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Oct. 27.



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A FAMILY OF NATIONS WITH  
ONE ETERNAL FATHER~~

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(SECOND SERIES)



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AMANUENSIS

FLORENCE DISMORE

(FLORA MORE)



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MANCHESTER HOUSE, MARSHAM ST., S.W.I.

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THE PROGRESSION  
OF MARMADUKE

88.4

FIRST PUBLISHED  
APRIL, 1926

PSMS 22



1988,3806

(B 3835)

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## FOREWORD

THE second volume of "The Progression of Marmaduke" will be warmly welcomed by all who have read the first. It is essentially one of those communications from higher planes which should refute completely and for ever the parrot-cry of the inexperienced in spiritualism, that nothing but trivialities come through to us.

But, if spiritualism is to mean anything to the world we must not stop at having proved communication with the so-called dead to be possible. That fact in itself is of supreme importance to man, solving as it does the question of continuity; through scripts such as the following we are learning not only that the "dead" are alive, but something of the conditions in which they live, and in what manner to shape our conduct here in order to progress hereafter. This information comes from those who know, and if we merely pigeon-hole it as interesting without applying it to daily conduct, spiritualism will have failed in its chief object.

This second volume of Marmaduke's progression on higher levels is the fruit of his own experience and a revelation of the spiritual significance that lies behind all manifestation in the material world—that it is the hidden side in everything that really matters. Whether it be his reflections on those who "only believe they believe, they do not *realise* God," or upon some current business methods, or any of the practical sides of life, Marmaduke gives us food for

thought. "The man or woman who builds good houses for the people, whether he or she be spiritually minded or not, is nearer our world than the unpractical person who thinks a great deal about the future life, but in no way contributes to the welfare of his fellow-creatures," is a pronouncement that should be written in letters of gold.

The book is full of suggestive thought, and the author from the Unseen is to be congratulated on having found an amanuensis through whose mentality he has been able to express himself so clearly.

ROSE Ch. de CRESPIGNY.

*Westminster, February, 1926.*

# THE 'PROGRESSION OF MARMADUKE.

*Writings given by him after his passing to  
the Spirit-World.*

*(Second Series)*

March 31st, 1918.

## THE POWER FOR GOOD INHERENT IN MANKIND.

One is at times apt to think that some men have naturally the seeds of evil in them, and that others are filled with the spirit of well-doing. Not so : in all men there is good, in all men there is evil. Flowers and weeds grow side by side, and the stronger plant will push aside the weaker one. Let the good flower be cultivated and the evil weed allowed to die. Some semi-civilised races have not yet learnt the husbandry of the *soul*, for the weeds of ambition, greed, and covetousness have been allowed to take root and flourish, till it has been almost impossible to find room to plant good seed. What can your nation do to avert a similar catastrophe ? In the first place you must instil into young people a belief in God. At present they only *believe* that they believe ; they do not *realise* God. Then teach them of the continuity of the future life with that of earth. Show them the effects of evil thoughts and evil living. Impress them with the beauty of a good life going on

into eternity. Many will say this is working for future generations, and what is to be done for the men and women of *to-day*? The same system, rather differently applied, would serve. Were lectures on these subjects given as cheaply and could be attended as easily as the cinematographs, the masses might be attracted to the teaching and help to spread it. When once the broad and true lessons taught by Christ are adopted, you will have laid the foundation of a system of ethics which the storms of life cannot destroy, and against which evil counsels and selfishness will not prevail. Evil may go on for a time, but let the *majority* of mankind make for righteousness and goodness, and it will lose its power. The "Second Coming" may not be in the flesh, but we think it has already commenced, and instead of another crucifixion there will be a mighty welcome given to an honoured and beloved *King*. Long and fierce has been the battle between good and evil, but the righteous cause will in the end prevail. It does not need a *personal* Devil to stir up all that is bad in human nature, but it does need the influence of Christ to fight against it, and in these days of war and sorrow He has been on the battlefield, combating pain and despair, and will also lend His merciful aid on the battlefield which is in every human soul. And we predict that in the future there shall be no more war, that nations will live in unity, and that the light of Heaven will illumine the dark places of the earth.

April 28th, 1918.

THE FORCE OF THE POWER FOR GOOD.

It is a fact that, as mankind grows better, it takes its own faults more seriously. The normal man does not trouble himself overmuch about the motive of his actions, but let him once become a believer in Christ's teachings and he will find a hundred evils in himself of which he was formerly unconscious. The world is very complaisant about itself while in a state of semi-barbarism, but when true civilisation commences then it sees evil as it really is. One man will walk through a large city and see neither cruelty nor hardships, and will even deny that they exist ; but the humanitarian is perpetually being grieved by the sufferings both of mankind and of animals. Do you ever consider what would have become of the world long ago if it were as bad as some people make out ? They see the evil in it magnified, and the good minimised. They deliberately put the wrong end of the telescope to their eyes, not considering that by so doing they are lessening the power for good in the world ; but these people are fortunately in a minority, and after all it really is a healthy sign that nations are beginning to think the world is a wicked place and that there has been no progression in it ; for the self-satisfied are never perceptive. The effect for good exercised on others by even *one* beautiful character cannot be gauged. It spreads like the light ; it perfumes like an incense ; it permeates and influences all around it ; and insensibly it becomes a beacon round which the storm-tossed birds of sin and passion take refuge, and in its shadow

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## 10 THE PROGRESSION OF MARMADUKE.

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find rest and shelter. Every man can choose which he will be—a bearer of light to his fellow-men, or a will-of-the-wisp, drawing others into danger and sin, who gloomily surveys with morose satisfaction the moral wrecks he has helped to make. Seeing clearly as I do now the mischief that can be wrought by a single ill-spent life, my aim is to hold myself, and others like myself, up to odium as wreckers of the world's substance and cumberers of the earth; far too late for earthly atonement did *I* repent of my sins. Bitter is the after-repentance that comes with the realisation of sin, but salutary may be the warning that can, through one's own personal suffering, be given to others.

June 16th, 1918.

CAN THE WILL OF MAN PREVAIL AGAINST THE WILL  
OF GOD ?

We talk as if the will of God were the same sort of will-power that is seen in man, but I would rather define it as the expression of His decisions through the fixed laws which govern the world. How can man alter these ? He often thinks he rules his own destiny, which to a certain extent is true ; but there comes a time when he finds he is up against a fixed barrier, and no effort of his can break it down. Are these *fixed* laws then *immutable* ? The two words seem identical in meaning, and yet to me there is a difference. A law may be established which in the generality of cases will work well, but in exceptional instances such a law might not be good, and therefore I think it probable that an overruling of such a fixed law may be possible, as where a man's escape from death by accident seems miraculous. In my opinion that man's work on earth was not yet finished, and therefore his death was not allowed to be accomplished, as it would have been in the ordinary course of nature. And yet, when we talk of "the ordinary course of nature," are we not repeating a phrase of which we do not apprehend the meaning ? Does anyone know Nature's laws ? No, men only see those that are in daily working action, but there may be—and *must* be—others which we do not even perceive, and yet which come to the fore when special occasions require them. On these points I have only my own theories to give you, for we too, can only conjecture. But I have great faith in the future earth-life of our race. Why should there not be a bridge over to the

unseen world for everyone? Why indeed should it be any longer the "unseen" world, for nearly everyone has, or could cultivate, some form of psychic power? Even if years were given to the study, they would be years well spent, and brain-waves of thought from one to another would help all such students. Now I have a good deal drifted from my subject. I believe that under certain conditions there *can* be modifications of God's fixed laws, and that prayer will often bring about the desired object. But man is not then pitting his will against that of God, but is asking from a superior being that which he is powerless to bring about himself. We know too little, even here, for me to dogmatise, but I imagine that the injunction to "pray without ceasing" is a good one, but it should not be *conscious* prayer, uttered in words, but such a blending of the mind and will with those of God that every work shall be undertaken with the wish to please Him and have His blessing upon it. This, I think, is what is meant by "praying without ceasing," for if the words were taken in their literal sense we should simply be training up a race of hypocrites who would make a parade of what should be kept secret in a man's own heart. It is a large subject, and one can make very little of it, but I send my imperfect thoughts through you to be put down in writing, and I often find I obtain more clearness of vision thereby than if I ponder these problems by myself.

July 28th, 1918.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL IN THE WORLD.

The majority of thinking people have long since ceased to believe in a personal devil, waging war against goodness ; but how then can evil be explained ? Why should there be evil at all ? And why should there be a different standard of conduct for men and animals, since both only follow the instincts of nature ? There would be no answer to these problems did we not believe the aim of the creation of the world to be the progression of mankind. A world of stagnation where desire and right automatically went hand in hand is inconceivable ; and if earth-life were without struggle and there were no obstacles or natural tendencies to overcome, it would soon pall. With the animals it is different. They are doubtless also in the world for a purpose, but they are not expected to change and improve their natures, except in individual cases where they become domesticated and the friends of man. The sheep crop the grass as they did in the days of the patriarchs, and the cows and oxen eat and sleep and are not troubled by any consciousness of leading an idle life. Though we do not say that the earth was created for man *only*, we do maintain that he is the culminating creation on earth, and that the world's chief concern is his development. Even in our spirit-world progress, and only progress, is the aim, though there may be a point at which progression ceases and we become, as it were, merged into the eternal. We have no definite knowledge whether this is so, and are inclined to the belief that the upward ascent will go on indefinitely.

The grand scheme of the universe cannot be fully

entered into in our present state of development, but in order to advance morally men must have a conception of good and evil, and also something which mankind calls "conscience"; for though there may be *intellectual* progress without a realisation of good and evil, *moral* progression cannot go on without it. Existing in early days on a much lower level than at present, man, whether directly descended from animals or not, was at first little their superior. If he had remained in that condition there would have been no object in the world's creation. In studying the gradual upward progress of the human race we cannot but be struck by the beauty of the scheme of evolution from lower to the higher, and the working out of man's divine conception in the mind of God, now evolving itself by the very laws which God Himself ordained. To my mind the whole plan is soul-satisfying, and whatever be the final destiny of man, whether to be absorbed into the very being of God, or whether to be so refined and purified as to be able to live in His immediate presence and help in the carrying out of these mighty designs, matters little; for, even supposing that man's life is not eternal, but that his spiritual existence merges into another form, it would still be beautiful to have lived, struggled, conquered and overcome, and to have been raised upward till the highest pinnacle had been climbed. Should I finally die as a personality, I am convinced that I shall live again, and though my life on earth has been a series of falls and failures, yet here in the spirit-world I have struck the upward path, and I will follow it, let it lead me where it will. I feel my hand in that of an all-wise Father, and I am content to obey His will and trust to His guidance.

