THE FUTURE LIFE
IN THE LIGHT OF
MODERN INQUIRY

SAMUEL McCOMB

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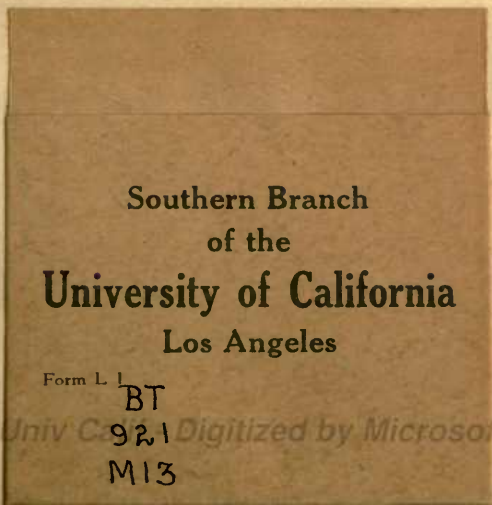

THE FUTURE LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN INQUIRY

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THE FUTURE LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN INQUIRY

BY

REV. SAMUEL McCOMB

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Author of "Prayers for To-day," etc.

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To

My Mother

In Grateful Memory and Sacred Hope

PREFATORY NOTE

THE author offers no apology for the publication of this book. The subject is indeed well-worn, and there is much plausibility in the aphorism that "nothing new has been said *for* immortality since Plato, and nothing new *against* it since Epicurus." Yet this is not to be taken too literally. Our newer knowledge has deprived many ancient arguments of the prestige which they once enjoyed, and has, at the same time, opened up fresh paths of reflection and suggested the lines along which the thoughts of coming generations are likely to run. Moreover, the world in our day is shaking and the hearts of men are failing them for fear. Everyone is bound to say what he can on behalf of a belief that cannot but steady and reassure the human soul amid the perils that now beset it.

Cordial thanks are due and are hereby tendered to Dr. Walter F. Prince for his generosity in preparing the materials of Chapter IX, especially for his clear outline of the Fisher case, a fuller exposition of which he will set forth in a volume now being made ready for the

press. Grateful acknowledgment must also be made of Rev. Dr. Elwood Worcester's kindness in reading a portion of the proofs and in making several valuable suggestions. Chapter IV has already appeared as an article in the *Contemporary Review* for June, 1919, and in the *American Journal of Psychical Research* for the same month.

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THE FUTURE LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN INQUIRY

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS IMMORTALITY?

It is important at the outset to make clear the sense in which our terms are used. The pantheist, the positivist, and even the agnostic assert immortality no less fervently than the orthodox Christian, but it will be admitted that a conception so loose and featureless can hardly admit of argument. It is unfortunate that the word "immortality" has been used with such ambiguity that the problem has been obscured and a subject difficult enough in itself has been rendered still less amenable to thought.

A widespread popular usage interprets immortality as in a strict sense the life *everlasting*. But whether the soul will last forever is and must remain always a question for faith. Here knowledge and science are dumb. We know not what vicissitudes may be in store for the soul in

the measureless reaches of infinite time. The survival of physical death might well raise the presumption or the hope that a being capable of surmounting such a barrier would also prove equal to any changes that may befall in the life to come. But beyond this we cannot go.

By immortality is here meant the survival of bodily death of that part of man which is called, variously, mind, soul, self, spirit, individuality, personality, or whatever other term may be held to be synonymous with these. The time-honoured word "soul" is as good as any other —if only we are careful to make sure of what we mean by it. Modern men cannot away with the notion that the "soul" is a mysterious entity, distinct from, and, so to say, standing over against thoughts, volitions, and feelings, itself knowing no change, while these, like the ever-shifting pictures of a magic-lantern, come and go and never continue in one stay. The more we try to grasp this entity, the more it eludes us. It is a metaphysical abstraction for which we can find no meaning or purpose: and so the psychologist refuses to recognize it and is content to leave it to the preacher and the scholastic philosopher. Today what we mean by the "soul" is simply a limited stream of thoughts, volitions, and feelings, partly conscious, partly

subconscious, yet also a stream able to recall its past states, and to recognize these states as its own. This finite unitary consciousness is connected with a body in a relationship indescribably intimate. But both the psychical and physical elements imply a greater reality to which they belong and out of which they have emerged. If any reader feels that this view makes the soul too much of a mere phenomenon, perhaps the definition of a well-known man of science will prove more helpful: "The soul is that controlling and guiding principle which is responsible for our personal expression and for the construction of the body under the restrictions of physical condition and ancestry. In its higher development it includes also feeling and intelligence and will and is the storehouse of mental experience. The body is its instrument or organ, enabling it to conceive and to convey physical impressions, and to affect and be affected by matter and energy. When the body is destroyed, therefore, the soul disappears from physical ken; when the body is impaired, its function is interfered with and the soul's physical reaction becomes feeble and unsatisfactory. Thus has arisen the popular misconception that the soul of a slain person or of a cripple or paralytic,

has been destroyed or damaged; whereas only its instrument of manifestation need have been affected. The kind of evils which really assault and hurt the soul belong to a different category."[1]

It really does not matter, so far as the problem of immortality is concerned, how we define the soul, if only we refuse to reduce it to a function or a by-product of brain-processes. Our idea of the nature of the future life will indeed be affected by our conception of the spiritual content of the soul, but the *fact* of the future life is independent of all such theories.

Now, the question in which we are interested today is not, Is the soul endlessly existent? but, Does the soul survive the experience of death and preserve a sense of its identity? If and when we are able to answer this question in the affirmative, we may go on to enquire as to the nature and we may even speculate as to the conditions of the life beyond. The point to be emphasized just now is that immortality means the individual's survival of death, the persistence of personal consciousness in spite of physical dissolution.

Many who are unable to believe in this con-

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge: *Man and the Universe*, pp. 165, 166.

quest over death, cannot bear the thought that all the garnered treasures of human character are thrown to the dust heap, and hold that the moral and spiritual values attributed to the survival of personality can be retained and converted into an ethical inspiration by the posthumous working of our influence in the lives and characters of unborn generations. The solidarity of the race is indeed a truth which science has especially graven on the minds of modern men. No man stands alone. No life is lived unto itself alone. We are one with our environment. Our deepest convictions are shaped in part at least by men and women who have long since mouldered in their graves. And we, in turn, by our words and deeds, affect our contemporaries and shall affect those who come after us, for good or ill, for happiness or misery. It is, indeed, a solemn thought that every act we do leaves its mark upon the texture of our spiritual nature, and at the same time goes forth to work out its appointed consequences in the life of humanity. Our little lives like rivulets rush to swell the vast tide of the race's common life, each making its contribution to the mighty whole. All this is deeply, if tritely, true. In the oft-quoted lines of George Eliot, it has found noble expression:

"Oh may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues."

But the very efforts of poet and philosopher to array in alluring colours the hope of posthumous influence in the life of posterity as a substitute for personal continuance after death, are themselves proofs of the deep-seated longing which is denied. And the more we examine the proposed exchange the more we see that it is a case of giving us a stone when we ask for bread. For the assumption is that the history of the race is one of continuous and unmodified progress. But as Professor Royce has pointed out, temporal progress is only one aspect of the temporal order. "For in Nature, too, nothing recurs. The broken china will not mend. The withered flowers bloom no more. The sun parts forever with its heat. Tidal friction irrevocably retards the revolution of the earth." And again: "Remember we have lost, beyond earthly recall, the Greeks, and the constructive genius

of a Shakespeare or of a Goethe; and these are, indeed, for us mortals, simply irreparable loss." Thus progress and decay, evolution and disintegration, are alike laws that govern the history of the individual and the race. Not only so, but if any dictum of science is to be relied on, it is that which prophesies that "our racial destiny is to strive and to starve to death in ever-deepening gloom." In other words, we are asked to devote our moral energies with whole-souled ardour to the work of helping a race which is as evanescent as a colony of ants, and of confining all our interests to a world which will one day roll on in its orbit as though men and ants had never been. Such a theory of immortality makes the sacrifice of the individual irrational and unjustifiable. The heroic millions who in the Great War have laid down their lives for freedom—what of them? Do you say that they have contributed their share to the progress of the world, that the good cause will triumph because of their sacrifice and that this is their reward? What matters it that they lapse into nothingness, if only the ultimate victory of right be achieved? The answer is, that our moral consciousness protests against such a decree. We ask and cannot but ask that somewhere and some time

these brave spirits shall witness and share in the triumph of that righteousness of which they were the organs and instruments. And here we return to the ever-present question of the worth of personality. Man, says Kant, is an end in himself and cannot be used as a means to an end. But on the theory we are controverting, man is of no intrinsic account. All life, the living individuals of today, and of the farthest bounds of time, must appear, in this view, utterly contemptible. Why should I sacrifice myself for others, if the others are, like myself, the children of a fleeting day, doomed to the same pitiful fate? It is no reproach to human nature to say that few will be found to rejoice in such a quixotic enterprise. The "immortal dead" were once indeed unique centres of experience, but they are now annihilated and while some of their thoughts may persist, they do not "live again," no more than the stone lives again (to borrow Huxley's illustration) in the wavelets which it makes when flung into the sea.

More recently, poetic thought has sought to find a substitute for personal continuance after death in a mystic absorption in the totality of being, or God. William Watson conceives the great divine event awaiting humanity to be uni-

versal euthanasia—a reabsorption in the Universal Spirit.

"When from this threshold of being, these steps of the Present, this precinct,
Into the matrix of life, darkly, divinely resumed,
Man and his littleness perish, erased like an error and cancelled,
Man and his greatness, lost in the greatness of God." [1]

Now, wherein consists man's real greatness? Is it not in the fact that he is the creator of *character,* a unique self-conscious centre of feeling and will? This is the inner core of man's essence. It is this that differentiates him from the brute creation and constitutes him a *person.* For man so conceived to disappear or be lost "in the greatness of God" would mean a tragedy, obscuring in gloom the divine character and the spiritual worth of man. What kind of a God must we suppose Him to be Who having called into being a creature such as man, endowed with individuality and all the unrealized possibilities of a divine nobleness, should waste all this spiritual treasure, the grandest product of creative energy, by quenching the light of conscious reason and affection in "the

[1] *Hymn to the Sea.*

vast darkness of the Godhead"? Francis Thompson's intuition pierces the sophism with unerring insight:

"Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed
Suffering no flowers, except its own to mount?"

Certainly the interests of ethics and religion are bound up with the denial of any renunciation of man's true selfhood. His annihilation means a loss to the moral order, for the good realized in *character* ceases to be; it means also a loss to God, for a being whom He has summoned into friendship with Himself is no more. In some real and true sense God needs man, even as man needs God. Every soul has to God the value of a realized purpose, an increase of goodness in the universe. But this conviction is fatal to the thought that a physical episode, such as death, can put a term to the love and self-giving which constitute the true greatness and glory of the Divine.

There is another substitute for personal continuance after death which some modern theologians offer us and which in much of present-day preaching obscures the real issue. Personal immortality is left shadowed with doubt, but in order to make good this deficiency, strong

emphasis is laid on "eternal life." Many an unsuspecting hearer imagines that when "eternal life" is held up before him as the true goal of all his strivings, he is being exhorted to live a life not limited by death but as permanent as the life of God Himself. What is meant, however, is quite irrelevant to the notion of personal persistence in a life beyond the grave. The phrase is intended to mark a quality of soul attainable here and now—a sense of dominion over the world, an experience of victory over the troubles and vexations of our earthly existence. It is a present ethical and religious experience and one may have it without thereby entertaining any hope for a life after death. Bailey in his "Festus" has brought out the thought:

"We live in deeds not years, in thoughts not breaths,
In feelings, not in figures on a dial."

In its highest sense "eternal life" means fellowship with God evidenced in a life of brotherly love and service. As a New Testament writer puts it: "This is eternal life, that they know Thee, the only real God, and He Whom Thou hast sent."[1] "We know we have crossed from death to life, because we love the brotherhood; and he who has no love [for his brother]

[1] John xvii, 3.

remains in death."[1] So far, however, is this profound truth from being incompatible with the idea of personal immortality that it rather points beyond itself and suggests the ultimate victory of the soul over death, the swallowing up of all that threatens man's destiny, in an abounding and ever-growing life. We may well argue that if "eternal life" means the present consciousness of God, an episode in the history of the physical organism will not avail to quench this consciousness in darkness.

[1] I. John iii, 14 (Moffatt's translation).

CHAPTER II

IMMORTALITY AND THE MODERN MAN

THERE is, perhaps, no more significant revelation of the spiritual trend of our age than the revived interest in the riddle of human destiny. Even before the war, in many circles where it was supposed the question was settled for all intelligent persons in the negative, old questionings began to stir afresh, and the discovery was made that the matter was not settled, that the human spirit was girding itself for a fresh attack on the ancient problem: If a man die shall he live again? But, undoubtedly, the war with its cruel losses has stirred in millions of hearts with unwonted poignancy the old cravings to know whether "those we call the dead are breathers of an ampler day," and whether there are grounds for believing that spirit will yet flash to spirit some signal of mutual recognition. Today as never before men and women are searching their minds to discover where they really stand in regard to this most vital and momentous question. Amid the crash of falling kingdoms, the passing away of those

near to us and most dear, the darkening shadows of social revolution, in short, the utter insecurity of all finite interests, we ask for some enduring reality, some abiding rock on which we can build the fabric of our spiritual life. The experience of many soldiers at the front is that also of many of their friends who remained at home. Face to face with death, either personally or vicariously, these persons have discovered that their religious faith or view of life was a mere tradition which broke down under the pressure of a terrible experience. They have awakened as from a pleasant dream, to discover—what? A world full of doubt, denial, uncertainty, at best of vague and elusive hopes. There are many persons who would describe their mental state as "an aspiration sometimes approaching almost to a faith, occasionally and for a few moments rising into a trust, but never able to settle into the consistency of a definite and enduring creed."

But whatever may be the situation in the world at large, surely inside our Christian Churches this faith is kept fresh and living, and here, if nowhere else, death can be faced in calmness and peace in the assured confidence that it marks only a transition to a fuller and a richer life. Alas! this is far from being the

case, as any one with knowledge of the facts can testify. Too often blank uncertainty ending in bitter despair unhinges the mind and throws the inner world into confusion. There are, of course, many exceptions, but these will be found almost wholly confined to the few who can accept the Christian revelation in childlike faith or whose spiritual intuitions are undimmed by the shadows of the abstractive intellect. The refusal to accept any truth on authority, the rise and dominance of the higher criticism, the uncertain note of the educated teacher of religion, and the crude phantasies of the uneducated evangelist—all these and other influences in a lesser degree are responsible for the present failure of faith in immortality in the Christian world. Indeed it must be confessed with pain that the most unwavering assurances of the immortal hope do not as a rule come from the professed champions of Church and Creed but from men whose main interests lie elsewhere. Take, for example, the following statement of a well-known man of science: "We shall certainly continue to exist, we shall certainly survive. Why do I say that? I say it on definite scientific grounds. I know that certain friends of mine still exist, because I have talked with them . . . I have conversed with them as I could,

converse through a telephone with any one in this audience now. Being men of cultivated mind they have given proofs that it is really they, not some impersonation, not something emanating from myself. They have given definite proofs. Some of these proofs have been published. Many more will have to be withheld for a time, but will ultimately be published. I tell you with all the strength of conviction that I can muster that the fact is so, that we do persist, that people still take an interest in what is going on, that they still help us, that they know far more about things than we do, that they are able from time to time to communicate."[1] Now what strikes the reader in this confession is not the reference to the spiritistic theory of communication so much as the ringing tone of clear and assured conviction. However this certainty is gained, it is simply invaluable. It means a new world for the man who has won it. It cannot but bring to life an ethical stimulus, consolation amid discouragement and defeat, a coherence and an intelligibility otherwise impossible. Yet were one to stand up in a Christian pulpit and proclaim a future life with a like assurance, he would be listened to with polite incredulity on the part of very many and

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge: *Science and Religion*, p. 25.

would find himself regarded as St. Paul was by the Athenians—something of an enthusiast. Ruskin in his preface to "The Crown of Wild Olive" makes the strikingly true observation that "if you address any average modern English company as believing in an Eternal life, and endeavour to draw any conclusions, from this assumed belief, as to their present business, they will forthwith tell you that what you say is very beautiful, but it is not practical. If, on the contrary, you frankly address them as unbelievers in Eternal life, and try to draw any consequences from that unbelief,—they immediately hold you for an accursed person, and shake off the dust from their feet at you." How is this to be explained? Why is it that the average church-goer resents the unqualified affirmation of a life beyond the grave? Doubtless to some extent he is influenced consciously or unconsciously by the prevailing habits of thought already referred to; but there is another reason. Strange as it may appear, the average professor of religion prefers that the future life should not be discussed except in a form which convention should dictate, and convention prescribes that this form be no more than a pious aspiration. Listen to the startling assertion of a distinguished American divine: "A degree of

agnosticism touching the future life is tolerable to religious men today, which would have been quite intolerable in other days. It is not an accident that in modern sermonic literature the subjects of heaven and hell bulk far less largely than they once did. *In the absence of experimental proof* few present-day thinkers are able to count immortality as other than a more or less well-grounded hope."[1] The situation is a curious one. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that many good church-going people are afraid *that the belief may turn out to be true.* We have an exact parallel in the widespread repugnance to the preaching of that fundamental change of moral and spiritual outlook which goes by the popular name "conversion." This doctrine, it is held, is suitable for the degraded or vicious classes, for men and women of an emotional type, perhaps, who have been flagrant sinners or transgressors of social law, but quite inapplicable to law-abiding, respectable citizens, to the educated and the conventionally "good." But now it was precisely to these latter classes that Christ preached the doctrine, and it was their aversion to it that drew from Him His denunciation of Pharisee and

[1] A. C. McGiffert: *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, p. 163.

Sadducee. Here, then, are two great religious ideas which provoke annoyance and resentment on the part of many apparently religious persons, and the question is: Why? The more one turns the matter over in one's mind, the more the conviction grows that the same psychological cause is at work in both cases. Many turn away from certainty of a future life and from the demand which brooks no denial for a profound transformation of their minds, for the same reason; *acceptance of either idea would inevitably lead to a far-reaching disturbance of their normal, every-day lives, to a complete reconstruction of their moral and social world.* But as the years pass, the dull weight of custom, the inert, mechanical, and automatic force of convention, makes such a reversion of their normal existence a task to be evaded with all the stratagems at their command. Hence they make a compromise. They will not deny that within limits the Christian theory of repentance has its rights, but it must not interfere unduly with the claims of use and wont. So, too, with the idea of a future life. That also must not be denied, yet it must not be asserted, as if it were a fact like the law of gravitation, or like any of the data of experience, because if it were so asserted and accepted, they would be com-

pelled to regard themselves and those about them in an altogether different light. They would awake to the claim of unsuspected duties and tasks. They would see their every act to be fraught with a significance unimaginably great. To escape such a revolution the idea of immortality must be lessened of its dynamic meaning, and its revolutionary power must be kept in check.

But this method of dealing with a great principle brings its own Nemesis. When, through some painful bereavement, the soul is awakened to the need for certainty, for some satisfying conception of the world into which the loved one has passed, nothing offers that can stand the scrutiny of the anxious heart, beset, as it is, with a host of questions that now clamour for an answer. How intently the mind strains into the darkness and vacancy to catch a gleam of living light! Where are the dead? How can they exist without a body? What is the meaning of resurrection? When will it be and how? Do the departed pass to the judgment of God immediately after death, or do they wait in a disembodied state for a public and formal assize at the last day? Do they inhabit other worlds? If so, as these worlds are constantly perishing, must not discarnate spirits migrate from world

to world? How are we to conceive of the employments of those who have passed over? Are they near at hand or remote from us? Shall there be a meeting between loved ones again and mutual recognition or will not those who have passed over first have advanced to higher planes where the weakness or immaturity of those who come later may not reach? What kind of a sphere is it into which has gone that tender and loving spirit so dear to us on earth? Will there be friendly faces to offer a welcome to the newcomer? Or is it an infinite void where in utter loneliness the spirit lives out its life shut up with the memories of its past? And when the intellect fails to create new perplexities, the imagination conjures up a myriad phantoms to terrify and to confuse.

The lesson such experiences should teach us is to get face to face with this problem and to come to terms with it. Sooner or later the hour when we shall be forced to face it will befall us, and then we may be in no condition to summon our souls to order and certainly we shall have lost the spiritual benefits of self-discipline and preparation. What a pathetic and even tragic circumstance is the fact that around us are thousands of men and women who all their lifetime are subject to bondage through fear of

The most marvelous thing is the indifference people have about it

death either for themselves or for others! And yet no true or worthy life can be lived till fear is trampled underfoot. We can do our work in peace and dignity only when we can say with Victor Hugo: "Death is not the dreary finish to life; it is its prolongation; my work is only begun," or with Emerson: "All that I have seen leads me to trust God for what I have not seen."

Outside religious circles, there are great varieties of attitude toward our problem. To begin with, there are the indifferent who hardly ever think of the matter and who spend no little energy in keeping it at arm's length. Why worry, they say, about death till death comes? One world at a time. We shall know all about it time enough; just now business and home, art and science, politics and social life can fill every moment. This appears to be a state of mind as unscientific as it is unnatural and impermanent. It is unnatural, for man is in essence a moral being, that is, he acts with a view to an end, to the accomplishment or enjoyment of something in the future. If man is not this, he is no better than the non-rational animal. The future to "a being of large discourse, able to look before and after," has a significance for the present, whether that fu-

ture is only ten minutes ahead or ten years or a possible eternity. Indeed the present has no meaning except with a view to the future. Says Pascal: "The immortality of the soul is a thing which concerns us so mightily, which touches us so deeply, that it is necessary to have lost all feeling in order to be indifferent about it. All our actions and thoughts must take different paths according as there will be or will not be eternal goods to be hoped for, so that it is impossible to do anything with intelligence and judgment if it is not regulated by the view of that point which ought to be our final object."[1] Poets and moralists have often compared human life to a journey. Is it a sign of sound judgment or of prudence to entertain no curiosity about how the journey will end, whether in a black gulf of oblivion or in shining fields, and happy company and a sense of freedom and refreshment? But normal or abnormal, such a condition of mind is not fixed. It is at the mercy of a thousand accidents. At any moment the indifferent soul may be smitten by mortal loss, and awake to the agony of a parting that seems eternal. We may be believers or sceptics, but indifferentists we cannot permanently be.

[1] *Pensées.*

There are others who while not indifferent to the life beyond the grave are content to say: "I do not know." Huxley, who invented the word "agnostic" to describe this mental attitude, maintained that as a scientific man he was unable either to affirm or to deny immortality. If any one says that the mind persists after the dissolution of the brain, the pure scientist must ask, How do you know? On the other hand, if any one denies such persistence, again the question must be, How do you know? Theoretically, such a position is tenable, practically it is not. Huxley himself could not carry his doctrine through amid the sad realities of experience. In reply to a letter of Charles Kingsley, who wrote him words of comfort on the loss of a dear child, the man of science flung over his agnostic doctrine and took refuge in a wondrous faith. "The ledger of the Almighty," he wrote, "is strictly kept, and every one of us has the balance of his operations paid over to him at the end of every minute of his existence." Of course, he leaves himself open to his own query: How do you know? Are the pessimists all wrong? Are there no monstrous wrongs inflicted on the innocent? In a world such as this, given over to intolerable miseries, to bitter sufferings that often fall on the noblest and the

most self-sacrificing of their kind, what scientific justification is there for the doctrine that the Almighty pays to every man at the end of every minute of his existence exactly what he deserves? Yet at bottom Huxley is right. God is just and in the end His justice will be manifested to every moral intelligence in the universe. But this is not the language of science. It is the prophetic insight of faith. Huxley solved the problem practically for himself by taking Aristotle's advice. He lived as if he were immortal. His ethics was the ethics of an eternal being. In other words, he was an agnostic in name only, though his contemporaries in the heat of conflict often misunderstood him.

The truth is, we must live, and we must live by some kind of belief or disbelief. Now either the soul persists after death or it does not. These are the alternatives, there is no other. You may ignore the whole question, and even pour contempt on those who expend thought upon it, but you do not thereby get rid of either horn of the dilemma, the great Either—Or on which hang interests unspeakably momentous. Immortality is either a fact or it is a falsehood. Do you say: Granted, but I am in no position to prove it to be one or other, therefore I can

make no affirmation either by way of belief or disbelief. Very well, but *you are living as if one or other were true.* Logically you may be entitled to the name "agnostic," but in actual practice you are a believer or a disbeliever. Thus in the very centre of your life there is a profound contradiction; thought and conduct, logic and practice go different roads, and you are content to be and to do what you are unable to justify at the bar of reason. Is it in this lame and impotent conclusion that a doctrine of agnosticism must land us? It is impossible to see that it can do otherwise. Only the elect few, however, are likely to live as if they were immortal, if all the time they suspect themselves to be only mortal. The majority will more probably decline upon a matter-of-fact point of view and will regard the immediate present as their true and only concern. In other words, they will act on the belief that the soul is not immortal. Renouncing vain dreams of the future, they will be prone to renounce as quixotic and inappropriate to such poor and insignificant beings as men are, all those ideals of self-sacrifice, of devotion unto death to some great cause which have till now been "the fountain-light of all our day, the master-light of all our seeing." In a word, agnosticism is simply

a refuge from the inconveniences of open and frank discussion and as such is a sign of intellectual pusillanimity. Hence bolder spirits decline the shelter from the storm of critical debate, and come out in the open as the champions of dogmatic materialism. Among these may be named Professor Haeckel, Professor Metchnikoff, and Mr. Edward Clodd.

Professor Haeckel lays down three propositions with all the dogmatic assurance and absolute finality of an ancient Church Council: 1, there is no living, personal God; 2, the will is not free; 3, the soul is not immortal. These assertions deny the three fundamental truths of religion which from his point of view are the "three buttresses of superstition." All the proofs of arguments for life after death are overturned by the conclusions of modern science, and these in turn may be summed up in the now accepted commonplace of physiology that our mental life is a function of the grey matter of the brain, from which it follows that the function vanishes with the dissipation of its organ. To suppose that thought can survive the brain would be equivalent to supposing that the steam in a tea-kettle could survive the destruction of the tea-kettle. Man is simply a creature of the natural order. His brain is a

highly organized composite of certain chemical elements over which gleams a temporary phosphorescence, a by-product of molecular activity, and this by-product we call consciousness. To Professor Haeckel it seems as absurd to say that digestion can continue after the stomach has been destroyed as to say that mind can persist after the brain has perished. He does not hesitate to affirm that "the belief in the immortality of the soul is a dogma which is in hopeless contradiction with the most solid confirmed truths of modern science."[1] And Mr. Joseph McCabe, his English disciple, holds that when we know more about the brain's structure and chemistry we may find that they are perfectly competent to account for all mental processes. Metchnikoff in his *Nature of Man* with equal hardihood maintains that "a future life has no single argument to support it, and the non-existence of life after death is in consonance with the whole range of human knowledge."

