These are the ties that endure. These connect us with the real spiritual world, a world as near as the heart's most intimate friend, the mind's profoundest thought.

Our first need is to dissociate the idea of death from our thought of the soul. Death is an external or secondary incident, like a change of residence or habitat, and is not intelligible by itself, or in terms of the conceptions with which

conventional thought has invested it. The essential idea is that the inner life is continuous, that we are already denizens of the eternal world. Secure in our grasp of eternal possessions we can begin to view temporal possessions aright. To become thus secure it is necessary to think back as far as we can, starting with the Being whose life is forever the source of our experience.

That is to say, time and the other conditions of finite selfhood as we know them begin with the existence of this life-round through which God manifests His selfhood. It is impossible to start and end with time and space, with the merely natural world, and arrive at an adequate idea of God. Our starting-point should be with the Being who is eternally His own ground, who never began to be but eternally is, He who is self-subsistent, independent, absolute. He is not a creature of time or of any other limitation: He makes time by displaying His activities in natural form. The temporal world is part of the eternal divine order. The conditions found within it are those that spring from the divine purpose, the divine nature as revealed in it.

Likewise with the human soul, whatever we find it to be under the guise of nature. Whether you and I ever existed before our birth into this natural world is an idle question in comparison with the great thought that whatever we are es-

sentially, as sons of God, we are eternally in the purposes of God. This is the ground of our being, our selfhood, our very life. Secondary to this is the fact that we went forth in the fulness of time to gather experience, pass through the long round from ignorance to knowledge, and come gradually to consciousness of our spiritual birthright. Secondary, too, is the fact that we are given the great choice that enables us to become sons of God in actuality, consciously immortal in the spiritual realm of being. The difference is that the Father's will now becomes ours, His purpose the consciously chosen purpose by which we endeavor to make ourselves worthy of immortality.

Temporal or earthly existence, I insist, is secondary, whatever our belief in regard to the so-called planes of experience. The fundamental consideration is this splendid gift which we call life, ever carrying us forward to fresh moments of experience. We awaken to find ourselves observant creatures meeting life as it passes. With this reflective observation life really begins for us, whatever may have happened before. Will this consciousness be continuous so that we can look back upon this fair world and own our life here as really ours? That will depend upon the stage we have reached in thought and life. In the case of some men this conscious-

ness probably continues unbroken, so that death is indeed an external incident. Ordinarily there are such lapses as you and I already know from painful endeavors to be righteous amidst conditions that tempt us to be sinners. Only he is sure, I repeat, who is morally a person, who can command all moments of his fluctuating consciousness; most of us are fragments, collections of moods, tendencies, habits, feelings, with now and then a moral impulse. If as fragments we live, should we not expect to take up our next occupation in a fragmentary manner? Shall any one put a man together save a renewing quickening spiritual life, inspired of course by heavenly wisdom?

Life then is not a mere strait between eternities, as men once believed; the soul is not "hurled into eternity," as the reporters for the sensational press inform us. Whatever life we are to know is inseparably involved in the life that now is. There appears to be no escape for us, either into another heaven or another hell. This tremendous truth implies the conclusion that there is nothing morally insignificant of which we can now be deprived, nothing which need be postponed. For death is not the leveller of men, it is not death that unmasks us, compelling us to appear at last for what we are; it is moral judgment that does all this. To him who has eyes

to see the inmost selfhood, these strange beings round about in ungainly clothes, ugly hats, and conventional disguises are already revealed for the little that they are worth, as incisively revealed as would be the case were they airy shapes haunting the dim light of a ghostly world. The disguises elude most of us, to be sure; we address these benighted creatures as if they were mere beings of flesh, hats, automobiles, and bank-accounts. But the moral cosmos is a fact now, and each man is unsparingly, constantly judged by what he is at heart, in secret thought and inmost deed.

Without doubt, death is an unmasking—the severest wielder of surprises that ever meets mankind. No doubt death is the only incident powerful enough to awaken some of us into decency. But consider how superficial it must be to one who still turns a deaf ear to the angel of the moral law, how long a time some men and women of high repute must spend in a spiritual kindergarten learning the first elements of moral integrity. Then, too, there are probably those who will long be dazed, half asleep, or even more unruly than when here. For them death will conceivably mean extremely little; what will avail will be the great moment when they cross the line from disorder into order, morality. Possibly it will be easier in the future life to make the effort

and cast the die. More likely everything will depend upon the man.

For those who already know themselves in some degree, the future life will surely be richer, freer, abounding in opportunities to make headway and to serve. But this will be because while here they have already passed through a change greater than death. Is this assuming too much, do you say, are we making light of death? Then look farther back and make sure that you start with life—life, not death.

What is a soul? Are we really creatures of flesh and blood, mere epiphenomena fitfully added to life's fever, soon to be reduced unto the elements when our brains have ceased to function? If not, why not begin this hour to think and speak consistently? Why refer to yonder fleshly form "husbanded in death," as your sister, your father, or your husband? Why maintain this long round of conventionalities by which we belie our faith and declare ourselves the weakest of cowards?

If in actuality I believe my sister is a soul, let me ever think of and love her as such, addressing her as one worthy to be called a daughter of God, sometime to be an angel in fact as she even now is in ideal, mayhap in fleshly purity. To live by what I profess were to meet her as a soul, even if the world condemn her. One can never serve

two masters in these respects. When my sister's erstwhile garment is laid aside, let me remember that she lives as truly as when I saw that same garment clothing her. If my faith tells me that life is life, it will also tell me that her joy has increased with her freedom. Why, then, should I be so far selfish as to be bowed down in fleshly grief as if my sister were dead? Should I not live in joy with her joy, picturing her as she probably is, awakening to fuller consciousness, greeting me with increased affection? Surely, the attitude of earthly grief and selfishness would close the door, turning me hellward, not heavenward, while to live with her as a soul, less apart from me than before, would be to give her the greatest satisfaction.

XIX

THE FUTURE LIFE

II

CAN one live according to this high standard, do you ask? Is it not human to grieve, should we not conform to the customs of our land? That depends upon our consciousness. Those for whom this faith is a reality have met the severest test and that is why they know it is true. Once there came to a friend a woman who had recently lost a son and who, finding no consolation in the church, sought light elsewhere. My friend bore no evidence that sorrow had come her way, and she spoke as calmly and confidently about death as most of us do about this natural life. Emphasizing the thought of life, and pointing out that the mother would please her son most by regarding him as a living soul enjoying a richer mode of life, she tried to show the way into a larger attitude. The mother listened patiently for a time, then objected, "It is very evident, Mrs. S., that you have never met with sorrow." When my friend told this grieving mother that it was less than three weeks since her beloved husband had left this natural world, the

statement came with the force of a revelation that changed the course of her life; for she saw that here was a woman who, though separated from the one whom she most deeply loved, was not really separated at all, since a living faith wholly took the place of the conventional thought of death, together with all the attendant signs. Here, in fact, was a woman for whom there was but one life—the immortal life of spiritual consciousness and love. What another had accomplished she might attain by equal fidelity and love.

Consider the difference that would characterize our life here, if we could grow up with the teaching that there is but one life—the moral present. It would then be possible to regard all the tribulations of human experience in the light of their value for the soul, to live consistently in and with the thought of life as essentially spiritual, dependent at each and every stage upon the life-giving Father. A different scale of values would obtain from first to last. Deeper knowledge of this existence would prepare the way for a higher entrance into the future. In place of the fear of death—that terrible disturber of our rest throughout our conventional existence, there would be joy in life—gratitude for the blessings of growth and companionship. Best of all, without the torments of fear, and with a

normal mode of life in general, there would be a strong possibility that death would come in the fulness of time, not as a result of the strenuous existence which takes most of us away before our time. For why should not death sometime be an easy, natural transition, when we have outgrown all correspondences here?

This line of reasoning brings us to the point where we can take up the question most eagerly asked about our loved ones: Shall we know them, will they know us in the future life? Our argument leads us to ask the prior question, Do we really know our friends here? What is it to know a soul? Almost without thought we answer that we are bound to our loved ones by inner cords, ties of feeling, unity of spirit, common interests, affections that are not dependent on external relationships, although fostered by the clasp of the hand and the many little acts of tenderness which the heart prompts. We really know, not when we have minutely analyzed, but when we have lived with a person, "through thick and thin," through mutual struggles and deepening joys. Is it not safe to infer that we are most likely to be drawn to those whom we have thus most intimately known in this world? Are we not likely to be most remote from those who are at the great distance from us here?

Many indeed who go on before us may out-

grow their relationships with people in the flesh and may not be recognized by any whom they knew here. But these changing relationships are occurring all about us now. Most of our acquaintances are for a time only. Many ties of blood are external simply. A man's real relationships are with those who are near him in type, just as in a church one finds men and women of a certain sort of faith, constituting a spiritual group. Such groups need not be alone constituted of those in the flesh, or out of it, but may include all souls, whether incarnate or discarnate, who think and live in the same general way. Very likely we all belong to such groups, large or small. If so, we are likely to know and to be known by those who are quickened in the same degree.