September 15th, 1918.

THE FUTILITY OF REGRET.

You know that when I first came over I was urged not to let my thoughts wander back to the past continually, but to look only to the present and the future. I think in the earth-life also there is too much time given to dwelling with vain regret on our failures and errors. All thought that cannot be translated into *deeds* is a waste of mental energy. We are apt to let ourselves dwell on the "might have been" to the exclusion of those things that are *still possible*, and that are crying out to be done. No one has a perfectly unstained record in his earth-life, but by looking back and dwelling on it we are only living over again the sins and faults we have committed before, and have only ourselves to blame if our minds still run in the old groove and are unable to rise above it. Once the past be cast aside and a new life of endeavour begun, we find our natures expand, and what was impossible to us, now becomes possible. Though some may be dearer to us than others, and before we can begin to realise that universal love is within our power, all jealousy in its littleness must be put aside. I wish I could explain to you how wonderful is the experience when this love for all mankind first comes to us. It is as if a shaft of warm light struck deep down into our hearts and changed the outlook on life, making us perceive the selfishness of the former existence, and showing that to live for others is the only true source of happiness. Life eternal would be a sad thing indeed, did it not comprehend in itself the *love* eternal. "God is love," and when we approach nearer to Him than is done on earth, some little portion of the great God-love

seems to enter our being, and to make us rejoice in the beauty of human fellowship and human friendship. Truly, friendship is one of the most blessed things a man can give or receive, but it must be a *selfless* friendship, which seeks to benefit another and not oneself. Say we have a friend in spirit-life with us whose progression is more rapid than our own, and he is ready to enter a higher sphere ; trying to hold him back because he cannot then be so constantly with us, we are not his friend, but his enemy. Should a friend still on earth be doing good work, and we in the spirit-world miss him, endeavouring to get his earth-life shortened that he may come to us, then we are not a true friend, but an enemy in disguise. All this does not seem to have exactly a bearing on " the futility of regret," yet I think it is part of the subject, for, after all, vain regrets are *personal* and, as long as they are indulged in, we are thinking of ourselves and are making it impossible for us to be of use or comfort to others. Therefore cease to look backward, do the best in the *present*, and press forward to the *future*. The past has gone and can never be recalled, but the *present* will soon merge into the *past*. Let us therefore live, whether on earth or here in spirit-land, so that there can be no more regrets for mistakes, wrong-doing, and injustice ; then the future will spread out brightly and man will go on his way, casting flowers of sympathy and love on others as he treads his onward and upward path.

September 22nd, 1918.

THE GRADUAL GROWTH OF MAN.

It is certain that man was not created just as he is now, but that he has evolved from a lower state, and will continue to evolve through the ages to come. We must go back through millions of years to see the undeveloped creature, half animal, half human, which yet had in it the capabilities of rising higher, thus showing its difference from the mere animal. It has been argued that this difference consists in the utilisation of *tools* by man to obtain his needs, however rough they might be at first. But there is something more : there is the sense of responsibility to a higher power. With animals, as far as we can judge, mankind is the only supreme ruler they recognise, and their sense of wrongdoing, with the domesticated animals, is dependent on the displeasure of their master. However nearly, in the olden days, man and animal resembled each other, we may yet, I believe, take it for granted that, as with savage tribes at the present day, there was always in man's mind some idea of a God or gods, who could make or mar his life and direct the storm, the wind, and the waves, and whom he had to propitiate to ensure his own well-being. This is, of course, the lowest ideal of God. Later on we have the God of the creeds, who has still to be propitiated, and who can be pleased or offended. But gradually a higher conception of God is arising, and men are gaining a faint idea of a truly omnipotent God who has, however, once and for all fixed the laws that govern the world, so that, if these laws are, either wilfully or in ignorance, disobeyed, pain and sorrow, loss and misery, automatically follow.

If it were not so, men might well wonder during war where God is, and if there is a God at all; but when mankind really grasps the fact of the existence of law in the world, he will realise that God would not be worthy of trust and reverence if He consented to alter His laws because men choose to disobey them. I think that in everything we can trace progression, and in the spirit-world here we have a strong belief that the group-soul of the lower domestic animals is divided up and enters into the higher type of animals such as the dog and the horse, which, by their closer union with man, partake more of his nature; and these higher animals come over at their earth-death and live here for a certain period of time, and it is possible they may even develop into the soul of a man, though not of one whom you (often falsely) call "civilised," but of one whom you (unthinkingly) often term a "savage." If we did not believe in the upward progress of man we could not believe in God, and without God, life would not be worth living even here. But down to us from the higher spheres come the beautiful words of our guides, which teach love and pity, and promise happiness for *all*—a happiness planned by the master-mind of the Creator of all good. To doubt Him is to take away all hope for ourselves, and all wish to benefit others. We believe in an all-powerful, merciful God, under whose rule the universe is slowly travelling on towards the perfection which was the aim of its creation.

September 29th, 1918.

### THE MERCIFULNESS OF DEATH.

I wish to show how beneficial it is that the old, worn-out body should be left behind on earth and nature's provision for change take place. Suppose that man was condemned to drag along his present body for ever, and that there was no renewal of either the bodily or mental powers. Then life under these circumstances would be a curse and not a blessing. If during the whole of earth-life the body continued in health and vigour it would be different, for the conditions would be more akin to those of the future life, which receives our spirit-body at "death." Yet this, too, has soon to be thrown aside in its turn, to make way for a more ethereal frame, as we ascend higher.

With the trees and flowers of earth the same thing obtains: their leaves and petals fall to make way for fresh ones. Here it is not so. We have no funerals of dead remains, either animal or vegetable, and we do not have to brush up the scattered leaves, for all are re-absorbed to form the new ones. We do not know what becomes of those parts of our bodies here which we cast off in moving from sphere to sphere, but we gather that they are somehow utilised, and that in the first seven spheres our bodies are not changed but only *refined*; we are also told that further on in the ascent of life the body is cast off as it is on earth, only with no grief or sorrow to ourselves or others; it is the butterfly emerging from the pupa-case, that is all. You may say, where is the mercifulness of the earth-death? Do most people *want* to make the change; and does it not plunge others into sorrow? Yes, but this is the result of want

of knowledge, for men could not mourn for friends if they realised the beautiful world to which they have passed. Though people take words on their lips, and talk of their dear ones being "better off," these are mere phrases, and they neither fully grasp the idea nor fully believe in what they express so glibly. A fuller teaching is needed. Why should explorers be sent to the North and South Poles, and yet the mental powers of those whom you call "clairvoyants" not be more utilised to visit the future home and tell of its beauties to the inhabitants of earth? Some few of us, indeed, who have passed over, do come back and give partial descriptions, but these do not reach the mass of mankind, or touch the hearts of those who are now enveloped in the gloom and misery of a (to them) hopeless sorrow. Some are crying aloud from here to their mothers or wives on earth, vainly trying to dry their tears; but the mourners are deaf to their pleading voices and our comforting words alike, and weep and bewail as before. If the unity of the two lives, in earth and heaven, were truly realised, the learning of lessons on earth need not be as painful as it is. Death is merciful, for it sets free powers that were crippled in the earth-life. Death is merciful, for it brings us nearer to God, and perfects our love for all mankind.

November 24th, 1918.

GROWTH OUT OF SORROW.

These years of war have brought hardship and pain to many, but I should like to review the benefits which have accrued, and see if mankind has made a good use of the sorrow and loss which come through war as the results of man's own will, for without war such miseries would not exist ; and without man's will wars could not be. Yet as they *have* come, even by man's own doing and against God's laws and purposes, an overruling providence can turn these very evils to good uses. They have brought out the capabilities of women, and it has been well said that the war could not have been carried on without their help. They have shown a self-sacrifice quite equal to that of the soldiers themselves, and they were not conscripted, but voluntarily left sheltered homes for a rough life of discomfort and trial as nurses, or in other fields of labour, if they could help those driven from their homes, roofless, miserable and starving. These veritable Sisters of Mercy have shunned no hardships, and great will be their reward in the future life. Many of those, too, who stayed at home have given their time to hard and uncongenial work. But this was for a time, and we may wonder whether there will be any permanent elevation of character and aims in either men or women? We think so, for men have seen that those beneath them in the social scale can be as much gentlemen in deeds and thoughts as themselves. Women have recognised an equal self-devotion in their poorer sisters, and we hope that, when things are again normal, there will

no longer be heard that contemptuous word "only"—  
"only a workman!" "only a servant!" The old phrases will have gone, because the old ideas will have gone also and will not be revived. Men have learnt, too, that churches and creeds are powerless (as such) to comfort them in real danger or trouble. They want something they can prove and grasp and hold to, and we from here can supply it if they are willing to listen. We do not want all men, whether convinced or not, to cast off their own religion and adopt a new one, but we want them to be open-minded, and then they will obtain conviction when the time and opportunity arise. Has not the war also taught that all sorrow is not hopeless: that even in their distress men can look upward and beyond, and see the compensation of the larger life of the future? Our "dead" are never dead as long as we think of them and wish to keep their good opinion and their love. Let a man declare that he is an atheist and you should not believe him if there were a "dead" wife, son, or daughter to whom he feared to bring sorrow or disappointment. Words slip out when the tongue is unguarded, and a man who professes not to believe in the hereafter will often say: "No, my wife disapproved of that;" forgetting that if really dead it could no longer pain her to have her opinions contravened. For my own part I do not believe there is such a thing as a real atheist on the face of the earth. There are agnostics, but they only refuse a creed and do not insist on annihilation at death. Their refusal to believe in God is because, they say, His personality cannot be known. Call him the "First Cause" then, you agnostics! You *are* believers all the same, for you recognise a power which transcends that of human kind! An unthinking world cannot arise out of the ashes of ruined homes and desolated hearts. The mother, weeping for her son, welcomes with gladness

the knowledge that he is as much with her now as ever. The wife stretches out her arms and cries aloud : " Come back to me, my beloved ! " and through every fibre of her body she feels his nearness and is comforted. This war has caused much misery and sorrow, but the events which in themselves were evil will be turned to good, and out of the battered cornfields, the wrecked homes, the plundered cities of your allies, will arise better homes, loftier ideals and a truer brotherhood between nation and nation.