Mr. Edward Clodd, a well-known contributor to English "rationalist" literature, was asked in 1915 by the editor of the *International Psychic Gazette* to send a message of comfort to those bereaved by the war. He replied: "As the evidence that we possess seems to me conclusive

[1] *Riddle of the Universe*, p. 210.

against survival after death, I can say nothing on the lines which you suggest." [1]

Now all these pronouncements are specimens of sheer dogmatism. Where is the evidence that disproves the persistence of personality after death? All that is offered us is another dogma about the existence of "substance" which is named "ether"; mind and matter are simply forms or aspects of the one eternal substance. Throughout the entire universe, in matter and in mind, there rules the great abstract law of mechanical causality. "The monism of the universe based on the law of substance proclaims the absolute dominion of the great eternal iron laws." These abstract notions are in no sense evidence for or against anything. We can sum them up by saying that the soul's continuance after death is impossible because it is opposed to the monistic assumptions of Haeckel's philosophy. The dogmatic materialist not only can bring forward no evidence against immortality, he refuses to consider the evidence for it which is being slowly accumulated by men of the first distinction in science and philosophy. Nothing so betrays the narrowness of a certain type of specialized mind as the determination to ignore the evidence of psychic research on the

[1] Quoted by J. A. Hill in *Man Is a Spirit*, p. 13.

ground that such evidence avails nothing against the fundamental principle: *consciousness is a function of brain.* When the advocate of the soul allows that for many minds trained in laboratory methods the only satisfactory answer is to isolate the phenomena, to show proofs of the activity of mind after the material organism has perished, the dogmatic materialist declines to follow his chosen method of observation and experiment, on the ground that the evidence so obtained can be referred either to fraud, or to the tricks of the subconscious factor in mind. When such men as Henry Sidgwick, Arthur J. Balfour, William James, F. W. H. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge, Camille Flammarion, Charles Richet, James H. Hyslop, William Crookes—to name only a few—have asserted after many years' investigation and study that at least there is a great psychological problem on the solution of which may depend the most vital interests of mankind, one may suppose that a policy of ridicule or of sullen silence on the part of the dogmatic materialist will not avail and that sooner or later he will be forced to face the evidence and to offer some coherent, intelligible, and acceptable interpretation of it. When that day comes his dogmatism will vanish, and he will discover that the

universe being much more mysterious than he had imagined, his categories of thought must needs be enlarged so as to include the new phenomena. As James remarks, the universe will be shown to be a more many-sided affair than any sect, even the scientific sect, allows for.

In spite, however, of the various influences making against belief in a life beyond, there are cheering signs of a turn in the spiritual tide. The sufferings and bereavements of the war have recalled the minds of men to the underlying realities of existence. The old yet ever-new questions demand an answer: Is there a God? And if so what kind of a God is He? Has He spoken to man? Is there a soul? If so, what is it? For what purpose are we on this planet? What is the meaning and end of life? And no question is more poignant, more laden with the soul's hopes and fears than this: After death—what? Hence a new and living interest in the presuppositions, the conditions, the possibility, the nature of the future life, has been created. Ancient solutions, time-worn arguments no longer tell. The metaphysical theories and ecclesiastical doctrines that satisfied our grandfathers are as broken reeds today. Yet if an age is to be judged by the books which it writes and reads, never were men more anxious to gain

some certain footing amid the uncertainties of thought about the other side of death than they are at the present time. It is becoming increasingly difficult to force belief by coercive authority on minds touched by the modern spirit; nevertheless, the failure of civilization, the instability attaching to what seemed the solid realities of experience, have driven thought and hope beyond the earthly horizon in search of an abiding foundation. The yoke of tradition is broken, but the free wind of inspiration is blowing on the highways of the world, and new hopes are stirring within the human heart.

The rise of the Psychical Research movement marked by the founding of the English Society in 1882 under the presidentship of Professor Henry Sidgwick, probably the most judicial mind in the England of his day, called attention to a vast mass of facts ignored by academic science which point to the existence of supernormal powers of certain peculiarly endowed persons called "psychics" or "sensitives." It was believed that science was failing in its duty to the world as long as these obscure phenomena were allowed to remain in the hands of ignorance, fraud, or charlatanry. Such men as Mr. W. E. Gladstone, Sir O. Lodge, F. W. H. Myers, John Ruskin, Pro-

fessor Barrett, Professor James, Sir W. Crookes, Mr. Gerald W. Balfour, Mr. Andrew Lang, Bishop Boyd Carpenter took a great interest in the work, and some of them have made distinct contributions to psychological science. Owing mainly to the credulity and superstition of ordinary spiritualism, and to the fraudulent devices of many so-called "mediums," the movement in America lags far behind the English movement both in popular support and in the type of mind enlisted in its advocacy. As an illustration of the conventional spirit that reigns in academic circles in America, it may be mentioned that when some years ago a sum of money was bequeathed to a certain university for the investigation of psychic phenomena, according to the most approved scientific methods, the legacy was not accepted until other seats of learning had been sounded as to whether the use of money for such a purpose was seemly and appropriate! The aversion of the great body of scientific men to psychical research arises partly from *à priori* prejudice against any doctrine which if proved true would shatter the framework of their views as "to the principles that govern the universe," and partly, as Professor Barrett says, "from a disregard of the essential difference between

physical and psychical science. The only gateways of knowledge according to the former are the familiar organs of sense, whereas the latter indicates that these gateways can be occasionally transcended. The main object of physical science is to measure and forecast, and from its phenomena life and free will must be eliminated. Psychical phenomena can neither be measured nor forecast, as in their case the influence of life and volition can neither be eliminated nor foreseen."[1] Psychic phenomena may be divided into (1) physical, (2) mental. Some of the physical type are so astounding as to be incredible, though attested by men of the highest scientific standing and of blameless integrity. Among these may be mentioned: (*a*) the tipping of tables with but slight contact of the hands of a certain number of sitters, (*b*) the moving of tables without any contact whatever, (*c*) the increase of weight in a table so that the muscular strength of a strong man could not raise it from the ground, (*d*) the floating of the table in mid-air during which the psychic increases in weight by an amount practically equal to the weight of the table, (*e*) rappings in or on a table or on the walls of a room by which intelligible messages have been

[1] *Psychical Research*, p. 34.

spelled out.[1] These rappings vary in loudness from the slightest taps to blows which shake the room as though a sledge-hammer were being wielded by an invisible operator.

But however impressive to the average mind the physical manifestations may be, the mental phenomena are likely to be those that will yield the best results. At all events, these latter appeal strongly to those interested first and foremost in survival. They consist of communications purporting to come from deceased persons through an intermediary spirit called "the control" who has possession of the psychic's organism for the time being. The method may be either oral or written while the psychic is either in a condition of trance or fully conscious. Hardly a week passes that a volume does not appear containing discussions, discourses, and even highly complicated and artistic stories which have come by automatic speech or writing, or through the agency of some mechanical device, such as the planchette or the ouija board. An attempt will be made to appraise the value of this evidence in another part of this book. Here it suffices to say that as the experiments

[1] Those interested in the physical phenomena of spiritism may be referred to C. Flammarion, *Les Forces naturelles inconnues;* Dr. Crawford's *Reality of Psychic Phenomena;* Von Schrenck-Notzing, *Materialisations-phänomene.*

go on and the experimenters grow in skill, messages have been received so convincing in their proof of identity *to the persons receiving them,* that some of the most critical and cautious observers have abandoned their doubts and have proclaimed themselves believers in a life after death.

With the new interest in the possibility of a post-mortem existence and under the strain of intolerable grief created by the war, many unhappy hearts have tried to find comfort in the supposed messages from loved ones purporting to come through mediums who make money out of their alleged or genuine gift and who are, therefore, tempted to give something in return for payment. It may be taken as a safe rule—suspect the motives of any "medium" who accepts money and at the same time refuses to put himself or herself under rigid scientific control. To those in grief and anxious to get into touch with their loved friends who have passed over, I would earnestly say: Avoid all professional mediums, clairvoyants, and crystal-gazers, and communicate with the American Psychical Research Society, the officials of which will be happy to give wise and trustworthy counsel.

Lastly, the expansion and, as it were, de-

materialization of the physical universe indirectly makes for belief in the spirituality and abiding work of personality. Modern science builds the mighty fabric of organized knowledge in what turns out to be supersensible realities. Matter which the popular mind conceives to be solid and substantial is not what it seems; on the contrary, it contradicts all that is usually asserted about it. It resolves itself into centres of electrical energy. All matter, however different in form, has a common basis. The ultimate atoms, we are now told, consist of units of negative electricity, and of an equal number of units of positive electricity; nothing further has been as yet discovered as to their nature. This solid unyielding framework of things fades away into realities that can be apprehended only by the speculative intellect. There are depths below depths. Ether, a highly speculative reality, believed to be present in all space, and to penetrate the densest forms of ordinary matter, makes possible the propagation of heat, light, and electrical action. Now the more mysterious and unsearchable the ways of nature become, the less incredible is the suspicion that there is in man a force indestructible like all other forces and that over him death has not dominion. Mark the changed attitude toward

"miracle" and the "supernatural." These question-begging terms no longer affright us. We know today that miracles do happen, if by miracle is meant, as Augustine says, not an event contrary to nature but only to nature as we know it. We feel sure that, however extraordinary the event, with wider knowledge it would be found to fall under the operation of laws of wider scope than any we are as yet familiar with. As the universe grows upon us in depth, in subtle refinement, in approximation to what we call spirit, the negations of materialism lose their weight, and the great idea is taking possession of many thoughtful persons that not matter but mind is the ultimate reality; that, therefore, not death but life is the last word and everlasting fact.

CHAPTER III

THE DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY

THERE is a very popular belief, fostered by much of our hymnology and preaching, that everybody is intensely desirous of living on after death; and that even the few who have abandoned hope of doing so, cannot wholly suppress the wish that it were otherwise. Hence,—so the argument runs,—a desire so universal cannot but imply the existence of a corresponding reality. "The heart has reasons which the Reason cannot understand. The philosopher in rummaging through the treasure-house of the soul finds the idea of immortality and also the desire for it. He cannot help asking if this desire for immortality may not be evidence of man's capacity for it. If there is an appetite for life everlasting, the chances are that the appetite will not go unsatisfied. If the heart's aspirations keep leaping toward eternity, it is not unlikely that eternity has some blessed thing in store."[1]

[1] C. E. Jefferson: *Why We May Believe in Life After Death*, pp. 137, 138.

This argument unquestionably makes a powerful appeal to the emotions; but the emotions are not given us in order to guide us to truth. They have their place in strict subordination to reason. They can stimulate the rational powers and lend dynamic force to the will, but by themselves they are no criterion of truth. It is not their function to form a pathway to reality. We shall see a little later what element of truth lies in the contention. It is so obscure indeed that it is liable to create illusion and foster unwarranted expectations.

But it may be well to say first a few words about the primary assertion that the desire for immortality is universal. All men, we are told, long for personal continuance after death.

Do they? It is true that the majority of religions have held up the hope of immortality before the eyes of men, yet the Hebrew faith, as the prophets proclaimed it, and the religion of Buddha in its purest form renounced the thought, the one teaching that man's real destiny was limited by the grave, the other promising as the prize to be won, Nirvana, in which consciousness shall be "as a blown-out lamp." The pessimism of the East, which looks forward to sheer annihilation, has invaded the West, and philosophers like Schopenhauer and poets like

Thomson and Swinburne have glorified death as the last and highest word of the universe to its creature, man.

Leconte de Lisle, the popular French poet, apostrophizes death as man's truest friend: "Thou, O Divine Death, into which everything returns and is blotted out of being, receive thy children into thy serene bosom; enfranchize us from time, number and states, and give back to us the repose which life has troubled."

Mr. H. G. Wells, who has exchanged agnosticism for an ardent and even belligerent theism, regards with supreme indifference personal continuance after death. "Many people," he says, "seem to find the prospect of a final personal death unendurable. This impresses me as egotism. I have no such appetite for a separate immortality."[1] Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, however much he differs from Mr. Wells on other matters, agrees with him here. "I have a strong feeling," he remarks, "that I shall be glad when I am dead and done for—scrapped at last to make room for somebody better, cleverer, more perfect than myself."[2]

Professor J. H. Leuba informs us that of the highly educated men of scientific temper to

[1] *God the Invisible King*, preface, p. xix.
[2] Quoted by J. H. Holmes *Is Death the End?*, p. 314.

whom he put the question whether they desired immortality, 27 per cent. did not desire it at all, 39 per cent. desired it moderately, and only 34 per cent. admitted that they desired it intensely.

Moreover, when appeal is made to the passion for life we must not forget that sad phenomenon of our time, the passion for death. Sociological experts tell us that before the war suicide was alarmingly on the increase. It is obvious that only the man who has convinced himself that death ends all can risk the chance in which so many of his fellow-men believe, that it does not end all, and rather than bear the troubles that he has, prefers those that he knows not of. When some overwhelming calamity, a bitter sorrow or an intolerable shame, overtakes the modern man, he broods on death as a door of escape.

"To die—to sleep—
To sleep! perchance to dream, ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come."

It is the "dreams" that daunt at times the suicide's purpose. If only he could be sure! It is the fear lest, after all, the burden he would lay down may await him behind the veil, that

puzzles his will, and gives pause to his resolve. For one who succeeds in silencing the voice of nature, there are probably many who draw back, unable to face the unknown, because by no means certain that it spells extinction. But must not facts like these modify the notion of a universal desire for a future life?

Yet there is something to be said on the other side. Much of the suppression or renunciation of a wish for personal immortality springs from a false or contracted view of the life beyond. Buddhism was a Gospel of hope to the people of India. It freed them from the intolerable incubus of a non-moral universe, of endless Heavens and Hells, arbitrary in character, which threatened to crush out the spiritual life. Better a thousand times the passionless non-existence of Nirvana than an infinite series of rewards and punishments which had no organic connection with the moral states of the saved or the lost. The same reaction may be found in the history of Christian thought. Schleiermacher, whose influence on modern religious thought has been so far-reaching, is often quoted as an illustration of how a great Christian thinker can get along without any conviction as to a life hereafter. But the motive of his doubt is more significant than the doubt

itself. "The secret selfishness, the hidden earthly sentiment, the manner in which the majority of men picture immortality to themselves, and their longing after that, seem to me irreligious; nay, their wish to be immortal has no foundation but their aversion to the real goal of religion. They have no wish to escape from the familiar limitations and at best long for wider eyes and better limbs. But God speaks to them in the words of Scripture: 'He who loses his life for My sake shall find it.' They might at least try to begin their life for the love of God, to sink their own personality even here and to live in the One and the Whole."

In these noble words we read a rejection of immortality in the interests of religion itself! But may we not conclude that the wish for personal survival would re-emerge, if only this wish could be so formulated as to be worthy alike of man and of God? Not by the destruction of the desire, but by its purification from every taint of meanness and self-seeking, can man rise to his true dignity as an ethical and aspiring personality.

The same principle comes to light in the feeling of Mr. Shaw. He wishes when death comes to make way for somebody better and

abler than himself. Such a thought could only come to one who conceives of the future world as purely static, from which the boundless possibilities of intellectual and spiritual growth are excluded. Mr. Shaw has visions of social betterment, glimpses ideals in art and literature not yet realized, and knows that ethically the goal for which he strives is a flying one. Would he turn away in weariness of soul from a future life where these prophecies might receive progressive fulfilment? It is clear that he is unconsciously carrying over into the world beyond some undissolved residuum of thought belonging to the very orthodoxy which he had imagined himself to have outgrown.

Besides, on this matter there is variety of experience, and names of weight may be quoted on the other side. Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson, whose attitude toward historical Christianity is as critical and at times as hostile as that of Mr. Wells or Mr. Shaw, has written words which show that he stands the poles apart from the current literary conception. "Western optimism in my opinion," he says, "is doomed unless we can believe that there is more significance in individual lives than appears upon the surface; that there is a destiny reserved for them more august than any to which they can

attain in their life of threescore years and ten. On this point I can, of course, speak my own conviction,—the conviction that at the bottom of every human soul, even of those that deny it, there lurks the insatiable hunger for eternity; that we desire, in Browning's phrase, something that will

> 'Make time break
> And let us pent-up creatures through
> Into eternity, our due;'

and that nothing short of this will ever appear, in the long run, once men have begun to think and feel, to be a sufficient justification and apology for the life into which we are born.'' [1]

Mr. Dickinson's conviction is in line with that of the greatest master of poetic art in the nineteenth century. "I can hardly understand," says Tennyson, "how any great imaginative man, who has deeply lived, suffered, thought and wrought, can doubt of the soul's continuous progress in the after-life." [2] James Knowles, the friend of Tennyson, says of him: "His belief in personal immortality was passionate—I think almost the strongest passion he had." [3]

[1] *Religion and Immortality*, p. 43.
[2] Alfred Lord Tennyson: *A Memoir by His Son*, Vol. I, p. 321.
[3] *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1893.

Or take the testimony of Dr. Felix Adler, the honored head of the Ethical Culture Movement, who certainly is not biased by any theological motive: "As for myself I admit that I do not so much desire immortality as that I do not see how I can escape it. If I as an individual am actually under obligation to achieve perfection, if the command, 'Be ye therefore perfect,' is addressed, not only to the human race in general, but to every single member of it (and it is thus that I must interpret the moral imperative), then on moral grounds I do not see how my being can stop short of the attainment marked out for it, of the goal set up for it."[1]

Even in the case of those unhappy souls for whom life has lost its savour and who turn from it in disgust, it may well be questioned whether in every instance the passion for death is the hope of or belief in extinction. Many a suicide has left behind him a pathetic prayer for forgiveness, not from man only, but still more from God, because of the motive of the deed, perhaps unbearable mental or physical pain; perhaps overstrained remorse for some shameful memory, some "rooted sorrow," which no healing hand could "pluck from the brain."

[1] *Life and Destiny*, pp. 38-39.

These prayers, we may well believe, will not go unheard of the Eternal Compassion, but how could they ever have been offered by any one believing that death for him meant eternal unconsciousness? On the contrary, they imply that the suppliant believes that there is a world beyond where he may have to answer for his act, but he feels that he cannot be worse off there than here, and that if misery should befall, at least it will not be the misery that now drowns his being in darkness. And thus it happens that the suicide called to testify against our belief turns out not infrequently to be a witness for it.

On the whole, then, we seem justified in concluding that though the longing for a future life does not characterize all men, nor is always at full tide in the experience of any particular man, yet it does appear, consciously or subconsciously, in the great majority of the race, in one form or another. The desire may thin out into a vague and uncertain inclination toward a vision but dimly apprehended, or it may rise into a burning intensity, as in the experience of the great mystics, in which all finite interests are consumed; but the desire in some degree cannot be denied to be an all but universal possession of humanity. Nor can it be

doubted that many,—and they not among the least critical and reflective of their kind,—find in this belief and hope the only alternative to pessimism, the only rational clue to the riddle of life. It is in the religious history of man that the hope is seen especially to be a normal part of man's spiritual experience. From the animism of the savage up to the most refined belief of civilized man, the idea of immortality has been at work, though at certain epochs and among certain peoples it has fallen under an eclipse. Not only so, but wherever the creative energy of mind has functioned at its loftiest levels of inspiration, as in the prophetic insight of a Plato, a Goethe, or an Emerson, it has been unable to brook the thought that at last its sovereign strength should be laid low in the dust of a non-spiritual nature.

When we have said all this, it still remains to ask what bearing it has upon our problem? I am unable to see that the *desire* for immortality has any direct or vital bearing on the *fact* of immortality. It seems as though both the defenders and the opponents of the doctrine have exaggerated the importance of man's desire for a life in the Beyond, though, of course, for very different reasons. How can our wishes, whatever pragmatic value they may have in our

limited experience, be any true index to the ultimate quality of the universe? How do we know that the order of things is friendly to our longing? The existence of the most insistent longing does not guarantee the reality of the object longed for.

I may desire to write another "Hamlet" or "Faust" or amass a monstrous fortune or achieve a thousand and one wonders that would be eminently serviceable for the world; but what warrant do these yearnings offer that they will find fulfilment? So, too, I may desire to overleap the barriers of the grave, yet what avails it, if the natural order says "no"? Besides if I desire a thing, it can only be because I set a value on it, and this I cannot do unless I know or suspect something as to its nature. If I wish for a continuance of my personal consciousness after death it must be because I conceive that in some way such continuance will minister to my well-being. How do I know this? Who has explored the undiscovered country and has returned to report upon its nature and characteristics? In short, turn the matter as we may in our minds, we cannot avoid the conclusion that our desire to live after death is simply an enlargement of primitive racial instincts, born of our ancestral reactions to the pressure

of natural forces. We want to live on because on the whole we feel life is good.

What now about the desire, not for life but for death as a final fact? Do you say: I have feasted well at the banquet of life; why should I not make way for another guest? I am surfeited with all that life had to give, aesthetic and sensuous enjoyment, the pleasures of the intellect, the happiness of loving and of being loved. I am more than satisfied, and now, farewell!

"Asking no heaven, we fear no fabled hell.
Life is a feast and we have banqueted—
Shall not the worms as well?

"The after-silence when the feast is o'er,
And void the places where the minstrels stood,
Differs in nought from what has been before,
And is nor ill, nor good." [1]

To use Mr. Wells's phrase: "This impresses me as egotism." What right have you to imagine that the universe is so constructed as to gratify your wishes, created by disgust or indifference for existence? Why should the world-whole be supposed to be governed by your sense of sensuous and intellectual repletion? What about the myriads who have suffered per-

[1] William Watson: *The Great Misgiving.*

haps the most tragic fate that can befall the soul, the crushing out, that is to say, of intellectual energies by the brute force of circumstance, the sacrifice of all that is divine in life by the slow corrosion of sordid cares and mean necessities? Has the universe nothing to say to these victims of evil fortune except to award them the crowning sadness of a contemptuous dismissal to the black night of nothingness? If we could convince ourselves of this, we must resign all hope of understanding the meaning of life, and the world, ethically considered, is no longer, in Carlylian phrase, a God's cosmos, but a Devil's chaos.

If it be said that the desire to survive death is low and selfish, a vulgar clinging to our own poor, petty, and constricted interests, the answer must be that at its best our revolt against the extinction of the rational spirit is motived by the agonizing reflection that *others* whom we have known and loved, and whose history has been a benediction to the world, should, in the plenitude of their moral and rational powers, be doomed to annihilation. It is against this unintelligible decree that our noblest instincts rise up in passionate protest. Assure me that these other lives, so noble and so fair, so rich in the beauteous things of the

spirit, shall not be quenched in the dust of death, and if need be, I shall renounce my wish for my own continuance, and be content to have it so. "When a man passionately refuses to believe that the 'wages of virtue' can be dust, it is often less from any private reckoning about his own wages than from a disinterested aversion to a universe so fundamentally irrational that 'good for the individual' is not ultimately identified with universal good."[1]

We conclude, then, that the desire for the after-life, when purified of its baser alloy, is more consonant with man's moral and spiritual integrity than indifference or aversion, yet of itself cannot constitute a ground of belief. It is a suggestion, but for the basis of our conviction we must look elsewhere.

On the other hand, our desires have their place in the selection of the ends for which we live. One man has as much a right to wish for a future life, in which any virtue acquired here may go on to perfection, as another man has to desire wealth and social place in this world. In both cases, the ideals set before the mind are constituted by hopes and fears. Were there no wish for an after-existence, the problem of human destiny would soon cease to engage our

[1] Henry Sidgwick: *The Methods of Ethics*, p. 504.

interest; it would die from sheer inanition. A worthy ambition to live on after death is not the sign of a moral weakling or of a nature cast in a negative mould. It would be in harmony with an optimistic view of the world to say that such a desire ought not to be baulked of its realization, but whether this is so or not must be determined by the findings of ethical reflection, of spiritual intuition, and of such discoveries as deeper knowledge of the psychic depths of personality may reveal.

CHAPTER IV

HINDRANCES TO BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

Death has been called "the great commonplace," but it is a commonplace that never fails to awaken our astonishment. And perhaps never so poignantly as today has this challenge stirred the hearts of men. The premature cutting off of millions that formed the flower of the race has, as might be expected, created the most painful reactions in the general mind, and men are asking as they have never asked before: What is Death? Is there anything beyond the veil? If there is something, what is it? Bitter and painful experiences are driving multitudes to put these questions, and even in professedly religious circles, the tragic fact is that the oracles are dumb, and that no articulate answer is forthcoming. All unconsciously to themselves, their traditional faith in a future life has been slowly undermined and when the day of adversity has come, they find themselves without a refuge, staring into the black pit of despair. Doubtless in all ages belief in immortality has been shadowed with difficulty and mis-

giving. The obvious phenomena of death, the inability of the mind to visualize the transition from an incarnate to a discarnate state, or to picture the form which life assumes in the world beyond—these have always been sinister arguments even among the uncultivated. Moreover, immortality has from time to time shared the fate of other great beliefs, such as God and Freedom, in accordance with the ruling forces of any given age. In the period of the Enlightenment, for example, which taught man's native ability to obey the moral law, the autonomy of his will, and in a word his moral independence, it is clear that a doctrine of immortality formulated in terms of rewards and punishments could have no standing. What need of such extraneous supports, if man has the power to become virtuous of himself, and has an inborn tendency to realize the good? No wonder that the century which had identified immortality with a scheme of "prize-morality" should find the first incredible when it found the second superfluous.

Now if we look back on the past fifty or sixty years, we shall find, in addition to those fundamental handicaps to belief arising from the domination exercised over us by the senses and the failure of imagination to conceive or picture

the immaterial, certain specific causes at work which account for the present widespread doubt and denial. These causes, I believe, will be found to be three: 1. The breakdown of religious authority as embodied in codes and laws and institutions, and more specifically, the dissolution of the traditional forms in which faith in immortality has been expressed, under the combined influence of advancing ethical insight and deeper knowledge of the New Testament. 2. The rise of modern materialism, which, in the popular mind, is bound up with the triumphs of natural science; and more particularly, that form of materialism which finds in consciousness simply a function of the brain, and therefore sharing the fate of the brain. 3. The rise and spread of Socialism among the wage-earning classes, and more especially the doctrine of Karl Marx and his followers, with its materialistic conception of history and its resultant denial of spirit in man.

I. THE BREAKDOWN OF THE TRADITIONAL FORM OF THE IMMORTAL HOPE

Whatever we may hold as to the origin of the belief in a future life—and it is probable that this origin is to be found in the ghosts which

visited the dreams of savage men—it is not to be denied that the belief itself has sunk its roots deep in the soil of religion and has drawn thence its tenacity and power. Hence it has become a *religious* phenomenon, and the hope which it offers to the human heart is shaped by the specific religion in which it appears; nor is it at all certain that these ancient beliefs did not rest, in many instances, on good and genuine experiences, and we may say: as is the religion so is the faith in immortality; the higher the religion the more spiritual is its doctrine of the future.