Likewise with love. Few men and women love as you and I would like to have them, with that deep interior bond that ever draws two souls more closely together. When it is the soul's love, not the fleshly affection, may we not reasonably expect that this bond will draw the two into deeper union even when one has left the flesh and must await the other during many a year? Surely this is a reasonable belief. It is allowable, also, to hold that even during a visible separation lasting ten, even twenty or thirty years, the two will grow in unison, knowing each other

better all the while, ready for quick recognition when the lingerer shall be free. And recognition, let us remember, is not of the eye but of the heart, the soul.

Here then are joy and hope for us at the point where we are most eager. But how it changes matters even in this present life! How different from the beginning to eternity is that love which is of the inmost heart, uniting soul with soul, inspiring each to live for the other, in contrast with the zeal for power and possession which ordinarily rules in what we call love! First in order in all fields of interest stands that which has eternal value, pertains to character and the moral ideal. Every man is to be judged, to be worked for, in accordance with what he really is at heart, that is, his best self, the soul that is struggling into expression. The life in and for the Spirit is the one life worth while. Other ends are to be sought only so far as they pertain to this greatest end. Our work for humanity is thus made constructive in a far larger sense than is ordinarily thought of, with the longest look ahead. Yet all this change shall come about, not with the acceptance of more responsibility on our part as if we poor finite creatures could peer into the most distant future to discern what is best for a man, but with the giving up of all merely human responsibility in

favor of unqualified cooperation with the moral law, complete obedience to the guidances of the Spirit.

The old notion that we are suddenly to be transported into heaven or hell went with the primitive conception of God as a local being a few hundred miles above the earth, then supposed to be the centre of the universe. It was pleasant, no doubt, to sing about the delectable region in which there should be "no more sorrow." More serious was the proposition that there should be no more time, for this appeared to offer a real way for escape from the slow processes of this earth. All this changed with the discovery that whatever occurs in the cosmos takes place by degrees. Hence even in a timeless world no one would be free from the conditions which make for righteousness. Time is long or short according to the love we bear for what we are doing. Sorrow will cease when we are wise enough and loving enough to merit a life of blessedness. We are lifted out of the domain of time in so far as we love and give ourselves to the eternal values, to truth, beauty, and goodness. An eternal type of consciousness may be added to this transiency which ordinarily imprisons us. It may be attained by every one who will give up enough local interests to take on those that pertain to the cosmos.

The old conception of virtue has also gone, since we discovered that our earth is not the centre of all things. No one would seriously think of purchasing a seat in heaven who has learned that merely to give away all one's money, or to accept a creed which is supposed to guarantee salvation, signifies little. We are learning that merely external things decide nothing whatever, that all depends on the motive, the character, the actual attainment. In other words, those who are really serious understand that virtue begins when moral judgment begins. He who does a virtuous deed is rewarded according to its inmost character by a power which no hand can stay. No one need purchase what he has earned.

If, then, you would "inherit eternal life," begin to be worthy to be known by your friends in the future by living for the moral values and spiritual essentials of life. By these I mean the actual attainments, the heart-interests, and inmost states which draw us into conditions of real life development. We begin to know these when we judge righteously, and a righteous judgment is not so difficult as might appear. At heart we would all like to pass for what we are, be frank, open, honest, making no claims, in gentle deference and kindness preferring that our betters should take the lead; what makes us such

difficult and unpleasant creatures is what is external, conventional, worldly. Begin to pass for what you are and people will bestow confidence upon you, honestly speaking from the heart. Give from the inmost centre and your fellows will respond from that centre.

There is indeed an inmost part of us all, a centre where the love of God abides, ever sustaining the capacity for goodness in us, however strong the life that seems to gainsay its very existence. This, I insist, is the primary consideration. If you do not know it yet, if you have not found it in yourself or in others, study to find it, simplify your life sufficiently, seek quietude enough. In the stillness of nature, in the silence of the night, in the calmer moments between the storms and stresses, meditate on the permanent life of the soul. Remember the loved form whose presence within your household bespoke a soul of sweetness and purity, or of manly dignity and power. Consider how free must the loved one's life be in contrast with the complexity of your own. In order to establish a conscious bond between that life and yours you would naturally cultivate a spirit of restfulness and genuine repose. You would scarcely think of this inner quietude as your own, as sought for yourself. Really to find the inmost centre is to find that a higher life than you can claim as your

mere own steadily springs into fresh moments of being within you. That life springs out of the abundance of the divine heart. It carries the soul forward from moment to moment. What it does for you, what it would have you do—this is essential, moral, spiritual. He who apprehends and knows it, thinks not of his own, makes nothing of himself; but responds, obeys, shares, loves, gives unqualifiedly.

In some of us a work of destruction must be wrought before we can find this inmost centre, for we have made too much of the self, we care for the form more than the spirit, revere the head above the heart. Hard is the work of destruction, sometimes, for we have paid high for external accomplishments and we want them recognized for all that they are worth. But the process continues, nevertheless; the Spirit is trying us all in the light of the inmost standard. To enter the real life that now is, to be aware of this essential process, is already to dwell in and to know the future life, to have no more doubts concerning its existence. For we know that the self-same Spirit that is remaking us now made the total environment in which we live, possesses all things and is unopposed. God is the one efficiency, there is no other. The real life is life with Him. He is life and in Him is no death. "He is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

He is love, and His love knows no hatred for souls, condemns no son or daughter. He who would know life and have it more abundantly may indeed have and know it who opens himself in spirit to be guided.

The future life is the life of the spirit, and the spirit in man is the group of powers through which God quickens him, through which heavenly presences are perceived, by means of which he responds in thought, will, and deed. The spirit was not conceived by the flesh but was born of Spirit. Nor is it solely conditioned by the brain and nervous system. It is immersed in the flesh, while we dwell here, but already its powers are recipients of the divine life, capable of acknowledging and responding to the divine love and wisdom. The spirit is not a mere faculty or sense, it is not quickened by feeling alone, or limited to mystical experiences; it is the man himself in permanent form, in heavenly possibility, if not already in heavenly guise. To have a definite conception of it, instead of holding a hazy psychology, is already to be able to reflect concerning the future life in a rational way. There is no reason why we should not construct a fairly precise conception if we keep close to the actual intimations of the spirit's presence which our best experiences supply, and which our highest insights complete.

It seems to be granted to but few to behold the future life as it were in vision while we yet dwell here. For those who believe they have communed with spirits and angels the actual experience of enlightened and heavenly presences outweighs in authority even the knowledge of the moral order on which I have placed such stress. For it is experience that convinces, rather than argument or even knowledge, and sometimes a person's whole life will be changed by the coming of a quickening presence or through the persuasiveness of an inner vision. It is those who have been touched and quickened who really know, while other people merely have grounds for faith and are still able to doubt on occasion.

It is not strange that such experiences are seldom vouchsafed to men, for most of us are absorbed in external life, most of us care solely for the things that perish. This is probably wise, for it is well that we should advance little by little, while a few lead the way. No one who eagerly seeks light on the great question will ever be deprived of light, but if the foregoing considerations are sound much will depend on what we seek and the way we seek it. Not in anxiety and scepticism are we likely to be given genuine evidence. There is a vast difference between the occult realm to which scepticism right-

fully applies and the inner realm of spiritual quickening, the sanctuary of the spirit. The conclusive evidences are gifts of heaven. They do not conform to our standards and are not controlled by our will. The best is not bestowed while we insist that it shall be given in precisely our own way.

Not then in mere faith but in conviction founded on actual experience some of us hold that we actually gaze into the future life, discerning heavenly forms and faces clothed with radiance and expressing love beyond all powers of appreciation in ordinary speech. From these visions it appears plain that the life of the enlightened future will not be one in which men simply mete out justice, administering moral lessons to their fellows, but a life in which love will prevail, a love which will not only pertain to a small segment of the human self but will fill the entire sphere. Conceive a being filled with love, literally from head to foot, as if emitting a soft effulgence spreading far beyond the bodily form, and you will perhaps have some idea what manner of being sometimes attends our footsteps on their faltering way. If we could see more, if we could really behold the manner of life which the angels lead, doubtless we should be eager to press on and join them in the sacred beauty of their existence. But it seems wise that our eyes are

holden that we may not see, since each must take up the round of activities where he dropped it when the vision came. Nothing seems to absolve us from being practical.

We have succeeded in this brief survey of the great subject, if we have pointed out various directions in which the wise spirituality of the future may grow little by little out of the philosophical life of the present. Reason dissolves circumstances into laws and into eternity. He who leads the life of reason will not be greatly surprised even by death. For the same law that founded death creates itself in forms of mastery in the philosophic reflection of man. He who is able to rethink life so as to add the gifts which his individuality produces has the groundwork on which the future shall be reared. It is not strange, then, that we occasionally foresee our own future some years ahead. That future is being formed through us even now; we possess in essence what we are to be. Translate this life of eternal creative reason into the society of the republic of God, you who care rather for the personal than for the laws and values, and you will already have prefigured before you the group to which you belong. Only when we thus break away from the mere things, mere temporal events, and branch out into the free atmosphere of the ideal, can we complete the picture. We

are partly making the future in which we shall dwell, by this ideal construction in which persons are beheld as each contributing his organic portion in a spiritual republic. To be, not merely to seem, to have real abiding peace, a love that stays, a reason that we live by, fellow-souls with whom we labor throughout the centuries—that it is to belong to a future that is worth while, to realize "the glory of the imperfect" for the sake of the greater glory of God.