December 22nd, 1918.

### WHY THE WORLD EXISTS.

You might think there was no necessity for a world at all, but if you try to picture *nothingness* you will find it is impossible to do so. Even were there no worlds, no planets, no anything tangible, there would still remain *space*, and space must be filled, if only with air or ether. It is out of the question to conceive an absolute negation of everything, and how could space be better filled than with worlds, or planets, as you call them ; and given the world, what could have been done other than to plant it and people it with men and animals and make of it a training-school of progression ? There is no one, I firmly believe, either on earth or in the spirit-world, who could plan out a better scheme for the universe than the existing one. An infinite nothingness is inconceivable—granted. Then a world must be created : granted again. And created by an intellect infinitely superior to that of man : granted also ; and that intellect man calls " God." One cannot imagine the world growing by itself out of chaos, for if it did it must be governed by laws, and who fixed those laws ? God again ! Wherever we turn, we come back to the " first cause "—God. Some have asked how God came into being ? That we shall probably never know, however we may progress nearer to His presence, and it is one of the questions which neither men's intellect nor ours can elucidate ; but if we can trace everything back to God we have enough for our needs and should be content. If you really think out the arrangements in the earth-world, and still more *here*, where the level of life is spiritually higher, I think you will find that every

alteration you could suggest would not be a benefit, but very much the reverse. It is only the non-thinker and the careless who find objections to the scheme of creation as it obtains. And then, what does mankind know of the scheme of creation? How can he realise the full beauty and majesty of the laws of God? Only the *equal* of God could comprehend and appreciate them, so there is really no valid reason for the objection, raised by some cavillers, to the presence of pain, sorrow, sickness, and sin in the world; and besides that, it is setting up the judgment of an inferior intellect against that of the omnipotent, creative Power, with whom all is possible, and whose plans are beyond man's conception. If men followed the laws of God and conscience, they might reform the world, and pain and sin, sickness and sorrow would lessen and become bearable, instead of, as now, often unbearable evils. Of all that mankind deprecates, there is nothing which is not increased by his own faults and headstrong follies; and until he lives a better, purer, simpler life, these evils will exist; and if he had the power to create the world afresh, he would probably devise one having evils and hardships much more gigantic in their scope than those which now perplex and annoy him. For the *created* to cavil at the methods of the *Creator* is not only presumptuous but almost unbelievable.

December 29th, 1918.

### THE GROWTH OF A HIGHER WORLD-IDEAL.

You may think that during the long ages mankind has been progressing towards a higher idealisation of what life really means, and a better recognition of its aims and objects ; but in looking fully into the facts, can such improvement be discovered as might reasonably have been expected ? I fear not. Men have got accustomed to certain things and acquiesce in them to some extent, although knowing they are wrong. For instance, in many cases it is taken for granted that business dealings cannot be conducted on the highest principles of fairness and consideration for others ; and a man acting in contravention of such principles is not ostracised, should the particular practice be a common one. All this must be changed, for it saps the very foundations of high ideals, and men are not likely to rise to lofty heights who condone such methods. You may object that the soldiers during the war have shown heroic valour, disregard for personal safety, self-sacrifice, and love for their comrades. I grant this, but these very men, when at home, might have been pursuing the same underhand ways as those I deprecate ; only they were placed in entirely new surroundings, where the temptation of pecuniary gain was completely absent. They had only life and death to reckon with instead of money values ; and where you eliminate the money element you can obtain a much higher standard of conduct from men than when their livelihood depends upon successful trading. That is why it will be so difficult to keep the heroes of the battlefield up to their higher level. The ordinary cares of life will recom-

mence, and again they will begin to fight against their competitors in the industrial world ; and though they may feel that what seemed right and usual in the old days is now repugnant to them, they will probably lack the moral courage to stand to their *civilian* guns as they did to the actual guns of war. They must not be judged too hardly, for the battlefield of everyday life is often a greater trial of *moral* courage than the battlefield of war is of physical bravery, where all has gone save life itself, and where life itself seems dearly bought at the expense of a cowardly action. Human nature can, now as ever, rise to heights of grandeur of which it had not been deemed capable, but it requires something outside the ordinary daily routine to bring out this nobility. What can be done, therefore? For war is wrong and barbarous and cannot rightly be utilised as the training-school for abnormal virtues. The education of the future must train the coming generations in moral as well as physical courage, so that an unfair or cowardly act will become impossible. We, in the spirit-world, do not ask whether a man has been rich or poor, successful or the reverse on earth, but we do require that he shall show a " clean slate " as to conduct, and that all his aspirations shall be attuned to the highest standard. Everyone who shares the opinions I have expressed regarding the present low standard of everyday morality should speak out and protest. It is often said that earth-life would become impossible, for instance, if everyone spoke the *truth*. Granted, if all *unpleasant* truths were blurted out ; but it is easy to keep silence and refuse to say what is *not* true. A falsehood can be acted, too, as well as spoken, as where a pretence is made of what a man does not really feel. Many other changes I should like to see, but these must suffice for to-day.

January 5th, 1919.

AN IDEAL FOR THE FUTURE.

I wish, if I can, to plan out what should be the aims to strive for on earth in the coming year. *Our* life is already ideal and needs no reform, but the poor old earth is still labouring under wrong methods, wrong ideals, and wrongs inflicted by mankind on others. It is well to define clearly what the world needs most, and how changes can best be made. First of all, war must, of course, be made impossible, for even from a practical viewpoint war would be suicidal in future, and would mean the annihilation of not only the armies but the non-combatants as well, and I would suggest the propaganda of anti-war principles in all schools and colleges, and the spreading of knowledge by suitable literature in libraries and reading rooms. But I rely most on the teaching in schools, for if our future soldiers rebel against war, it must cease. The industrial unrest is another great problem to cope with. The same sort of propaganda work must be commenced, showing how this instability of labour recoils upon the workers themselves and, by making all commodities dearer, does away with any benefit from an advance in wages. It might be advisable, in every trade, to have a Committee or Council, representing both the employer and the employees, which body should settle all questions concerning wage-disputes, and at other times should meet once or twice a year to investigate any changes which might have made the existing arrangements unfair to either side. I would also have it made legally compulsory that, after a certain percentage of profit to the employer, the surplus should be divided into bonuses

in which the master's share should be the same as that of each workman ; and again every employer should provide suitable housing accommodation for his men and their families, and not engage fresh workers until he had seen that they also could be well and comfortably housed. There are many other problems you have to contend with which are difficult of solution : one is the tendency in young people to abandon home life. At present this may not be possible to alter, but the next best thing is to provide innocent amusement by social gatherings amongst the people themselves, and it would be well that, attached to every factory, there should be a hall for amusements, which should be under the management of a committee of the workpeople only—with the stipulation, however, that the employer and his family should be allowed entrance at all times, on the same footing as the other members. Probably this would establish more cordial relations between themselves and the master. Class distinctions cannot be entirely abolished, but you can show that you do not recognise a man as better than another simply because he belongs to a higher status in society, but only if his life proves him worthy ; and that a workman, doing his duty and living a good and useful life, is as much to be respected as his employer. For a man to rise in the world by his own endeavours is often an infinitely higher thing than to have been born in the purple and have had to use no effort to attain to it.

January 12th, 1919.

THE NEW IDEALS.

I have dealt with this subject previously, and I now want to give you a short summary of my convictions. At present there is no absolutely fixed standard of conduct for mankind to follow. Christ's example would apparently seem too distant and far off, and the simplicity of His life too drastic to attract followers in this age of luxury. What standard then can be set up which will offer an inducement to the present generation to adopt it? Even should deceit in business matters cease, and if people should no longer ape a mode of living to which their means did not entitle them, and which leads to fraud and deception, there would still not be a very lofty ideal raised. But having gained so much, other ideas could be promulgated, such as unselfishness and self-sacrifice. It is sad to picture our soldiers coming back to everyday life and finding the same shams and injustices, and the same pushing and crowding-out of others in the labour market. Where is now the "cup of cold water" given to a thirsty soldier? Many a civilian elects to keep it for himself! Would it not be possible to influence these discharged soldiers to put into their renewed civilian life the same ideas of duty and "doing their bit" as they held during the war? Lectures might be given to them, and I would suggest as a title: "Lessons learnt in war-time"; for I believe it would be found that many a man who would have given his life for his country does not recognise any responsibility towards it as a civilian. Much will have been accomplished if they can only be taught that there is the high and the low level in every

walk of life, in every stage of the journey of life ; and that it depends upon themselves whether they will tramp in the mire or follow the cleaner pathway of duty. If these men fall into the mire, the blame will be, not with them, but with those who failed to point out to them the better way. Every man should be his " brother's keeper " and help him to be ready to go into his place when he passes to the great beyond, which seems so far away, and yet is but a step, and into which all pass when the first stage in their life's journey is ended.

February 16th, 1919.