Now when we turn to the Christian religion we are at once struck by the contrast between the teaching of its Founder and that of His disciples. The characteristic features of Christ's treatment of the question are unwavering and sublime assurance of the fact of immortality with great reserve as to its nature and precise conditions. Only a few of His sayings, and two or three of His parables enshrine His convictions about human destiny. Yet He has so transfigured the beliefs and conceptions of all who had gone before Him that Christianity has been justly called the religion of immortality. The paradox is resolved when we remember that it was not His teaching only but

far more his post-mortem appearances to His followers that created the dynamic of His religion. Over against the apparent meagreness of Christ's words stands the rich luxuriance of visions and doctrines and hopes as seen reflected in the writings of Evangelist and Apostle. Around the simple belief in continued communion with God beyond death, thus gathered in the course of time a complicated series of beliefs, taken over for the most part from Jewish tradition and environment, and handed down to the modern world as moral and religious truth. It is the presence of this Jewish Apocalyptic element in the teaching of the churches that explains why so many turn away from all thought about the future life as futile and hopeless. Moreover, it is to be noted that the idea of Heaven in the Book of Revelation reflects the socio-political life of the time. Heaven is pictured as a palace with spacious gardens and golden gates, God as a Potentate clothed with might and majesty, and man as a being prostrate before Him in reverent subjection. There are, indeed, other elements created by the new spirit of the Gospel, but they are incidental and subordinate. "People do not believe in a future life," writes a well-known Anglican scholar, "because the forms

in which the belief has been presented to their minds, seem, on the one hand, to be intellectually untenable, and on the other, to be unattractive or even repellent. Traditional pictures of Hell seem morally revolting; while the Heaven of Sunday School teaching or popular hymnology is a place which the plain man does not believe to exist, and which he would not want to go to, if it did."[1] Doubtless the symbols of the Book of Revelation, with its pearly gates and golden streets, its strange and monstrous animal figures, its emphasis on ecstatic worship as the sole occupation of the heavenly world, in brief, its non-human quality of life, has had much to do with the present revolt against ecclesiastical teaching about a state of future existence. A singular confirmation of this judgment is supplied in the private letter of an American soldier who was a member of the Foreign Legion and who laid down his life in the war. He writes as follows:

"Living as we do, with death as a constant companion, has but deepened my conviction of something after this life. But it has destroyed my belief (what belief I may have had) in the conventional heaven and hell of theology. With all reverence, I can think

[1] B. H. Streeter in Essays on *Immortality*, p. 135.

of nothing more deadly than an eternity devoted to singing, playing, and adoration. A man's soul must include his capacity for action, work, his creative faculties, I think; to me our power to imagine and create is one of the evidences of God in us. That, and the numbers of young men just on the threshold of their creative life—musicians, writers, painters—men who could look at a river and vision and build power plants and factories; yes, soldiers who could look at a map and vision armies in place and manœuvring—these men, killed, utterly destroyed in a second by a few ounces of explosives, have made impossible the belief that all that their minds held is definitely lost to humanity. I believe that death is followed by life as sunset is followed by sunrise, but by a life much more closely related to this one than theological dogma would have us believe. . . ."

But other and deeper causes have been at work.

To begin with, thoughtful persons have come to see that death has been overestimated. Its significance for man's spiritual history has occupied too great a place in thought and feeling. How many earnest spirits like Dr. Johnson have all their lifetime lived under a dark cloud through the fear that death settled their moral status in the universe for all eternity! Popular thought conceives of death as ushering in the soul to the presence of the Judge of all, there

to undergo trial and receive fit sentence. Thus death which is an episode in the physical order, a biological event, is transformed into a spiritual process, with resultant illusions and confusions both in thought and life. Yet a little reflection would show the unreality of this way of picturing the meaning of death. If here and now on "this bank and shoal of time" I am not in the presence of God, then nowhere throughout the entire cosmos can I ever find Him, or feel His eye upon me. Five minutes after death where am I? From the standpoint of spiritual reality, precisely where I was five minutes before death. Doubtless death as a physical process, like all other physical processes, affects the life of the spirit, for it implies that the physical organism has been dropped, and that life is lived under new conditions. But it is one thing to say this and another and a very different thing to say that a bodily event has power to work as by magic a profound transformation in all man's spiritual relationships, in the very texture of the soul-life. This is to assert what cannot stand the scrutiny of ethics or of science. The main significance of death lies in its power to change our environment. And when traditional theology passes beyond death and tries to forecast the history of the

soul in the after-world, it forms a scheme or framework within which for ages the hopes and fears of men have moved, but from which the majority of educated people today turn away in utter disbelief. They cannot say with Dante that the pillars of an enduring Hell have been built upon the love and justice of God. They do not believe in eternal torture, that is, in pain that has no meaning and no end, nor do they find credible, the resurrection of the physical body, a final Day of Judgment on which human history will be finally wound up, to be followed by a static Heaven and Hell, or a Purgatory that is at once artificial and unethical. If the after-life is to be worthy of man's reverent trust and hope, it can only be by our applying to it those moral categories which have been found to work in our experience here and now. One of these great formative principles is that of growth. Man's personality is never a finished article; it is a growing organism. Now to suppose that the world beyond the grave is the scene of irrevocable woe or bliss in which a man enters at death is to suppose something that offends the moral sense, because it contradicts all that which our experience in this world certifies. As Dr. James Ward remarks: "That a man should pass at once from

earth to heaven or hell seems irrational and inequitable; and the lapse of ages of suspended consciousness, if this were conceivable, would not diminish this discontinuity."[1] Nor is the official doctrine of Purgatory in any better case. For this doctrine is *not* the rational and acceptable view of Plato which reappears in the teaching of such men as Clement of Alexandria and Origen that the suffering in Purgatory is disciplinary and is profitable for the correction of morally imperfect habits and for the purification from the stains contracted through the defilements of this life; it is the irrational and unacceptable theory that at death souls destined for Heaven are in the very instant of death morally transformed, wholly turned away from all evil and wholly given to all good, but pass into Purgatory for a space to expiate in pain the debt which they owe to justice of God for the sins committed in their fleshly life. These theories of popular religious thought, whether Roman or Protestant, are no longer possible to cultivated men, because they deny that the history of the soul is an organic development in which there is a continuity between the higher and the lower stages of being, and in which spiritual progress is inconceivable

[1] *The Realm of Ends*, p. 406.

apart from decisions and choices of the moral will. The most clamant need at the present time in the sphere of religion is a bold and vigorous effort at reconstructing the current conceptions of the future life, by sweeping as rubbish to the void the pictures and fallacies of Judaic imagination stimulated by Pagan thought, and by building a fresh and still more compelling and realistic view of man's destiny upon the teaching of Christ and of those who stood nearest Him in spirit, and upon the nature of man's higher life as disclosed by modern reflection. And those who reject belief in survival because they no longer expect to hear the trumpet blast heralding the Last Day, or to see a great white throne with its apparitors of doom, or to emerge from the grave clad in a body which they had laid aside not without some measure of relief, may be reminded that faith in immortality was in possession ages before these thoughts entered the human mind, and therefore can exist when they have passed into the limbo of oblivion.

II. THE RISE AND INFLUENCE OF SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM

Materialism or the doctrine that all phenomena, whether physical or psychical, are

phenomena of matter in motion, has behind it a long history, going back to the speculations of the ancient Greek philosophers, Empedocles and Democritus, and finding its poet in the Roman Lucretius, whose motive in writing his *On the Nature of Things* was to free men from the fear of Orcus with its eternal gloom and suffering, by showing that the soul, made of attenuated matter, vanished when its constituent particles were dissolved. In the nineteenth century Tyndall startled his contemporaries by his assertion that in matter was to be discerned "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life." The history of the universe has been the history of atoms in motion, and within these atoms lie all the forces that create light, heat, electricity, and so forth, each being convertible into the rest. Everything that has come to be, mental or physical, lay germinally in the primeval atom. The modern phase of the doctrine substitutes units of electricity for the hard atoms of the older thinkers. But this does not alter the essence of the argument. These ultimate entities constitute the stuff of which the universe is made. The concentration of so many brilliant minds on the physical sciences, and the resultant emphasis on the mechanical

aspect of nature, combined with the revolutionary doctrine of Darwin which seemed to complete the materialistic argument by the proof that man has been developed by an endless number of minute variations in virtue of the law of natural selection from his pre-human ancestry, threatened to sweep the last generation off its feet and to make materialism triumphant among all educated people. But idealism in a variety of forms during the past quarter of a century has, it is claimed, turned the tide, and on all sides we are assured that materialism is dead or dying, at most dragging out a precarious existence in quarters innocent of philosophical speculation, and ignorant of the real situation in the higher thought of our time. A lecturer in connection with the Ethical Culture Movement has recently told us that "no longer is it left to theology to decry materialism. Science herself has sounded its death-knell. Today it is difficult to find a genuinely scientific champion of its thesis as it was fifty years ago to find an opponent."[1] An Anglican theologian in a book just published assures us that "materialism is a 'creed outworn.' Fifty years ago, when physical science was making such

[1] *Faith in a Future Life*, by A. Martin, p. 44.

rapid advances, it was fashionable. Today it has ceased to be fashionable and is thoroughly discredited."[1]

The writer of the article on "Materialism" in Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* avers that "materialism as a dogmatic system hardly survives in philosophical circles, although in alliance with Secularism it is no doubt influential among certain sections of the working classes and often forms the creed of the half-educated specialist."[2] "In dogmatic form," writes Dr. F. R. Tennant, "materialism is to be found today, perhaps, only in the literature of secularist 'free' thought. Even the monism of E. Haeckel which is materialism in all but name, awakes no enthusiasm among scientific students in Britain, and is rightly regarded as involving an obsolete standpoint." There can be no doubt that these writers are serious thinkers who not only believe what they say, but have grounds for their belief. Yet it is no less certain that materialism was never more rampant in scientific circles than it is today. It was an ancient saying that when three physicians met, two were always found

[1] *Christianity and Immortality*, by V. Storr, p. 23.
[2] Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. Art. *Materialism*.

to be atheists; substitute the word "materialists" for "atheists" and you will not be far from the truth. Owing to the ill odour now attaching to materialism as though it involved a certain moral approbrium, scientific men do not care to label themselves with the name, but that they are firmly persuaded of the doctrine and teach it to the youth who attend our medical schools may be reckoned as certain. "Almost any of our young psychologists will tell you," says James, "that only a few belated scholastics or possibly some crack-brained theosophist or psychical researcher can be found holding back, and still talking as if mental phenomena might exist as independent variables in the world."[1] But the matter has been recently put to the test in a genuinely scientific style. Professor J. H. Leuba sent out a questionnaire to groups selected from published lists of American scientists and psychologists, and philosophers, with a view to discover how far the belief in God and immortality still prevailed among the educated classes, more particularly in college and university circles. Of those who answered the questions it was found that 49.4 per cent., among the physical and biological scientists taken to-

[1] *Human Immortality*, pp. 9, 10.

gether, declared themselves either disbelievers or doubters in regard to belief in immortality. Of the more eminent as distinguished from men of lesser reputation, only 36.9 proclaimed themselves believers. The biologists produced a smaller number of believers than the physicists, 50 per cent. being credited to the former, 57 per cent. to the latter. Of the men of greater standing among the biologists only 25 per cent. avowed their belief in a future life. Another interesting and significant fact emerged. Whereas among the physicists and biologists the number of believers in immortality was substantially larger than that of the believers in God, among the psychologists the number of believers in immortality was clearly less than that of the believers in God, 24 per cent. asserting their belief in God, and 19.8 per cent. their belief in immortality. Among the greater psychologists the number of believers in immortality sinks to 8.8 per cent. Professor Leuba concludes that "in the present phase of psychological science, the greater one's knowledge of psychic life the more difficult it is to retain the traditional belief in the continuation of personality after death." To put the results of the investigation briefly, more than half of all those who replied to the questions addressed

to them and over two-thirds of the more eminent of these rejected belief in immortality.[1] These ascertained facts prove that the reassuring utterances of men of philosophical distinction as to the passing of materialism require critical discrimination. Inquiry and statistical study prove the prevalence of denial of survival in scientific circles as the result of psycho-physiological knowledge implying materialism, and yet sincere and thoughtful men assure us that this doctrine is thoroughly discredited except among the half-educated and scientific amateurs.

How is this apparent contradiction to be explained? The answer is that the term "materialism" is ambiguous and covers ideas that have no intrinsic connection. Materialism as a theory of knowledge has been vanquished by idealism and may be said to be dead, but materialism as a psycho-physiological solution of the problem of mind and brain was never more alive in scientific circles than it is today. The old doctrine that nothing is in mind except what enters through the senses was shown to be false by proving that mind had powers which the senses were not adequate to explain. The

[1] *The Belief in God and Immortality*, by James H. Leuba, pp. 173-281. Dr. Leuba was unable to get any reliable results from his inquiries in philosophical quarters, as he was unable to formulate his questions in such a way as to get from the philosophers clear answers.

intellect can rise above the individual perceptions and can grasp them as an intelligible whole. Such an act may well be called "creative"—an act quite impossible to the senses. Sensationalism, then, has vanished from the realm of debate, and in that sense materialism has had its day and has ceased to be. But the scientific materialist does not wince at this philosophic victory. For he is not concerned about the nature of knowledge; such a problem he hands over to the metaphysician. What concerns him is to frame an hypothesis, in harmony with scientific method, which will render intelligible the relation of mind to the bodily organism. And this hypothesis can be expressed in a sentence—*consciousness is a function of the brain.* It cannot be denied that the normal facts are on the materialistic side. Universal experience testifies that consciousness is always associated with a physical organism, weakens when the organism weakens, is impaired when the organism is impaired, and finally disappears when the organism perishes under the stroke of death. It is true that the materialist cannot prove that consciousness is destroyed by death, but why, he asks, should consciousness persist when the other functions, the various chemistries of the body, are stilled forever?

Now that the full strength of the negative argument may appear, it may be well to hear what some of its champions have to say in its defence. "If an individual feeling always goes with an individual nerve-message, if a combination or stream of feelings always goes with a stream of nerve-messages, does it not follow that when the stream of nerve-messages is broken up, this stream of feelings will be broken up also, and will no longer form consciousness?"[1] Haeckel points to the discovery that in the grey matter of the brain are located not only the seats of the central sense-organs, the spheres of touch, smell, sense, and hearing, but between these the great organs of mental life, the highest instruments of psychic activity that produce thought and consciousness,[2] and throughout his discussion he assumes as not open to dispute that when this complex mechanism ceases to function, all mental activity perishes. That the organization of mind advances with even pace along with the organization of brain, is the merest commonplace. The fortunes of mind and brain are so interwoven at every moment that to the scientific observer it is incredible to

[1] Clifford, *Essays and Lectures*, Vol. I, pp. 247-249.
[2] *Riddle of the Universe*, p. 65.

suppose the escape of consciousness from the shattered elements of the physical organ. The general thesis of the mind's dependence on the body is buttressed in detail by the researches of the physiologist and the psychologist. "The phenomena of consciousness correspond, element for element, to the operations of special parts of the brain. . . . The destruction of any piece of the apparatus involves the loss of some one or other of the vital operations; and the consequence is that as far as life extends, we have before us only an organic function, with a *Ding-an-sich,* or an expression of that imaginary entity, the soul. The fundamental proposition . . . carries with it the denial of the immortality of the soul."[1]

Now the point to be emphasized is that the brain is a highly complex structure in which a vast number of molecules are worked up into cells with all their marvellous ramifications, that with the break-up of this composite structure mind no longer exists. Consciousness appears with a physical complex called brain and is never known to function apart from it. Must not consciousness disappear when this complex is dissolved? As John Fiske writes: "We have

[1] G. E. Dühring, quoted by W. James, *Human Immortality,* p. 50.

no more warrant in experience for supposing consciousness to exist without a nervous system than we have for supposing the properties of water to exist in a world destitute of hydrogen and oxygen."[1]

It must be confessed that the answers made to this contention are far from satisfactory. The familiar argument of idealism, that matter is not an independent something prior to thought, but is real only in so far as it appears to mind, so that, if you abstract mind from matter, matter ceases to be—this argument appears to the scientific materialist to be a mere metaphysical puzzle or quibble, and he takes his stand on the principle that for practical purposes reality is directly perceived. The idealist's reasoning seems an airy nothing when confronted with the world of objective facts. Hence, to meet the new situation the materialist is pointed to the elements of mental and moral experience. No physical facts, it is maintained, can explain moral values and ideals. The higher the stage in human evolution the more clearly appear in experience principles which imply that man has other and more vital interests than the maintenance of his physical existence. As a rational, self-conscious

[1] *Everlasting Life*, p. 55.

being, the shaper of his destiny, and the focus, so to say, of values that cannot be measured by any material standard, man stands outside the realm of mechanical necessity, and is not explicable in terms of brain molecules and nerve elements. This argument has been set forth with impressive eloquence and powerful dialectic in the writings of Professor Ward and Professor Pringle-Pattison. But much as it appeals to the student of ethics and philosophy, it fails to persuade the scientific materialist. For the demand of the student of physiology is for facts, observed phenomena which may compel him to modify his thesis of the mind's functional dependence on the body. In the absence of these facts, his hypothesis holds the ground, and no assertion of man's moral and spiritual dignity will avail. But the curious and startling feature of the present situation is that the idealist acts as if he suspected that he had achieved only a dubious victory over his antagonist. For, of course, materialism denies immortality, and if idealism had really inflicted ruinous defeat on its antagonist, would not the idealist joyously proclaim to the world the fact of survival, and bid all men rejoice with him in the sure and certain hope that death is not the end? As a matter of fact, the idealist draws no

such inference in the great majority of cases. On the contrary, he warns us that undue emphasis on a future life augurs an unhealthy spiritual temperament; that, at best, the belief is secondary and inferential, and might even disappear, leaving all ethical and religious interests unaffected! The scientific materialist may well smile as he sees the *impasse* in which the philosopher finds himself, and he goes on his way, more than ever convinced that philosophy is a will-o'-the-wisp, and that for him the path of wisdom is that of observed fact, and inductive method.

Out of this deadlock there is only one way. It is to refute the materialist by giving him what he professes to crave, that is to say, facts open to observation and experiment, just like the other facts which have created his negation. These facts are phenomena which go to prove that consciousness can function apart from the brain. For men of unscientific temper or of sternly ethical and religious instincts, such a proof may not be necessary, though, perhaps, desirable, but for the man who devotes his life to the study of brain states and corresponding mental states, in health and disease, facts alone have coercive power. Doubts created by science can be solved only by science. Hence to this

extent the problem of immortality is now a scientific one, and psychical research appears to be the only serious effort to face the situation. Only by the slow and tedious accumulation of facts tending to show that mind works independently of the physical organism, can the scientific materialist be met on his own ground, and be compelled to surrender. It is highly significant that the latest defender [1] of the materialistic denial of immortality admits the reality of the phenomena of psychic research, but refers them to telepathic communication between living persons, apparently forgetting that this is to explain the obscure by the more obscure. Nevertheless the admission is interesting; it is likely to prove the first rift in the rock-ribbed dogmatism of modern materialism.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN SOCIALISM

Perhaps no movement of the nineteenth century has been more potent in the life of vast masses of men than the rise and spread of socialism. Its most logical form is that of scientific socialism as expounded by Karl Marx. To the strict Marxian, socialism is not merely an economic doctrine; it is a philosophy of life and all its relationships. Speaking at the grave

[1] E. S. P. Haynes in *Belief in Immortality.*

of Marx, his friend and co-worker, Engels, explained the Marxian "materialistic conception of history" to mean that the given "stage of economic evolution of a nation or epoch forms the foundation from which the civil institutions of the people in question, their ideas of law, of art, of religion even, have been developed and according to which they are to be explained—and not the reverse, as has been done hitherto." Strict Marxians, therefore, reject belief in immortality on the ground that it is merely a reflection of the economic situation of the people among whom it appears. With the establishment of the socialistic Utopia, the idea will wholly vanish. To be sure, all socialists are not out-and-out Marxians. Indeed the average socialist, strange to say, is an unmitigated individualist in religion, holding apparently that while all other human motives and institutions are capable of being socialized, the deepest motive of all has no sociological function whatever! Unquestionably, the general trend of the movement has been to conceive of man too much as an economic, money-grabbing, food-getting animal. The wage-earner is engaged in the struggle for an existence. To him the things of pressing moment are food, clothing, shelter, houses, land. Socialism has shown him that

these things depend on far-reaching international and financial conditions. In opposition to the teaching of many religious bodies that the supreme concern is the salvation of the soul, which is quite independent of material conditions, socialism tends to the other extreme and so emphasizes the improvement of external conditions as to obscure the inner meaning of man's being, his power to transcend circumstance, "to live a life beyond, to have a hope to die with dim-descried." The life beyond the grave can offer no economic return; therefore, it must be denied or relegated to the realm of the negligible. "When we have attained the good things of this world," as Goethe observed, "it is so easy to regard those of the next as a delusion and a snare." Moreover, the struggle for a redistribution of earthly goods and for a larger opportunity to get out of the present world what is in it, is so absorbing and exciting that any interest in the supersensuous realm distracts the attention from the real things, the solid and substantial realities of economics. In other words, as has been well said, "man is to be no longer, even in his holiday dreamings, an amphibious creature, longing somehow for the boundless ocean, but he is to be simply and exclusively a land-animal, a creature of earth

alone." The economic interests of the proletariat loom so large as to eclipse the vision of another world. Moreover, socialism offers itself as a substitute for the religion with which so many of the wage-earning class have broken in our time. It holds up the ideal of a socialistic state as an object worthy of reverence, commanding the utter devotion of our lives and the suppression of all other desires and ambitions. Now, as belief in immortality has become an essential element in religion as Western peoples know it, it is obvious that the growth of the socialistic idea has been hostile to its hold on large classes of the industrial populations of the world.

The remedy lies in a twofold direction. The believer in immortality must show that his faith is not only compatible with but essential to a genuine reverence for whatever bears on man's best life. And he must prove his faith by proving his interest in the material well-being, the readjustment of social conditions, the provision of a larger economic and educational opportunity for the unprivileged masses. Any preoccupation with the other world which curtails our interest in establishing the Kingdom of God wherein each shall work according to his ability, and to each shall be given according to his

needs, will in the long run react harmfully on our conviction that not here but beyond must the destiny of man find its consummation.

And, on the other hand, the socialist must be led to see that the implications of his creed are deeper than he suspects. No programme of economic reform, no acceleration of materialistic dreams, can satisfy the spiritual ambitions of the human spirit that has once realized the import of liberty, equality, brotherhood, and caught a glimpse of the new world wherein dwelleth righteousness. Such a belief is really mystical in character. For man is now seen to belong to a grander order than that of earth; he is the focus of eternal values; he escapes our economic categories and stands forth in his true being as the citizen of a transcendent world who here and now is passing through a preparatory discipline and after each task is done, is haunted by a divine unrest that urges him on to find his goal beyond the limitations of his terrestrial lot. It is paradoxical but true that the more super-earthly man appears to be, the more sacred become all his temporal interests and strivings.

CHAPTER V

THE MORAL ARGUMENT

The argument which we are now about to discuss has, perhaps, more than any other, made widespread and permanent appeal. When all other reasonings have proved but broken reeds, the argument based on the nature of man as a moral being has afforded a rational foundation from which faith might make its venture. It has also the singular merit of being the one argument on which such a speculative genius as Immanuel Kant was willing to stake the eternal hopes of humanity. The form, indeed, in which he propounded it is no longer acceptable; it shares in the doctrinaire and abstract quality of eighteenth century thought. "From the moral law implied in the practical reason," says Kant, "comes a demand for an ultimate harmony between happiness and virtue; but this harmony is unattainable in this life, owing to man's fleshly weakness, therefore there must be a life after death where man may find an opportunity for the achievement of his endless task."

Translate this into modern language and it means that nature imposes on every man the duty of realizing the ideal of his life, but this ideal is really infinite in scope. The more it is pursued, the further it seems to fly before us. It is an everlasting task to which man by the very constitution of his being is committed. Now a universe in which the moral ideal sets up such a claim must give sufficient space for man to fulfil it in a world perfectly harmonious with it. Such an opportunity is denied the servant of the ideal if death ends all. It is, therefore, an ethical necessity that death, so far from ending all, should prove a pathway into a more abundant, completer, and richer life. When certain dubious elements which have been associated with the argument have been cleared away, it can be stated in a form which still carries a large measure of conviction to those possessed of healthy ethical instincts. Too often an undue emphasis has been placed on future rewards and punishments, as though virtue were a sort of prudential insurance against the possibilities of woe in a future world. Nowadays, we have come to see that a good life is intrinsically good and an evil life is intrinsically evil apart from any consequences whatever; and we are called to realize goodness

in thought and conduct without an eye to any ulterior benefits. Of two men, one who avoids evil from fear of consequences or hope of reward is, we feel, inferior morally to him who says, "I will do what is right because my conscience and reason tell me it is right, and I will do it without regard to any external reward whatever because the very doing of it satisfies my nature." Five centuries before Christ, a great Oriental teacher proclaimed the necessity of renouncing the idea of performing right deeds from the motive of winning heaven and avoiding hell, if one were to be really virtuous. It is to be feared that there are multitudes that have not as yet learned the lesson of the ancient sage.

Moreover, the theory which would divide the moral life into two sections, the first of which is the performance of moral actions in the present world, and the second the obtaining of rewards in the world to come in return for these actions, must give way to the deeper view that the present life and the future life are one. The results of our actions here and now are realized. The sinner in the very act of violating his own nature automatically inflicts grievous loss upon himself; a good man in the very act of obeying conscience and reason is gaining

enlargement of being, a stronger and richer personality.

And yet at the root of the popular idea is a truth with which we cannot dispense. It is this —if goodness is to claim our wholehearted devotion, even to the length of our being willing in its interest to sacrifice the physical life, the demand of the soul is that goodness must be worth while. What rational ground for a truly moral action could there be, if its fruition in an enhanced personality with all its further possibilities were at the mercy of an external and alien power such as death? Motives of prudence or utilitarian considerations would still be possible, but the prudential and the truly moral are poles asunder. Tennyson has gone to the heart of the matter when he says of virtue:

"She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die."