CHAPTER XX

THE BOOK OF LIFE

No fact more plainly shows that human beliefs depend on human attitudes than the remarkable diversity of opinion concerning the Bible. In this Book of books man may find whatever he looks for, what he thinks, what he is. In fact man may confirm from it whatever he wishes to believe, and apparently prove whatever is to him a truth. Any kind of spiritual theory may be founded upon it and it may serve to establish any sort of authority. Whenever a new cult arises or an ancient belief is revived the Master is claimed as the initiate or prophet of the new order of society presently to come into being. To understand what the Bible means to the masses you must know not only the great faiths of the world but the lesser ones too; you must know human nature and all the incentives that lead men to look beyond visible things in quest of God, if "haply by feeling after Him they may find Him."

Meanwhile in the endless confusion of creeds and interpretations there seems to be but one way to advance to clearly established science,

namely, by adopting the higher criticism. This point of view means, in brief, that the same principles of interpretation shall be applied to the Bible which we employ when studying the works of a classic author such as Homer. Every well-informed person knows by this time that the great Greek poet brought together traditions and myths concerning the gods or heroes. Homer lived in a certain age, was subject to certain conditions and beliefs, and spoke a certain language. No one would think of studying his verse apart from these conditions. He was "inspired," if you please, but inspiration is a certain activity of the man of genius; inspiration does not produce its works apart from human instruments and limitations, nor does it involve any guarantee against errors and mistakes. When it produces poetry its effusions are regarded as poetry, not as science.

In the same way, so the critics tell us, the myths of the ancient Hebrews, together with their moral code, came in time to be put in written form. For the sake of authority these writings were attributed to Moses as law-giver, and to the prophets and other writers who put long-standing beliefs in classic form. The Bible is simply a collection of short literary works, not a unitary book. It was brought into its present shape long after the events and sayings

which it records became historical facts. It abounds in myths and errors, popular beliefs, and contradictions. There are various copies of the original manuscripts, and these do not always agree. As a whole, it should be read in the light of the conditions under which it was produced. To know how the world was made, you should consult modern science, not the Bible. To know history, you should turn to its chief authorities. To know what to believe, you should look for light wherever you can find wisdom that appeals to you. There can be no standard of belief in a collection of myths, hymns, and prophecies gathered from the literature of a people. That is to say, the Bible is essentially human, and should be read as all other books are interpreted.

In the face of this well-established view any one who should still claim that the Bible contains a "revelation" would be looked on as behind the times. It is possible, however, to assimilate the results of the higher criticism and yet find in the Bible an illumined clue to the spiritual life. For example, we may frankly recognize that the commandments did not originate on Mount Sinai but were widely believed by other nations, and that Moses copied from other writings earlier than those now attributed to him. Indeed it matters little whether there ever was such an event as that associated with Mount

Sinai; what does matter is that the myths which the Hebrews preserved came to have divine authority, in contrast with the civil authority which they had long enjoyed. The ancient Hebrews represented types of development in such a way that principles are discernible despite all the errors and imperfections, the crudities and externalities for which they are known. There are indeed verbal contradictions and appearances that readily mislead. The true God is very far from the angry, jealous deity, narrowly partisan and exclusive, in whom the Hebrews believed. Unless the Bible had been produced amidst the imperfections of human nature and the limitations of human language, unless it had been true to the wanderings and failures of the Israelites, it could not have been written. But never can even the world's most learned critics discern the harmonious inner meaning of the Scriptures by mere study of texts, languages or historical conditions.

How then shall we discern the inner meaning? What is the spiritual value of the Bible to-day? Can you and I read it so that it shall not merely uplift the soul in the "beauty of holiness," as when we read the Psalms, but also give us systematic spiritual understanding, verifiable by human experience and reason? The answer to these questions is found by considering once more

what the Word was, which "in the beginning was with God and was God." We are taken at once into the realm of the universal, guided by the idea of God as the All-Father who so established human existence that however great the darkness there should shine within it some measure of the light which "illumines every man born into the world." If the Word had not been universal this could not have been the case. If man had not been so constituted as to possess power to comprehend the light, this could not have been true. Over and above all visible signs or symbols, earlier and more comprehensive than any book, there must have been the eternal Word written in the heavenly cosmos of the human heart. Because this spiritual Word is universal, it may be read at any time or any place, by him who has the eyes. Because it is universal the clue to it is within every race or nation. This Word would exist were there no visible books. Men need visible books and other aids to thought and worship, that they may grow into discernment of the Word that is written in the spiritual experience of the race.

The universal Word contains an essence, that is to say, divine love and truth, in entire purity; and it has a function, namely, to open the spiritual world, to conjoin men with heaven, to make known the pathway of the soul. It is also

adapted to the nature and needs of men, and can be expressed in the language which men know. Historically speaking, it is much more extensive and earlier in form than the volume we call the Bible, and in another sense it is smaller since our Scriptures contain writings of secondary value, in contrast with those especially adapted to the inner meaning. Doubtless the ancient Asiatics possessed parts of this universal Word in written form. We should always be cautious in making statements concerning the historical extent of the Scriptures. What we may declare with confidence is that there is a spiritual condition on man's part which makes it possible either to discern the universal Word or to write and interpret any part. For the Word indicates not merely the manner in which divine wisdom leads the race along the spiritual pathway, but also the stages of human response, and the darkness or tribulation through which the nations pass. Moreover, there really is a difference between the universal Word and many books in which man undertakes to interpret life for himself. Men have found in the visible Bible whatever they believed because, even in the text, with its record of the wanderings and failures of men, it is the book of the totality of human life, adapted to the simple as well as to the wise in all ages. What men have

lacked is the spiritual science which shall make known the inner meaning. This science can be acquired only through spiritual ability to discern the universal Word, an interior openness, quickened by the same Wisdom that produced the Word. This enlightenment is as possible today as at any time in the past. The universality of the Word may be verified by one who lifts his spirit into that light. For the Bible is an exposition of the principles by which we live and move and have our being in God. It contains the same law which is "written in all our members." But we must approach in a certain spirit, in willingness to be enlightened, putting aside preconceptions involving external judgments. This means putting aside, for the time being, the point of view of the higher criticism. For we need a clue to the correspondence between all things visible and their spiritual counter-parts and meanings. Given this insight in some slight degree, the Bible becomes like an open book, instinct with life and meaning for today.

We need not look far for clues to this universal meaning. The Gospels state in the plainest language that the Master employed simple illusions drawn from the world around and uttered parables containing an inner meaning not to be taken simply as it reads. We also read about

the letter that "kills" and the words that "are spirit and are life." The kingdom of heaven is symbolized by visible things said to be "like unto it." Although every utterance is simple and direct, it must be put in signs and symbols, and there is no excuse for reading mere words without their spiritual meaning.

As the gospel history draws to its close, the Master "opens" the Scriptures to those capable of discernment, indicates a definite clue to the Bible as a whole by singling out the "law and the prophets," and by unfolding those Scriptures which pertain to the truth which was "from the beginning." Turning to the Old Testament with these clues, we may learn that, in a distinctive sense, its central books are written with reference to the relation between nature and spiritual things; hence we may infer that the inner meaning may be found in all parts of the Bible. Surely, since it is a law which we may all verify that "no man can serve two masters," it is equally plain that one must choose between fidelity to the letter and fidelity to the spirit. Given the spirit, we may in time come to see why it clothes itself in all the signs and symbols, appearances and limitations, of the letter, which men have found so baffling. The truth is there in the letter, as indeed God's word is written in the whole visible universe about us, in our hearts and in everything

we do, think, or will; but what is needed is the eye to see it.

We may illustrate by the signs employed in musical compositions. No one mistakes these signs for music. They involve a plan or orderly arrangement such that, given the training, you may go to the piano or other instrument and produce sounds like those indicated in a certain order by the composer. The test of the value in these signs is found in the use to which you put them; what you produce is part of the "music of the spheres." The keener your grasp of the principles, the more highly developed your musical ability, the less need you have for symbols. You will be able to catch a theme, carry it in your mind, and work it out. You apprehend, as it were, the eternal essence of music, and when listening to great music you are sometimes lifted above mere space and time.

Consider now what would happen if in reading the Scriptures we should endeavor to put ourselves into a certain interior state, symbolized by the figures of speech used in the Psalms. To make any headway, as in music, we should need not only to think the subject out, but, as it pertains to life, *to live it out.* We would then turn from the symbol to the reality likened to it, and consider the conditions necessary to discern the reality. Thus we would come to realize with a

conviction that would take deep hold of us, that each man must test these spiritual principles for himself. The Bible, as thus approached, would prove to be the Book of Life.

If we shall regard the Bible as the book of life, we must start with the idea of Life to read it aright. All life is from a single source, it flows forth into man to quicken his affections through love and to enlighten his understanding through truth. Life thus spurs man forward in the activities of his daily experience, it teaches him from within and from without, it is thus stirring in every one of us to-day. Thus stirred, we all pass through certain periods of development as youth follows childhood, and as we pass on to maturity of thought and feeling. In a certain age we are external, like the children of Israel. We produce idols, and need to have them destroyed. We need commandments in forms of external authority, the visible pillar of cloud, the guidance for each day, the given task with its tangible reward. Then we are led by the same wisdom into a more interior state represented by conditions to which the sermon on the mount applies.