#### THE GROWTH OF THE PRACTICAL IN LIFE.

You may think that the practical element in everyday life may tend to the exclusion of spirituality, but to even the highest forms of this there must always be a practical side. For instance, spirit-teaching from our plane would be of little use if we did not impress those on earth with the necessity for performing all the duties of that life well and faithfully. The spiritual and the practical should so blend together that the material details of the earth-existence will be ennobled and lifted out of the commonplace, to which category they are mostly relegated. Rightly considered, earthly duties are of as high a value as any *we* are called upon to perform in the spirit-world, and no task should be despised merely because it has reference to the affairs of earth. If the homes of the people are not comfortable, spirituality is deadened, for, with a constant sense of discomfort, their minds cannot be free to grasp things of

a higher nature. The ascetics of old simply dulled all feeling and thought, but did not thereby attain to any real height of spiritual progression by their self-inflicted suffering. The growth of the practical is a thing to be aimed at, not deprecated. To take the housing question again : the man or woman who builds good houses for the people, whether he or she be spiritually-minded or not, is nearer our world than the unpractical person who thinks a great deal about the future life, but in no way contributes to the welfare of his fellow-creatures. The man who does his best to help others to live the higher life is not only spiritual but practical as well. There has been too much dwelling on the *spiritual* nature of man as a teaching apart from his everyday life, for he who builds a solid house, a good ship, or even makes a useful article of furniture, welds into that which he has made something of spirituality, because he has given of his *best* to the work. All things have their auras, and if you could see with *our* eyes, all the things of earth would have their beautiful colours ; and those that have either been made or tended with love and care, would show more lovely auras than those which had only received perfunctory attention. It is not good to draw the line too sharply between earth and Heaven ; let them meet and mingle, and both will benefit. But you must not think that because a plan, a scheme, or a reform seems to carry with it no mandate from the spirit side of life, that therefore its inception is purely earthly, for the spiritual guidance may be unconsciously present all the time, and *we*, from our standpoint, should count the philanthropist who benefits his fellow-men, more spiritually-minded than he who deems no action praiseworthy unless taken under the name of his own particular creed or religion.

February 23rd, 1919.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IDEA.

Upon the idea that a man has of life depends the trend of his own life and that of others. One will aim at riches, another will wish to carve out for himself a scientific, literary, or military career ; but everyone has probably at one time had a wish to do something definite with his life. I have written on " Ideals " before, but an idea and an ideal are not the same thing. An *idea* is something which may be good or bad in itself, and be worth working for or not ; but an *ideal* calls up an image of something high and noble : something one may strive after and yet not attain. A man may try to carry out an idea also and fail, but the want of success would generally be of a material nature, not a spiritual loss. Yet an idea, if of a lofty nature, may in time attain to the height of an ideal, and this is what I mean by my title. Say, a man starts a profit-making business, but gradually becomes interested in his workpeople. He will then desire to raise them morally and spiritually and will plan and scheme for this end, and his first idea of money-making has changed to the ideal of a higher and better life for the workers under him. When such an altitude has been reached it is an evolution of great beauty. If I were still on earth and had boys to train I would ask them early in their school-career if they had made a choice as to a profession or business later on. Should a definite reply be forthcoming I would ask then what other aim in life they had besides getting on in that particular profession. Probably not one of the boys would ever have thought that anything more was needed than to " get on " ; but once suggest that *no*

profession, trade, or calling can be an end in itself until it had been made the stepping-stone to higher things, and those boys will begin to think, and may eventually enter on life's path with nobler aims and ambitions than had the above suggestions not been made. The ideal of a true philanthropist is not only to raise the standard of comfort for the masses of the people, but to bring more spirituality into their lives, and from here we see with pleasure the steps that are being taken for this end. Mistakes may be made, but the endeavour is there. Such things as " Young People's Clubs " may seem very material and trivial, but they have done good work in showing the young working population that those whom they formerly looked upon as selfish and unable to enter into the lives of others less well off than themselves can and do honestly desire to help them and be real friends to them, and probably in a few more of your earth-years the feeling between employers and employed will be on a much better and more altruistic footing. Take courage, therefore, and do not be dismayed by what seems to you the small increase of the progress visible, for in the great eternity years are but as seconds of time, and the universe is slowly but surely travelling forward and onward.

March 23rd, 1919.

MISSPENT LIVES.

I feel that this paper ought to be an autobiography, yet I cannot bring myself to recall again my past errors and sins, and so I will write from theory and observation only. Now a misspent life is a wasted life, but in judging of this, much will depend upon the circumstances in which a person is placed. Strenuous public work cannot be expected from a man who has to struggle to keep a family, though even he can do something to help his fellow-men and benefit his immediate neighbourhood, and from *our* point of view a quiet unobtrusive worker may accomplish more than a brilliant platform orator who can hold an audience spell-bound, for if a man believes thoroughly in the need of any reform, the very force of his belief will convince others also. The "faddists," as they are called, are the people who set stones rolling which finally gather into the avalanche which overspreads the valley, and *we* should call it a misspent life if the "man of one idea" did not endeavour to make others share his views. One can be an excellent husband, father, brother or son and yet he may make a failure of his life if he neglects opportunities for public service which come in his way, and gives himself up wholly to family ties, for there can be a family-selfishness as well as a personal one. Wives, too, sometimes hold back their husbands from public service from a desire to keep them too much within the home circle. There is great work to be done in the future, and if each would only do a *part*, the reconstruction of the world on a happier basis would be the result. Pressing problems are now

before the world : the housing question ; conditions of labour ; lack of employment, and all that is now making for industrial unrest ; but the solution will never come while each class or trade is working for its own interests alone, regardless of the effect their demands would have on the community at large. Class selfishness, trade selfishness, family selfishness, *all* will have to go before the ideal life can be arrived at and peace come to the world.

April 6th, 1919.

#### THE EMPIRE OF TRUTH.

At the present time the war has opened the eyes of many people to abuses which exist, but there is one which few seem to consider, and that is the lack of truth. An ideal world needs unselfishness, conscientiousness, and above all, *truth*. Not that you should always be pressing the truth on others in a way to hurt them ; that is not my meaning, but I would require truthfulness and absolute honesty in all dealings between man and man. If a man deceives anyone over business transactions he is sinning against truth. If he prevaricates in order to help himself out of a difficulty, he errs in the same way, and all deceit brings in its train a deterioration of character. One *must* be truthful here, because the mind can be read, and what is in it cannot be hidden, yet there would seem to be no preparation made on earth for this showing up of the true character, and therefore it is a terrible shock to find one's real nature is known in the new life. There is great need for truth in the negotiations now going on

between the nations. No country should have secret and hidden motives, or pretend to motives which are not their real ones. "Diplomacy" is the one term which represents the greatest wreckage of truth. It may be "diplomatic" to suppress facts, but it is not truthful. It may be diplomatic to feign a friendship which is not felt, but nothing can justify it. I wonder how long it will be before nations and individuals alike realise that honesty is really "the best policy." It may not lead to advancement on earth, but when the future life is considered also, everything assumes a different aspect, and the value of intrinsic honesty becomes apparent. Foolish are they who close their ears to the teaching of things spiritual and cling to things material. After they have left the earth, of what good their hoarded possessions, their investments, their fat banking account? All these things may be good if properly used, but all alike become absolutely valueless when the earthly bodies have been quitted and the more ethereal conditions have been entered upon which prevail here. Truth does not mean truth in speech alone, but it embraces also right aims, actions, and thoughts, and those who have once firmly grasped the hand of Truth will never let it go.

April 13th, 1919.

THE SPREAD OF A BELIEF IN THE UNKNOWN.

At the present day there is a decided trend towards belief in what was characterised by some of the older scientists as "the Unknowable," and men are rapidly coming to the conclusion that there is no such thing as the "unknowable." They may not be able to grasp everything while still dwelling in their finite world, nor can they even do so at once on their entry into the higher sphere of being; but that they will in the end discern the secrets before hidden from them I firmly believe, and I am told, by those who have risen higher than myself, that it will be so. People on earth are very apt to say: "We were not *meant* to know this or that." This is manifestly untrue, for if men were not meant to discover the facts of science and nature and to solve the riddles of the universe, why have they minds which are continually pushing them on to new discoveries? And why do these almost invariably lead to further ones? It may be, and probably *is* the fact that mankind is not yet ready for *all* knowledge; and I can testify from my own experience that when we pass over we are not ready even then; but nevertheless, in this new world, we feel that we are ever pressing forward to the fuller knowledge, and shall one day attain to it. If we had been created like the animals, who do not seek for any fresh knowledge (as far as we can judge), then our earth-lives would have been far less interesting and instructive. When a man discovers a new fact and communicates it to others, he feels that he has found one of the lost pieces of the mosaic of the world's design, and that other pieces will be discovered later, until the

whole pattern is complete. Shall we ever know *all*? No, not *all*: we believe that some things must remain mysteries except to the mind of the Creator himself; but we hope and trust that much more will be known than at present, and that on earth there will be a knowledge of the future life, of its different spheres, and the work which is done in them. When all this is known as an absolute truth we can well afford to wait for the rest and to leave all in God's hands; for at present we are as children, gaining education little by little, and when we think that we have all eternity in which to learn, we need not be dismayed if many still on earth refuse the light which *might* be theirs. We strongly believe that the spiritual part of mankind made signal progress during the latter years of the war, for, during that time, life and death had clasped hands and shown themselves as twin-brothers. The death of the body is often the birth of the soul, and so the passing over of a dearly-loved son, husband, or brother may mean the awakening of the soul of one left behind on earth, as well as of the one translated to the new sphere. We have every reason to be hopeful as to the spreading of spiritual knowledge and, even when openly opposed, the opposition is based not so much on *denial* of the truth, as from carping criticism of the *methods* employed for its discovery.

April 27th, 1919.

THE CHOICE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.

If not to every boy and girl born into the world, certainly in later life, to every man and woman comes the deciding as to the bent of their future life. Probably no one would deliberately *choose* the wrong path, recognising it as such, but he may carelessly drift into it, for no step in life is insignificant, and on small issues may depend all the future. In youth one is apt to think of them as *little* things: the first untruth, how trivial it may seem! Perhaps it may be only saying: "I don't know" when a full confession might bring some modicum of blame. It may be the first card-playing for money, leading to future gambling habits. It may be merely a fit of laziness: the putting off of writing a letter till the morrow, and when to-morrow comes, again omitting the duty, so that the habit of procrastination is formed, which may cling to one through life, unless some drastic awakening brings a realisation of the fault. Selfishness, too, is of gradual growth—commencing even with as small a thing, it may be, as the neglect to give up a comfortable seat to an older person. Very venial sins these, you may say, yet they lay the foundation of the future character, and parents should be on the watch for such traits in their children and correct them, for in later life it is like breaking an ill-set bone and resetting it, to alter habits which have become a part of the man himself. Many adult people are quite unaware of their own faults, and would really be grateful if they were pointed out to them in a friendly and considerate manner, and I only wish now that *I* had had some friend in early youth who

would have done this for me. Repentance can be easy where the sin has not gained too firm a grip, but sack-cloth and ashes will hardly effect a cure in the latter case. There is good in all people, but in many it must be sought for and brought to the surface.