The true motives which enter into and spiritualize a longing for a future life are, as has been well said, "that personal affection may

continue and that moral goodness may grow." However many be the links that bind man to the lower creation, there is one quality which lifts him out of the animal world and puts him in a category by himself. It is his power to form and cherish ideals. These ideals, though ever changing, are also permanent; they are the shaping and determining forces of life. But if the limits set by man's earthly fate arrest his progress, death falls as a blight on all the promise of his nature. For the full unfolding of his powers he needs a world of larger scope than this. What kind of a universe would it be if such an opportunity were denied? Would it be possible to acquit it of cruelty and injustice? Hence, before we ask, Is man immortal? it is necessary to ask, What is man? Is he a merely natural phenomenon to be identified with the sum-total of his natural impulses? If so, the verdict against survival is already given. If man is inextricably implicated in the life of nature, he shares the destiny of nature. But the analysis of the human spirit discloses the presence of powers and capacities which have no meaning for man conceived simply as a member of a biological series; the roots of his being strike deep into a spiritual and transcendental world. If man is only a terrestrial being

whose history is confined to threescore years and ten, why all those gifts and aptitudes, those ideal-forming powers by which he transcends these limits, in virtue of which he can resurrect the buried past or lay the foundations upon which to build the fabric of the future? There is no relation between his short earthly history and the magnificence of his mental and moral endowments. The ideal set before him is the perfection of all his powers, the realization of his true selfhood, and this ideal demands fulfilment. As he progresses in experience and the good for which he strives ceases to be material, it takes the form more and more of a spiritual self. This idealism is not an accident; it belongs to the inmost essence of his being. (From this point of view we can see that man does not need to wait for death, in order to be ushered into the immortal life. He is already a citizen of an eternal world and his every act is the act of a person to whom death is an irrelevance.)

Now here is the strange paradox; this "finite-infinite" being is set in a world which hedges him in on every side, mocks at his enthusiasm, and pours contempt on all the flights of his idealizing imagination. Hence the tragic pathos of human existence. Man is beset behind and

before by forces that deny the possibility of realization of his ideals. Consider the fact that about one-sixth of all who are born die before reason begins to unfold itself. Think of it, that myriads start life already handicapped in body or in mind, or in both; that even the few who have every gift that nature and heredity and circumstance can bestow are yet at the mercy of a thousand adverse influences and know well that they have scarcely learned the first necessary lessons before their time is up and they pass, leaving behind them only hints of what they might have done. "Man goes to his grave," says Bossuet, "dragging the chain of his broken hopes." Has not our own time brought home to us this thought as never before? Think of the millions of youths cut off in the springtime of their lives, having scarcely had time to do more than reveal the presence of capacity, the promise of what might have been. The fragmentariness of life, its tragic inadequacy to meet the most clamant needs of the soul, the fact that our most precious possessions are at the mercy of the accidental and the unpreventable—all this has no meaning except in the light of man's persistent conviction that he belongs by nature to another world; that this other world is his true home and destiny.

From another point of view, we are led to the same conclusion. The only ideal worthy of man as a rational being is the ideal of moral perfection. He is committed by the necessities of his nature to a struggle—a struggle in very truth for his soul. But his striving is never finished; it is an endless process. As a given duty is performed, as an inspiration born of insight is realized in practice, new obligations are laid upon the will, nay, the more we advance in spiritual experience the more clearly we see the chasm between the ideal and the fulfilment. A St. Paul can cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" And again, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow on."

In every man there are two selves—a better and a worse. The worse self is created out of instinct and sense, the better self out of intellect and moral will. It is the duty of every man to make the former subservient to the latter, to find in intellectual and moral activity the true sphere of his desires and aspirations, but this task is infinite. How is he to achieve it, if the limits of his earthly lot mark all the time at his disposal? And if he does not achieve it, is there a sadder tragedy imaginable? Everywhere else in the organic realm, there is a proportion be-

tween a creature's capacities and the scope of its life. Why is man doomed to incompleteness? It has been said, indeed, that if one took a fair and dispassionate view of one's moral shortcomings, the thought of another life wherein these would reappear might seem far from a thing to be desired. In order to disenchant man of the hopes of a future after death, writers have painted him in colours drawn from the weaker and baser side of his history and yet man feels that there is a residual capacity, a reserve of moral force, if only it could be set free, strong to regenerate, to build anew the city of his dreams. Who has not heard the pathetic cry of many a sorrowful spirit, "If I had my life to live over again, what a different man I would be?" What if it should turn out that beyond death there awaits us a new opportunity in another environment to make good the failures which here we deplore?

When we turn to the affectional side of human nature, we find in harmony with the greater poets of all time a principle which is ultimate and for the satisfaction of which only a boundless future seems adequate. It is the principle of love. This feeling alone gives value to life's experiences. But the very essence of love lies in personal relationships. Now death

puts an end to these relationships. What then becomes of love and what of the worth of life dependent on love? It may be said that if death takes one friend, life can give us another. But where love has been truly spiritual, implying the deepest and most vital communion, nothing can take its place. Love is not transferable; it finds in the being loved a uniqueness, an individuality, a something that cannot be transcended by any other object or being. "The whole conduct of men," writes Professor Coe, "shows that the personal-social relationships that they most value they do desire to continue. One does not willingly lose friend A, even if one is convinced that an equally good friend B is ready to take A's place. Love individualizes the object to which it attaches itself, so that something of the value is lost if the individual perishes."[1] If death brings final destruction of personal relationships, then love, using the word in its highest sense, makes demands and by its very nature sets up claims which are incompatible with the necessities of our earthly lot.

And here it may be worth while to point out that if men value mainly the other life because of the possibility it offers for the renewal of those social relationships which death dissolves,

[1] *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 295.

we must reverse the popular judgment as to the relative superiority of the pursuit of knowledge over the activity of the affections. To know the world without and the world within is a noble ambition, but to love our brothers is still nobler. We are justified in asserting that the full possibilities of man's nature can be realized only in proportion as he enters into the joys and responsibilities of an associated life. The history of the past, the long story of the development of civilization confirms the judgment expressed by man in his desire, because of social reasons, for immortality, and both assert that the highest act of man is to love and serve his fellows. It is needless to add that this idea is revolutionary in character. Once it is realized all our social problems are solved. Classism and pseudo-nationalism and war vanish from the earth and a pure democracy is at last set up among men.

It will be found that as a rule men of strong ethical instincts cherish the conviction that somehow beyond death an opportunity will be given them to go on with the work of soul-making, of realizing possibilities which here on earth have only begun to reveal themselves. This unconquerable intuition or feeling seizes those who have surrendered to the spell of the

ideal, who strive after spiritual perfection. But this ideal can never be satisfied. As the years pass, it grows wider and wider and death steps in to arrest the soul's upward progress and apparently to put to confusion all its endeavour. If the universe is more than a soulless machine grinding out life and death with grim indifference, if it is at heart moral, we must believe that its highest creature and revealer—man—will have the chance to pursue his spiritual task, to work out his destiny, to achieve the end for which nature designed him. Every one who has entered on the higher life knows that all the moral phenomena which he has as yet produced have failed to exhaust his capacities or to express fully his personality. There are depths within depths, dormant energies which even in this life, under fit stimulus, at times awake and with revolutionary violence transform thought, affection, desire. "Within every man's thought," says Emerson, "is a higher thought; within the character he exhibits today, a higher character." And if man's nature is thus a constant process of evolution, shall death stay the onward march of the spirit and proclaim the mastery of matter over all moral values? If so, we must believe that we are living in a universe governed by unreason.

There can be no doubt that the argument outlined above has considerable weight and must command the sympathy of all who reflect upon the meaning and purpose of life. Our deepest experience is our moral experience. In it we must believe there is a revelation of ultimate truth and this experience demands a future life as its necessary presupposition. Yet it must be confessed that the argument labours under some weaknesses which impair its value as a demonstration. Clearly it rests on a philosophical faith—the faith that at bottom the universe is a rational whole based throughout on ethical principles which we can read for ourselves. Else there is no guarantee that the moral demand of man's nature will be satisfied. But this faith in essential morality of the universe seems to rest upon another faith—faith in God, the Eternal Ground of all existence, Whose moral perfections are to be discerned in nature and humanity. Then comes the doubt whether the world as we know it presents a scene where only benevolence, love, goodness, and the various attributes that we call divine may be seen, and thus the foundation of our argument seems infected with a misgiving. It may be true that "He who has seen the sea and the blue of heaven and the moon and the stars, who has

climbed a mountain, who has heard a bird in the woods, who has known a mother—he will bow his knee and thank his God and call life good, even though his lot in the end be nothingness;"[1] yet we cannot forbear asking: what of the multitudes who have never known these aesthetic and social joys, who have never tasted of happiness but who have drunk to the dregs the cup of misery all through the weary years? Will you tell these to bow the knee and offer a prayer of thanks to the Power that has placed them here, if this be the full portion assigned them? It may well be that in order to vindicate the universe as rational, or, in religious terms, to justify God at the bar of human intelligence as perfectly good, we must first of all prove immortality. A new world must be called in to redress the balance of the old.

But there is another and a still more serious drawback; our reasoning here is based on the belief that the universe will preserve what is valuable, all else being cast on the dust heap. This argument is strong as applied to the case of all who have entered upon the higher life and who have begun to taste some of its experiences.

[1] J. H. Stirling, quoted by A. S. Pringle-Pattison in *The Idea of God*, p. 45.

These may well claim the right of continuance as elements of value in the moral world. But what of those who have never risen one step above the animal life? What of the depraved, flung into a world that owns them not, the children of a base heredity reared in filthy surroundings, breathing from birth an atmosphere poisoned with the fumes of sin and shame? What of the victims of alcohol, morphine, cocaine, who cry for freedom from a slavery that too often circumstance and hereditary weakness have made inevitable? Can the universe refuse to hear their cry and will it coldly decline to give them another chance, even though they are realized worth less than nothing? In shuffling off this mortal coil must they not shuffle off existence itself as valueless to God and man? So it would seem and yet a protest arises up within us that cannot be silenced. What if even in these misguided souls there are possibilities thwarted here which may well blossom into virtue and honour hereafter? It is hard—nay, we must hold it is impossible—to kill the divine life, to quench the spark increate in the human soul. Prince Kropotkin tells a story in *Mutual Aid as a Factor in Evolution* of a French convict who escaped from prison. He lay concealed

all night in a ditch close by a small village, probably intending to steal something to help him on his way. As he was lying in the ditch a fire broke out in the village. He saw a woman run out of one of the burning houses, and heard her piercing cries for help to save a child in the upper story. The escaped prisoner dashed out of his retreat, made his way through the fire, and with scalded face and burning clothes, brought the child safely out and restored him to his mother. The village officials had him arrested and returned to prison. Kropotkin speaks of the act as the result of an impulse of the natural man, and not to be attributed to any inspiration of "divine grace." But the "natural man" is an abstraction. He has never been seen anywhere except in the pages of theologians and philosophers, and he could not appear even there were it not that all that is divine in the real man is left out of account. If self-sacrifice at the risk of the natural, physical life is not divine, then there is nothing divine anywhere in the realm of human experience. But hope for the lost is only possible, if we can ascribe to the universe, or rather to the Power that rules within it, everlasting compassion, never-failing goodness. But here again to justify this belief must it not be that we must prove that this

world is only the vestibule of another and a greater world where saving and redeeming forces may be brought into play for the good of those whom nature and man have treated so harshly?

CHAPTER VI

JESUS CHRIST AND THE FUTURE LIFE

The apparent silence of the Founder of Christianity concerning another life has often been commented on as strange and enigmatic. Some have gone so far as to say that, like Buddha, He was an agnostic on all matters that lay beyond the earthly horizon, and had no word of wisdom to offer mankind in answer to its eternal question. "It is strange," says Emerson, "that Jesus is esteemed by mankind the Bringer of the doctrine of immortality. He is never weak or sentimental; He is very abstemious of explanation. He never preaches the personal immortality."[1] Yet it is this Man who has so quickened the thought of immortality, so brought it home to the human heart that for all time His religion is bound up with the assertion that the soul has within it the power of an endless life. Here is indeed a puzzling paradox. Only a parable or two, and a few scattered sayings on the great theme are all that have come

[1] *Works*, vol. viii, p. 330.

down to us, and yet immortality becomes one of the great regulative or pivotal ideas of Christian thought from the apostolic age to modern times! How is this? Has Christendom misplaced the centre of gravity in Christ's teaching? It would be hard to avoid this conclusion if the contention were right that ethical teaching apart from any doctrine of a future life formed the sum and substance of Christ's message. It would be more true to the facts to say that His thought and outlook were determined by belief in the immortal life, that His religion and His ethics alike would be meaningless without this basic truth. "The Sermon on the Mount," says Dr. J. H. Hyslop, "is far more representative of the primitive Christian teaching (that is, Christ's own teaching) than the doctrine of immortality."[1] But this contrast is unreal and artificial. *For the ethical teaching rests on immortality as its essential presupposition.* It is true that the Christian belief in life immortal goes back to the resurrection of Christ and finds there its strength and momentum, but the appearances after the Crucifixion would not have been credible had it not been for His message and the overwhelming moral impression which His personality exerted

[1] *Life After Death*, p. 93.

on His followers. We fail to recognize this because the forms in which were cast Christ's ideas as to the future seem to us foreign and at times fantastic, though they were the familiar religious speech of the age to which He belonged. The burden of His message is a supreme reality which is called "the Kingdom of God," or "the Kingdom of Heaven." The phrase is borrowed from the apocalyptic visions of contemporary piety, which in turn went back to the teaching of the prophets, but what concerns us is its meaning for Jesus. Modern social reformers insist the Kingdom of God must be set up on earth, and they are right; but in so far as they forget that no temporal realization of the ideal can satisfy the demand of Jesus, they are wrong. To His vision the Kingdom was the divine order within which true life was to be realized, a life to which death was a sheer irrelevance. In the Sermon on the Mount—in all probability, a collection of thoughts and sayings originally delivered at different times—the utterance which stands first strikes the keynote of the whole: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven,"[1] or, as in the more original form, "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the King-

[1] Matthew v, 3.

dom of God.'"[1] The persons to whom He speaks were the socially despised, poor peasants and fisher folk, shut out from the good things of this world. He opens to them the gates of a new life of unbounded possibilities. He preaches the strange wonderful message that poverty was no barrier to the Kingdom, nay rather, it was at least a negative preparation for entrance to it. The failures in this world can be the successes in the world to come. This message was new, yet old. Here, as elsewhere, it was not the function of Jesus to bring unheralded truths to His hearers. Belief in immortality had been for two centuries and more a widely accepted belief among the Jewish people. Only the worldly and sceptical Sadducee rejected it. Hence Jesus was not constantly asserting it, but He sought to purify it from the crudities of popular thinking, to moralize it, and to show men how to live so as to prove themselves worthy of such high destiny. Still more, He not only taught immortality, He practised it. To Him the invisible world was more real than physical objects around Him. Messages, voices, mysterious signs, supernormal "guidings" flashed from the unseen into the seen, so thin was the veil that divided the temporal from the tran-

[1] Luke vi, 20.

scendental order. Death was to Him simply an episode in the onward march of life. He was not interested as we are in bare survival. His eye was fixed on life as a spiritual state, as a condition of moral activity. He told His contemporaries that unless their goodness was of a higher order than that of the professed religious classes, they would in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven,[1] and this Kingdom He elsewhere identifies with "eternal life."[2] In short, as the preacher of a practical religion He was concerned with immortality mainly as a motive and safeguard of the spiritual life.

His argument with the Sadducees,[3] who denied immortality, was not a logical and reasoned plea. Rather was it a deep intuition, a far-reaching glance into the nature of God and of man. They put to Him a supposed case of a woman who had married, in accordance with the Mosaic law, seven brothers in succession, and the question which seemed to reduce the future to an absurdity was—whose wife shall she be in the resurrection? The reply of Jesus at once rejects the materialistic assumption underlying the Sadducean contention, and at the same time asserts a real personal continuance beyond the

[1] Matthew v, 20.
[2] Luke xviii, 18, 24.
[3] Mark xii, 18-27.

grave. Sex-relations, He intimates, are abolished in the other world, which is the realm of discarnate spirits. Men and women are as the angels, that is, the order to which they belong transcends the present order, and marriage, birth, and death pass away with all that is merely physical. The divine resources are not exhausted in the arrangements of the world that now is; they are able to call into existence new arrangements in another and higher realm. Thus does He lay down the basis of a spiritual theory of immortality. Yet He also takes care to assert the persistence of personality in all the fulness of its powers. His questioners accepted the books traditionally ascribed to Moses, and with something of an *argumentum ad hominem* He asks them to reflect on the meaning of a passage whose authority they did not doubt: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"; His own interpretation comes like a flash of light: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Universalize these terms in the light of Christ's teaching as a whole, and He seems to say to the Sadducees, modern as well as ancient: "The personality on which God sets a value cannot be extinguished in death. The very fact that God has once sustained and guided the soul is itself

the guarantee that He will not fail it in death and through death." Given a God such as Christ conceived Him to be and immortality follows as an inevitable inference. God is personal and holy love; man is His child. Can we imagine the Eternal Love permitting the being loved to lapse into non-existence? Such a thought introduces a schism into the Divine nature and casts a blot on the Divine purpose. If it be said that this reasoning is valid so far as good men are concerned—but what of the evil and the base? Immortality may indeed be predicated of lives that are of spiritual worth to God, but surely we are not warranted in extending it to the vicious, the criminal, the worldly, those who in no sense can be called the friends of God. Now it is here that we must recall Christ's attitude toward human nature in general. He was no sentimentalist. He did not put on the same level as of equal worth in the eyes of Heaven the self-sacrificing and the selfish, the penitent saint and the impenitent sinner. His ethical sanity was shown on the one hand in the distinction which He drew between those who did and those who did not the will of His Father, and on the other hand, in the emphasis He placed on the potentialities of the soul, however degraded and lost to all virtue.

It was not the soul at any given moment in its career which filled His vision, but the glorious possibilities that lay hidden from the world and even from the soul itself. Death could not mean the extinction of the Divine spark, the destruction of the sleeping potencies of even the most sinful. On the contrary, it might well mean, and in a universe governed by the Eternal Goodness it ought to mean, the entrance on a career of reform and self-discipline whereby all that was lost might be slowly but surely regained.

Some five hundred years before Christ Plato formulated his argument for immortality in the *Phaedo,* and as Jowett has pointed out[1] there is an analogy between the logic of that work and the argument in the Gospels. Said Plato: "If the ideas of men are eternal their souls are eternal, and if not the ideas, not the souls." Said Christ: "If God exists, then the soul exists after death; and if there is no God, there is no existence of the soul after death." It is probable that Plato believed in personal immortality, at all events in the period immediately succeeding the death of Socrates. His doctrine of transmigration, however, with its exclusion of personal memory, by implication is a denial of

[1] *The Dialogues of Plato,* Vol. I, p. 377.

personal survival. But most scholars would say that he failed to prove it. All he succeeded in establishing was the persistence of the universal soul, the substance out of which individual souls are made. As his latest editor has said: "There is nothing to prove that particular souls in their departure from the body are not reabsorbed in the universal spirit, merging their proper consciousness in that common force of nature which is ever manifesting itself anew in the power of individual life."[1]

The truth is that as one reads the *Phaedo* one is conscious that Plato is greater than his arguments. His outlook was limited by the intellectualism which characterized his time and country. What he strove to vindicate was the survival of man's rational consciousness, whereas the belief of Christ conceived of the future life as the sphere of man's moral activity and abiding fellowship with God in faith and service. The really impressive fact is that He who by general confession stands first in the order of holiness, preaches the same truth that lay so close to the deepest interests of the philosopher who stands first in the order of intellect. No authority indeed, however high, can compel belief, yet the insights of the incom-

[1] R. D. Archer-Hind: *Phaedo of Plato*, 2d Ed., preface, p. 28.

parably great are surely more likely to be true to reality than the vaticinations of lesser spirits.

It is obvious that Christ could not communicate precise details as to the exact conditions of the life beyond, and we may add, He would not even if He could. He lived in an age and in a land steeped in superstitious ideas of the world beyond. It was not His rôle to vie with the dreamers and visionaries who revelled in the bizarre and vainglorious pictures of the future, and who professed to unveil to the living world the secrets of the dead. Moreover, even if to His clairvoyant vision there had been revealed the invisible world of the discarnate, so that He knew precisely how they lived and what they did, how could He share His knowledge with those about Him? Only through sensory symbols, the means of our present experience, could these things be told, and scepticism would have always its plausible arguments wherewith to explain away the presumed revelations. It is His glory to have lifted the great fact of immortality out of dark and superstitious imaginings into the clear light of moral truth, and of the ever-living and necessary laws that govern the spiritual universe. Hence, while He is silent as to matters which could only satisfy

curiosity, He is not heedless of the imperious needs of the soul, or of the hopes that give unity and dignity to life.

But there is another reason for His reserve as to the place, mode, and conditions of the hereafter. With Him the thought of a life after death is contained in a thought more august still, the closeness of the coming Age, the eternal Kingdom of God. To His prophetic spirit the time was foreshortened. An old world was dying, a new one was about to be born. Hence He regarded all things in the light of this stupendous event. The sceptical reasonings of the philosopher, the curious questionings of the common people, seemed to Him the merest trifling in view of the supreme reality that was about to burst with the crash of doom on the world of appearance, and to usher in a new heaven and a new earth wherein alone righteousness should dwell. Christ was not a theosophist preaching to men an occult science, nor was He concerned with the special difficulties which beset a materialistic age like our own. On the contrary, He was the Herald of the end, the Preacher of repentance with a view to entrance into a kingdom whose morning was about to dawn; and His whole being was flung into a delirium of effort to awaken men to a realization

of the cosmic event, sublime and glorious beyond their utmost power to imagine. What had He to do with the How and the Why, the This or the That of the future? He sends out His disciples to proclaim in tones of trumpet clearness His word of warning. The time is all too short, only long enough for repentance. All questions of an interesting kind about how the dead fare in their hidden world were swallowed up in the awe-inspiring expectation that very soon the gathered generations, past and present, would enter on a new life of transcendent blessedness.

In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus,[1] the plutocrat who was "clothed in fine linen and fared sumptuously every day" and the poor man, "laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table," we have an imaginative picture of the law of moral continuity. The curtain falls upon the life-history of these two men, and when it lifts again, we find the rich man in torment and the poor man in blessedness. What is the meaning of the story? Is it that wealth here means poverty in the world beyond, and poverty here means wealth there? So thinks Dr. G. Stanley Hall, who, in his work

[1] Luke xvi, 19-31.

Jesus Christ in the Light of Psychology, remarks that "there is no intimation that Dives had any guilt save that of being rich, or that Lazarus had any merit save poverty, unless Dives ought to have known and relieved the suffering of Lazarus; but the next world is simply one of complemental reversal. Wealth here is repaid with Hell there and pauperism with Heaven."[1]

One of Martineau's incisive criticisms might be appropriately applied to this statement: "It contains the maximum of error in the minimum of space." A careful reading of the story with allowance for Christ's method of leaving something to the imagination of His hearers will prove that He does not make the incidence of penalty or suffering in the other world a mechanical affair, a thing dependent on the chance of death. He represents the poor man as laid at the gates of the rich man, desiring to be fed. Is this not a hint that the sin of the rich man lay not in his riches, but in his lack of sympathy with the beggar staring him in the face day by day? But still more important is the emphasis on repentance. Why does the rich man implore Abraham to send Lazarus to his five brothers on earth that they may repent?

[1] Vol. II, p. 586.

Repent of what? Of being rich or of failing to use their riches aright? To ask that question is to answer it. The rich man is condemned, then, not because he was rich, but because he was heartless. He suffers the result of selfish living. This is the lesson of the parable, and the idea of immortality is simply called in to reinforce the moral, not as a truth of independent significance to be taught for its own sake. Christ has thus moralized, as none else has ever done, the realms of heaven and hell. They are not static conditions. There is an upward and a downward movement. The law of moral continuity holds good there as well as here. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Yet there is impressed on man's spiritual constitution a law of renewal whereby the very abhorrence for his sin, awakened within him by the discipline of pain, marks the first stage of his recovery. And may we not see a trace of the working of this law in the soul of the tormented as he begs for some message from the dead to carry an admonition to his brethren lest they also should tempt the same fate? Nor must we suppose that in Christ's thought all punishment in the future life is on the same non-moral level. Responsibility goes hand in hand with privilege. The servant that

knew his master's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes, whereas he that knew it not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes.[1]

It is the weakness of the modern pulpit that in a natural reaction against the over-emphasis of an earlier age on the punishments of the other world and against the exaggerations in which an unbridled imagination revelled, it should fall into the opposite error of obscuring the life after death by vague generalities wherein the dread effects of selfish living on the post-mortem future of the soul tend to vanish from all vital conviction. The extreme and unwarranted pronouncements of popular evangelism that outrage alike the spirit of a rational religion and the teaching of sound psychology, are no valid excuse for the failure of the pulpit to proclaim, in harmony with Christ's thought, that our desires and deeds have a permanent effect on character, that every act leaves its marks, for weal or woe, on the soul and that not Omnipotence itself can annul the law which binds suffering to sin. In our fear of introducing selfish motives into the life of virtue, we have forgotten that after all we are moral and intelligent beings, and that the consequences of

[1] Luke xii, 47, 48.

our acts are in part, at all events, a motive to action.

Doubtless there is noble truth in the story of that mysterious woman who was seen once on the streets of Damascus, bearing in the one hand a pan of fire and in the other a pitcher of water. On being asked what she purposed to do with them, she answered: "Burn up Paradise and put out the fires of Hell so that men may do good for the love of God alone." Yet we need not hesitate to affirm that the vast majority of men have not reached as yet that peak of perfection, and that therefore we cannot dispense with such ethical stimulants to self-improvement as may be afforded by the contemplation of the indestructible effects on our spiritual future of what we think and do here and now.

But perhaps what needs emphasis at the present time, when ecclesiastical tradition has so *dehumanized* our Lord's thought that the life beyond has lost its savour for even many Christians, is that the other world is a world of truly human relations and activities. Under the symbols which He uses we discern that the after-world is a social order. He figures the relations in which spirits shall stand to each other as those natural to frank and joyous inter-

course. Very significant is the fact that He selects the homely illustration of a common meal in order to portray the happiness of the good. "They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down at table in the Kingdom of God."[1] Jesus Himself looked forward to a joyful rendezvous with the great prophetic spirits of the past, whom He expected to recognize. He speaks of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God," with whom He hoped to hold converse. His unwavering assurance on this point as compared with the doubt of Socrates whether he would meet after death with the wise and great of the past is due to that firm hold on the reality of God which the philosopher could not attain.

Clearly Jesus conceives of the world beyond the grave as an organized community. He speaks of eating, drinking, judging, serving, of scenes of joy and happiness in the presence of angels—all symbols, no doubt, but symbols which point to an organized life. Here we have no neo-platonic flight of the alone to the Alone, no survival simply of the intellect as philosophers have imagined, but the continuance and

[1] Luke xiii, 29. Compare the Parable of the Wedding Feast, Matthew xxii, 1-14.

enjoyment of all truly human powers and faculties. Whatever else the future life may be, at least it will not be thinner or poorer than the life we now know.