Looking back with the enlightenment now ours, we realize that even in the visible tabernacle on which we so greatly depended, there was a "most holy place" which stood for the inner king-

dom; but we could not then discern its real meaning. Looking back, we see that we have been wisely led every step of the way and as rapidly as we could proceed. What was once a mystery now becomes a law. What was formerly an external sign and symbol is now seen as a thin disguise for inward reality. The whole process of life from simple to complex, from the external to the internal, was one; but we could not know this until we had come into possession of the knowledge that all spiritual growth is from within outward. Now that we are in the process of spiritual reconstruction, we are able to see that the Bible is especially the book which tells of that quickening Life which saves us from our ignorance and self-love.

The second coming of the Lord, of which the Bible tells us in language that long utterly mystified its readers, may confidently be said to be precisely this revelation of the inner meaning concealed within the letter. The Bible in the letter is indeed full of difficulties and conflicts, is ambiguous. Hence the problems raised by the higher criticism. Only when viewed in the spiritual light do these difficulties and problems disappear. There is still need for doctrine, but it must be the doctrine which like a "lamp to make genuine truths visible" gives the human spirit the same clue in the study of the text that

is found in the interpretation of experience at large.

Granted the spiritual principle of interpretation, we may consider difficulties such as the problem of non-resistance and find a direct clue. For the gospel teaching applies to the realm of motives, the source of higher resistances; leaving the matter of external adaptation to the individual Christian. Thus the giving of the cloak also, or the turning of the other cheek, is only a symbol. Following out the principle of inner interpretation, we find the whole gospel disclosing a unity never noted before. The inconsistencies and ambiguities are affairs of the letter. There would never be an end to these if we should stop with the letter, or confine our interpretation to results attained by the higher criticism. The latter is true in its place. It has in part come to stay. But its true value cannot be discerned save in the light of the inner interpretation.

Given the inner clue, we also see what is to be the pathway of return for those who have lost faith in the Bible There can be no return to the old literalism. The way back will be through belief that the Bible is the Word despite the limitations and difficulties of the text. In this sense the Bible differs in no way from life itself. Any literal study involves difficulties. Life as a whole

is like a perplexing text if regarded item by item from the outside. There is no end while this is our point of view. But then this can never be the true point of view. The spiritual vision alone affords the interpretative principle. Life is for experience, is for faith. Its value is seen in the fruitions of the soul's inner history. The Bible is true just because it is true to life, because it describes the pathway of the soul, with its vicissitudes, temptations, mysteries, struggles, and successes. What is needed is ability to apply it as a living book to the events of to-day, finding in them the same laws, the same tendencies, and withal the same clue to spiritual freedom.

Thus regarded the Bible is far more than a guide to salvation. It is indeed a book about sin and the regeneration and all the rest to which theology calls our attention. But it is also a guide to the constructive study of the human spirit. It is essentially a social book, unfolding the long life-evolution of man from his earliest lapses to the point where the Master comes to reveal the true ideal of brotherhood and service. If it has meant a thousand things to as many interpreters, it should far more truly mean one great thing to us to-day through its teaching that we are "members one of another."

We need not trouble over the difficulties raised by those who use as their chief instrument the

biblical criticism "made in Germany." That criticism has been as subtle, as misleading, as mischief-making as the sly propagandism which we once gave place to in our country, even welcoming high-class German spies as exchange professors in our universities. Like the war conducted by the Huns in Belgium and northern France, it has everywhere left ruins behind. Its subtle influences have undermined the faith even of innocent teachers who did not know the first thing about German thought but were guided by the authority of others. It has brought some of our ministers to a point where, following external clues, they have tried to piece together the fragments of the Gospels which the destructive work has left and to reconstitute Christ as it were from the outside. It has rejected John, the greatest of Gospels. It has arbitrarily ruled out many of the events recorded in the Gospels. It has presumed to say precisely what words Jesus could have uttered, and what words the Master could not have spoken—in accordance with the conception of the Master imposed on the Gospels by this criticism. In short, it has become as dogmatic as the old theology against which the devotees of modern liberalism have protested.

In order completely to undermine this criticism, it would be necessary to look as far back as Martin Luther's time. For the Protestant

Reformation, despite all its liberalizing influences, was in some respects a self-assertive reaction in favor of the faith of the individual who arrogates too much power to himself. Some of the great values of Christian teaching were obscured by this self-assertion. Other truths were wholly lost to view. Kantian philosophical criticism added its subjective tendencies to those of the Reformation. In bondage as we have been to German intellectualism, we have borrowed any number of critical tendencies. Instead of seeking the inner meaning of the Gospels, we have developed theologies out of the Pauline Epistles. We have then read our chosen system of ideas into the Gospels. Hence Protestantism has more and more divided into sects. It is not strange that under the conditions faith was difficult.

But how different is the result when we seek the principles which disclose the living Lord! We may then read the Bible to seek light on the divine providence, for instance, in war-time. That is to say, the Bible is profoundly and very truly a book about the inner warfare of the soul as the clue to man's outer warfare. The historical events of the earlier books are relatively incidental. What signifies is the inner history culminating in the coming of the Messiah.

The original Christianity of the Master of life

and death is so much greater, truer than the Christianity of most of the churches, that we would lead men to that. The simple, direct teachings of the Gospels are so much greater, truer than all the theologies founded on the Pauline Epistles, that we would lead men back to the Gospels. The true message of comfort for those whose loved ones have left their sight is indeed in the Bible. But the Bible has been to a considerable extent neglected, that is, in so far as it addresses itself to the whole man, in its teaching concerning the nearness of the spiritual world, the reality of angelic presences, and in other noteworthy respects. We have put our creeds above the Bible. We have read the interpretations of our creed into the text. We have judged by the letter. Meanwhile, the Word itself reminds us with eloquent emphasis that "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

The test will then be our ability to read in these words a life-carrying message for to-day, the day of new social issues, issues which seem to have no solution until at last we find the divine clue. Thus to read will be to look more deeply into the tendencies of the day in quest of the spirit in them, the divine purpose; always making allowances for the changed conditions since the days of the coming of Christ on earth.

Thus to read is to realize that the light shines afresh which lightens every man that is born into the world. This light is the power of the eternal Word which "was in the beginning." All things were made according to that light. All things were made by Him who was and is its source. The light, the source, and the truth are inseparable.

CHAPTER XXI

THE INWARD LIGHT

Probably every one who is trying to live the Christian life has a rule which simplifies the spiritual ideal to a single practical principle. The system of the Christian life as a whole is essential. So is each of its parts. The thought of the infinite has its rightful place. The universe is vast and complex, and a great system of thought is needed to represent its wisdom and beauty. Life too is complex, and there are appropriate times for dwelling on its magnitude. Yet that which is most complex may become for us the most genuinely simple, if we concentrate upon a rule of life which applies to each situation upon the daily highway.

Such a rule is found in the principle of the inward light, "the light of Christ in the soul," as the Friends call it. This principle stands for the living presence of God today, "the voice of God in the soul of man;" for the nearness of the spiritual world and the guidances coming therefrom. It expresses the universality of the Holy Spirit or Comforter. It is not advocated in contrast with the Bible as a record of what men did and

believed in the far past when they were guided by the divine providence, but it makes the inner meaning of the Bible *a living Word,* a witness to the truth that there is an eternal Word, universal and invisible, not limited by time or place or by language. He who endeavors to live by the inward light today, each hour and moment, should be able to confirm from actual experience the teachings of the Word as the universal clue to the spiritual life.

If we look back to ancient Israel, in the journey toward the promised land, we realize how long must have been the progress of man till he came to the period of the inward light as an emphatically inner experience requiring no outward sign or symbol. The sons of Israel were so far external that they required such a symbol as the manna, said to have fallen in abundance for each day, and for that day only, as a sign of the divine providence. The pillar of cloud was said to move forward when the Israelites should fold their tents and depart. It stood still when they ought to encamp. Obedience to these changing signs was typical of inner obedience. Then there was the tabernacle with its "holy place," to be entered on the proper occasions by those dedicated to this purpose. Within the tabernacle were the commandments in visible form as guides for daily conduct in civil and

spiritual affairs, for a people still dependent on prohibitions in such forms. Finally, there were times of unusual need when Moses was given the guidance for the hour, the guidance which came only in case he "stood still," and asked what God would have him say and do as leader.

The dawn of the Christian era witnessed changed conditions. The Hebrews were still external, so far indeed from knowledge of the true light that they failed to recognize the Messiah in the flesh before them. Yet the conditions were such that in the sermon on the mount the same law enunciated for the Israelites of Moses's time was restated for those able to discern the wisdom of the inner life. The most holy place of the external tabernacle now became "the secret place" of the heart into which every one might enter, where any one could commune with the Father who should close the door upon the outer world. Instead of the priest whose function was to seek divine wisdom apart from the people and in their behalf, we now have a universal prayer for daily help and daily bread as the guide to man's social life. We also have a sharp contrast between merely external worship, fasting, and prayer; and the true receptivity which is of the heart. There is no visible manna or cloud, or any similar sign or symbol. In place of symbols to hold the mind upon the commandments, we

have emphasis on brotherly love and the one great principle that, whatever the occasion, what we need is provided by the Father.