May 25th, 1919.

#### THE TRANSITION FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

This is what the change really means when the earthly body is cast off and the imprisoned spirit is set free. I want you to realise that the released one feels no pain, but only a great sense of freedom and of larger possibilities for development. I am now speaking principally of those who have had some previous knowledge of what happens after the transition. During the sleep of recuperation the mental faculties are active, and pleasant memories and most delightful anticipations pass before the mind. Then comes the real awakening, and with it the desire to work : to help others. When once this longing for service comes, the rest is easy ; our place is assigned to us, and we begin our new life of usefulness and happiness, so different from that on earth. We have no disagreeable duties to fear, for all our work is pleasant to us, and even when we were helping the wounded on the battlefield we only felt that we could rejoice at being allowed to do a so much-needed work. Try to realise all this, and think of your dear ones, released from all earthly troubles and trammels ; with a new spirit-body, alert, vigorous, and active ; and a mind stored with knowledge and a fund of

happy memories ; and you will not then wish them back. No one who has passed over ever craves to return, unless, it may be, those who cannot at once shake off the earth-desires ; for when once the wrench is over, then the joy begins, and although we may regret leaving those who remain behind on the earth-plane, yet even for *their* sakes we could not wish to come back to the earth-life, so infinitely less desirable than the conditions in spirit-land.

June 1st, 1919.

CAN A MAN INFLUENCE OTHERS FOR GOOD EITHER BY HIS WRITINGS OR TEACHINGS, UNLESS HIS OWN LIFE IS BASED ON THE SAME LINES ?

This is a moot point, but all depends upon whether the personal contradiction is allowed to become apparent in such writing or teaching, or in any other way is revealed to those on whom he wishes to exercise a good influence. We know that it is quite possible for a man to have a high moral standard as an *ideal*, yet not to have sufficient strength of will to act up to it himself ; and deplorable as this is, it often happens that the best part of a man—the aspirations and strivings which he should have cultivated and allowed to ripen and come to maturity—will appear in his writings or lectures, or any other form of teaching. We do not say that this is any excuse for his own moral lapses, but still it is a very different thing when a man *flaunts* his sins before the world and makes no effort at improvement. Such a one is a moral leper, and infects others, who should shun his society ; but a certain amount of pity can be felt

for the first man, although his conduct must be condemned ; for there are many people whose moral fibre is so weak that at the first temptation they fall, knowing that they should have resisted the evil, but having lost all power of will. Is it possible to strengthen the will-power of such people ? Yes, if they know of the continuity of life with the life hereafter ; and the terrible responsibility which such knowledge carries with it. They would then be brought into closer contact with the guides who are trying to help them from *our* side, and so their efforts at reform would have more success. It is a solemn trust laid upon those still in the earth-life, to keep their minds and bodies pure and healthy, and in no way to cause a lessening of the moral health of another. It is sometimes argued that there are people in the world so bad that no example and nothing anyone else can do can make them worse, and that therefore, there is no occasion to restrain evil thoughts, words, or deeds in their presence ! But what a terribly low standard of morality is this ! It might as well be argued that to steal from the rich is no sin, because they will not miss the loss ; that to kill a diseased person is not wicked, because he must in any case die soon ; the moral atmosphere becomes tainted when a crime is committed, or evil thoughts sent out ; it is made easier for others to sin, and the bad example creates a precedent which helps to lower the moral tone of a nation.

June 29th, 1919.

THE FIGHT OF THE WORLD.

It seems to me that peace and war are the summary of the world-struggle. As after war comes peace, so the mind of man attains peace at last, after long battles fought out between his better and his worse natures, where the first has suffered many defeats at the hands of the latter. These battles are constant unless a man has so deadened his conscience that he gives way to every impulse without regard to morality, right, or justice. But the normal, ordinary man does not do wrong of deliberate, set purpose. Sometimes he acts hastily and repents at leisure ; sometimes he is unable to withstand temptation and succumbs to it. His conscience pricks him all the time, and a long period of bitter remorse follows. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that his armour should be buckled on and that he be ready for the battle at any moment. If he thinks that, as he has not given way to temptation for a long time, he can now relax his efforts, he is like the soldier who sleeps while on sentry duty, because he has had no alarm from the enemy for some hours. The enemy is in his own heart and is with him always, and if he sleeps at his post he will be in the grip of the enemy and a prisoner before he has time to defend himself. I would lay down this rule: when you are in doubt about two courses of action, never decide at once ; weigh the decision, and when you have made it, weigh it again and yet again. Very often your first impulse comes from your own wishes ; the second may be impressed upon you from the other side of life ; for your guides may have seen that

you are in danger of taking the wrong path and have come to your aid. "Second thoughts are best," but I make one exception: where it is a case of doing a generous action. If you are aware that a person is in a difficulty, and know that he is honourable and worthy of assistance, take the course which your first generous thought suggested, and give him help. But if there is a real doubt in your mind as to the man's true character, then it is not a case for quick and immediate decision, but for "second thoughts." There can be nothing more sad than to feel that one might have saved a friend from misery and ruin, and yet held one's hand until too late. Too late! How sad those words sound! But that is the difference between earth and heaven: here there is no such thing as "too late," for we can all repair our faults and sins in time; but hard is the experience, and thorny is the path through which we have to pass to do so. I would implore all who dally and delay, to ask themselves whether they are wise to fritter away the opportunities for improvement offered them on earth, in order to take ease and pleasure which will turn to "dead sea fruit" in the world to come. "I did not know!" such people cry; to which we might reply: "You might have known. You might have learnt of the future life and the necessary preparation for it from those on the earth-plane more advanced than yourself, who could have warned you of the pitfalls you were making for yourself." We do not reproach these poor wandering souls, however, for their misery is great enough without that; on the contrary, we try to help them. But to those on earth we would say that everyone who, knowing the truth, does not try to pass it on to others, is guilty of an unpardonable omission of duty. He may meet with success or else with ridicule, but if he honestly tries to bring conviction to others he will have done his best, and not on his head will be the blame if

they fail to respond to his efforts. Christ Himself could not convince all His hearers, and we cannot expect ordinary mortals to have even as much success as He had, yet His teaching has survived through the ages, and it may be that even now a few well-chosen words will set a ball rolling which will go on to future generations. Let us not have on our conscience the reproach of wrecked lives that we might have saved had we been more in earnest, and if we had given more love and service to our fellow-men.

August 3rd, 1919.

THE POWER OF LOVE AND OF THE SPIRIT.

The spirit is love, and love is the spirit. Until the spiritual part of man is so developed that love permeates all his thoughts and actions he cannot be said to be spiritually-minded ; but when love has taken possession of his nature, then spiritual qualities develop. On earth the material things so rule life that this is difficult, and the spirit is dwarfed and stunted in its growth ; but when once the earthly body is cast off, and the spirit ascends to a higher level, progress is more rapid, especially where there has been true effort made on earth to attain to the higher ideal. We are often delighted to see the change that comes over a man when he no longer finds himself weighed down by the trammels of earth, but feels that his spirit can soar to heights hitherto undreamt of. When the spiritual element has once got the upper hand over the remnants of the old material outlook, then there begins to grow up the deep love for all living and sentient creatures, both human and animal, which we who have been longer in this atmosphere of love have already made our own. If we come in contact here with a hardened sinner, whom on earth we should have loathed and despised, we only see his misery and despair. If he is still unrepentant, and rails against his fate at being removed from earth, we pity him, for we see the terrible remorse he will have to undergo ; and that the repentance and remorse must come before help can reach him. As long as a sinner does not recognise his sins, we cannot help him ; but once let him do so, and our hands are no longer tied, but can grasp his and draw him out of the

pit of misery to which he has condemned himself. Even such men are easier to help than some self-satisfied, so-called "good" people, narrow in creed and unforgiving in nature, who have tried to do good according to their light, but whose light is but twilight, if not real darkness. They do not see that narrowness is in itself sinful. The only remedy is for a number of similar characters to be brought together; then each sees the failings of the others, and finally they, too, recognise that they belong to the same category. Love can reach them when they acknowledge their need of help; so it is that this universal love of ours can descend into the darkest places of guilt and woe; can rescue those who are plunged in despair, who are hardened at first by what they think undeserved misfortune, and who have been, for the time, hide-bound in old errors and beliefs.

August 10th, 1919.

THE EXPERIENCES OF LIFE.

It is in some ways easier to develop spirituality on earth than to commence here, for if it has not been cultivated before, it will be like beginning to learn a new language, to develop a new nature in the next world. But sometimes on earth it is difficult to say where duty lies—whether in allowing the spiritual to dominate the material or the reverse. In each special case we think a just decision can be arrived at if a little time is given for consideration before taking definite action, and when it has been made a habit to consider the spiritual as well as the material aspect of any case, then each decision will become easier than the last. Now, what should be the experiences and lessons of earth to fit mankind for the world to come? In the first place he should learn the charity which is love; for a man who loves his fellow-men is not likely to judge them harshly or to take advantage of them in any way. He will not be keen to find out their faults, but rather the good qualities which most possess in a greater or less degree. Next, he must learn not to be obsessed by the material aspect of life, but to give the spiritual its due place. Then he has to learn that firmness of character is essential. He must not be firm on one occasion and give way on the next. I mean, he must fix his standard of right and wrong once for all, and not be tempted to deviate from it. A man who is befogged between right and wrong cannot act firmly, for he will be swayed by others. Also, he must so order his life as to prove to others that the standard he has set up is the highest and best one. It is little use to march under a banner if

you do not hold it aloft for others to see. Those who, in their inmost souls, are convinced of the continuity of life, and the possibility of communication between the two worlds and yet do not acknowledge their belief, are acting a cowardly and unworthy part. All the traits of character which should be cultivated in earth-life will be of the greatest help in the future life, for love and charity, firmness and steadfastness of purpose are needed in our world, and we should be badly off, indeed, if every released soul who comes over had to learn these qualities for the first time here. Men need not consciously prepare for the future world in practising virtue for the satisfaction of their own conscience and the good of their fellow-men; and, indeed, they are praiseworthy if they live the good life without premeditated idea of ultimate reward. Some pass over without either belief in, or knowledge of, a future world at all, but if they have done well on earth, according to their powers and opportunities, they are prepared for entry into our world and can at once join in its work and activities. I think the reason why some of the best men and women have never put before themselves a picture of Heaven, was because their large-heartedness would not allow them to accept the conventional idea of a Heaven from which more than half of their fellow-creatures would be banned. They prefer to wait and trust, rather than accept a creed which goes against their sense of justice and mercy.