Within the community there is room for work. Unselfish service to God and man will characterize the good; and the greatest will be the most eminent in serving others. "My Father worketh up till now," says Jesus, "and I work." And if God and Christ are eternally working, it follows that those who would resemble them in spirit will participate in their activities. Everlasting unemployment would to the human spirit become an intolerable burden; and too often the heavenly world has been presented as a scene of idleness. Yet the law of continuity would suggest that we shall in the world beyond engage in those pursuits analogous to those for which we have taste and aptitude in this world. Just as in this life our highest happiness lies in the exercise of our moral energies, so in the new world, these energies, set free from the hampering influences of the body and inherited or acquired weakness, shall win greater heights of achievement than were possible to us here. And when we reflect that, as Christ teaches, there are lesser and greater in the Kingdom, it is not overstraining the

thought to say that no small part of the work of good men and women in the world to come will be in the exercise of their philanthropic and redeeming powers. The weak, the ignorant, the sinful, the penitent, shall all need help there as they need it here. Will it not be the joy of the learned, the strong, the spiritually advanced to share their good things with the spiritually inferior?

And what about our relation to those in this spirit-world? Are they beyond the reach of our thought and desire? Let us remind ourselves that the dead live in God even as they lived in Him when they were in the flesh; and if we could pray for them and they could pray for us on this material plane what power has death to destroy our spiritual fellowship with them that they are no longer within our physical ken? Death in itself, be it repeated, is a physical process and works no metamorphosis on the human spirit; not one of our moral and spiritual relations is altered. To cease to pray for one who has passed through the experience of death must mean either that death is the end or that the world into which it ushers the soul is static in character, admitting of no spiritual progress—which latter doctrine robs the life hereafter of all interest and value to

any rational intelligence. Surely it is more in harmony with right reason and with the genius of the Christian religion to believe that the spiritual laws which obtain in the present order of existence are valid as far as human experience extends. With our prayers we may follow our dead into their new life, and we may well believe that our desires can help them amid their new duties, experiences, and responsibilities. And may we not add that as long as they retain memory and consciousness they will not fail to think of us and to breathe a prayer that unto us also all may be well?

Thus does the other world open up before us a sphere, truly human yet freed from our terrestrial limitations, with endless opportunity for the divine enterprises of pity, patience, self-sacrifice, for the unimpeded play of all our moral energies devoted to the good of our fellows. Such a world cannot but appeal to our noblest instincts and cannot but substitute for a languid belief the glowing ardour of high desires. With this vision of a future lighted with the radiant hues of hope, we can gird ourselves for the tasks of the present life in assured confidence that no true work accomplished here shall fail of its spiritual fruition hereafter.

CHAPTER VII

DID JESUS RISE FROM THE DEAD?

"ONE thing is certain," says Harnack, "from this [Christ's] grave has sprung the indestructible faith in the overthrow of death and in an eternal life. . . . Wherever today against all the impressions of nature there exists a strong faith in the infinite worth of the soul, wherever death has lost its terrors, wherever the sufferings of this world are measured against a future glory, there is bound up with these vital feelings the conviction that Jesus Christ has forced His way through death; that God has awakened Him and raised Him to life and glory."[1] In Christendom, at all events, wherever faith in a future life is still a vital conviction, it is to be traced back to the belief that Jesus Christ survived bodily death and reappeared to certain of His followers. No one disputes the fact that had it not been for faith in the Resurrection the cause of Jesus would have perished with Him in His grave. Further, no

[1] *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, p. 102.

one disputes the fact that apart from this faith it would be impossible to account for the existence of one of the greatest institutions in history, the Church, using the term in no narrow or sectarian sense. And lastly, no one disputes the fact that between the paralysis of faith, the utter despair born of the tragedy of the Master's end, and the beginnings of the victorious campaign which His followers conducted against the combined forces of ecclesiasticism, imperialism, and popular superstition, *something* happened, and this something they alleged to be the Resurrection. Hence the biography of Jesus does not end with His death; it must include His appearances after death. For His influence in history took its rise in and is sustained by the conviction that He manifested Himself on the material plane after His crucifixion. These facts are beyond all reasonable doubt, account for them as we may.

But doubts and difficulties begin to emerge as soon as we seek to understand what precisely we mean by the Resurrection and what value we are to attach to the historical testimonies brought forward in its behalf. Very often the devout Christian confounds his present experience of Christ as a spiritual force energizing in his life with the historical fact that Christ rose

from the dead in Palestine about 1900 years ago. We can experience the living mystical Christ through His influence over our characters. For, as the unknown author of *Theologia Germanica* writes: "In so far as a man's life is according to Christ, Christ Himself dwelleth in him, and if he hath not the one, neither hath he the other. For where there is the life of Christ, there is Christ Himself." [1] But this mystical experience has nothing to do with facts of history. These must be proved by historical witnesses. That Christ energizes in the moral universe today we can experience for ourselves; that on the first Easter morning He rose from the dead is an historical happening to be established by historical research and study of all available sources of information. Now, when we turn to the New Testament within which all the accessible testimony is to be found, we discern two main traditions, one handed down in the Gospels, confused, discrepant, and clearly consisting of divergent reports originating in different quarters of the Christian community, but bearing witness in essence to one sublime certainty: "He is risen. It is He Himself and not some visual shade that we have seen. The same Jesus that we knew and loved when He lived

[1] Chapter xlvi.

amongst us, manifested Himself to us by infallible proofs." It would be easy to draw up a rather formidable list of discrepancies between the narratives of the four Gospels, and a vast amount of ingenuity has been spent in disentangling the various strands of tradition that have been so greatly confused. But happily we are not dependent on these stories which are the source of our most perplexing difficulties today. We have another, a simpler and an absolutely authentic account by St. Paul, who wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians some twenty-five years after the Crucifixion. This testimony is the solid rock on which the waves of destructive criticism have dashed in vain. The present writer believes that any open and candid mind, propossessed with no dogmatic assumptions against the survival of the soul after death, can convince itself that Christ emerged from the realm of the dead, and manifested Himself on the material plane to certain witnesses, by concentrating attention on what Paul has to say in the light of modern reflection, using the Gospel records as subsidiary and corroborative. All his authentic letters rest on and imply his own direct and immediate experience of the actuality of the Resurrection. The most famous and the most cogent passage is, as has

been indicated, the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, verses 3-8, 11. Here are his words in Dr. Moffatt's well-known translation: "First and foremost, I passed on to you what I had myself received, namely, that Christ died for our sins as the scriptures had said, that he was buried, that he rose on the third day, as the scriptures had said, and that he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve; after that, he was seen by over five hundred brothers all at once, the majority of whom survive to this day, though some have died; after that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles, and finally, he was seen by myself, by this so-called 'abortion' of an apostle. . . . Such is what we preach, such is what you believed."

Let us consider this calm and measured statement with a mind free from all dogmatic prepossessions and anxious only to learn the facts.

To begin with, the Apostle is not proclaiming a new idea which he wishes to commend to doubting or sceptical minds. On the contrary, he is setting forth the common faith of the Christian Society, the faith which he had himself received, and which the Christians at Corinth had believed through the agency of his preaching. His experience was not a private

See page 136. The adventure Beautiful by Lillian Whiting.

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matter. It was one which he shared with Peter and James and the rest. If it be asked what opportunity he had for learning what they had witnessed, it suffices to point to Paul's own statement that he spent a fortnight at Peter's house in Jerusalem a few years after the Crucifixion.[1]

It is to be further noted that the Apostle does not describe the Resurrection. "He rose on the third day." Rose from where? And how did He rise? Paul is silent. All we know is that He rose from among the dead, or departed spirits, into light and glory. And as this event took place in the invisible world, it is obvious that no description of its mode or conditions is possible. In a later part of the chapter he argues for the resurrection of the body, but not the body laid in the grave (that is flesh and blood which cannot inherit the heavenly world), but another and a different body. We infer, then, that Paul would have us know that Jesus rose out of the world of spirits in a new and spiritual embodiment.

But what Paul emphasizes is not Christ's act of rising from the dead. It is His appearances that he stresses. And the appearances which he records are six in number. This does not

[1] Galatians i, 18, 19.

mean that there were not others, it only means that these are cited as known to the Apostle and as constituting a solid defence of the central truth of the Christian religion. He "appeared" to Peter, to the Twelve, to more than five hundred members of the Christian community at one time, to James, to all the Apostles, and finally, to Paul himself. The appearances to Peter and to the Twelve are corroborated by the tradition preserved in the Gospel of Luke.[1] If St. Paul had not been sure of what he was saying, how could he, while Peter and a majority of the more than five hundred referred to were alive, proclaim the fact of the appearances as witnessed by them?

When we consider the psychological situation created by Christ's tragic end, implying as it did the refutation of His claim to be the appointed Messenger of Heaven, and the utter shipwreck of His followers' hopes, to be succeeded shortly afterwards by a recreated faith in His divine mission, and by a boundless courage and an unconquerable moral energy, the principle of causality demands that a sufficient reason be forthcoming for such a momentous transformation. Now Paul supplies the necessary cause. It was the certain and per-

[1] Chapter xxiv, 34, 36.

manent conviction of these witnesses that they had been in contact with Jesus Himself in all the fulness of His personal life, and for this conviction they were prepared, if need be, to lay down their lives. It was their unshaken assurance that their risen Master had manifested Himself to one or more of their physical senses. Modern sceptical writers do not question that the disciples believed they saw Jesus after His death, but they hold that the belief was a mistaken interpretation of a purely self-created and subjective phenomenon. What the disciples really saw was not Jesus nor any other objective reality whatever, but a reaction of their own minds under the rebound from despair, a reaction which took the form of, or, as it were, projected itself as a visual impression. What they experienced was the creation of a powerful autosuggestion and is to be explained by purely psychical processes. It is very significant that in the most recent attempt to controvert the reality of Christ's Resurrection, the writer refuses to face the Pauline witness. He confines himself to the easy task of refuting the notion of a physical resurrection.[1]

Now both belief and scepticism are agreed on

[1] A. W. Martin: *Faith in the Future Life.*

one point: these witnesses had visions of Jesus after His death. But while the sceptic holds that the visions were like the dagger which the heat-oppressed brain of Macbeth conjured up, "a false creation," the witnesses themselves were convinced that what they saw was "veridical," that is, truth-telling, and was produced by the actual presence of the real and veritable Jesus whom they had seen and heard in the days of His flesh. Surely the burden of proof lies with the sceptic. What evidence does he bring forward to refute the claim of those who assert that they beheld the form of One who had died? None. All he can do is to fall back upon the assumption: "dead men do not rise." Rather than believe in the possibility of such an event, it is preferable, he would hold, to strain psychological possibilities to the breaking-point or to throw up the whole problem as insoluble. But how do we know that dead men do not rise? We do not know it and the assertion is a mere assumption, and an assumption which is being called in question more and more as time passes. If our view of the universe makes this world a self-contained whole, completely shut off from the world of the discarnate so that we cannot even say with Fechner, "sometimes a little chink does open, suddenly

and quickly closes again, in the gate generally shut up between this world and the next," then the matter is foredetermined, and discussion is superfluous. On the other hand, if we have found reasons to believe that the veil which hides the other world from us has grown so thin that to some finer sense than those which make us aware of physical things has been revealed a glimpse of a transcendental realm close to us and crowded with other intelligences, we can accept the simple and natural view of Christ's friends that He was actually present and convinced them of His reality. It is a striking fact that some men of distinction, like the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, who had lost faith in the Resurrection, because of its incompatibility with their view of the natural order, have recovered their faith because of experiences which compelled them to change their conception of this order. In his work, *Survival of Human Personality After Bodily Death,* this writer speaking of these experiences says that "as a matter of fact our research has led us to results that have not been negative only but largely positive. We have shown that amid much deception and self-deception, fraud and illusion veritable manifestations do reach us from beyond the grave. *The central claim of*

Christianity is thus confirmed as never before." [1]

Granted, it may be said, that Jesus Christ in the first century of our era stepped forth from the invisible into the phenomenal world, what bearing has that fact today on faith in the life after death? Now we are in a different situation from that in which the first Christians found themselves. They were visited by a wonderful and soul-transforming experience, a vision of the Son of Man risen from the dead; we in this far distant age, with minds prepossessed with a philosophical or scientific world-view, must grope our way back to the great event amid manifold historical, critical, and psychological difficulties. The men of the first century argued: immortality is a fact, a glorious and palpable reality, filling earth and sky with its splendour, for we have beheld with our eyes the face and form of Him who had been crucified and who had died and had been buried. We argue: believing as we do in the Fatherhood of God, in the ethical value of personality, in the ultimate righteousness of the world-order, we are constrained to believe in immortality, and in virtue of this belief we are unable to withhold our acceptance of the Pauline testimony

[1] Vol. II, p. 288 (italics are mine).

that by means of a truth-telling, objectively valid vision, Jesus Christ manifested Himself on this earth to hundreds of witnesses. Thus by our different relations in time to the historical fact, our spiritual relations cannot but be affected, so that while the early Christian inferred immortality from the Resurrection, we, on the contrary, can believe in the Resurrection because we already believe in immortality. While this is true, is it not also true that *historically* belief in Christ's victory over death has had a powerful influence in putting at the very heart of the Christian message the mighty hope of an endless life? For many centuries, the belief in some kind of existence beyond the grave was practically universal. Homer, Plato, Virgil, the Old Testament prophets and historians testify to the popular belief in a world of shades, pale phantoms, flitting about in Stygian gloom and sadness. Such a life—if life it could be called—was no object of desire to any rational being. It was man's fate, the doom decreed for him by the inscrutable will of Heaven. He looked forward to it with fear and repulsion. It was literally true to say that all his lifetime he was subject to bondage through fear of death. But suddenly the dread gave way to desire. Wherever the Christian message was

accepted, the entire psychological climate of the soul was reversed, and the life beyond became an object of love and longing and aspiration. This is the indubitable fact of history. And the explanation is at hand. The personality and career of Jesus Christ had brought home to the human heart the love of God as a reality which created a new heaven and a new earth, which energized as a mighty power of redemption in the lives of men. The tragedy of the Crucifixion seemed to eclipse this wondrous sun that had for a space illumined their universe. But with the reappearance of their departed Master, the love which had shone forth in His earthly life now rises in new majesty, reveals its invincible greatness and indestructible force in that death had to give way before it. Wherever Christ is, love is. Whatever world He inhabits, it is filled with the sunshine of goodness, self-sacrifice, and glory unspeakable. Hence there came into the conception of the life to come a definiteness, a certainty, and a desirableness which had been hitherto unknown. And even yet simple and devout souls throughout Christendom rest on this tradition in childlike faith, and have an assurance and inward freedom which more critical natures often envy. To the average man there is a

weakness in all our arguments. Elaborate reasonings, conclusions extracted painfully from premises which are open to debate, appear bloodless and remote from reality. Over against them stands the dark and chilling fact of the apparently unbroken silence of the ages. "Thousands of generations," says Carlyle, "all as noisy as our own, have been swallowed up of time, and there remains no wreck of them any more, and Pleiades and Arcturus and Orion and Sirius are still shining in their courses as when the shepherd first noted them on the plains of Shinar."

It cannot be denied that one authentic instance of a traveller returned from the land of spirits would outweigh a thousand speculative arguments which seem weak as gossamer threads to the soul face to face with death and the dark unknown. The believer in the Christian story holds that in one signal case the everlasting silence has been broken, and his faith in immortality wins thereby an intensity and a clearness which otherwise would be impossible. But what about non-Christians, devout Jews, Buddhists? This argument cannot find them. What it gains in intension, it loses in extension. Indeed the argument from Resurrection to immortality as developed by Paul is

concerned only with those who have identified themselves in thought and life with Jesus Christ. It does not touch the case of men in general. His reasoning is not: "Jesus rose from the dead and reappeared on earth, therefore all men are immortal," but it is this: "Jesus, as the Head of a new humanity mystically united to Him by faith and a common spiritual life, rose again, and therein is the pledge and guarantee that His members shall also rise again." But this mystical doctrine is too high even for the great majority of Christians and to those who have been bred on a different tradition and within a different fellowship, it is quite unintelligible. But immortality belongs to man as man, though its spiritual quality, its blessedness or the reverse, will be determined by the presence or absence of Christlike virtues and graces, themselves the proof that God has not left Himself without a witness in any human spirit.

What, then, is the real significance of Christ's Resurrection for belief in an immortal life? What is its message to men in general? It offers not only proof of survival but more particularly it makes survival worth while, an end to be desired. All the higher religions imply a doctrine of immortality, a belief that the soul

lives on after the physical organism has perished, or as in the Judaism of Christ's day, that it lives in the old body, with all its defects and weaknesses, reanimated and supernaturally restored from the dust of the grave. But what the Resurrection of Christ offers to him who can accept it is the possibility that every righteous man, every one who cleaves to what he perceives to be best, will not only live on in the other world but will win a new embodiment, a fit medium for nobler and more unimpeded activities, and for the enjoyment of those personal relationships which constitute a truly human life. It is a revelation not merely of the fact of survival but of its *nature* as no ghostly or abstract continuance after death, as rather a truly concrete, rich, and manifold human life. Apart from this revelation we may conceive of the future life in the manner of the ultra-idealist as an abstract stream of consciousness functioning in the absolute or as an idea persisting in the Divine mind or as a series of mental images connected with an atom which cannot be destroyed. But ordinary healthy human nature has no interest in such a future. These bloodless categories may, perhaps, seem a very Paradise to the philosopher; it is to be feared that to the great mass of non-philosophi-

cal humanity, they would offer an exceedingly uninteresting prospect, so much so, indeed, that men generally would be inclined to say: Rather no future at all, rather blank non-existence than a future such as these theories imply. It is indeed a curious situation in which modern thought in regard to the problem of the after-life finds itself. As in ancient times popular beliefs robbed the future world of all interest and value, so is it today with much of our most respected philosophy. It, too, makes the future after death abstract, dreary, and far from appetizing. The world beyond the grave was peopled according to ancient imagination with vague, weak, ineffectual shades; the same world, according to some of our most venerated professors of philosophy, is the theatre of an "unearthly ballet" of the thinnest abstractions ever spun by human brains. In both cases, the future life, ceasing to interest, ceases to stir hope or provide stimulus or affect life at any point. The Christian message where accepted restores the interest, for it interprets the life to come as not less but more than the present life, as a state of being analogous to our present existence but richer, fuller, intenser, involving a very plenitude of emotional and intellectual activity, and of an ever-ascending range of

social relationships. Christ came back from the undiscovered country to this living world as a friend would visit friends, to reassure them, to say that all was well, nay more, that their hopes were far below the sublime reality. Henceforth that other world meant for them far more than it had ever done before. They carried over into it all the wonder and the glory, all the beauty and the gladness, all the satisfaction to heart and mind which His ministry among them had wrought. Is it any wonder that they found the true home of the soul where lived their heart's love and admiration? The world of the dead no longer struck a chill to their souls when they thought of it. On the contrary, it flung upon them a great fascination, and inspired them with an ardent longing. It may be that here is the open door through which Christianity may enter and repeat its ancient triumphs. Make the future life the realization of a man's ideal strivings, the embodiment of all his highest aspirations, and it will become an object of desire, something for which he will surrender all lesser lures. And among these aspirations can there be any more worthy of the soul than the desire for intimate communion with these higher and more spiritual intelligences that have blessed the world with their presence and

work in it? Such is the thought of one of the greatest minds of the nineteenth century. "We shall," says Fechner, "enter into close fellowship with the great spirits of those who lived, in their second stage of life, long before us, but whose great example and wisdom served to form our own minds. Thus he who lived here entirely in Christ will be entirely in Christ hereafter; nor is his individuality to be extinguished within a higher individuality; nay, he will be established, and receive new strength, and at the same time be able to strengthen others."[1]

To sum up: the signal contribution which Jesus Christ has made to the teaching about immortality was wrought, partly, by the revelation during His earthly career of what constituted the immortal life in the highest sense of the term, the sharing in qualities which are by their nature deathless, faith, hope, love, peace, and their allied graces; and partly, by His triumph over death and self-manifestation in glorified form to the eyes and hearts of those who had loved Him and had mourned His tragic end. His return from the realms of the dead was not necessary to persuade them of survival; like all pious people of the time, they believed in a post-mortem existence. But it was neces-

[1] *On Life After Death*, p. 67.

sary to dissipate the vagueness and uncertainty of their ideas, to reassure them, to make clear that the life to come is a higher stage in the development of the human spirit for all who here aspire and strive. Because of this revelation it seemed to them that Christ was the bringer of real immortality, and strong in this mighty hope they despised death, even though it came to them in forms the very thought of which makes the blood run cold in our veins today, and they revolutionized the civilization of the empire and set in motion forces which have exercised incalculable influence on the moral life of humanity. Throughout all the Christian centuries myriads of men and women have found in death no longer an enemy but a friend, the opener of the gate through which the soul passes to the fulfilment of its dearest hopes, the fruition of its strivings and strugglings here below.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ARGUMENT FROM PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

A LITTLE while ago it was possible to write about immortality without deeming it necessary to acknowledge, except, perhaps, by a perfunctory allusion, the existence of the Psychical Research movement inaugurated for the investigation of certain obscure and abnormal phenomena which have been generally relegated to the sphere of superstition and hysteria. But, as some of the finest and most acute minds of this generation have concluded that when a critical sifting has done its work, there is left a solid block of evidence not capable of any "naturalistic" explanation, we can no longer ignore the facts or smile away the interpretation which competent students have put upon them. Yet if it were possible one might be well content to pass the subject by, for among all the bewildering and perplexing problems that have ever taxed human wits, unquestionably this problem takes a preeminent place. Indeed, it seems presumptuous

for any one who has not spent many years on personal investigation to offer any judgment as to its meaning and worth. Psychical research may be, as many think, absurd, but the way in which its arguments are often answered is still more absurd. Sneers, ridicule, *a priori* dogmatism, such mouth-filling phrases as "a recrudescence of mediaeval superstitution," "a scandal and a disgrace" to the fair name of science—such things are the fruit of ignorance and prejudice. Could anything be more preposterous than the dictum of the late Professor Münsterberg that the evidential facts alleged by psychical research not only do not exist but can never exist? And what are we to say of the curt dismissal of the whole question by Professor A. E. Taylor, member of the British Academy, as one of fraud or thought-transference, or if these theories break down, of possible demoniacal possession."[1] Professor Taylor does not stay to ask what he means by thought-transference, whether and to what extent such a theory has been proved, how the proving of fraud in one psychic can disprove honesty and high character in another, nor finally does he reflect whether the activity of evil spirits may not make credible the

[1] See *The Faith and the War*, p. 136.

counter-activity of good spirits. The truth is the philosopher and the man of science entertain a certain general view of the world with which these alleged facts are incompatible; therefore, there is a tendency to argue that the facts themselves are unworthy of notice and ought to be set aside without more ado.

Mr. Edward Clodd, in his book *If a Man Die Shall He Live Again?*, gives a list of mediums detected in fraud and infers that all the phenomena of spiritualism are the work of trickery and deception. He fails to notice, however, that while some mediums have been proved guilty of deliberate and wilful deception, others in the light of fuller knowledge can be charged only with unconscious simulation of fraudulent behaviour. But what is more important, Mr. Clodd, with all his claims to scientific method, omits to supply a list of "sensitives" whose honesty has been placed beyond all dispute by critical guardianship extended over many years. The fact appears to be that this writer approaches the subject with a mind already prejudiced against the spiritistic doctrine.

So, too, with the theologian. As a rule he approaches the question with certain theories as to the future life in the back of his mind

and as the methods and results of psychical research appear to conflict with these preconceived ideas he holds himself excused from even examining what may be said in their favour. This, of course, is not true of all the representatives of religion. The greatest living philosophical divine in the Church of England protests against rejecting the support which may be given alike to the Resurrection of Christ and to the resurrection of all men by "sifted and well-attested evidence of more or less analogous appearances of the dead or the dying to their friends."[1] The great majority of scientists and theologians have built up out of their favourite conceptions distinct systems of thought by which they picture to themselves the universe. The question, of course, is: Are these systems final or must they not be so modified as to include the new phenomena, if these phenomena can be proved to be genuine? The modern spirit has small patience with dogmatism and finalities of any kind. Its watchword rather is, nothing is impossible, except the self-contradictory. The advocates of religious faith should take warning from history. There are two questions about which man's curiosity can not be stilled. These are:

[1] Hastings Rashdall, *Doctrine and Development*, p. 180.

Whence has he come? and Whither is he going? When Darwin published his *Origin of Species* in 1859, the theological world was shaken to its foundations. No lover of truth can look back on that controversy without a sense of shame and humiliation. Today all men find in Evolution a master-key of knowledge, and because of it we understand religion itself better than we have ever understood it before. It is a painful reflection that the very arguments launched against the teaching of Darwin a generation ago are being refurbished to do duty against the teaching of Sir Oliver Lodge and Professor Barrett. Only the other day there was published the report of an address by a popular preacher, in which he lifted a warning voice against the work of the Psychical Research Society on the ground that it is undermining the foundations of the Christian religion and making the Creeds of none effect. He does not stay to ask—What is the Christian religion? Nor does he inquire whether the traditional interpretation of the Creeds is a permanently adequate and final presentation of spiritual truth. It is the old appeal to authority against the claims of a Divine and progressive revolution. There is a saying of Samuel Taylor Coleridge which that great writer com-

mends as worthy to be framed and hung up in the library of every student of religion: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth will proceed by loving his own Sect or Church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all."[1] Unhappily, the scientific movement has in the popular mind been confused with the unscientific cult of spiritualism. This is one of the main reasons why, as compared with Great Britain, America lags so far behind in the investigation of these abnormal incidents. The average spiritualist is an exceedingly credulous person, too much governed by the emotional interests in the life beyond and prone to construct out of doubtful material a very portentous edifice. The credulity, the intellectual incoherence and lack of proportion, and the deception and self-deception with which the history of spiritualism has been disgraced have created a general prejudice against the whole subject. It is most unfortunate that the term "spiritualism" should not have been confined to the cult that bears that name and that the term "spiritism" should not have been reserved for the scientific movement. One of the favourite devices of the critic is to lump together "spiritualism" as a

[1] *Aids to Reflection*, Aphorism LXIII.

religion and "spiritism" as a scientific theory advanced in explanation of certain psychic phenomena. Psychical researchers are all branded as "gullible" and "credulous," they insist, and the fruit of their toil is declared to be "nauseating dribble" and "banal inanity." Of course, the answer is at hand. Among the men of whom these things are said are A. J. Balfour, Sir W. F. Barrett, William James, and Henri Bergson.