There is a central law which governs the entire sphere of the divine providence as thus inculcated: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Here in brief we have the entire plan of heavenly things. The more clearly we understand this central principle, the more wisely we may seek the inward light. For the principle implies the entire system, the complete Word of God. It also involves a certain conception of man's spiritual nature as recipient of the inward light.

This law means that all spiritual progress is from within outward, for the kingdom which we are bidden to seek pertains to the inner life. All the promptings that send men forth to service are from this source. So is all the goodness, life, love, which gives power to such service. Not only is the original impetus from within, but so is each guidance along the way, all that is supplied by way of assistance to the central impetus. There is an impelling current or outflow from the secret place into the first stages of the soul's accomplishments, and continuing—if man is faithful, to the final stage. He who shall keep in touch with that impetus from first to last will

find that every detail is provided for, so that the divine gift shall be coincident with the need and adequate to meet it. There will often be discernible to the eye of one who follows the course of events with thoughtfulness and exact correspondence in time and place, between need and supply. It is the impelling activity from within which achieves the desired end. External conditions are essential and these should be favorable, but they are not causes. It is imperative that we hold the inner point of view, the vision of the kingdom as fulfilling the divine purpose. Otherwise we may misinterpret some of our experiences as if the correspondence were due to chance.

Again, there is a certain condition to be fulfilled. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." What is the righteousness of the kingdom? The entire sermon on the mount is the answer. Here we have in detail a statement of the ancient "law and the prophets." From time to time one needs to take up portions of the great sermon to make sure that one is following the law in its interior form, not as a merely external code. One should make sure that one is living by this law in detail as a living inner principle. Everything depends upon the motive and attitude, even the passing desire and thought. It no longer suffices to keep the law

in external deeds simply. Even to lust "in thought" is to sin. Nor may one be true to the law of righteousness by becoming so absorbed in the interior kingdom that one's light is hidden there in mere receptivity. We must give in order to receive. There must be efflux or expression, if we would have the heavenly influx increase. The light is so to shine that one shall live as much in the external as if not taught that the kingdom is "within;" for the true Christianity is social, although always developing from within outward, guided by the divine light, not by outward conditions.

When we come to the application of this principle to our life today we realize that the times have again changed. We have moved forward to the age when a new light is shining, when more truly than ever before each and every man may lift his mind into the light of heaven and receive wisdom for the occasion. We have grown too into more intimate knowledge of that region of man's nature in which he is able to cooperate with the living, present inflow of divine power. We now see that since the principle of the inward light is universal, applicable in all times and places, the guidance for today is as real as the record of human experiences of its presence in the past. The law enunciated in its inner form in the sermon on the mount is still our law, and

we have not departed from the needs and demands of that sermon. But the wisdom for us is discoverable in the present leadings which disclose divine wisdom in a new light according to the conditions of the inner life of each of us today. For the social order has changed, and we as individuals have other needs under new circumstances. The question is, Are we able as individuals to apply the sermon on the mount to our requirements so that we seek the kingdom of God as a living divine order amidst new conditions? Are we able to live by the divine light as real for us today, not as if borrowed from the past in mere terms of the past? Do we realize that in deepest truth a new heaven and a new earth are being established?

At first thought this emphasis on the present seems to be an exaltation of the individual man, as if we were estimating his own present feelings above the commandments. Yet we do not raise this doubt when it is a question of the continued existence of nature and of human life. Life as it passes for us today is far more real than our thought of life in the time of Moses. Our conscious experience is always most real in the present moment, however much we may draw upon our past. One's love for a friend is still real if true and expressive today. At any moment one's real self is a summary of all the in-

tellectual tendencies and the affections which have survived the years that have gone. For better or worse each of us lives by what has thus endured. We do not live by what we were. Some of our tendencies have run out. Some of our affections have waned. Our life fades into mere history as we look back. The future which we anticipate will be in some measure different from our anticipations. What just now avails is what we love most, is our present realization of the divine love and wisdom as *living,* dynamic, real.

The human self as it exists today is a direct clue. We receive the divine love from an infinite source, yet only so much of that love is intimately real as we can respond to and live by as if it were our own. We are open by influx to the divine wisdom, yet only so much of its infinitude of truths is real for us as we can assimilate in active thought as our own. The divine light shines within us in its constancy in order to lead us without break from reality to reality, the living present always being the most real. "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."

As truly as the pillar of cloud advanced for the Hebrews when they ought to move forward, in specific adaptation to those far-off and very crude times, so does the divine light shine to-

day in direct application to its needs and conditions. The individual feelings and thoughts of the person seeking the direct guidance today correspond to the external signs of old. The law is still "written in all our members." It is still true that "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The sanctuary is in our own heart accompanied by conditions which we may learn to understand, if we regard the living word today as real, revealed anew in the light of our age.

It is of course impossible to state the situation apart from our human tendency to confuse the divine light with personal sentiments. Only through experience, guided by constant reference to the heavenly standard may we learn to know the true light. There is no personal feeling to save us in advance from all mistakes. The test of divine truth is the test of reality, reason, and experience. The divine light is precisely that principle which guides us despite our errors and wanderings, that we may learn through these wanderings the way to spiritual wisdom. We may lift all our problems and needs into heavenly light for guidance. We may test all knowledge by that light.

What then is this rule of life in brief? That in the divine providence there is a pathway of the soul different in some measure for each of us

yet alike in other respects, so nearly the same for all that the sermon on the mount is the universal clue. That each has a purpose to fulfill, and that this purpose will be made apparent from time to time according to our needs. That a living divine impetus is active in our inmost selfhood, ready to give us leadings hour by hour. That there is a way to penetrate through any possible darkness to the heavenly light. That there is a way to solve every problem, a light for every occasion, including those occasions that pertain to our ordinary life in the world.

What shall one do to find the divine light, to know and follow it? When you have a plan of action under consideration, put it upon the altar of thought to see if it be burned away, allowing time for the reactions of your own better nature. When you have a problem of daily conduct to solve, turn first to the secret place of the divine light and pray for guidance. When eager for spiritual truth, remember that a new light is shining, that there is an "inner dictate" by which all may be led: leave all externalities and formal statements and lay your needs before the Father "who seeth in secret" as truly today as at any time in the hallowed past. In any need that may arise follow the same course. Turn first to the direct source of light, wherever you may look later. Give intuition a free opportun-

ity before you begin to seek advice, discuss matters, or examine external authorities. Then gain the needed contrast by seeking the best light you can find elsewhere. If the inner clue leads you to the Bible which, as if by chance you open at the "right place," follow the clue. Be guided first and last by the divine light and return to it if you lose touch with its guidances.

When people come and ask you to engage in this or that enterprise, pause to see if the proposed plan meet with the inward response of your higher nature. When exponents of doctrines urge their beliefs upon you, take the teachings in question under advisement to see what present spiritual life, if any, they have in them. When in doubt whether to proceed in your affairs as you have hitherto lived, pause to await a new impetus, favorable or unfavorable, as the case may be. Put essential matters and creeds to the test to see if they still bespeak the authority of the spiritual life today. If no longer able to give yourself with spontaneity to your work, test this unresponsiveness and seek new clues to the spontaneously true and real. In the absence of direct leadings for the conduct of the hour, or checks to action in the name of conscience, proceed as you have until brought to a stand-still. Seek anew the kingdom of God, that what is needed for its expression may be added.

We note also that the law as stated for the inner life comes not to destroy but to fulfill. We are not bidden to throw away older teachings because they are external in form. We are not called on to renounce approved social observances or even the world. A new heavenly light now casts its added glow on all that we possessed before, and we view the entire field of human activity by the aid of its superior illumination. The light may at first be a mere "gleam of darkness," but well may we pray to have a gleam of genuinely living light increase, in contrast with borrowed light or merely historical authority. The "inner dictate" may seem but feeble and indistinct, but let it be heard with reverence.

To believe in the inward light is not to be vague, not to listen at random. One brings to the silent hour the best that one has to give, in quest of the highest. One turns to the secret place to learn the divine wisdom, to know the divine purpose and realize it; not to enter into self, or to exalt personal experience. The light that comes is measured by the quest for it, by the capacity of the lamp as at present trimmed and kept burning. The divine love that inflows cannot, or rather does not, penetrate more effectively until there is increased outflow through greater love for one's fellows. The inward light is the guide to cooperation with divine wisdom, not to mere receptivity.

The law is complete as a whole and in every detail. If aware of it by means of the inner dictate, instead of by mere reference to authority, you have a standard by which to measure or test every element of experience in daily life. The simple rule is, Be true to the inward light as a living standard. Expect all the experiences that normally belong to spiritual beings dwelling even here and now in the spiritual world.

Under the changed conditions of our time, I repeat, a new light is shining. This new light does not guide us to a man in the flesh, or to a tabernacle touched by a cloud. It sends us to the same God, the same interior kingdom, but it supplies the new clue for the new age, you cannot read it aright in any age that has gone before. The movement of enlightened thought is from within outward. Therefore first elevate your mind into its heavenly light, pray that your inner eye may be opened, your inner ear made receptive, that you may begin from the direct source of all true illumination. You may then turn to history and to the Bible as the open Book of Life, and read by reference to the living word discernible within the heart.