August 17th, 1919.

THE MIGHT OF PRAYER.

True prayer is heard and answered when the right objects are asked for and the right attitude of mind maintained. It should have the effect of the correspondence classes by which a new subject can be taught from a distance. The life eternal is to most people a new subject, but you can establish a line of communication between the two worlds, and when you thoroughly recognise that there are guides in our world under whose charge you are placed, and that they are permitted to assist you in your difficulties and trials, and to take you by the hand and lead you to heights which you could not scale by yourself, then I think you will see that this daily communion with a Power who is above all and over all, is a means of enlisting also the practical help of those who, under His command, pass it down through we know not how many higher to lower spiritual vicegerents. *We* must be at the very beginning of the real spirit-world, having so recently come over, but we have nevertheless learnt somewhat of the procedure, and see how a never-ending stream of influence pours through until even we are able to pass on some of it to those on earth. The high and radiant spirits through whom these influences reach us are seldom seen by us, yet it is from them that we learn the far-reaching power of prayer. If you had a relative who had gone to a distant country, and you never wrote to him or entered into communication with him by thought, you would soon lose the telepathic power which may have existed between you, and which your letters or thought would have served to keep alive. In the same way, if you do

not try to keep in touch with the Highest Power, which directs and guides all, the possibility of approaching nearer and nearer to Him grows less and less, and may probably cease altogether while you inhabit your earthly body. But if you try to keep the communication open you will succeed and will enter the new life as a student, truly, but no longer as an infant, having to learn everything from the beginning. The power to grasp the highest, to long for and wish to attain it, has to be cultivated; and to do this, prayer, true, sincere, earnest, and rightly directed, is necessary. Those who get disheartened and fall back into the ranks of the careless and disbelieving will have to regain here the ground which they should have gained on earth, and they will find that it would have been easier for them then than when new modes of thought and of aspiration have also to be cultivated. The prepared soul is the one who has passed the preliminary examination with credit, and will have the less difficulty in passing the final one here. The blind are not only those whose physical sight was darkened on earth, but also those who deliberately closed their eyes to the larger and grander issues of life.

September 7th, 1919.

THE HEALING ART.

When a patient is given over by the doctors on earth there is a finality about it which seems to preclude hope. Not so when we are treating the patient from our side. Then it is that we whisper encouragement, and try to turn his thoughts to pleasant visions both of earth and of the world to come. When a man ceases to dread death, that unwelcome visitor is very often banished for the time ; and yet no one should fear leaving the body, though it is natural to feel sorrow at parting from those dear to us. So men cling to life until the great change has occurred, when they realise that the journey taken has brought them to a more beautiful and a pleasanter land. We want you to know that treatment from our side may arrest disease, or in time banish it altogether. We—or rather our doctors—can act by mental power on the affected part in local disease, or on the portion of the brain which controls that part of the body, or apply mesmerism when necessary, and so bring about a condition making recovery possible. We have seen some wonderful cures made from here, and our doctors rejoice when they succeed after all else has failed. It is not possible to give a fuller explanation of the methods employed, but you know that all sorts of diseases can be produced by anxiety, grief, or care, acting on the mind, and through that on the body. If men thought less of material things, therefore, and more of spiritual matters, their minds would be in a healthier state, and there would be less disease. The earth-body is too dense in its material at present. Here we, in our more ethereal envelope, have no diseases, but on earth

the heavy flesh which covers the spirit-body of man makes it difficult for us to give him impressions from our side. To return to the general subject of the treatment given from here to a patient still on earth; in the convalescent stages he is always surrounded by both children and animals from our side; of course, unperceived by himself unless he be clairvoyant. They give largely of their vitality, and so are of great assistance in the process of recuperation. It may seem strange to you that they are able to have any effect on the earth-body, but so it is; and through the magnetic force given off, from the children especially, the restoration to health of the patient is more quickly accomplished than would otherwise be the case.

October 5th, 1919.

CAN THE TWO LIVES BE LIVED SIMULTANEOUSLY?

Truly they can, as some have proved in their communications with our world ; but I did not agree with your preacher this morning, for I think that God does show Himself in the earthly life, and that, though there are sorrows and disappointments in it which do not occur in the spiritual world, yet these are a part of education only and therefore must be taken as a working out of God's plan for the world's progression. I cannot agree either that there is a sharp line of separation between the two worlds ; in fact, there is very little, the two intertwine and dovetail and sometimes you enter our world, as when you leave your body during sleep and escape to the higher state and the more spiritual activity. But there can be an intermingling of the spiritual with the material even in your daily employments, and you will find that if you allow yourself to realise this you will gain more and more of spirituality and of spiritual perception. Now the perfect life on earth is where the spirit dominates the earth-body, and all that a man does, thinks, or says, is but a reflection of his spirit, which is acting as the judge and critic of his lower nature. No doubt, if mankind believed in the reality of the next world as a proven fact, and that they would meet their dear ones there who had gone before, they would allow themselves to be guided by these to purer thoughts and nobler actions, but they do not, as a rule, really believe it. You may possibly think that if men are so dependent on our world for the development of their better nature, it is strange that the absolute knowledge of a future life should be confined to the

few and not be more general. Well, what a man works for he usually values more than what comes to him easily, and perhaps this is the reason why the knowledge has, with a few exceptions in the case of natural-born mediums, to be acquired at the cost of some pains and sacrifice. We do not absolutely know the past history of man's development, but of this I am sure, that in whatever planet or sphere he may be placed in the future, he will never be cut off from those he loves, but that "Love will still be Lord of all" in a higher sense than these words generally convey; for "Infinite patience, infinite love, infinite wisdom, stream from above," and no one can suffer disappointment where love reigns triumphant.

October 26th, 1919.

A CONTRASTED VIEW OF THE TWO WORLDS.

This seems to predicate that there are but two worlds, a view I am very far from holding, but as we have hitherto only dealt with your earth and *our* world of spirit we will not concern ourselves with any of the planets which may be inhabited. Now there are great contrasts between the world of earth and the world of Heaven, though they are not at first as sharply defined to those passing over as they are later on. Take, for instance, our treatment of the young. We teach, but it is love-teaching, and punishment does not enter into our methods; but the very atmosphere of love which surrounds the children makes them long for it if it is withheld, and so the least expression of displeasure is sufficient to curb their faults. But the first thing that strikes most when newly arrived here is the absolute contentment existing in this world, except in the lower spheres, naturally. No one wishes to play a part or do work for which he is unsuited: If he finds he can do better or more intellectual work than he has at first tried, he is free to do it, and all rejoice that he has progressed so far. But no man is despised because his life or opportunities on earth have not developed his intellectual faculties, but if it is seen that it has been circumstances which have kept him back on earth, he is helped forward by willing teachers, and prepared to take the place for which he is fitted by nature. You will want to know how the purely manual labourer of little education fares here. Well, there is a certain amount of non-intellectual work which he can do at first, until he becomes more used to the life and desires to be put to

different service, but there are always sufficient of these intellectually undeveloped spirits who, for a time at least, prefer to do something as near as possible resembling their old work, and so, although these pass on after a while to more intellectual labours, others replace them, and there is never any lack of willing helpers, and no one is ever called upon for unwilling service. In some respects it may seem a pity that the methods in Heaven are not adopted on earth, but if the earth is to be a real training-school for the higher spheres here, the desired effect could not in that way be obtained. If you think the matter out, you will find that the hardships and disappointments, nay, even the sorrows of earth, have fitted men for the higher life and made them more sympathetic, more generous in judgment, less harsh in criticism, and have softened and mellowed their natures, thus making it possible for them to attain the more Christ-like life which the dwellers in the higher spheres have to lead and find their joy in leading. To bind up broken hearts makes their own sadly-tried hearts whole again, and the "cup of cold water" given to another takes away their own thirst. All have to learn the pure and unselfish love for others in which alone they themselves can truly begin to live the higher life.

November 2nd, 1919.

### JOISTS IN THE WORLD'S FOUNDATIONS.

The world is spoken of as a school, and it is said that men are put there to learn, but we want to know more than just that fact. Could you ever conceive of a time when the world would cease to exist because its work was accomplished? No, never! The earth may have some time hence served its turn, and we can imagine various planets dying out or being re-absorbed, but we cannot think of a Heaven existing alone without the gradation of another sphere of existence. You may argue that there are different spheres in our world of Heaven, and that these would suffice. Yes, but the people who pass over to our side have already been tested in the earth-existence, but if all had to begin and work up from our lowest spheres there would be no reason for any to commence on a higher plane here than another, because none would have as yet been tried and either found wanting or the reverse. Now the world of earth is like a building; it rests on joists and these joists are represented by the human beings in the training places of earth. No more is required of anyone than his circumstances have made possible, and whether he be born as a savage or of cultured parents, the result is the same. Men have to fill their place in the structure of the world, and if they fill that place worthily, according to their lights, then they are part of the solid joists that will support the building. But those who ignore conscience and seek only their own benefit or pleasure are the weak joists, and should there come any trial of their strength they will give way and wreck the building. We may draw an analogy from

the present time : before and during the war the weak joists have been the militant party in all nations, and the avaricious and self-seeking, who have seen in the war and its miseries only a means of gaining additional wealth. The solid joists have been those who did their utmost to prevent war, but when it was once decided on, sacrificed all for the good of their country. Such men and women are the props and stays in their generation, and their example serves to put heart into others also. What is wanted is that there shall be no imperfect structures, but that all the materials shall be tested and trustworthy. If there could be a world on earth where every man considered his neighbour before himself ; a world without fraud, self-seeking, or avarice ; if all that a man possessed were spent in doing good, after the settlement of his own fair claims on his wealth, then there would be a solid building which not even an earthquake could destroy. But there does not seem any prospect of such perfection. The world—that is, the intellectual world—is divided into two sections : those who see the evils which exist, and wish to find a remedy ; and those who, as long as their own wants are satisfied, are content with the present conditions of existence.