One of the most impressive facts in the history of psychic research is this power to convert hard-headed and sceptical and even materialistically-minded men to views which the popular mind denounces as "soft," "superstitious," "absurd." The most recent example of this transforming power is seen in the well-known novelist, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who, in his book, *The New Revelation,* tells his experiences:

"When I had finished my medical education in 1882, I found myself, like many young medical men, a convinced materialist as regards our personal destiny. I had never ceased to be an earnest theist, because it seemed to me that Napoleon's question to the atheistic professors on the starry night as he voyaged to Egypt: 'Who was it, gentlemen, who made

these stars?' has never been answered. To say that the Universe was made by immutable laws only put the question one degree further back as to who made the laws. (I did not, of course, believe in an anthropomorphic God, but I believed then, as I believe now, in an intelligent Force behind all the operations of Nature—a force so infinitely complex and great that my finite brain could get no further than its existence.) Right and wrong I saw also as great obvious facts which needed no divine revelation. But when it came to a question of our little personalities surviving death, it seemed to me that the whole analogy of Nature was against it. When the candle burns out the light disappears. When the electric cell is shattered the current stops. When the body dissolves there is an end of the matter. Each man in his egotism may feel that he ought to survive, but let him look, we will say, at the average loafer—of high or low degree—would any one contend that there was any obvious reason why *that* personality should carry on? It seemed to be a delusion, and I was convinced that death did indeed end all, though I saw no reason why that should affect our duty towards humanity during our transitory existence.

"This was my frame of mind when Spiritual phenomena first came before my notice." [1]

Or take the experience of the late F. W. H. Myers. He began life as an earnest believer in traditional Christianity, only, however, to find that later reflection dissolved away the structure of his faith. The point at which he especially felt the weakness of his position, was the question of immortality. He became an agnostic as to a life after death, but determined, however, to leave no stone unturned in his quest for assurance. He turned to psychical research. Years of self-sacrifice and laborious effort were at last rewarded: "It is only after thirty years of such study as I have been able to give that I say to myself at last, *Habes totâ quod mente petisti*—'Thou hast what thy whole heart desired';—that I recognize that for me this fresh evidence,—while raising that great historic incident of the Resurrection into new credibility,—has also filled me with a sense of insight and of thankfulness such as even my first ardent Christianity did not bestow." [2]

Dr. James H. Hyslop, the devoted secretary of the American Society for Psychical Re-

[1] *The New Revelation*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, pp. 14-16.
[2] *Proceedings of the English S.P.R.*, part XXXVII, p. 114.

search, has placed on record the story of his failure to find satisfaction in the traditional faith of his home and his resolute search for an abiding foundation on which to build his life:

"But scarcely had those feelings shaped themselves into resolution when the chilling breath of scepticism came to cool the ardour of my hopes. The first step in this direction was the discovered need for me of revised biblical interpretation enforced by a little sectarian controversy about amending the Constitution of the United States in favour of certain religious acknowledgments. The fatal chapter, however, fixing doubt beyond recovery was that on the Incarnation and the Resurrection in Barnes's *Evidences of Christianity*. Faith might have had its way had it not submitted its claims to proof. The very gibes of religious fanatics and cartoonists against the doctrine of Darwin strengthened it in my sight, and every discovery of geology, of physiology, and of psychology pointed to only one conclusion, that of materialism. I accepted it, not because it was a desirable philosophy, but because the evidence of fact was on its side, and neither the illusions of idealism nor the interests of religious hope were sufficient to tempt me into a career of hypocrisy and cowardice. I

had to temporize with many a situation until I could assure my own mind where it stood. In the pursuit of some final truth on which to base a life work I passed through all the labyrinths of philosophy, losing nothing and gaining nothing in its meshes. After Plato and Aristotle it seemed to lose its moorings in facts and lived on tradition and authority. New discoveries and reconstruction it despised as it would the occupation of neophytes and children. At last I was directed to the idealism of Kant for light and found there a system as helpless as it was mystifying, though it had been born in the atmosphere of Swedenborg's distinction between the transcendental and the phenomenal and of which it soon became ashamed. In it the bankruptcy of philosophy was the opportunity of science, and in a favourable, though accidental moment my attention was attracted by psychic research in which the first prospect of crucial facts presented itself.

"However satisfactory philosophy had been in showing that the meaning of the cosmos was to be found in the supersensible, whether by idealism or atomic materialism, the more exacting method of science, which had strengthened the claims of physical law and causes and which became the standard of truth, made it

necessary to regard the residual phenomena of human experience, if only to corroborate the inferences which idealism had drawn from the normal. In fact, whatever the validity of the older views as possible constructions of the world, their probability was lost in the face of the certitudes of science which had multiplied evidence for the extension of physical explanations, and religion had to turn to the residual phenomena of life, as it had once done, to vindicate its aspirations and interpretation of the cosmos. It does not yet clearly see the direction from which its light is to come. But in the accumulation of facts within the field of supernormal phenomena I found the dawn of another day for an idealism that will last as long as scientific method can claim respect."[1]

The problem of immortality as formulated by psychical research ought to be carefully noted. Failure to keep this formulation in view has led both the average man and the critical student into much misdirected antagonism. The psychical researcher takes up the question as it has been shaped by modern materialism, which simply asserts that normally we know consciousness only in connection with

[1] *Psychical Research and the Resurrection*, by James H. Hyslop, pp. 406-408.

a physical organism, and we cease to find any trace of consciousness as soon as the organism perishes. As death marks the cessation of all other functions of the body, why should consciousness be an exception? We do not, indeed, know what consciousness is, but neither do we know what matter is; and materialism maintains that science is concerned primarily not with the ultimate constitution of either but with the relation in which the one stands to the other. Wherever we have mind we have a physical organism; with the dissolution of the organism, mind ceases to manifest itself, and the natural inference is that it ceases to exist. To the convinced materialist, therefore, a future life is an absurdity.

Now it is at this stage that the psychical researcher comes upon the scene. He says to the materialist: "I accept your argument and I propose to give you such evidence as will convince all rational persons that individual consciousness does persist after death. This I shall do by opening up a channel of communication whereby we may get into touch with a particular consciousness which may prove its identity by recalling its earthly memories, and may satisfy us that we are not listening to the echoes of our own thoughts but to the veritable

experiences of a personality which was once alive on earth and now survives in another state of being." This is what psychical research claims to do. Whether it has justified its claim is open to dispute; but, at all events, we must not blame it for failing to do what it has never pretended to do. It does not profess to make clear the nature of the other world, nor its mode of existence. It throws no light on the occupations of surviving personalities, nor does it offer to solve a multitude of questions which religion and philosophy propound. In brief, it sets aside all speculation for the time, and concentrates on the task of obtaining from deceased persons such information as will identify them with personalities known to have lived amongst us. This information must be of such a character as not to be explicable by any normal channel of communication and it must consist of such incidents or facts as are verifiable and thus capable of proving the identity of discarnate intelligences, if such there be.

It is here that so much disappointment is experienced. We plough our way through a disheartening mass of trivial and incoherent details which seem to argue that persons of known ability and acumen while on earth have

undergone a sad deterioration since they crossed the boundaries of the other world. If indeed these individuals who claim to speak to us from the other world are what they profess to be, why do they convey to us no authentic tidings of their new environment, why do they not throw light on the vital problems of our present existence, on such a question, for example, as the real relation of mind and body? If the life in the other world is to be judged from the Proceedings of the Society, it must be pronounced flat, stale, and unprofitable. So it would seem, and yet on further thought we may have to set aside these questionings as irrelevant. Why should we suppose that the transition to the realm beyond death marks an access of insight into the problems of our earthly life? Further, if the experts of the Society are looking not for revelations of supernal truth but for trivial details of earthly experience so as to establish the identity of the presumed communicator, the very insignificance of the messages may turn out to be a point in their favour. And as to information about the nature of the other life, we may doubt whether it could be given us on this material plane, except in a misleading form; and if it were given, how is it to be verified?

For example, "George Pelham," the most convincing of all the communicators, told Dr. Richard Hodgson, through Mrs. Piper, that the organism with which the departing spirit is supplied is made of luminiferous ether—an intensely interesting and valuable bit of information, if true! But how do we know that it is true? Had Mrs. Piper never heard of the Epicurean notion of an "ethereal" body? Is it not an easy supposition that her subconsciousness reproduced this doctrine, accrediting it to George Pelham? In any case, we have no means of proving or disproving the statement. And the same remark may be applied to the inspirational utterances with which spiritualistic literature abounds. In so far as they are in harmony with received ideas, they may be taken as a reflection of the psychic's own thought, in so far as they are not verifiable, they are useless as evidence, though, for aught we can tell, they may be true. What is wanted is not revelations of the future state for which we have no test of reality, but memories of earthly experiences open to inquiry and verification. There is one very important fact about the other world—if it be a fact—concerning which there is practical unanimity among the best accredited psychics. Souls leave this

How souls leave this Earth

world in all stages of moral and intellectual growth. In the world beyond, there is, we are told, a vast amount of missionary activity going on, the more developed helping and encouraging those of lesser attainments, and all spirits finding scope and room for the everlasting play of self-sacrifice. Now it is a curious fact that about fifty years ago a distinguished Scottish divine, Dr. Robert Service, published an essay on *A Spiritual Theory of Another Life*,[1] in which on purely Biblical and philosophical grounds he defended this selfsame thesis. Dr. Service would have rejected with scorn any testimony from the Mrs. Pipers of his day, if such had been known to him, yet his contention is a commonplace of psychical research. Even so, we must ask: How do we know that it is true? In asserting it to be true, we are really begging the question, for we are assuming that the fact of survival has been proved, and that we have some test by which we can verify presumed descriptions of the spiritual activities of surviving personalities.

When we seek to judge the value of the evidence for communication with the dead, we are confronted with certain drawbacks under

[1] *Contemporary Review*, April, 1871.

which it labours. For one thing, it is generally agreed that the most convincing items are too intimate to print. To quote a remark of Mr. Henry Holt, the well-known New York publisher, in a private letter to the writer, "Nature seems to have strengthened the partition between this plane and the next by making the strongest evidences that death is only a partition, so intimate that those experiencing them cannot tell of them." Again the material that is published loses much of its conviction-creating power from the fact that the reader has it at second-hand. There is an elusive quality about first-hand, direct experiment which cannot be communicated by any amount of reading and reflection. Says Dr. Hodgson in reference to his experience with George Pelham, "the continual manifestation of this personality, with its own reservoir of memories, with its swift appreciation of any reference to friends of G. P., with its 'give and take' in little incidental conversations with myself, has helped largely in producing a conviction of the actual presence of the G. P. personality which it would be quite impossible to impart by any mere enumeration of verifiable statements. It will hardly, however, be regarded as surprising that the most impressive manifestations are at

the same time the most subtle and the least communicable.''[1]

Still further, not all that claims to be supernormal is supernormal, nor is all the genuinely supernormal to be regarded as evidence for the existence of discarnate intelligences. Shrewd guessing, hints unconsciously supplied by the sitter, fraud, conscious or unconscious, on the part of the psychic, the vagaries of secondary personality, chance coincidence,—these and other influences must be set aside as inadmissible before we can be sure that we are in the presence of the supernormal. Then, only those incidents or facts supernormally communicated that bear upon the personal identity of dead individuals can be accepted as relevant evidence. In a word, whether we agree or not with the view which some investigators believe to be the inevitable result of their inquiries, we must admit that psychical research is a genuinely scientific movement. It makes painstaking efforts to get at the facts, and as a rule, allows theory to wait on experiment. Indeed, the critic who would most effectively deal a blow at the ''spiritistic'' hypothesis, will find the best weapon for that purpose in a careful perusal of Psychical Research journals and

[1] *Proceedings*, Vol. XIII.

proceedings. For masterpieces of dialectical skill I know not where one could better go than to these volumes which for the most part gather dust on forgotten shelves.

In the next chapter will be given some specimens of the sort of evidence which the psychical researcher offers in support of his contention. The reader must have in mind that to do justice even to these narratives, it is necessary to study them as they are fully set forth in the original sources of information, and further, that the evidence now accumulated is so bulky that few men can afford the requisite time to study it. Various books giving selections from this literature have been published, the earliest and greatest of which is F. W. H. Myers's *Survival of Human Personality After Bodily Death.* The evidence is not all in by any means, but enough is open to the study of those who are interested in the problems involved to force the issue of causation. It would appear that there are at present only two possible hypotheses: *either* we must accept a far-reaching doctrine of telepathy, *or,* we must hold that under certain conditions, an occasional message, at least, gets through to our world from the realms beyond. There does not appear to be any escape from the choice thus

thrust upon us, yet, whether we accept one or other, doubts and difficulties beset us. In the view of the present writer it is a case of balancing probabilities.

1. *The telepathic hypothesis.*

By "telepathy" is meant the transmission of thought or feeling from mind to mind independently of the recognized channels of sense. It will be noted that there is nothing explanatory in this definition or description. The word "telepathy" is a convenient symbol to cover coincidences between living minds not due to chance; but we have not even an inkling of the process by which these coincidences come about. In calling in telepathy as an explanation, we appear to be appealing from the obscure to the still more obscure. Speaking generally, "official" science rejects as pure fancy the alleged facts connoted by the term. For example, Professor Armstrong, who writes a postscript to Mr. Clodd's *If a Man Die Shall He Live Again?*, brackets together "telepathy" and "spiritualism" and denounces both as popular superstitions. There is no such thing (he holds) as action of mind upon mind apart from the recognized channels of sense, except such as are explicable by shrewd guessing. We have, as a result, the

amusing spectacle of distinguished men of science appealing to telepathy in order to render the spiritistic theory superfluous, and of equally distinguished men of science rejecting telepathy as unproved and (as some think) unprovable. To make confusion worse confounded such a competent investigator as Mrs. Henry Sidgwick believes not only in telepathy as generally understood but extends the process to the world beyond the grave and maintains that the only satisfactory interpretation of the facts implies that the living can receive telepathic impressions from the dead. In other words, telepathy instead of being a rival to spiritism may turn out to be its ally in the sense that it points to a mental phenomenon explicable only through the agency of discarnate intelligences. Even if we admit with such a high authority as Professor W. MacDougall that the "reality of telepathy is of such a nature as to compel the assent of any competent person who studies it impartially,"[1] we still must ask, How is it possible? What must we assume in order to explain it?

The present situation of the telepathic hypothesis may be described thus: (1) It is accepted by the great majority of those who

[1] *Body and Mind*, p. 349.

have made prolonged investigation, as a convenient way of stating that active conditions of two living minds may be transmitted from one to the other by some supernormal path as yet unknown. (2) It is rejected by academic science as unnecessary, since the alleged facts are illusory. (3) It is accepted by many as a rival to the spiritistic hypothesis, as competent to explain all the undoubted facts of psychical research so far as these seem to point to a transcendental cause. (4) Finally, it is accepted by some experimenters as a process not only of incarnate minds but of minds discarnate, and as hinting at a law governing all spiritual intelligences throughout the entire universe. The fatal weakness of telepathy as an adequate explanation is that it is necessary to ascribe to it a selective power which no experiments or spontaneous phenomena reveal. So far as experimentation has gone there is not a shred of evidence to lead us to suppose that one mind can penetrate the subconscious depths of another mind, and pick out of a myriad elements those that are relevant to the establishment of personal identity.

2. *The spiritistic hypothesis.*

This view has the advantages of simplicity, ability to explain, and agreement with what we

know of the powers of consciousness. On the other hand, there are obstacles to its unreserved acceptance. To begin with, the silence or apparent silence of all the ages as to any authentic message from the world beyond raises a powerful presumption that the spirit-messages of today are to be explained by some mysterious forces of the receiver's psychic organism. To this it is replied that such silence is a mere assumption, that on the contrary the experience of the race testifies to the reality of communication with the other world, but that prejudice, preconceptions, and a materialistic bias have dulled the minds of the majority, and prevented them from impartially weighing the facts.

Then, again, in many of the phenomena there is a curious mixture of truth and error. It was this perplexing fact that led William James now to a favourable and now to an unfavourable judgment. In his Report on Mrs. Piper's Hodgson-control, he says: "*I myself feel as if an external will to communicate were probably there,* that is, I find myself doubting, in consequence of my whole acquaintance with that sphere of phenomena, that Mrs. Piper's dream-life, even equipped with 'telepathic' powers, accounts for all the results found. But

if asked, whether the will to communicate be Hodgson's, or be some mere spirit-counterfeit of Hodgson, I remain uncertain and await more facts."[1] Just at the point when the correct answer to a test-question is of vital importance, the supposed communicator is silent or finds it convenient to plead an engagement elsewhere, or in some instances makes a reply which turns out to be incorrect. In order to blunt the force of this objection, our attention is called to the fact that what primarily demands explanation is not the chaff but the precious grain, and to the further fact that in any hypothesis, any message from the transcendental realm must be coloured by the subconscious activities of the psychic.

Perhaps the objection which weighs most heavily with the average man is the assumed triviality of the messages. Even admitting, he says, the reality of the communications, of what use are they? What do they tell us which we do not know? Is it not passing strange that these intelligences have nothing to tell us of the conditions of the sphere which they inhabit? The psychical researcher replies: All the messages are not trivial, and even the trivial have their value as marks of identifica-

[1] *Proceedings of American S.P.R.*, Vol. III, pp. 588, 589.

tion. But the non-trivial messages such as those recorded, for example, in Miss Cameron's *Seven Purposes,* are not open to verification, and may by the critic be explained as subconscious fabrications. It is hard to see how this difficulty can be overcome. Finally, the popular mind is deeply influenced by the failure of such men as the late Dr. Richard Hodgson and Mr. F. W. H. Myers to fulfil their promise to communicate the contents of sealed letters which they left under stringent guardianship. One may doubt, however, whether such a proceeding constitutes a real test. Suppose Mr. Myers had revealed the contents of his sealed letter, would any hardened sceptic have felt shaken in his unbelief? In all probability, he would have sought help from the long arm of coincidence or have taken refuge in clairvoyance, that is, the transcendental perception of hidden objects.

On the whole, the layman cannot but feel that up to the present time the more probable of the two hypotheses is the spiritistic. The very least we must acknowledge is that the psychical researcher has made out a good case for himself, and has established the probability that ultimately his thesis will be proved to the satisfaction of all competent judges.

CHAPTER IX

SPECIMENS OF THE EVIDENCE SUPPLIED BY PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

In order that the reader may be enabled to judge for himself the sort of evidence which the Psychical Research Society is slowly accumulating, a few typical illustrations, selected for the most part from the society's literature, are here set forth. It must be borne in mind that a great many more incidents and cases of equal evidential value could be extracted from the voluminous reports of the society, but considerations of space forbid. Perhaps the most convincing book in the entire literature of the Movement is the thirteenth volume of the Proceedings, which contains the famous Hodgson Report of his own and others' sittings with Mrs. Piper. The study of this volume will compel thoughtful persons to admit one of two hypotheses to be true: *either* this New England woman of average education develops under certain conditions a power of dramatization comparable with that of Shakespeare or of

Balzac, *or,* we are in the presence of phenomena that point to some such doctrine as the spiritistic theorists contend for. But Mrs. Piper has fellow-dramatists of equal power—if this be the horn of the dilemma we prefer—and it is from one of these that our first testimony shall be taken.

THE EAR OF DIONYSIUS [1]

This piece of evidence, reported by the Right Hon. Gerald W. Balfour, has attracted considerable attention, particularly among persons of literary and classical education. It is not weightier than many others of more direct and simple character, but, if from discarnate sources, it illustrates the variety of ways by which the living beyond the veil are endeavouring to demonstrate to the living on this side. And it must be admitted that this kind of proof attempted is of the precise sort which would have been congenial to the eminent Greek scholar of the University of Cambridge, Professor A. E. Verrall, and his friend S. H. Butcher, professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh, who are the purported communicators.

[1] Proceedings of the English Society for Psychical Research, Vol. XXIX, pp. 197-243, 260-286.

Mrs. Willett, with whom the English Society has had many experiments, was the automatist, the messages coming mainly in writing, partly by voice, and mostly while in a state of trance. One mysterious phrase, "Dionysius Ear the lobe," came in 1910, and nothing more which seemed related until January 10, 1914, when a number of fragmentary quotations and scattered classical allusions, seemingly having little relation to each other, were written. All the after members of the series were written when Mrs. Willett was in trance and were not shown to her until the series, comprising three long groups of sentences, separated by considerable intervals, and one brief congratulatory finale, was completed.

Prominent among the topics to which various allusions were made was the "Ear of Dionysius," the designation for a certain grotto at Syracuse, opening on a stone quarry, where Athenian prisoners were kept, and where afterwards Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse, was said to have been able, on account of the peculiar acoustic qualities of the place, to listen to what his captives said. But there were also multiform references to the story of Polyphemus and Ulysses, and the story of Acis and Galatea, to Jealousy, to something to be found in Aris-

totle's *Poetics,* etc., etc., the allusions pursuing the several topics through classical authors especially and also to an extent through modern poets. But almost to the end there appeared to be little connection between these various themes, or reason why they should reiteratedly be grouped together. Yet it was early intimated that there was unity yet to appear, and it was expressly declared that a deliberate purpose was back of the scripts. "There are two people in that literary thing, chiefly concerned in it. They're very close friends, they've thought it out together." And it was unmistakably intimated that the two were the Greek scholars, Professors Verrall and Butcher.

Suddenly, though delayed as if to give those in whose hands the script was a chance to work out the problem for themselves, and with an air of surprise natural to the specialist who discovers that he has talked "over the heads" of his auditors, the key was given which unlocked the mystery, and unity was achieved. The key was the fragmentary word "Philox." The classical dictionaries show that there was a Syracusan poet Philoxenus, whose name very few but the most learned pundits of Greek literature would recognize. Even Mrs. Verrall, an accomplished classical scholar, did not

remember him. Very few lines of his survive.

But the classical dictionaries, as a rule, do not give the details which bind together the most important topics and allusions of the script. At last a share of them were found in Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*, and a greater number in a rare and recondite book by Dr. H. W. Smith, on the *Greek Melic Poets*. These two paragraphs found respectively in the named books sufficiently demonstrate the unity as found in the experiences and works of Philoxenus, but even here not all the pertinent classical allusions of the script are to be found. So that, if Mrs. Willett had consulted either or both of these books she could not have found all the facts which came out.

Mrs. Willett is not a classical scholar. She is very well known to the investigators, who are satisfied that the range of classical knowledge displayed in the script is enormously beyond what she is capable of having absorbed incidentally to general reading and equally well satisfied that she never consulted the authorities mentioned, which would have been insufficient even if she had.

But certain allusions in the script were such as would have been congenial to the studies of

Professor Butcher, others to Professor Verrall. Besides, and it seems a significant coincidence, it was found that Smith's *Greek Melic Poets* was in Professor Verrall's library and was used by him in his college lectures.

Professor Verrall was interested in his lifetime in the experiments for cross-correspondence, which dealt largely with classical materials. It seems probable that, his interest continuing after his death, his own communications would take some such form as we actually find. But to learn the real strength of the argument that back of these scripts lay a "will to communicate" on the part of classical scholars who have passed beyond, the reader must go to the full report. One feature of this is what looks like cross-correspondences between the Willett script and that of another automatist, dealing with the same group of references.

TWO SAMPLE "CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES"

The English Society of late years has conducted many experiments in "cross-correspondences" in which the communicating spirits are supposed to get the same test word, phrase, or thought into the script of different automatists

at a distance from each other, none of them allowed to see the script of the others, all of it being sent to the headquarters of the society as received. Mrs. Piper in Edgbaston, England; Mrs. Verrall, widow of Professor A. E. Verrall of Cambridge University, and herself a scholar of distinction, in Cambridge, England; Miss Verrall alone in Cambridge; and Mrs. Holland in India; these were the chief psychics involved. Mrs. Holland did not know even that any such experiments were being conducted.

It is almost impossible to cite any of the results in brief space, in a way that will be intelligible, and quite hopeless to do so without diminishing the evidential force.

The St. Paul Cross-Correspondence.[1] On November 15, 1906, Sir Oliver Lodge proposed to the purported Dr. Hodgson, who was communicating through the hand of the entranced Mrs. Piper in Edgbaston, that a test of the kind should be made, and Hodgson, assenting, said that he would go to Mrs. Holland and try to make "St. Paul" come out in her writing.

On December 31st, Mrs. Holland's hand wrote in India without break the following, ex-

[1] See *Journal* of British Society for Psychical Research, July, 1917-January, 1918, or *Journal* of American Society, September, 1917.

cept the parenthetic figures, which we prefix for ease of reference.

(1) II Peter 1, 15.
(2) This witness is true.
(3) It is time that the shadow should be lifted from your spirit.
(4) Let patience have her perfect work.
(5) This is a faithful saying.

These sentences, with their references to "this witness," "time that the shadow should be lifted," "patience," and "faithful saying," have a significant sound, as though attention were being called to something. But to what, Mrs. Holland did not know.

Paragraph 2 was written by St. Paul (Titus 1, 13), paragraph 3 is reminiscent of a passage by St. Paul and of none other in the Bible (Romans 13, 11), and paragraph 4 is a sentence which St. Paul was fond of using (I Timothy 1, 15; I Timothy 4, 9; II Timothy 2, 11; Titus 3, 8); paragraph 4 (James 1, 4) would have pertinence as a hint. Paragraph 1 seems to be irrelevant. The *name* of St. Paul *appears* to be lacking.

But later, January 12, 1907, in Cambridge, Miss Verrall's hand wrote:

"The name is not right robbing Peter to pay—Paul? Sanctus nomine quod efficit nil continens petatur surveniet." [Let a saint be sought containing in his name that which effects nothing, he will come to aid.]

And on February 26th Miss Verrall got:

"You have not understood about Paul, ask Lodge. Quibus eruditis advocatis rem explicabis non nisi ad unam normam refers hoc satis alia vana." [By calling to your aid what learned men will you explain the matter unless you carry it to one norm? This is sufficient, all else is useless.]

Here are two references to St. Paul by name, and the suggestion "ask Lodge." Does it not look as though failing to get the name agreed on with Lodge, the communicator had turned to another automatist? "Let a saint be sought containing in his name that which effects nothing." Can we refuse on such hints to examine the name "Paul" and find in it the root PAUO meaning to cease, come to an end—a procedure the opposite of "patience" and which is pretty sure to effect nothing? "The name is not right," "let a saint be sought"—where? Does not "robbing Peter to pay—Paul" furnish a hint that the passage from Peter in Mrs.

Holland's script, otherwise full of Paul, is meant?

Turning in that direction we find that there is *one* passage in the Epistles of Peter which names Paul, which is likewise the *one* passage in all the New Testament Epistles which names him, which is likewise the *one* passage in the entire New Testament which best describes him, and that is II Peter 3, 15, "And account that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you." And we discover that II Peter 3, 15 differs from the citation as written II Peter 1, 15 by but one figure. Considering the many indications that an auditory process is often involved in the transmission of words through a psychic, it is important to note that of all the other ordinals "third" is most likely to be mistaken for "first" in speech. Can all this be the result of accident? Many will conclude, after they consider all the interlacing hints in the Verrall script—more than we have mentioned —that II Peter 3, 15 was meant to be given Mrs. Holland, and that this is the "norm" which, once discovered, would "explain the matter" which concerned Lodge.