This is plainly what illumination means in the rational sense. We need not put the possibility far from us. We may see "in a glass darkly" at first, but later "face to face." The great

thought is that all light is one, from a single source, the same light which has ever quickened every man born into the world. We may well look for greater manifestations of this light as clues to the right social life for the day. We may well endeavor to be true to the living Word "written in all our members."

"The entrance of thy words giveth light." "Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The inward light in this its larger or social sense becomes our guide when we have heard anew those marvellous words of old: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

XXII

POSITIVE VALUES

We have been guided in the foregoing interpretations of the inner life by a certain view of the human spirit. By no means denying that the spirit is limited by mental life in general, and that the mind in turn is limited by the brain, we have nevertheless seen that there is much more to be said about the spirit than can be adequately stated when we have acknowledged such relatedness to the full. The brain is an instrument for the formation and preservation of habits, and the mind tends to function in the ways which these habits permit. In its own freer field the mind readily acquires regular modes of activity, too, so that automatisms play a part even in the sphere of psychical experiences of comparatively recent origin. Our subconsciousness is a reproduction of our conscious life, hence this deeper portion of our mental life also participates in automatic actions. It requires acute attentiveness on our part to keep our subconsciousness from intruding and projecting thoughts or "messages," although in our conscious selfhood we have every reason to avoid such inventiveness. Yet we might overdo

the hypothesis that our subconsciousness produces psychical experience. For we need constantly to remind ourselves that every effect has a cause, and that people develop interests in psychical experience in the first place because of spontaneous impressions or guidances; hence that psychical experiences cannot be explained away as sheer cogitations of our own inner life.

Our view of the human spirit turns upon the discovery of intuitive powers whose existence must be frankly acknowledged, whatever we may believe concerning the objective reality of psychical phenomena. There is much more to be said in behalf of the spirit than is told by conventional psychology, with its fascination for mere sense-processes. Our knowledge of the natural world begins indeed through the presentations of our senses. We are creatures of instinct, emotion, bodily activities centering about earthly desires, and thoughts tending to foster self-love and love of the world. All this is true so far as it reaches. But we have vestiges at least of higher instincts than those of the mere body. We have not lost all our sensitivity to inner impressions. If we are at times creatures of moods and the duality of self, we also have higher moments of consciousness, and we are not limited by sheer inferences based on physical facts. Mental influences in various forms relate us to people near us

in type. There is thought-interchange to some extent. We receive direct impressions of character, we have feelings "in the bones" which come true, we have premonitions and leadings which may be trusted. No account of the human spirit is acceptable which does not faithfully describe these inner experiences. By implication the human spirit is as extensive and varied as all these experiences indicate. The profound consideration is that the operations of this intuitive phase of our nature imply the ability of the spirit to function independently of matter. That is to say, as spirits we are more directly related to one another than by means of the brain with its powers of expression through audible speech, handwriting, gestures, facial changes, and the like.

We have seen that to make ready to interpret psychical experiences we need to distinguish between external phenomena, such as the operation of a board or pencil; and inner phenomena, that is, mental impressions, conscious and subconscious. We need also to distinguish between inward impressions and auditory or visual illusions, since the real question is, What actually takes place in the human spirit? Having pressed the hypothesis of illusions as far as it can be carried, we still have to do with inward experiences which are real for the one who participates in them.

Pressing this contrast still further, we have

found that the intelligible clue is found, not by putting the conscious self over against the subconscious; but by discriminating between outward and inward mental states. Thus, for example, there is an external memory, with its manifold associations pertaining to our life in the outer world. But there is also an internal memory connected with character, our real motives and interests, beliefs and affections, the events we have lived through which deeply influenced us. We share the items of our external selfhood to a large extent with our fellowmen in the ordinary routine of life. We pass current in the world for what the outer self appears to be. Meanwhile, we well know that what we are in deepest truth is what the inner life discloses, with its actual attainments, limitations, attitudes, whatever the external appearances may be. A few genuine friends with whom we are in close affinity know this inner self in some degree, but how much more there is which no friend knows! This is the self or character which will survive the transition called death. It is the self which attracts spiritual guidance. Spiritually, we are always judged and helped by what we are, not by what we appear to be.

Since it is the spirit in its interior life which attracts experiences needed for growth and self-mastery, the guidances which are vouchsafed us

correspond with the spirit's state of development. There is an impetus or tendency, let us say, steadily to bring to us as spirits whatever we most need that we may live our life in the world, do our specific work, and meet the opportunities which can best be met while we live this earth-life. We need not go out to seek the conditions. What is for us in the divine love and wisdom is already tending toward us, and will come when we are ready. Our part is to welcome what is brought by this inward guidance, in firm faith that the power, the wisdom, the love will be given us to achieve, to be obedient, and to serve. What comes may not be what we desire, for it will call for victory over self-will and love of the world; but it will be what we need. For what comes will be adapted to the point we have attained in the age-long struggle between spirit and matter, the inner man and the outer, God and self.

Yet we may and should seek to put our spirits into the right attitude to test all matters we do not understand. For the inner life is the sanctuary of the spirit, the place of the shining of that inward light which illumines the pathway of the soul. When spontaneous illuminations have come, for instance, at four in the morning, and we have learned the conditions to some degree, we may invite those conditions and so depend more and more upon guidances coming in the fitness

of time. However faint the light shining in our spirits, it is the same in kind with that which has guided the great seers of the ages that have gone, the same in kind with the light which we find in the Scriptures. Therefore we may believe in it wholly, realizing that it is part of the eternal reason which discloses divine truth to men. In fact, this light is "the spirit of truth" which leads into all truth, the spirit of the Comforter, the living Christ. The characteristic of its disclosures is that it comes with authority, with power; is not dependent on mere facts and mere inferences.

The great difference in the attitude which this guidance quickens in us and the one we are led to adopt while investigating psychical phenomena is that while the inward light yields reality with great clearness and its guidances inspire implicit obedience, the investigator's spirit is full of caution, alert to suggest alternative explanations and to raise doubts. I must believe in guidance if I would be true to myself. I am free to question psychical experiences save so far as guidance leads me to see their rationale.

For example, long experience in these matters may have taught me that it is possible to receive inner confirmation of whatever I should believe. Thus I may have received on occasion a single sentence from some one near me in spiritual presence, coming with such distinctness, reality, and

power that I could not doubt it. Hence I may have come to see that for me at least the way to receive a genuine message is to receive it directly by inward impression. Hence I may have grown to be very sceptical concerning long messages, since experience has taught me that (1) it is difficult for the communicating spirit to convey the exact words for any length of time, and (2) after a few minutes the mind of the recipient tends to enlarge upon the original words and hence depart further from the actual message. The message as developed at length out of the pictographic process might indeed be mostly genuine. For all one can positively say to the contrary an automatist might receive fairly accurate messages without limit. But narrowing matters down to the minimum which simply must be believed as genuine, word for word, despite the acutest scepticism, one is bound to express utmost faith in guidance coming in the form of a short message.

To be sure, one might be led in a secondary way to investigate psychical phenomena and their associates, one might observe people experimenting with the ouija board or using the pencil, and one might read books such as "Living Waters," "The New Revelation," or "The Hill of Vision" to see whither all these things tend, and to discriminate according to such principles as those laid down in the foregoing pages. But, plainly,

one cannot step back, one cannot lower the standard, and one is bound to be as critical as the sheer unbeliever whenever guidance permits. The result is a growing conviction in the power and persuasiveness of guidance over and above the fluctuating factor of the intellect, with its sceptical processes and relativities. For our intellects are too much influenced by conventional education and externals, by such doctrines as religious education has imposed upon us. The spirit, when acting intuitively and freely, is interior to all this. Hence one comes to see the difference between psychical experience as the intellect regards it and such experience as it is illumined by the spirit.

Again, experience may narrow down the situation for me still further, and I may not for a long period receive even a single sentence from a mind beyond my own. I may in fact be merely aware of a presence with me from time to time, some one who seems commissioned to aid me in the work I am doing, as an accomplished artist might stand near a pupil with interest or approval, but never uttering a word unless the novice should make a false stroke. The friend in the spirit might aid me to keep my mind in the light, and indicate the way to put my work into the light in order that I should see its defects for myself; and yet never in the least degree exert any influence to control my will or my thought.

Further, he might prompt various friends in the flesh to bring me the books which I should read to make my intellectual investigations complete, and these friends might bring me what I need without being in the least degree aware that they were participating in my work. In fact, one of the profoundest reasons for believing in guidance is seen in the fact of minds cooperating independently to carry on a work without knowing that they are making such contributions.

If for the sake of the hypothesis we should endeavor to explain all the activities of the inner selfhood on the basis of the self alone, as if there were no communion with minds either in the flesh or beyond the flesh, we would still have on our hands for explanation the profound fact of *the working together of events toward a common end.* This "working of all things together" has always been one of the facts which has led people to believe in guidance. Some life or wisdom is behind the several lines of activity. The mere operation of intuition in general seems insufficient to account for this united action. Nor does it seem possible to explain the whole relationship on the basis of unconscious telepathy between minds in the flesh. The more plausible explanation is that we are open in spirit both to friends in the flesh and to those beyond it. When engaged in a piece of work requiring guidance on the future

life, we are more likely to receive it from the spiritual world. When facing moral issues demanding self-mastery we are more likely to walk with God alone.