November 16th, 1919.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

I think what is seen on earth now is the upheaval which follows the demolition of old landmarks and old forms of thought. The world has progressed immeasurably since the days when our ancestors used to own slaves and make their money in the slave-trade, and saw in this only what was natural and must be in the scheme of things, and were upheld by the Bible-saying : " Slaves, obey your masters ! " After this slavery was abolished a new sort arose, and the factory hands became slaves in fact if not in name. The emancipation of these has proceeded too slowly, and the slaves have rebelled. It matters little whether the oppression of a class has been wilful or thoughtless, the effect is the same, and in time the oppressed will always rise and refuse to live under the conditions to which they have formerly perforce submitted. This unrest amongst what are called the " working-classes " has made men think, and see evils to which they were previously blind ; this is the first thing necessary to bring about improvement, which will be partly through compulsion, but even more through an awakening of conscience on the part of employers of labour. Therefore this time of strife and struggle is not necessarily an evil, and there will be more sympathy amongst all classes, in the end, as the result of this clashing of wills and demands. There is always some cause for it where there is widespread dissatisfaction. I am far from urging that all the claims of the present day should be granted, but there will be an approaching on both sides to one mutual

point of view, and then there will be a cessation of the aggravation of dissension by means of strikes and violent measures. It will have done good that men and women of what are called "the upper classes" have turned their hands to the occupations of the manual workers during the war, and it will have brought them to a better knowledge of the hardships under which these workers have been living heretofore. When there is sympathy between class and class, the adjustment of grievances is not far off; and we from our side are hopeful, and believe that all will be well if only all men show patience and love. You may argue that there has not been much love shown by the working-classes to their employers. No, not as employers, but if during the war a soldier had had his old master as his officer, things would have been on a different footing, as between man and man, and the good feeling would in most cases have been mutual. If he is smarting under a sense of injury, a man cannot think kindly of the one he accuses of injuring him. Here, in our world, no person can harm another, and any injustice or wrong he has done on earth must be forgiven before he can ascend to the higher spheres. We look forward confidently, in years to come, to a better spirit prevailing in the earth-world. We look forward to masters who do not underpay or oppress their employees, and to workers who will be conscientious, and not require the pressure of poverty to urge them to do their duty. We look forward to a time when trades-unions will cease to exist, for every man will have a tribunal in his own conscience. Then perhaps we shall also find that what we, from our side, can teach, will make a vast difference in the outlook of the world, and we shall no longer hear men callously bolstering up rotten institutions by the careless pronouncement: "It will last my time!" but we shall see them setting to work to root out abuses and remedy

grievances for the sake of future generations as well as their own. And so, through trial and strife the world learns, it may be slowly and painfully, but it does learn, and the teaching on earth will be easier for those who come after you because you, in your generation, have suffered and agonised.

November 23rd, 1919.

### THE PERFECT LIFE.

When we first come over we are not attuned to take in the perfections of this life, and therefore our descriptions may not picture what would appeal to you as a perfect life, but when the spirit-body is accustomed to the vibrations in its new environment, and when a man has become aware of the possibilities of the new life, and has commenced to taste the delights of full and free service for others, he begins to realise that here is a life such as he never dreamt could be possible. To begin with, we have the most ideal surroundings; our trees, our grass, our flowers, our landscapes are all more lovely than anything the earth can boast of, and we have also much finer buildings than any seen on earth; for we have the master-minds of the architects of long-past generations to help us, and there is no jealousy one of another, but each contributes of his best to rear a thing of beauty. We may have our own houses as we like, and if we have not a sense of the beautiful we might make them ugly, but they are always taken in hand and modified by unseen guides so as to avoid a lack of harmony. But the public buildings are not built by the thought of any single man, and the best powers of the celebrated artists of past ages are brought to bear upon their construction. To make all around us beautiful is a part of the work we do if our talents lie in that direction, not only for our own sake but for that of others; and we want you to realise that when all selfishness is eliminated from a man's character he can take a purer pleasure in contributing to the happiness of others than in pursuing his own. The friendship here

is more profound than on earth, and bears with it a deeper love. There are no marriages, but when a congenially-natured man and woman do love each other, whether that love has commenced on earth or here, their whole natures are filled by a pure affection which makes their companionship all-satisfying and does not ask for passion, or a love such as that on earth which often disregards the best interests of its object. Here we would cheerfully give up the companionship of the one we love, were it for his or her benefit. And our young men and women who have grown up in the spirit-world, are something akin to the "angels" in which you used to believe as children. They have not wings, as you pictured, but they have spiritual wings, and their influence can reach far beyond the power of flight. They are the greatest help to all who come over young, and also to the world-weary and sad, who are so dispirited by earthly trials that at first they resist all ministrations and cannot be roused from despair. But these pure young souls come to them and, in time, break down the walls of reserve and indifference and let hope and love flow into the darkness of their sorrows. We thank God for these young helpers, and we thank God for the children; but more than all, we thank God for the pure and noble souls of the old men and women who have bravely faced the storms of earth and battled with the waves of temptation and disappointment, until at last they have landed unhurt on the shores of their heavenly home. Much as we love those whose earthly life was short, still more do we love those who have known grief and sorrow, disillusion and despair, and have remained steadfast through all. They are truly the heroes and heroines of Heaven, and all unite to do them honour and welcome them when at last they throw off the shackles of earth-life. I could write for ever on these blessed ones, but I must say good-bye now.

December 7th, 1919.

THE WARRING OF GOOD AND EVIL.

Many people say : " Why should there be evil in the world, and war have to be waged against it ? " Because no progress is possible without fighting for it, and because a world in which there were no contrasts would be absolutely colourless, and people would only develop like plants of the lowest order—keeping to one dead level, with no progression in beauty. It is hardly possible to picture such a world ; there must be opposites. After a long spell of happiness, when misfortune or sorrow at last overtakes a man, then for the first time he truly realises how blissful his life has hitherto been. In a world without contrasts there would be no opportunity for helping others, for though sorrows might come to them they would come in a different way, and be possibly less hard to bear than misfortune caused by the wrong-doing of others, or even by the sufferers' own falling away from the true standard of conduct. I sometimes try to think out what the earth would be like if there were no good or evil ; or rather, if all were fixed on one uniform plane of goodness, and there were no contrasted evil. The lives of men might be fairly happy in a negative sort of way, but there would be no moral progress, and if the future life of the spirit were still designed to be one of automatic advancement according to life previously lived in the earth-world, then, as all people must necessarily have led the same sort of life, when they were confronted with the conditions on this side, they would be quite unprepared for them, and would have to begin their education here instead of on earth. Happiness and

sorrow are not the same thing as good and evil, and though men are apt to think the terms synonymous, in very few cases is this perfectly true, and, in fact, many a heavy sorrow has turned out the greatest blessing, by changing a careless or selfish and, therefore, unhappy man or woman into one devoted to the welfare of others and for the first time tasting real peace of mind. These large questions are often discussed here, and it is a help to write of them in the old terms of earth, and to see how one's former point of view has changed ; but from whatever standpoint we look at them, I think we must all admit that if we believe the aim of the creation of the world to be the progression and final happiness of all its inhabitants, no better method could have been devised for securing this end than the present scheme. You may possibly think that the methods used are severe, and in some cases appear cruel. Where this seems to be so it is because men have not advanced as they might have done or were intended to do. Supposing that mankind had always tried to live up to the highest standard ; there would then be a very different state of things on earth to that seen in the present day. War would have ceased ages ago. There would still have been notable scientific inventions, but they would no longer have been warlike ones. There would have been better housing, better lighting, better machinery in factories—machinery which would not involve risk to the workers, but which would have demanded fewer working hours under more favourable conditions of labour. The use of all poisonous materials in industries would have been abandoned ; children would have been better cared for by their parents, and, except in the case of orphans, all the existing institutions would have ceased to be required. Many things which might have been a blessing to mankind have been turned into a curse by the uses they have been put to, and your

aeroplanes, your tanks, your long-distance guns, your poison gases, are all instances of men's powers of invention being utilised for wrong and demoralising purposes. We do not want to repress inventions : far from it ; but they must be for good ends and not for evil and destructive aims. Scientists should use their inventive faculties for peaceful and progressive purposes as actively and keenly as they have employed them for methods of destruction in time of war, and if this were the case, the rapid and real progression of mankind, both material and spiritual, would be assured, since material progression, if on the right lines, leaves the way open for spiritual advancement.

December 14th, 1919.

THE TRUMPET CALL TO ACTION.

The absolute war is now over, but the after-effects have still to be faced, and I want to try to show you how men could turn the present situation to the best advantage, were they only willing to do so. In the first place, above and under all that we deplore, the strikes, the unreasonable demands, and the selfishness shown by some bodies of people, there is a very real grievance struggling to make its inarticulate voice heard. I refer to the fact that the willing worker is often unable to obtain work. It was bad enough before the war, but it is infinitely worse now. Many people argue that there is employment for all, if men and women would only take what is offered. But this is not so. A man trained to one trade cannot turn his hand to another at a moment's notice, nor can a woman who has done rough work in a factory at once satisfactorily take her place in a household. No, judgment must be fair and impartial, and it must be admitted that the hardship is real, especially amongst clerks and typists and those who have not been manual labourers. It seems impossible to believe that England, and other nations also, who can organise in an incredibly short space of time all the complicated plans which a war involves, yet cannot think out any scheme by which this injustice can be prevented. The unemployment dole is worse than useless, for it is not charity but suitable work which is the need. We should have suggested that the entire working population be divided up into very small districts, each looked after by a Committee responsible for providing employment, either temporary or per-

manent, in its own area. Say, a clerk in an office was for the time being occupying the place of a man at the war, the latter would have been met when demobilised and his prospects of getting work made the subject of enquiry. If the former employer had reinstated him, then the temporary clerk would have had to be provided with another post. But the Committee should have had power to compel employers to take on their former employees, or if delay were unavoidable, to provide them with sufficient to prevent hardship during the interval. It would only have been by dividing the country up into very narrow areas that this scheme could have succeeded, or could succeed now, for each Committee would have to be acquainted with every man and woman in its own area, and be able in every case to adjudicate with perfect justice and impartiality. Something of the sort has been attempted, we know, but the districts are too large, and the men and women are insufficiently known. A demobilised man should be provided for at once, and not allowed to eat his heart out in vainly tramping the streets in search of work. That is one thing that needs doing. The next is the changing of public opinion as regards war. It should be laid down as an axiom that war is wrong, and that it is only a remnant of ancient savagery. In olden days any attempt to put down duelling would have been scouted; now, any proposal to revive the practice would meet with a similar fate. Then there should be more far-reaching efforts made to solve the housing problem, which threatens to become a source of moral danger and physical disease. Land should not be allowed to lie idle when so much is needed, and legislation could make the sale of such land compulsory. During the war there was, perhaps, too much commandeering—now there is too little. Compulsion and drastic measures are sometimes necessary for worthy objects.