But if that conclusion is correct, it completely

excludes the telepathic theory, since not a person concerned in the tests ever suspected where the implied error lay, or that there was an error. Not a living person knew it, and the "norm" was not observed and brought into place for years after the incident was first reported. But *some one* knew what the "norm" was, and that it had not been traced, and the *some one* who dictated Miss Verrall's script gave clue upon clue which, had "patience had its perfect work," would have earlier linked together the passages.

The Hope, Star, and Browning Cross-Correspondence.[1] Mrs. Verrall, automatically writing when alone, wrote, on January 23rd, 1907:

Justice holds the scales

That gives the words but an anagram would be better.

Tell him that—rats star tars and so on. Try this

It has been tried before RTATS rearrange these [evidently an error] five letters or again tears stare . . .

And on January 28th her script began:

ASTER [Greek for star]

TERAS [anagram on *aster;* meaning wonder or a sign].

[1] Proceedings of British Society for Psychical Research, Vol. XXII, 59-77.

And in the short passage which followed were several broken extracts from Browning's poetry, the word "hope" being emphasized by being substituted for the original word "passion" in the poem.

On February 11th Mr. Piddington sitting with Mrs. Piper was pointedly informed by "Myers" that a cross-correspondence had been attempted through Mrs. Verrall and, asked what it was, after a little confusion answered,

I referred to Hope and Browning.
(Yes.)
I also said Star.

. . . . . .

Look out for Hope Star and Browning.

Not until after this was search made in Mrs. Verrall's script received by the Society, with the result already given.

But again a third automatist, who had been told nothing, had a part. Miss Verrall on February 3rd was impelled to draw automatically a crescent and a star and to write with no intelligible context "the crescent moon and the star." Later too she was told that a *five* letter anagram had been part of a success on January 28,—nothing more. On February 17th she got a drawing of a star (without the crescent) and

the appended sentence, "that was the sign she will understand when she sees it." Of several following brief phrases these were three:

"No arts prevail
. . . . . .
and a star above it all
rats every where in Hamelin town
Now do you understand"

Miss Verrall's script did not, then, take the hint of "five letters" (aster), but gave the *four* letter English version of the same word. Besides she wrote anagrams on *star,* namely, "arts" and "rats," as Mrs. Verrall's script had done on January 28th in her "rats, star, tars and so on." And be it remembered that the "rats everywhere in Hamelin town" is a reference to a *Browning* poem, this time by *Miss* Verrall.

It would seem as though we had a good triple cross-correspondence. But it was really a quadruple one. Hodgson was supposed to be helping in the communications. It was actually discovered that among the papers left by Dr. Hodgson in his desk at the time of his death were scraps of paper whereon he had jotted down the series "STAR, TARS, RATS, ARTS, TRAS," of which portions had come out in the

script of both Mrs. Verrall and Miss Verrall, also the series, "RATES, STARE, TEARS, TARES," partly given in the script of Mrs. Verrall.

The full text of this cross-correspondence is richer in suggestiveness than the condensation indicates. But even here, does it not look as though a mind or minds conceived and presided over the concurrent phenomena?

THE AMAZING STORY OF DORIS FISHER

What is now known as the "Doris Case" has two parts. The first part is the history of the young woman as perhaps the most remarkable of the yet observed cases of "multiple personality," and the record of her cure,[1] * the second part is the record of a series of experiments begun after her cure was accomplished, with Doris as the sitter and Mrs. Chenoweth, who may perhaps be called the successor of Mrs. Piper, as the writing psychic.[2] In order to appreciate in some degree the evidential value of the excerpts which we are to make from the latter record, it will be necessary to glance at the earlier phase of the case.

"Dissociation," which is a phenomenon of

* Numbers like this refer to notes on pp. 208-10.

very rare occurrence, but recognized by all modern psychologists, consists (employing the psychologically orthodox explanation) in a fissuring of the mind, much as the main branches of a tree part from the trunk, into two subsistences, in which case they are called "dual personalities," or into more than two, which are accordingly known as "multiple personalities." The latter phenomenon is the rarer, and presents the appearance of the person changing, mentally and in some respects physically, into now one and now another of several other persons. The simile of the branches of a tree fails in that these "persons" are not on a par, for one, known as the *primary* personality, is what is left of the original total mentality, with what might be called rights of restoration; while the others, denominated *secondary* personalities, are in a sense parasitical interlopers, brought by some shock or strain to a predisposed individual. Let it be distinctly understood that these are not moods, or fancies, but real mental entities, which science no longer questions. Nor is the meaning that the afflicted party at one time *feels* like one person, and at another time *feels* like another person. There are really several distinct consciousnesses which irregularly take turns in being in evidence. To

the uninitiated spectator there indeed appear to be strange and extreme changes of mood and behaviour, accompanied by a "play-acting" ability to alter the voice, facial expression, etc., to suit, and a disregard for truth evidenced by contradicting stories and claims. But it is a fact that each personality has a different consciousness, will, memory, range of ideas and tastes, and a different set of bodily reactions in the form of individual facial and vocal expression and individual peculiarities of sensation, hearing, vision, etc.

At the time that Doris was discovered by Mrs. Prince and taken in hand by Dr. Walter F. Prince, she had five personalities including the primary one. But previous to the death of her mother in 1906, there were three (if "Sleeping Margaret" was a personality and not, as she has since claimed, a spirit), of which two were of such nature as to then manifest themselves to beholders. These were the primary personality afterwards known as the Real Doris, and the secondary personality, who came to be called "Margaret." By turns during the day these came "out" and conducted affairs. But "Margaret" had the advantage that when she was subliminal or "in" she was co-conscious, so that when she came "out" with a snap of the neck,

she knew just what to do or say in order to carry things along smoothly, while poor "Real Doris" was unconscious when "in" and if suddenly summoned into consciousness by the disappearance of "Margaret" often had to "fish," to "mark time," and to employ devices to orient herself, making blunders at that and incurring blame for her supposed wilfulness or falsity. "Margaret" never developed beyond the mentality of a very sagacious child of ten. So that in the last year of the mother's life, she was used to seeing her daughter at times behaving after the fashion of a young lady of seventeen and at other times like a romping child given to dolls and sports, always fond yet at times obedient and at other times roguishly heedless, now showing a comprehension suitable to her age, but again betraying an almost infantile belief in fairies and in the advent of babies in a doctor's satchel.

The case, complicated by a fourth personality at the shock of the mother's death, and by a fifth a year later, was taken in hand in 1911 and by stages in a treatment of three and a half years, during which Dr. W. F. Prince never was absent twenty-four consecutive hours, was restored to normality. One thing more. Not only was a daily diary of the progress of the case

kept during the three and a half years, but a large number of facts and incidents, gathered from the conversations of the several personalities, were set down. So that there was a written record of many facts utterly unknown to the reconstructed Doris, since none of the memories of "Margaret," who consumed what would amount to several years of her life, ever have emerged in her consciousness. Doris was adopted by Dr. and Mrs. Prince and still has her home with them.

Conditions of the Experiments with Mrs. Chenoweth

Five months after her cure, in October, 1914, Doris crossed the continent alone, to be the sitter in a series of experiments with Mrs. Chenoweth of Boston. This was done pursuant to the request of Dr. Hyslop, and the experiments were conducted under his management.

There were some peculiar advantages in selecting her as a subject, and also absolute safeguards.

1. Doris was utterly unknown to the public. Not a line had then been printed about her.

2. She was born and had spent the most of her life in Pittsburgh, some five hundred miles

from Boston, and had been living in California, three thousand miles away.

3. Of course Dr. Hyslop never mentioned the girl to Mrs. Chenoweth, who had never heard of her.

4. Dr. Hyslop had never seen her but once, and knew almost nothing of her earlier history. There had been only one or two brief meetings between him and Dr. Prince.

5. According to methods regularly employed, Doris was not admitted into the room where Mrs. Chenoweth was until the latter was in a trance, seated with an arm on the writing-board. Moreover the sitter was invariably seated behind the psychic and not allowed to utter a word. Later she did once forget and utter a few words, which, had it occurred earlier, would have betrayed her sex, but she had already been identified as the daughter of a purported communicator.

6. The condition out of which Doris had lately emerged, also, marked her as an interesting subject for such experiments. Could the communicators or any of them, professing to have known her, correctly describe that condition, so peculiar and rare?

Certain critics have drawn upon their imagination so far as to suggest that during such

experiments Dr. Hyslop probably gives involuntary hints to the psychic by vocal intonations, starts, exclamations, and other eloquent manifestations of emotion. This is laughable to one who has watched his demeanour at such times, which is as uniform and monotonous as the movements of a machine, as devoid of indications as the face of the stone Sphinx. Every word uttered in the room is set down and forms a part of the published report, except the exact repetition aloud by Dr. Hyslop of each word as it is written.

Did Doris's Mother Prove Her Identity?

It is impossible to convey, in this abridged account, an adequate conception of the richness of the matter contained in the purported communications from the sitter's mother. The reader must go to the full report for that. But at least the excerpts and condensations shall be fair, and not minimize such errors and incoherences as at least superficially appear to exist. The same spirit of fairness, however, compels us to admit that in estimating seeming errors, a certain though small allowance should be made for failure of memory on the part of the living, and will compel us to acknowledge

that certain of the incoherences and confusions are themselves evidential.

The first words written after Doris silently entered (November 9) and seated herself in the background were "John E." It afterwards appeared that her maternal grandfather was the communicator,[4] but the name set down was that of the father of Doris. In an instant, however, another communicator interposed with "May I come?" and declaring that her father was present (note that both she and her father were in fact deceased, though the youth of the sitter, even had she been seen by the psychic, would have made both facts doubtful) soon added, "Mother is glad to come here to you."

Then appeared the claim "I have been at home with you dear. . . . I mean with you personally and directly, first-hand I mean. This is different but I take the time to make some clearer statements if I can than I have made before." It is true that there had been superficial evidence of the presence of the mother in the home of the daughter and of direct touch with her. Doris twice saw an apparition of her mother,[5] on one of which occasions she was caused to look up by seeing the *shadow* before she perceived the figure it-

self. There had also been a few experiments with the planchette in which writing purporting to be from the mother was received. Both apparitions and planchette writing are different from pencil scrip through an unconscious psychic. Some difficulty now ensued in the Chenoweth script, what appeared to be "h" "W W W" and "M" being written, but then absolutely spontaneously came "She is my child," thus correctly indicating the sex of the sitter. It was after this, when the words "My being so cold" were read aloud by Dr. Hyslop, that Doris forgot and said "She died of pneumonia." But the exclamation came too late to do appreciable harm. Presently the hand wrote "Violets I still love." They were in fact Mrs. Fisher's favourite flower. "I remember them at the funeral." Dr. Hyslop here looked at Doris and she silently nodded. The writing went on without break "with the white roses." Soon after the control broke down. There were other partly-evidential allusions in the sitting for which we have no space here. Nothing professing to come from this communicator had been irrelevant and nothing intelligible expressed had been provably incorrect or unlikely. But Doris was strongly of the opinion that there were no white roses at her mother's funeral,

and so stated to Dr. Hyslop after the sitting. Not she, but the "Margaret" personality, none of whose memories survived in her, had been present at the funeral, but she thought she remembered hearing of white lilies, but not of roses. It was afterwards proved, however, that the communicator was right and the sitter wrong. The faded remnant of the very roses, which were held in the dead hands, have been traced, still with the florist's wire about the stems.

The second and short communication from Mrs. Fisher (November 10) must be almost passed over, but not because it presents difficulties. It is all relevant and a number of small evidential details appear. Among these are the statement, "I have been able to show myself on two or three occasions," and the expression, "I want to say a word about baby, my baby." We have already remarked that Doris saw an apparition of her mother twice. And "baby," a curious term to apply to a young lady of 22, happens to be what Mrs. Fisher often called this her youngest child. But more remarkable is the fact that the communicator used the word "guard" to designate the office of certain spirits supposed to be placed for the protection and aid of the girl. Now, this rather

than the more familiar term "guide" is just the word which had invariably appeared in the planchette script through the sitter herself in California. It was the first time that Mrs. Chenoweth's hand had been known to write the word "guard" in that sense.

In the first two sittings the communicator made references to the "nervous make-up" and sensitiveness of her daughter, and to her need of care and protection at the time of her own death. Another such reference in the third sitting (November 11) warranted Dr. Hyslop in asking what was the matter with the girl. The reply was very pertinent.

"I do not know what you refer to. If you mean the physical condition, I should say not that so much as a childlike dependence mentally which needed all my care and foresight to keep her as she ought to be and there was no one else who understood her."

Any one who reads the full account will see how strikingly correct this is. The trouble as it had been known to the mother was not physical but mental, "the childlike dependence" resulting from the personality "Margaret." The mother had not understood the case technically, but she understood how to deal with it as no one else had, and there was nothing about the

girl's present condition, even had Mrs. Chenoweth been able to observe it, which hinted at the past state.

"The play with other children was never as children usually play, but was left as a part of my care for her. We were companions, my little one, in a strange way and her mind was always so quick to see my meaning when to others she could not or would not respond, and there was a delicate feebleness, as some might call it, a slow development."

This is an extraordinary passage fitting an extraordinary case. The child could not play with other children unless she ("Margaret") was allowed to be autocrat. Hence she usually played alone or with her mother, who fully entered into the spirit of the peculiar sport, and thus was a companion "in a strange way." By endless patience and forbearance she was able to get along with both manifestations, which by their odd alterations and blendings must have made her wonder if her daughter would ever grow up. Even "Real Doris" was shy and backward with strangers.

Pressed to give details, the communicator not unnaturally demurred, saying that those things should remain between her and her daughter, but aptly added, "It was some things she said

as well as things she did." But she yielded and wrote:

I want to refer to the running away to other places.

(Yes, tell of some of the places.)

It was a matter of worry to have her do that. It was not only that she went but she would not come back, and there were things said at the time to try and make her understand it. I do not know now why.

(Can you say or tell some particular place where she would go and worry you?)

Yes, I am aware of the things that happened then and of my fears and constant watching for the return and of the real danger that might have come to her if she had got into the place, she would have been drowned.

All this is peculiarly true. The mother must have been disturbed by "things she said," as when the personalities contradicted each other. And often as "Margaret" she would go on some long tramp, perhaps returning late at night. Often the "Margaret" personality would dash into the river, clothes and all, and would swim underneath a dry-dock, etc. This last was a specially dangerous place. Observe that the mother does "not know now why" she could not make her daughter take understanding heed. Throughout, this communication showed knowl-

edge of the past behaviour of her daughter but not of the nature and cause of it.

"She was so much a child without the least sense of danger and I thought no one else would take the care of her that I did. Why I used to play with her and walk about doing my work and talking with her, and she would answer until suddenly I would get no answer and she was out of sight and then I had my worry."

All exactly true as set forth with many illustrations in the Report.

A passage in which there is evident confusion seems to say that the girl's father was dead, which was not correct, but it is not certain what was meant. Then a reference came to an "Aunt J," said to have felt some concern about Doris, which was true of her Aunt Jennie. Immediately followed reference to "Charles" and "Helen," the latter said to be alive and to have "had some association" with the sitter. Charles was the name of a deceased brother and Helen that of a friend who was not living but had died less than three weeks before. Are we bound to suppose that a spirit, every time an acquaintance dies anywhere, knows it at once?

In the next communication (November 16) came a reference to "Mary, Mamie." Doris

has a sister called Mary but never called Mamie. And then a reference to an aunt, later stated to be the communicator's own sister, to "our" mother (meaning the mother of the sisters) on the other side and to a "J" and the remark that the aunt would know who "J" is. The fact is that the aunt referred to (Marie) did feel some perplexity about the adoption of Doris into the Prince family, suspecting she was to be made a drudge. And she formerly had a little nephew James, of whom she had been very fond, but who died. The grandmother of the sitter was also in fact dead.

After the mention of her own mother the communicator proceeded:

"I have something to say also about some things that were left in the care of one who is in the old home. I mean the home where I used to live. Some things that have been kept for her and are still kept. I refer to a trinket that was not of such value, but was mine and being mine was kept. There are two women interested in what I shall write here, and I think each will know about the ring of which I write."

The fact is that the mother of Doris made a romantic, runaway marriage, and so incurred the lasting ill-will of her father, which accounts

for the fact that her "trinkets" were not sent to her. The old home was not standing at the time of the sitting. Prior to its being torn down an uncle was living in it, and when it was demolished the Aunt Marie and her daughter found a ring and a watch which had belonged to Mrs. Fisher and restored them. She gave the ring to Doris and later the watch also came to the latter.

Immediately afterwards was written:

"Lilies were there
(Just where?)
At the old home where grandmother lives, Auntie will remember. I wish I could write about a little curl that was cut from baby's head and kept by me, not yet destroyed, very like flax, so light, and do you know what the Methodists are.
(Yes)
They are not so clear about the life here as they will be when they come but they mean all right. I had faith too, but the knowledge is better. I had in mind a prayer that I used to want her to say long ago, for I felt it important to pray and teach her to say the little prayer. (Can you give that prayer?) Now? (Yes) I lay me—prayer that most children say. (All right) And at the end, God bless papa, God bless mamma, God bless Her and make her a good girl."

Doris often heard her mother describe the border of lilies-of-the-valley around her childhood home. The mother did cut a curl (the hair was very curly and soft and light as flax) from the brow of baby Doris, and it was found in a drawer after she died. Her family were all Methodists, but she became somewhat alienated from Methodism because of the unforgiving spirit of her father.

All the children were taught to say "Now I lay me" and to add petitions for parents, brothers, and sisters in turn. But Doris (as "Margaret") was too impatient to go through the long list, and finally a compromise was struck word for word as the communicator says, if we substituted "me" for "her."

The communicator said that she had seen Edith, who is unrecognized. Then came

"I shall give my little girl's name before I leave here. I do not know whether today or tomorrow, but I think I ought to do it, so you may know I remember, but I had so many other names for her that I sometimes called her one and sometimes another. Sometimes my little Dolly, sometimes runaway, little runaway. You know what that means, dear? (Sitter nodded) (Yes she does)

For those little feet could not be trusted to stay where they were told to stay, and many talkings and

some punishments had to be invented to keep my mind at rest as to where she might be, but that was the desire to get a larger scope I suppose. Do you remember the hill, down the hill to the stream.

(Give the name of the stream)

Yes and C. A, yes A.

Doris says, "Mother used to call me all sorts of names, Runaway, Sweetheart, Curlyhead, Spitfire, and others I cannot think of now, besides Dolly, because my hair curled close to my head when it rained or was hot and made me look like a doll I suppose."

What followed is also emphatically correct. Peculiar punishments had to be invented that would work with the "Margaret" phase. One was purposely to look grieved. As to "talkings" Doris says, "She would tell me that somebody would steal me, that I would get lost, that I would go too far and couldn't get back and would die on the road."

The family lived near the Allegheny River and a high embankment went down to it. The end of an old unused canal jutted into the river. The children called it the Canal and often went there to swim as well as to the river, so that Canal and Allegheny were conjoined terms to the anxious mother. The initials may refer to these.

On November 17th the same communicator, after some relevant but not specially evidential remarks, delivered an amazing series of incidents.

"It is not always what I remember that I wish to write but also to have something which my little girl may remember as well as I.

"I have been thinking about a swing out of doors and a step where I used to sit, I mean a doorstep where I sat and worked, and the swing was in sight of that.

(Yes, that is recognized) [Sitter had nodded]

"And in the swing my little girl played and had some pleasure, and there was also a game we played together, out of doors I mean and I wonder if she recalls a game with balls we played out of doors.

(Yes, what was it?) [Sitter had nodded]

"Croquet, and I wonder if she recalls how a game won by her always meant shouts and jumps and a great crowing on her part regardless of how mamma might feel, and I can hear that laugh and would give much to play again in the old way."

Note the announced purpose to select incidents which her daughter would remember. And the incidents which followed were such as concerned that one of her children exclusively. The swing was one of their secrets used only when they were alone together, put up before

every performance and afterwards taken down and hidden away. "Real Doris" and "Margaret" only used the swing and only when the mother sat on the back steps and sewed or prepared vegetables or sometimes talked and sang. Doris played croquet only with her mother and the mother only with her.

As to the behaviour after a game, Dr. Prince remarks: "A most realistic and lifelike description of 'Margaret's' manner, when exultant, as I so often saw her in later days. (It should be remembered that the 'Margaret' personality after developing to the physical age of about ten years never advanced farther.) 'Shouts,' 'jumps,' 'a great crowing,' 'regardless of how mamma might feel,' 'I can hear that laugh,' these graphic bits of delineation could hardly be improved upon. The 'regardless, etc.,' reminds me vividly of the times when 'Margaret' was delighted at some incident regardless of how her new papa might feel."

The writing went on without a break:

"Then I want to recall a walk we sometimes took down the road. I wonder if she recalls a pink bonnet, not quite a bonnet, but a little sun hat which was washable and which she often wore when we took our walk to see some one down the street."

True, Doris and her mother would "walk down the street" to call on an old lady, the very person who gave her the pink washable sun hat which the child often wore on these visits.

Then reference was made to an uncle who lived near the Fishers, was "not young" and was called "uncle" by every one. These particulars exactly fitted an uncle of Doris when she was a child. A toy piano was mentioned which the sitter did not recall. (6)

"I will not speak of the numerous dolls. They were always in evidence and usually one in the window. That was a little manner that belonged to her peculiarly to have a doll in the window looking out."

A little later the communicator said that these were paper dolls. Then the sitter who had shaken her head at the first reference, supposing it to be purchased dolls, which she had never possessed, understood. The child and her mother had cut out many paper dolls and "Margaret" nearly always had one in the window turned towards the street as if looking out.

"Daisy, daisy flowers. You know what I refer to. We used to love to get them, and do you remember a pet that used to follow us and we were afraid it would get lost."

(Yes, tell what the pet was.) [Sitter had nodded.] "Cat, kitty, always following everywhere."

As in other incidents it is not so much the truth of the separate statements as their truth in combination that is striking.

Doris and her mother used to go to some old estates about five squares away in order to pick daisies, and on these very expeditions a pet cat would follow part way and then turn back and "Margaret" would worry lest it would get lost and threaten in that case to beat her head against a post. Its name was "Kittybell," and perhaps "Kitty" following cat in the communication was an abortive attempt to give the name.

Other evidential items of this sitting, with one unremembered name, that of a little boy Eugene, "not a relative just a little boy we knew, I thought she would remember him," (7) must be omitted.

The next communication from Mrs. Fisher (December 1) mostly came intermediately through a purported Indian child calling herself "Laughing Water." Spontaneous allusions having been made to some trouble from which Doris had suffered, Dr. Hyslop asked what had caused it. The communicator said she would ask the mother.

"Accident is what she says. All right before the accident, all wrong after it. And some shock which seemed to make her afraid afterwards.

(Yes can you tell exactly what the accident was?)

"Fall into the river ['river' spontaneously erased as soon as read]. Fall is right and concussion. You know the rest.

(Was any person connected with or responsible for the fall?)

"Yes, Mother shakes her head and cries, but I do not know whether it was a man or woman, but some one was to blame. Carrying her to 'd' [distress and groans preceding the letter 'd' which was possibly the last letter of the word 'bed'] I do not know what she is trying to say but it sounds like school.

(Who was carrying her?)

"Man near her in relation.

(How near?)

"As near as father."

(All right.)

"The mother squaw is excited now and I think it is a shame to make her live it all over."

The facts were unknown even to Doris until this communication but were already on record in California, having been related to Dr. Prince by the personalities "Sleeping Margaret" and "Margaret." The mother was carrying the child, then three years old, to bed, and the father in a drunken frenzy seized and dashed

it violently upon the floor. From that time she was subject to changes of personalities and to deadly fear of her father. Note not only the truth of the statements but their psychological colouring, how they were extorted by "Laughing Water" piecemeal from the mother with all appearances of reluctance and emotion natural to one living over a tragic event in the life of her child.

Again we must pass over much that is evidential and very little that is not identifiable and relevant. Other communicators now took most of the time. But on December 21st the mother gave a number of details which cannot be omitted.

"I am some nervous as I recite some scenes, but I try to keep calm. I want to say something about Skippy, Skippy, a name of a, pet name. [Struggle]

(Stick to it.)

"Little pet of long ago. Skippy dog, and a kind of candy I want to speak of which we used to get at a store not very far off.

(Yes what kind of candy?)

"Long sticks that were broken in pieces, like brittle is sometimes. I do not mean the chocolates. They were rarer, but the kind that lasted so long in the mouth. She knows.

(Yes she does) [Sitter had nodded]

"And there were other things we bought there sometimes, papers and pen for things we did at home. I also want to speak of a little cup that we kept something in metal cup, tin, small tin, that we kept pennies in, and we used to turn them out after we saved them and count them to see if we had enough for something which we wanted. We were great planners my little girl and I. And we had to save some for Sunday. She knows what for.

(Can you tell)

"Contribution, collection. Part of it for that not all."

Every sentence is correct, every word, except that Skippy was a cat. It was lame and hence was given this name. The mother and child were accustomed to buy candy, the store was near the home, the candy was usually what had been peppermint sticks, but could be obtained cheaper because they had been broken.

They bought chocolates also, but more rarely, because of the higher cost. These were the only kinds purchased. They did buy papers and pencils, and at the same store. The paper was to make the dolls with, and the pencils were in order to write little stories and tack them up for each other to find, an instance of the comradeship of this mother and her unusual child.

Note the instance of the gradual building up of the right conception in its passage through

the sleeping consciousness of the psychic. The vessel used to keep "something" in, "pennies" (now we have it), was a "little cup," a metal "cup," a "tin, small tin," and the communicator goes on as though satisfied. As a matter of fact it was a small tin can. The "something" kept in the can was, in fact, pennies. Saving was a slow process because of poverty, and the pair would turn the pennies out to see if they had enough for small presents. And Doris constantly attended Sunday School and always took a penny out for the "collection." The mother and child were certainly great "planners," holding frequent consultation with great gravity and circumstance.

On two occasions the name of the communicator was given by her, Emma. Though there was confusion of a sort which would hardly consist with the telepathic theory, her fixed purpose to give that name as her own is evident.

Such, cut and injured, were the messages purporting to come from the spirit of Doris's mother. In full it is the most evidential group ever published. Some one remarked that the facts were mostly ordinary and common, and might happen to any girl and her mother. True, individually they might, but not in combination. Even naming the girl's mother, Emma, cor-

rectly had about twenty-seven chances to one of being incorrect if it were a guess. It is conservative to say that not one family in twenty ever possessed a cat or dog named "Skippy." One chance in 560! Never having observed a paper doll put in a window looking out, I do not believe one girl in thirty has the habit of making and so placing them. Now we have one chance out of 16,800 of just these three particulars combined being right.

All the particulars stated about the girl in the communications claiming to be from her mother with liberal allowances for errors or unprovable statements would not be likely of duplication on this planet were its population a hundred fold what it is.