Whether or not we believe that our guidances come in part through friends in the spirit, we seem bound therefore to hold that our guidances belong together, and that they imply a higher wisdom than our own. This conviction leads to very direct and inspiring belief in the presence of God through love and wisdom. It reinforces the idea of the divine providence. It strengthens belief in individuality and a distinct purpose for each of us. Thus we once more place emphasis on primary considerations, less concerned to discover the conditions through which the divine life is mediated to us. Nevertheless, we have a much clearer way of thinking about those conditions, with every reason to cultivate intuition, to observe the comings and goings of spontaneous impressions, especially the insights which come like a flash. We have a more definite idea where our illuminating clues come from, and we see the difference between these gleams from the inward light and ordinary psychical messages.

To accept the idea of guidances belonging together and possibly coming in part through friends in the spiritual word is, however, to raise the old question of the relationship between the

world of time and the world in which time as we are aware of it is unknown. What shall we say about guidances which anticipate experience and predictions which come true? Apparently, sequences of events are seen from the spiritual world, and these sequences seem to correspond in a measure with the succession of events in time as we know them. Thus one may receive a guidance in advance of experience to the effect that a journey covering months will be successful and without accident; for example, a voyage across the dangerous seas and into the war-zone, with all the contingencies due to the menacing presence of submarines and bombing planes. Then guidances may come from stage to stage of the journey to indicate when it is right to proceed or to wait, in so far as military regulations permit of choice. Again, premonitions of danger may come, and one may postpone a journey. Or perchance the premonition may be fulfilled, in the case of an individual who persists in making a journey despite an impression not to do so or a "feeling" that it will end fatally. In any event there appears to be a fixed sequence into which we may plunge or in which we may refuse to participate.

Many people assure us that they have had impressions of this kind. Here, for example, is a man about to start on a long railway journey

and who is deterred for a day by a premonition that there is to be an accident. Later he learns that the train on which he would have journeyed met with an accident in which a number of people in the rear sleeper which he would have taken were killed. The deterring impression came twenty-four hours before the accident.

Here is another man who, while travelling on an express train going at a high rate of speed, receives an impression to change his seat to another part of the car, and on the other side; and so his life is saved in an accident occurring a while later in which the side of the car on which he had been sitting was torn off. Returning home on the following day and before he tells any one of his escape, his sister tells him that two evenings before a guidance came to her, most unexpectedly, to pray for her brother, since he would be in danger the next day. This man is greatly impressed by this two-fold evidence of guidance. He is a Quaker, hence habitually a believer in guidance, and he has many interesting incidents to tell of more than half a century of experiences indicating that all guidances belong together in the divine purpose.

In the case of premonitions of danger in which people have foreseen their death, it is of course plausible to say that the persons in question have literally but unconsciously fulfilled the predic-

tions because they believed in them. But this explanation does not account for instances in which people have tried their best to avoid all dangerous circumstances, so as not to realize the prediction; and yet, despite all changes of plan, have unwittingly put themselves into the danger which they sought to avoid. Nor does it account for premonitions coming to soldiers of the exact circumstances of their death, a few days later, conditions which they would have avoided if possible, but which they were compelled by military orders to realize.

The easiest assumption to make is that predestination is true, hence that no effort on one's part will make the slightest difference. Belief in "destiny" is indeed widespread among people who have had premonitions. Fatalism is readily fostered in war-time, when everybody seems bound down to a fixed series of events, as if their lives were necessary products of events that have gone before.

No belief more sharply conflicts with our moral convictions, however, than the idea of fatalism as the universal law of human life. Nothing comes to us with greater assurance from the spiritual world than the statement that we are free, hence that predestination is untrue. The conclusion that every event is predetermined seems hasty indeed. The facts of guidance do not compel us

to believe that we are forewarned of "the inevitable." They do not give us information concerning what is necessary or fate-driven, but what is probable—if we follow the guidance from stage to stage. One is not bound to obey. Indeed some of us have come to know guidance by contrast with instances of it which we have wilfully disregarded. Guidance reveals wisdom, not necessity. It is sometimes accompanied by sentences containing exact dates, with the month and day, and sometimes not. Some of the precise predictions are fulfilled in point of time, others are not. Plainly, the element of time depends on mundane events which may develop quickly or slowly according to conditions not yet seen. All we need infer, so far as the perception of our spirit-friends is concerned, is that there is foresight of a sequence presently to be realized through what we call "time," with all its contingencies and delays. The sequence of events may indeed seem sure, that is, the gathering of forces to produce a certain result. But a prediction in point of time is hazardous.

Granted foresight of conditions taking shape to produce events about to occur in the world of time, a prophecy might be made which we could identify with subsequent historical events. Thus the statements in "The Seven Purposes" concerning perilous "drives" during the last year of the

war become intelligible. Thus one might accept the predictions of "The Hill of Vision" made three years before the war began, no precise dates being then hazarded. Only a little more difficult would be the exact prediction that the war would end August 25th, 1918, a prophecy received several months before that date. For this date need not be taken too seriously, and it will always be matter of question whether the tide actually turned at that time. The truth in such predictions becomes intelligible to us when we first consider more definitely how earthly events may be foreseen under the very different conditions of the spiritual world.[1]

It is essential to bear constantly in mind that the spiritual world affords a vision of causes in operation before their effects are seen in this world. This vision includes not only the activity of beings in that world whose powers may be far greater than ours, but insight into the real motives and plans, however secret, of people in this world, notably those who are stealthily making ready to plunge the world into a great war. But if the assembling of hostile forces is thus apparent, the gathering of constructive forces must be no less plain. Thus there is undoubtedly a

[1] Elsewhere I have argued, and still believe, that the tide began to turn July 15, when the German offensive was halted on the Champagne front; see "On the Threshold of the Spiritual World," Chap. III.

complete view of all the human elements involved n the vast operation, hence definite statements are possible. Then too we need to remind ourselves that many contests are seen as settled from the spiritual point of view long before their consequences in the realm of effects have been wrought out to the end.

Possibly, we might illustrate by such observations and predictions as may come within our power when, standing upon a mountain top overlooking a wide stretch of country, with plains and valleys, we see gathering in the far distance a forthcoming thunder-storm. Knowing the country well, we may be able to predict that the storm will follow the course of a river winding seaward through the level country, and we might send telephonic messages to inhabitants in the valley along the river warning them of the approaching storm. Then, the storm having passed our vantage-point, we might see the clear sky above the region where it originated, and inform the people along the river, still in the throes of the storm, that it will presently come to an end. We might indeed undertake to tell the precise time when the storm will cease, and the prediction might come true. But the storm might spend itself less quickly than we anticipated, and it might return over its course in part. Thus there might be phases of the storm which we could not foretell,

despite the fact that from the point of view of its origin its forces might seem well spent.

Making allowances for differences in the forces in question, this seems to be the kind of predictions we have to consider in endeavoring to account for the accuracies amidst the variations in the case of the precise statement that the war would end August 25, 1918. The editor of "The Hill of Vision" adduces military evidence to show that this date could be regarded as the time when the tide turned. In the forecast from the spiritual world it was plain that the forces in operation would reach their climax after a certain period of struggle which could be identified with the conditions of the war as then in operation on earth. With sure vision of all the forces in action, the communicating spirit might venture to make an exact prophecy. But the precise statement concerning the point of time would be subject to contingencies.

The communicating spirit states the general principle as follows: "We have this difficulty, that though we control spiritual forces which manifest themselves in Matter, yet we are often unconscious of the spiritless movements of Matter after the withdrawal of the spiritual work in time." [1] In the profoundest sentence in the whole book, the illuminating statement is made

[1] "The Hill of Vision," p. 38.

that time is "the ratio of the resistance of Matter to the interpenetration of the Spirit." That is to say, the whole struggle in process here on earth is a contest between Matter and Spirit, Darkness and Light, Self and God. In the spiritual world the struggle is seen from the vantage-point of Spirit, while we see it mostly in the light of the effects produced on Matter. From above, the discerning eye sees that Spirit has accomplished its work, even before the storm has subsided on earth. Hence the prophecies are given from the point of view of decisive causes, and sometimes they are made so precise that the element of time is included. But not all the after-effects in the realm of matter are foreseen by any means. Hence the prophecies may fall short in point of time: we should never rely on them absolutely. We, on the other hand, observe the events from the point of view of the resistance offered by matter, and we are painfully aware of the after-effects.

For practical purposes, therefore, it is wiser for us to dwell on the powers at work to bring about changes, and seek guidance that we may contribute our part in line with the Spirit. It is seldom given us to know the times and seasons. Ordinarily it is better that we should not know. There is every reason why we should live more and more in the realm of causes, ex-

tending our thought to include the activities of the spiritual world. We do not see all the elements involved. We are not told all that we cannot see. We are left to develop from the point thus far attained, with every reason for making the best use of such wisdom as may be given us. Essential events belong together in the divine purpose, that is the chief consideration. That purpose steadily goes forth to its realization. We may aid by transferring our allegiance from self to that purpose, from outward conditions to the Life which operates through them.