Throughout the series of messages from the mother, no knowledge of the underlying causes of her daughter's former strange condition was manifested but only that which would be germane to a domestic observer who was intelligent but unread in abnormal psychology. That is, they deal with puzzling conduct and the anxieties consequent thereto. On the theory of telepathic extraction from the minds of the persons present some inkling of what caused the conduct should have come through, since Dr. Hyslop of course knew perfectly the technical

definitions assigned to the phenomena of "dissociation," and even Doris at this time was fully informed about herself.

ADDENDA

But one communicator showed recognition of the technical nature of Doris's case, and he was the one known in lifetime to have had knowledge of this sort and dealings with a similar one.

This was Dr. Richard Hodgson, who had experimented with the well-known "Beauchamp" instance of dissociation and had often conversed about it with Dr. Morton Prince, in whose charge it was. Early in the sitting of November 19th a communication from Dr. Hodgson was written, from which only the most significant scraps can be taken.

"I am much interested in the way this case is going on and do not think I can add much to the work.

(Can you compare it with any you knew?)

"Yes, and have several times thought that I would interpolate a message that you might see that I recognized the similarity of the case with one in particular that caused me some concern at times and some hopes in others, but this is better organized than that was (8). I mean that there seems to be a definite

purpose and a continuity of knowledge that the other case only displayed spasmodically. You will I think know what I mean by that.

(Yes, can you tell me the case? [2])

"Yes, I think so. . . . [Nothing said by Dr. Hyslop in the interval but "all right"]

"I will do what I can on this side to help on this case for I believe it as important as any M. P. ever had

(What does M. P. mean?)

"Morton Prince

(Good)

"You see what I am after.

(Exactly what I wanted)

"The Beauchamp Case and I am trying to make some clear headway out of this one more than I did out of that."

And later came a pointed reference to "the secondary self with all the multiple personal equations."

Another communicator attempted to give the real first name of the sitter which was a very odd one, Brittia. As near as "Bretia" was reached, and then the psychic, while coming out of the trance, several times pronounced what phonetically spelled would be "Britta." And in fact this is the way the name was always pronounced, the "i" in the spelling being silent.

Also California was named as her home, and the home of her foster father "Dr. Walter Franklin Prince" given in full, being gradually spelled out. Curiously, when the last name had partly come through it for a moment took the form of "P r a y." This was meaningless to Dr. Hyslop, who did not know that "Pray" was the maiden name of Dr. Prince's mother. After Doris returned to her western home, the sittings of which she was the central figure continued, and one of the factors of the material became attempts to state actual events happening to her three thousand miles away. These statements proved correct in remarkable measure, as the Report shows along with a multitude of details of evidential or psychological interest.

NOTES

1. *The Doris Case of Multiple Personality,* by Walter Franklin Prince, Ph.D., being vols. ix–x of the Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research. 1419 pages.

2. *The Doris Case of Multiple Personality,* by James H. Hyslop, Ph.D., being vol. xi of Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research. 1024 pages.

3. To some readers what has been said about the multiple personality will seem more incredible than

spirit communication, yet, we repeat, these are facts scientifically established and unquestioned. Besides the voluminous report, an abstract of the case was printed in the *American Journal of Abnormal Psychology* for June-July, 1916, and the case has been reviewed without dissent by some of the leading experts.

4. As it is awkward to keep repeating "purported" or "alleged" the reader will understand that by "communicator" we mean the same thing as though we said "purported communicator."

5. See *Proceedings,* X, 1042-3.

6. Yet it is very possible that such existed. There were articles kept by "Margaret" in her drawer, which "Real Doris" was not permitted to see and did not know existed, or it may have been simply forgotten.

7. There were children that Doris does not remember because "Margaret," who has vanished and whose memories were not transferred, always "came out" to play with them.

8. Correct, in that this case was in the main organized into five concrete and coherent selves, not arising by hypnosis or undergoing various compoundings in or from that state.

9. Dr. Hyslop well knew when he asked the initial questions that they would be far more likely to suggest, on the guessing theory, one of the numerous cases dissimilar to that of Doris with which Dr. Hodgson's fame is mainly identified, than Miss

"Beauchamp," whose contact with him has been made known only by one or two obscure references in Dr. Morton Prince's book. Nor was there anything which could have been inferred from the appearance of the now normal young woman sitting silently back of the psychic, even had the latter been awake and gazing at her.

A NARRATIVE OF SPIRIT RETURN

The clergyman who had the following experiences is one of the leaders in his orthodox and numerous religious denomination in the city of New York. As a young man he was noted for a vigorous intellect, big heart, and athletic masculinity. His later honours and influence are but the fulfilment of the promise of his youth.

Some years ago the wife of this clergyman—a splendid character—passed away. On her deathbed her husband, whom we will call Dr. V., asked her if she would try to come back to him. She replied, "I will, if the Good Father will let me."

"Eleven months had passed away, and not even a dream about the one whom I loved better than my soul. She had left me with several children, and at no time during that period was there a hint to me that she was interested in us at all. I had fussed over the thing, I had

prayed over it, and I had wondered why nothing had come to me.

"During our life we had a very extraordinary relation. We were exceedingly sensitive to each other's condition, and when she was in difficulty or ill and away from me I almost always knew it. I call it telepathy myself.

"She died in May. The following April I was in the city of Philadelphia, in the Bingham House. I went to my room about twelve o'clock. There was a large chandelier with four or five lights in it in the center of the room and a push-button right at the head of the bed. I was lying with my eyes closed, not asleep,—as truly awake as ever in my life. I was thinking of her. It didn't seem to come suddenly, it seemed to come naturally, the room was filled with her presence. I could see, though my eyes were closed, her form, shadowy, with something that looked like the mist of the morning about it, and I said, 'Darling, why have you not come before?'

"She answered, 'The Good Father would not permit me.'

"I said, 'I have been so lonesome and so heartbroken that I have hungered for you. Where did you come from?'

" 'I have been up to see the children. (They were up near Lake ——.) They are lovely.'

She seemed to be sitting on the edge of the bed. The vision was so real that I reached up and touched the button and made an attempt to put my arms about her. As the room was flooded with light I saw nothing and felt nothing. I could have cried, 'What have I done! What have I done! O Father, forgive me, let her come back.' That was my prayer.

"I do not know how long I waited, praying earnestly and thinking intensely, when she was in the room again. I could see the smile on her face. My eyes were still closed. I never moved a hand or opened my eyes. I just let my soul do the talking. I was afraid to move and destroy it. I could see her. I have never lost the vision at all. I can recall it this second. She came in with a gentle laugh, and said, 'Why did you do that? Don't you know you can't see me?' I don't know how long we talked. I know I never slept a wink that night, and we talked of our life, of our children, of her father and brother that had passed on and whom she said she was instructing on the other side. God knows they needed it. She said that she was instructing them. That has destroyed my belief in hellfire. I have never preached hell since. And I have never feared death since. Death to me is only a little change, that is all.

"That was our conversation, there wasn't a silly thing, there wasn't a trivial thing,—nothing but what was of interest to her and me.

"Now, here is the climax. She said, 'I have come to you that you may stop your grieving, for it is making it impossible for you to do your work. That must be done.' I went back home, took the first train to my children, gathered them about me, and told them that I had seen and talked with their mother and that she was watching over us. That's had a powerful effect upon my children.

"Once again she came to me, but that seemed more like a half-waking, half-sleeping dream, just as satisfactory to me as the other. But not so vivid or evidential.

"My little girl of twelve did not appear to me for a year after her passing, but she came then in much the same fashion as her mother on the second occasion.

"During the first occasion I could hear the rumble of the noises on the street, but in addition I could hear this voice in my soul,—it was real, like a sounding board. I could hear her little laugh and her voice. She was there to me so vividly that I felt that I could touch that button and grab for her. There was nothing

different about my emotional state or my need for her at that time."

Dr. V. was asked what he had read or heard, previous to the vision, about developed spirits doing missionary work for less developed ones. His answer was quick and decided. "Never heard anything of the kind." He was asked if he believed that such things are done on the other side (this was before he had dictated the above narrative). "I believe it because my wife said so," was the energetic response. Let it be noted that not only did the vision not come in the first paroxysm of grief but eleven months after the death, but that the fact announced as to the spirit's occupation was contrary to Dr. V.'s previous belief, and caused a permanent doctrinal alteration dating from that moment. If the vision was the work of the "subliminal," that was functioning in an odd fashion!

People sometimes ask, "What is the *good* of spirit communication, even if it is a fact?" It appears to have done good in this instance. By what he felt to be as absolute a demonstration as any of the apostles received this religious leader was able to more than recover his former vigour in the business of life, a powerful influence for good was exerted upon his children, and henceforth a new and tremendous

assurance pervaded his sermons relating to the life which is Beyond.

The Experience of Dying

The following experience is related by Mr. John Huntley in a communication to Mr. J. Arthur Hill, who publishes it in his book, *Man Is a Spirit*[1]:

"About five years ago I woke from sleep to find 'myself' clean out of the body, as the kernel of a nut comes out of its shell. I was conscious in two places—in a feeble degree, in the body which was lying in bed on its left side; and to a far greater degree, away from the body (far away, it seemed), surrounded by white opaque light, and in a state of absolute happiness and *security* (a curious expression, but one which best conveys the feeling).

"The whole of my personality lay 'out there,' even to the replica of the body—which, like the body, lay also on its left side. I was not conscious of leaving the body, but woke up out of it. It was not a dream, for the consciousness was an enhanced one, as superior to the ordinary waking state as that is to the dream state. Indeed, I thought to myself,

[1] Pp. 71-74.

'This cannot be a dream,' so I willed 'out there' (there was no volition in the body), and as my spirit self moved so the body moved in bed.

"I did not continue this movement. I was far too happy to risk shortening the experience. After lying in this healing and blessed light I became conscious of what, for want of a better term, I must call music; gentle and sweet it was as the tinkling of dropping water in a rocky pool, and it seemed to be all about me. I saw no figure, nor wished to; the contentment was supreme. The effect of these sounds was unutterably sweet, and I said to myself, 'This must be the Voice of God.' I could not endure the happiness, but lost consciousness there, and returned unconscious to the body, and woke next morning as though nothing had happened.

" I had been passing through a period of mental and spiritual stress at the time, but had not been indulging in psychism, had never attended a *séance* or similar phenomenon, had not, as I remember, been reading anything to act by way of suggestion. I am in no doubt whatever—so vivid was the happening—that had the feeble thread between soul and body been severed 'I' should have remained intact,

the grosser body being sloughed off for a finer and one fitted for a lighter and happier consciousness, for 'life more abundant,' in fact.

. . . . . .

"I feel, however, I would like to make it known in such times as these; and, apart from its scientific aspect, if it conveys any personal comfort the trouble is repaid indeed."

In a later communication, Mr. Huntley states his general religious standpoint thus:

"I may add that I am not a 'Spiritualist,' or Theosophist, or Occultist forcer of these conditions, but a member of the Society of Friends, and one of liberal views in matters of religious belief."

CHAPTER X

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

GIBBON, in his famous fifteenth chapter, marks as one of the five causes of the growth of Christianity, "the doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth;" and in the true spirit of the eighteenth century, he goes on to remark that "it is no wonder that so advantageous an offer (eternal happiness) should have been accepted by great numbers of every religion, of every rank, and of every province in the Roman Empire." The historian is right when he thus sees in Christianity the religion of immortality, though he fails to throw light on the curious phenomenon that a truth which, on his own admission had been for centuries in possession of the greater portion of civilized men, had proved of small account, yet in the new religion swept over the Graeco-Roman world and eventually transformed it. Modern study of the origins of our faith has supplied this lack. We now know that the driving force behind the Christian

movement of the early centuries was the belief that the Founder of the movement reappeared after death to various witnesses, some of whom put their experience on record; and this belief being based, not on speculation but on an appeal to facts, had power to dissolve the prevailing materialism and scepticism of the age. There can be no question that the most potent factor in the reconstruction of the old world was the living conviction of immortality generated by the post-mortem appearances of One who had shown Himself Lord of life and fate. And it may be said that the waning of belief in immortality which synchronizes with the revival of science, may be traced in great measure to the failure of belief in the Resurrection. Immortality which had been so vitally linked to the reality of the Resurrection-appearances must suffer a severe blow when they are explained away as illusions of one or two hallucinated persons whose wild fancies spread as by contagion through a vast multitude. But what I wish to emphasize is that whether by illusion or reality, the belief in the immortality of the soul became a great dynamic in the moral realm and created Christian civilization.

Let us suppose that a like absolute conviction of a future life should seize the minds of this

generation with the overwhelming force which marked the early Christian civilization, what moral and spiritual consequences might be expected to ensue? We know what took place in the first century. This belief, brought home to the mind by proofs deemed infallible, acted as a mighty spiritual dynamic and turned commonplace traders and slaves into heroes and martyrs. It is true that many, hypnotized, as it were, by the resplendent glory of the life beyond, forgot the duties and interests of the world at hand; but this scorn of earth and time arose not so much from belief in immortality as from the deep-rooted conviction that the end of the world was at hand, that at any moment "the hammer on the clock of time might rise to strike the last hour." Why trouble about a world which at any moment might take end? Why concern oneself about the conditions of industry or the responsibilities of the home when they exist on such a precarious tenure? But this "otherworldliness" has rarely except, perhaps, in the monastic period, been the creation of faith in a future life. The evangelicals and the puritans, against whom the charge has been specially levelled, were among the most successful of merchants and financiers, and took no small part in reforming the social abuses of

their time. But in the light of our modern knowledge and of our present ethical advance, what practical effect might a profound conviction, based not merely on faith but on the sort of evidence which convinced the first Christians, be reasonably expected to have on the thoughts and lives of men? This question is not of merely academic interest, because today an alleged principle or truth can find entrance only after passing the pragmatic test. Granted that death does not end all—what of it? Why not take one world at a time? Why be solicitous about a state of being which is still outside the range of our experience? The present life with its infinitude of interests, its pressing needs, is enough just now. When we cross the threshold of the unseen, we shall meet the conditions that await us there and relate ourselves to them as best we can. So it is argued. But life is not a series of disconnected incidents, it is an organic unity, and its spiritual temperature cannot but be affected by its future as well as its past. Did an assured conviction possess the mind of its existence in the realm beyond death, such a conviction would cast back on the present order a strange and wonderful illumination, reversing our most cherished opinions, and effecting an astonishing transvaluation of values.

To begin with: such an indisputable assurance would justify the preference which man has entertained for ideals, religious, moral, aesthetic, as compared with the life lived on a level with the beasts that perish. If death marks the limit of man's moral history, then say what we will, matter which is indestructible proves its superiority to personality, which is evanescent. On the other hand, if the spirit lives on through death, then it follows that nature or matter is subordinate to the interests of the soul, and our moral horizon widens accordingly. Our ideals triumph over death, and can now be pursued with enthusiasm, and to them our most devoted and loving service can be rationally given. It is true that we ought to live in the good, the true, and the beautiful, whether we are immortal or no. This "ought" expresses an ineradicable instinct, and he who yields to it puts on beauty and nobleness. "If there be no God and no future state," says F. W. Robertson, "yet even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. Thrice-blessed is he who—when all is drear and cheerless—has obstinately clung to moral good."

And many a heroic spirit has sacrificed his

physical being, in these last years, at the call of duty though unable to find solace or strength in faith in God and immortality. Yet the vast majority will argue that since the cosmic order has no room for moral ideals, only a quixotic temper will persist in cultivating them at the sacrifice, it may be, of life itself. At all events, it will be admitted that a struggle in which we are foreordained to defeat is hardly one in which any thrilling enthusiasm can be evoked. Yet without this enthusiasm the highest fruits of the ethical life cannot be forthcoming. In a moral universe a theory of annihilation stands condemned, for it does not tend to an increase of goodness.

But an equally important question is raised when the sociological effect of this theory is contemplated. Convince men generally that consciousness ends in the grave, deprive them of that optimism that lies hidden in the heart, however it may be derided by the tongue, and what right have you to expect enterprise, adventure, the courage of the pioneer, the forward movement of the forces that make for progress and civilization? It was Renan who said that it would be a fatal day for any nation when it gave up belief in immortality. His shrewd eye saw that behind disbelief in a life beyond lay

disbelief in the value of personality. Look at Germany, where, among the educated classes, faith in immortality has been scorned as one of the main buttresses of superstition, and where dogmatic materialism in the person of Professor Haeckel still plants its banner. Is it too much to say that the diminishing sense of the worth of the individual has led to the glorification of the State which, in turn, casting aside the trammels of morality and lifted into a sphere where good and evil cease to have any meaning, provokes the stern antagonism of the world, and calls down irremediable disaster?

From another point of view our theme has importance for the social worker and the social theorist. Even when we have made allowance for all the regenerating influences at work, no thoughtful mind can contemplate the multitudes foredestined to pauperism and crime, victims of the fatal pressure of circumstance and heredity, without a feeling, that cannot be denied, that they have a claim on the universe for another chance, a fresh opportunity to win the secret of life. If the worker among these children of an evil fate were convinced that our gaols and penitentiaries were the only environment many of them should ever know, such knowledge would paralyse his energies and he must throw up his

enterprise as too small a remedy to cope with so tragic a wrong. Our social order, as we are now beginning to learn, is largely responsible for crime and poverty. The morally and socially unfit are our failures; are they also considered as unfit by the cosmic order?

The trial of the war has provoked in many a heart anxious questions about the fate of dear ones who have been snatched away in spiritual immaturity, or, it may be, with many sins to deplore, or

> "about some act
> That has no relish of salvation in't."

Yet these have sealed their loyalty to a noble cause with their blood. Now the safe guide in forming a sound ethical judgment where our own personal inclinations are involved, is to bring the problem into the clear light of eternal truth. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The soldier, however unworthy in other respects, who gives his life for a cause beyond himself, for an ideal end, however dimly descried, is, so far, in harmony with the deepest laws of the moral universe. In dying for an unselfish purpose, he has made a momentous beginning in the upward calling of the spirit,

and there are boundless possibilities of moral progress, if there is a world beyond. That may be taken as one of the most certain of facts; and the only alternative is annihilation for all alike; saint and sinner go down to the same night of nothingness.

On the other hand, if, as Emerson says, the main enterprise of the world is the upbuilding of personality, and if the world guarantees the permanence of its work, it follows that men will have the strongest reason and the highest motive to take up and make their own the purposes thus written in the very nature of things. If the universe is on the side of the good, in spite of all our weaknesses and failures we can still press onwards with undaunted spirit. Death ceases to paralyse us. It becomes a mere episode in the development of the spirit, and beyond it we can achieve things impossible here, because we shall have transcended the barriers of sense, and shall have entered on a purely mental state of being. All things are possible to us once the sting of death, the fear that in dying we shall lapse into nothingness, is drawn, and the "great misgiving" is supplanted by an assured confidence in the order of the world. Such a vital conviction of an after-life would act as a powerful ethical stimulus, urging men

on to finer issues, arming the will to beat down the enemies of the higher life, whether in the individual or in society. If the true and the good are ultimately one, immortality when seen as a real inspiration to action would seem to bear the stamp of a basic fact. From another angle, the reflex bearing of the life hereafter on the life that now is may be felt with a weight almost too great to be borne. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." All moralists, however much they differ on other matters, are agreed that sooner or later retribution overtakes sin, that a good act tends to create more good, and the thought of Karma which has sunk so deep into the Oriental mind appears to shadow forth an undeniable truth that "character is permanent and indestructible and passes not from us, however the fashion of our outward life may change." Now, if there is an after-life, the same eternal laws must operate there which we find at work here, else all reasoning becomes an absurdity, and our moral history a riddle without any meaning. Let men generally be convinced that death ushers them into another world in which they shall know themselves as continuing a life lived here, and with a memory whereby to claim past thoughts and deeds as their own, and will not reason, con-

science, prudence, conspire to force upon them the seriousness of life and its issues, and to stimulate all their psychic energies towards the upbuilding of a character, the making of a soul set free from the detaining bondage of mean thoughts and base desires? The individual would stand forth as the architect of a life and destiny greater than any this world at its highest can bestow. "I never lose heart," writes a great philosophical idealist in the New Testament; "though my outward man decays, my inner man is renewed day by day. For the seen is transient, the unseen eternal."[1] It is here, probably, that we are to find the secret of so many spiritual tragedies. Many enter on the higher life of self-culture and self-discipline; but as the lure of material things makes its appeal, and the realm of finite interests seem so real as contrasted with the world of ideals—what a falling off is there, what a decline from beauty and grace to the sordidness of an egotistic morality! With the fading away of an immortal perspective, life seems so brief, so precarious, that to sacrifice pleasure, ease, comfort, the joy of living at the bidding of the ideal, appears the veriest quixotism. And so the soul's high adventure ends in defeat.

[1] II Corinthians iv, 17 18 (Moffatt's translation).

Why are we here? Why have we been flung on this planet, to battle, to struggle, and to die? Is it not to develop our moral muscle, to make the best of our powers, to show what stuff we are made of? Our earthly existence, taken at its highest, is in itself a fragment, a torso, a poor, and petty thing. As Stevenson says, "Whatever else we were made for, it was not for success." Yet, deep-rooted and ineradicable in the heart of every man is, however obscured at times, a craving for the fulfilment of his life, for its meaning to be made clear. Death seems to be the sheer denial of this human demand. It stands inexorably on the path of moral progress: such is its outward guise. We need the inspiration of a great idea that we may overcome this abiding discouragement, and play well our part in the cosmic conflict between right and ill. "Give me a great thought," said the dying Herder, "wherewith I may quicken myself." It is the "great thought" of immortality that has power to uplift, unify, and strengthen the moral energies amid the most poignant stresses to which flesh and blood can be exposed. Take an illustration from a private letter written by a young officer who had been wounded in one of the bloodiest battles of the war. "The regiment

had a terrible night, was only about one-third the strength it went in. Two of our officers went off their heads and about two-thirds were killed or wounded. There is only one thing that can possibly make one rise above these surroundings: *faith that the spirit goes to a higher life,* and though I'm afraid my religion has been and still is patchy, this thought kept me perfectly calm and steady. Before the thing started you certainly could have knocked me down with a feather. I'm afraid I shall be frightened, too, when it has to be done again; but if only I can get into the same frame of mind as before, I shall be quite contented."

In the broader battlefield of the world, where we are all called to be soldiers, the same thought has power to revivify the fainting spirit, and when it infects the modern consciousness with its triumphant energy, it will lift our personal lives to fresh levels of efficiency, strength, and freedom.

Here, then, is one of the great tasks to which the New Age summons our finest and most consecrated minds. It is the reënthronement of a passionate faith in immortality, in the hearts and lives of men. What this faith did for the old Graeco-Roman civilization it can do for ours. It overthrew the very foundations, moral, social,

and political, of that "hard Roman world," destroyed its materialism, transformed its most highly prized values, and crowned the individual with a glory which has issued in the democratic ideals of today. Our civilization has been largely pagan in character, built on sensuous and materialistic ends and aims. The cry of the hour is for reconstruction and renewal, but as Lord Morley remarks in another connection, no real or permanent betterment in the social order is possible *apart from a transformation of spiritual thought.* The reconstruction of society, the reform or abolition of time-honoured institutions are vain dreams, if the individual remains a materialist at heart, conceiving this world as a "planetary cage" to be enjoyed as one may, but with no outlook upon a grander universe, no glimpse of a transcendental realm where may be found the fruition of all his highest hopes and strivings. Reinvest personality with its native rights, place it in a category by itself as an end to which all else is a means, that for which all institutions and forms exist and apart from which they have no reality, conceive it to be "a something that pertains not to this wild death-element of Time, that triumphs over Time, and *is*, and will be, when Time shall be no more;" and you have

introduced a revolutionary factor of potency, in Biblical phrase, to remove mountains—mountains of sloth, inertia, prejudice, and the dulness of use and wont.

From another but no less important point of view belief in immortality has a social value which, perhaps, will make it more tolerable to the mind of the diplomatist and political leader. Today great tracts of the world are in darkest chaos and anarchy. As was predicted long ago by thoughtful observers, the proletariat have taken up arms and are threatening the very existence of the civilization for the salvation of which the great war has been waged. Men of the depressed classes finding themselves and their fellows the victims of age-long inequality, suffering, and injustice, not infrequently under the aegis of law and religion, are determined to make a clean sweep of the system in which such things are possible. They boldly announced that after the war of nations, there must be another and a still more terrible war—the war of classes. Deep-seated in their hearts are love and hate, love of humanity in the abstract, hate of human beings or certain classes of human beings in the concrete. Just because of their love of humanity, the Bolsheviki and others at one with them, though

bearing a different name, are guilty of murder, robbery, and many another crime, and have let loose the most violent and brutal of man's primitive passions. Why this frightful contradiction? At bottom the answer will be found to be that great masses of the toilers have abandoned belief in any other world than this; they ask for no Heaven and they fear no Hell. What they demand and what they must have is a share of the good things of the only life they know or care about or in which they believe. Hence their cries, "Down with the State, with the comfortable and well-to-do classes, with the intellectuals, and up with the unprivileged and the have-nots! Time is passing, death will soon end all. Let us destroy, then, with fire and sword the existing order in the hope that at once the poor and the suffering may enjoy the good things of the world." Such thoughts could only be bred in an atmosphere saturated with materialism. Are we, then, to proclaim a tame acquiescence in the wrongs and injustices which organized greed inflicts on the workers, and as a substitute for good-will and social righteousness set up the hopes of a good time coming in the world beyond? On the contrary, belief in the infinite worth of the human soul, especially when reinforced by the doctrines of the father-

hood of God and the brotherhood of man, powerful as they are to dissolve and to build up again the whole social structure, creates the spiritual passion that can brook no wrong done to the humblest creature that wears a human face. But this passion is patient. It knows that self-sacrifice and self-control are essential to a being whose future is not limited by the grave, but whose destiny is made or marred by the thoughts or exertions of his earthly life. It knows that there is another and a better world, and that there the only thing that counts is character, love, and goodness, a spirit that can say: "Better far to suffer wrong than to inflict wrong on any man." The most urgent need at the present time in the interests of the spiritual reconstruction of the world is to reentrench this dynamic faith in the hearts and lives of men. Workers in this mighty transformation are called from different quarters. The philosopher whose proud boast it once was that though he could bake no bread he could give us God, freedom, and immortality, may again bring his interest into relation to ordinary human need by showing the place of a future life in any rational concept of the universe; the psychic researcher with his love of truth, his remorselessly scientific attitude, will do well to con-

centrate his energies on establishing the fact of survival; the Biblical scholar should make plain the solid historical foundations of the Easter-message on which organized Christianity was founded; the ethical teacher can show that moral experience stultifies itself unless the postulate of immortality be granted; the preacher can vindicate and intensify the deep mystical craving, manifest in all the higher religions, of union with the Divine, of emancipation from the weakness and decay of nature into the life and gladness of the sons of God. With such concerted and unified effort there shall dawn upon our distracted world a new day wherein at last the idealism of Christ shall have free course to work its beneficent will, to realize the dream of seer and prophet, the spiritualizing of all human relations in the veritable establishment of God's Kingdom on earth.

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