Our spirits sometimes act quickly and discern ends far in advance of realization. Intellectually speaking we move far more slowly, analyzing, raising objections, assimilating ideas against which we rebelled at first, and finally arriving at convictions. Our bodies move more moderately still, for matter is often unyielding. To understand all the conditions of life, we need to take account of these three differing rates of speed. In spirit we seem to achieve the goal at once. We never expect to fail again. We expect to be strong in faith, at peace within, prompt and ardent in service without. Time scarcely exists for us. But we reckon ill if we leave the conventionalizing intellect out of account, if we forget self-love, habit, and our dependence on the

body. Our earth-life is given us for the working out of this complex problem. There is wisdom for each level of experience, each stage of the journey.

So too the world moves at varying rates of speed, with groups on groups of people banded according to their affinities. If we could look forth over the world "under the guise of eternity," as Spinoza would say, we should see people moving and being moved in groups. Our point of view would be that of motives or prevailing loves in the age-long processes leading to ends. Both time and space would drop out of consideration as we now know them. Instead, there would be outward appearances corresponding to real inward conditions; we should see "things as they are," see them "whole" in clear light. Elementary indeed would seem this mundane life in comparison. Yet this life would appear as the natural training ground of the soul. It would seem less and less a mere conflict between forces, more and more intimately a field of expression for the eternal verities of the Spirit. For the darknesses would steadily disappear in the presence of the true Light. The errors would be overcome by the universalizing Truth. We would place less emphasis on the waywardnesses of men, more on the guidances which are ever at hand to disclose the Way. History too would seem in a measure

less important, in the quickening vision of the all-encompassing Life.

If any one prefers to regard all the thoughts and impressions that come to us as arising solely within our minds, as results of contact with the natural world through the physical senses, and to deny relationship with another world or with the mind of God, nothing further need be said. Sooner or later all who think are likely to try this hypothesis for a time, and it is profitable to do so. But eventually we have to reckon with the fact that, whether we like it or not, the human mind discloses experiences of other types calling for adequate explanation. Thus the present widespread interest in psychical matters has come about through dissatisfaction with the teachings of the churches and the physical sciences. It places too great a burden upon the human spirit conceived as a closed and isolated entity, if we try to explain away all psychical experiences as sheer illusions or delusions due to disordered bodily states and subjective fancies.

Again, others may still prefer to remain within the faithful ranks of those who recognize no religious experiences save the ones generated in us through acceptance of the true doctrines and the authorized sacraments of the church to which they belong. Once more, there is no objection to be raised, if this be the soul's sincerest guidance.

One sees why the authorities within the Church look with suspicion upon the whole psychical movement. To entertain even the hypothesis that people may receive direct guidance from God, may be regenerated by immediate influences from the spiritual world, or commune with "the dead" as if they were alive, is to admit a possibility that might jeopardize the whole institution. Hence the Church is likely to remain our most conservative organization. Meanwhile, the dissatisfied are sure to look for light elsewhere.

Or, one might adopt the leadings of the foregoing chapters in so far as they point to Quimby's theory, with its later variations, Mental Science and the New Thought. This would be to believe most heartily in intuition, telepathy, and the power of the spirit to convey direct healing influences to other spirits in the flesh; while objecting to the idea that such speech also includes the receiving of messages as spiritualists believe in them. It might involve an idea of the nearness of the spiritual world and it might not. But for the most part it would mean emphasis on the practical realization of the power of the Spirit in daily life for the sake of overcoming disease, poverty, and other adverse conditions. The chief objection to psychical experiences of a spiritist nature would be on the ground that people are unbalanced by them. But one might in turn ob-

ject to the conventional New-Thought position on the ground that it is one's privilege to help people through the thickets of the psychical world into the light of the spiritual life.

Or, again, one might hold that all these psychical matters were settled a hundred and fifty years ago by the disclosures or revelations of Swedenborg. That is to say, all psychical experiences are "dangerous," it is not given to us to receive either help or wisdom from spirits; and we should judge all such matters on the basis of the authoritative doctrines given in books like "Heaven and Hell." In such books, indeed, one finds the most complete view of the other world ever given to man. Naturally, Swedenborg is the one writer in all history with whom one would reckon seriously, if one were to press all explanations of the relationship of the two worlds to their rational limit. But there might be another way to make this estimate than merely to accept Swedenborg as authority without testing his teachings through appeal to experience and the best ideas set forth in recent communications. To take the Swedish seer in entire earnestness would be to look to inner experience to see how far his lead may be followed. For in our day the pursuit of truth has ceased to be a mere question of the comparison of doctrines. We have moved forward to an empirical age. A new light is shining.

In accordance with this new light we may start in a very different way from that of either the former theology or spiritism in any of its guises. The old theology assumed the existence of a transcendent God far above the world, from whom there once came an authoritative revelation out of the air, as it were, that is, apart from all human conditions and limitations. Hence the churches organized in this God's name surrounded man by a closed system. All that could be known about the life after death was taught by the churches. Immediate access to divine sources of life and wisdom was denied. Heaven was remote indeed. Future punishment was to be dreaded, and fear was used as an instrument to restrain the faithful.

Spiritism, on the hand, drew attention to alleged projections from the spirit-world into this, and centered its interests upon mediumship. It then became a question whether thought-projections or visions, messages from "controls" and the like, were real. The present-day interest in the ouija board is a survival of this view, that is, that the spiritual world projects itself into this one, and that we must discover whether the messages and visions are real, are products of our subconsciousness, or are purely subjective appearances.

In this book we have been pleading for a radi-

cally different conception of the whole field, namely, that in so far as men have possessed the open vision they have actually seen realities, angels and spirits *in the spiritual world itself;* hence that the open vision, not spirit-projections, yields our standard. With this conception before us, we have sought to direct attention to the spiritual powers which every man possesses now, powers which might be developed through use as Quimby, for example, developed them; or as they grew into fulness of activity in the case of Swedenborg.

Granted this point of view, we may make ready to understand the life after death and the spiritual world by learning all we can about the human spirit as it functions in this world. We learn, for example, that the spirit is the real basis of character, the ground of our prevailing love, the centre of our utmost thoughts and of the attractions or affinities of our truest friendships. We learn that it has a memory of its own which will survive, a "spiritual body" which really corresponds with the spirit's attainments; and that death is a dropping off of externals, with the outward memories and associates of this life. Better still, we learn that by direct influx from the divine life we receive wisdom and love into the understanding and the will according to our need, our responsiveness, and the use we make of this influent guidance.

Thus thinking about our life in the natural world in terms of spiritual law under clearly definable conditions, we may in constructive thought trace the pathway of the spirit into the other world. We may see the spirit, "clothed in its right mind," coming to itself in accordance with the prevailing love, and in a sphere of new influences and associates intimately related by spiritual affinity. Time will have ceased. Space will be no more save so far as its appearances correspond with the real states of the spirit. The natural world will be left behind save in memory and the inward ties which bind soul to soul in affinity, whether here or hereafter. The inward relationships will not be broken at all, and there will be no need of empirical proofs of "spirit return" to prove the survival of spirits who have never been separated from us. With the laying aside of earthly relationships our friends in the spirit will therefore be nearer to us, not further away. We may firmly believe this, although never for a moment aware of a spiritual presence and never the recipient of a message. If in addition it is given to some of us to become aware of the endeared presence and to receive a sentence which proves its reality; it is for a divine purpose in accordance with true faith, and no one has good ground for denying the inward impression.

Thus in possession of fundamental principles

by which to think out the relationship between the worlds, we are in a position to discern the realities amidst manifold illusions in matters psychical. We shall find that precisely as the mind plays us false in its misinterpretations of sense-phenomena and in our hasty generalizations about life, so in the psychical region the mind readily generates much out of a little. Thus in some of the recent literature there may be a minimum of psychical reality and a great amount of mental enlargement. Narrowing matters down to the psychical minimum, we are led to ask, What is its significance? No answer from the psychical world will ever suffice to explain. Unless you already know yourself far better than the typical communicating spirits know you, you cannot tell wherein they are right. And if you know yourself so well as this you have no need of merely psychical guidance; for you have learned the greatest of truths concerning the human spirit, namely, that it is taught from within by the divine wisdom, that man possesses no life or power, wisdom or love purely his own; but that he shares the divine goodness according to need.

Truly to grasp this greatest of truths is to see the place and yet the limitations of personal or subjective experiences, hence to be prepared to interpret in all earnestness the experiences of the seers. For we then in a measure enjoy spiritual

perception, we have "vision." Without vision they indeed "perish" who venture upon the psychical. But we are acquiring this vision. It may come to us whether we have read any special books or not, since real vision, true revelation is of the spirit: the eternal Word is hidden in the heart.

Whether we like it or not, therefore, and despite all the efforts of the churches to oppose Sir Oliver Lodge and the other pioneers, the point of view is before us now to be reckoned with, namely, that there is the most intimate relationship between the two worlds, and that all real causes are spiritual. The result is a new cooperative spirit pointing forward to the ideal which Swedenborg called the Grand Man. If we shall come to adopt that point of view we may find in it a new social gospel, or, rather, a return to the true Christianity of the Gospels.

THE END

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