*December 21st, 1919.*

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THE TRIUMPH OF ORDER.

At present, law and order seem at their lowest ebb in the world, for all that has been undertaken for the benefit of the classes who were down-trodden in the old times seems but to serve now to make them impatient of any restraint and eager for pleasure to the detriment of their work. But so it is when quicksilver is dropped : it all runs its separate way, and each little globule asserts its own individuality. Let a large globule, however, approach the others, and all will merge into the greater one and form one whole. That is what will happen in the present case. Now all classes are crying out for the freedom of each individual unit, but soon there will appear leaders in the different sections of the community who will draw all under one banner, for they will be animated by a new spirit, and will have a knowledge of the future that awaits all mankind, and be able to point out how men have cut themselves adrift from the path that God had appointed for them. It will not be a very speedy process, for new ideas take a long time to graft on to minds accustomed to a certain groove, and to the belief that they have to fight for their existence against all put in authority over them. But, all the same, slow and gradual changes are the most lasting, and steady improvement will set in when once the impetus has been given. We want, from this side, to train a few fearless and resolute men and women on earth, that they may be pioneers, and convince the working-classes—so-called—that their methods are wrong, and will not advance their cause either on earth or themselves in the hereafter. When men realise that

laws fulfil themselves automatically, they will see that to oppose these laws and try to break the chain of order is to hurl themselves against a rock. We are trying to get the earth-world into harmony with the eternal laws of spirit. You may think: "Why not leave the earth to work out its own salvation, seeing that so many are wilfully blind and deaf to the truth?" We could do so, of course, but then we should not feel our consciences clear, for we ourselves were faulty when on earth, and therefore we cannot justly condemn our fellow-men who still remain there. No, let us unite to do our best—you on your side, and we on ours—and pressure being thus brought to bear from both the seen and unseen worlds, great improvement will be the result in the future. Mankind will see that the present standard of conduct "does not pay" and that they must work in harmony with God's laws to make their lives a success either in the material or the spiritual world.

December 28th, 1919.

THE COMING RACE.

We, from the spirit-world, are striving after an ideal, and we want to show you what this is, and how far it is attainable. Man is not seconding us very much at present, but we see signs of an awakening which may lead to better things. Our ideal is the spiritualising of man's aims on earth, and making him fit for his transition here. What holds most men back is selfishness. They want to get all they can for themselves, and then possibly they may spare a little for others, but they do not consider caring for their neighbour as their first duty. That is the difference between the earth and our plane. We are concerned with the welfare of others first and, after that, of ourselves, except, naturally, when we first pass over. Then we have to educate ourselves to the conditions we find here, but when once we are initiated and have found our appropriate work to do, we lose the sense of self, and in losing it, find our true happiness. It is difficult for many to give up their earth-ideas, and therefore they come to us handicapped, but you are aware that finally all do progress, and therefore, could we but cut short the time of their probation, it would be an immense gain. This cannot be, unless the ideals of earth undergo a complete change, and we want this to begin before the death of the physical body, so that men shall realise what end they are working for and what awaits them in the future. Such knowledge would alter many a careless and unprofitable life into one of usefulness. If all who know the truth would speak out, then the knowledge would spread rapidly, but many keep

silence for fear of disapproval or ridicule, and so we do not get the help from your side which we have a right to expect. We would hold up three ideals for mankind on earth to work for : the elimination of selfish desires ; the substitution of altruistic love for their fellow-men ; and the knowledge of spiritual things, especially as they have a bearing on the life on earth. Were these the ideals on the material plane, it would not be long before it would become truly the forecourt of Heaven and pave the way to entrance there. With an awakened conscience guiding every man, these ideals would soon become realities ; and having a knowledge of the future, men's earth-lives must grow better, and the standard of conduct become a higher and more noble one. Especially where mediumship, or spiritual knowledge, has not been born with a man, but has had to be worked for, the character must necessarily be uplifted and raised by the new enlightenment. The three aims to be striven for then are knowledge, unselfishness, and altruism ; given these three, and there will not be a great deal left to wish for, and the world would at last be roused out of its old lethargy.

January 4th, 1920.

THE SPREAD OF REASON.

I think I should define "reason" as moderation or reasonableness of judgment, or the power of estimating things at their true worth, without being led astray by outward appearances or surface-values. You may know a man, for example, who at first makes a very good impression by his manner of speech and appearance, and those who see only the surface do not recognise that he is playing a part and that underneath the fair outside lie unscrupulousness and shallowness of character. If men cultivate reason they do not form a judgment at once, but await a longer acquaintanceship. How can the present and immediate future be truly made "an age of reason"? First by education and the cultivation of the perceptive reasoning faculties in every child, and potentially in every man and woman; for if the individual citizens of a nation have reasonableness and judgment they will make their country a dependable and trustworthy one. If all men reasoned rightly, there could never be the mistaken notion that injustices and tyranny inflicted on other nations could ever build up a solid foundation for prosperity. Reason must play a large part in the future, but reason alone will not do all; love must join hands with it. Take many of the disputes now going on as to wages and hours of the so-called working-classes; there is very little reason brought to bear either by employers of labour or employees. The former seem to think that by denying a claim they make it impossible; the latter appear to believe that

they have only to assert their demands in a sufficiently domineering manner to have them granted. Both are wrong. There is always a point where junction is possible, and if reason stepped in, and the employers were willing to own that in the past there had been hardships which needed remedying ; and if the workmen agreed that claims pushed too far would cause suffering through diminished trade, then there would be a meeting-point for agreement, and probably each side would discuss possibilities in a spirit of much greater harmony than prevails at present, where a victory for either party is often the cause of still more bitter feeling than before. Reason must also be brought to bear on the vexed question of women's work taking the place of men's labour. A woman who has to earn her own living should have the opportunity of doing the work for which she is best fitted ; but when there is no necessity for earning a living-wage then her work should be voluntary and honorary, and this should be the case with men also, and no man with an income sufficient for his wants should take a paid post which another man may badly need. But laws cannot be made to regulate all these points, and so it is that education must be relied on, and reasonableness and moderation be firmly established in the minds of the population. At present every man's hand seems against every other, if of different classes of society, and this should not be. Everyone is needed in the world for the performance of his own particular task, and whatever the work may be, it should be faithfully and well performed. Here we have varieties of work, and all can choose what they like best and are best fitted for. But then there is no jealousy of others, and no self-seeking for advancement ; spiritual progression brings advancement automatically and without this it will never come. If we are free from

disputes and jealousies in the spirit-world, why cannot it be the same in earth-life? The root of all the evil is money and the need for it, but, as the earth is at present constituted, it is a necessity of life and yet keeps back the spiritual growth. Men's natures must be softened and changed until money plays a lesser part in their lives, and so we say again: "Educate, educate, educate!"



January 11th, 1920.

THE TREND OF EVOLUTION.

In all animals there is the tendency to adapt themselves to the circumstances in which they have to live, and the analogy may be applied to the human race also. Evolution does not necessarily mean progression, but may mean deterioration in all that is not purely physical; and so it is that the environment in which mankind has to live should be such as will call for uplifting of the spiritual nature. The tendency of men is to rise to the level of their surroundings, and therefore all that makes for beauty and refinement should be brought into the homes of the people. Evolution is a slow process in the upward direction, but unfortunately changes can come quickly in a downward one, and a family compelled to go from a good neighbourhood to a slum-dwelling may very soon fall to a lower level in order to keep on good terms with their neighbours. The war has brought mankind to a parting of the ways, and it has now to be settled which way the world shall go; whether towards selfish luxury, extravagance, and pleasure-seeking, as in ancient Rome, and perish as Rome did, or whether it shall hold aloft the banner of progress, humanity, love and fellow-feeling amongst mankind, and so bring down Heaven to earth. At present all is chaos. Men see there is something grievously wrong, but do not know how to set it right and, unless some great apostle arises, things may be allowed to drift, and worse evils follow. It does not seem right, and it is not right, that hoards of wealth should be accumulated while undeserved poverty exists; and yet a premium must not

be put on idleness, and the steady, industrious man be mulcted of what he has earned by his labour to keep one who will not work. What is needed is the improvement in ideals and conscience of each man and woman on earth, and then they would find means to remedy the evils which now exist so largely.

February 15th, 1920.

#### THE RESULTS OF EFFORT, CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS.

Conscious effort means striving towards a fixed goal ; but the great danger in life is drifting aimlessly. If a goal has been set, unconscious effort may sometimes bring a man back and again set him towards his first aim, but the usual result of drifting is to let a man's ideals sink lower and lower as he floats on the tide of life, for he is not consciously making for any port, and most probably will perish on unseen rocks on the shore. Parents of children should see that they have an ideal to strive for from early youth. If you ask a boy what he wishes to be when he grows up, he will generally have his answer ready : " Oh, a doctor," or " an author," and so on, but hardly ever will he reply : " I would like to help my fellow-men." No, that is the ideal of manhood sometimes, but hardly ever of youth. But it might be, if parents directed their children's minds into the right channel ; yet we see from our world how all the aims of earth are for material welfare, not for spiritual improvement. Well, to return to our main subject. Is it possible for the right end to be attained by unconscious instead of conscious effort ?

Yes, where good principles and desires have been implanted early by wise teachers, but too often the ideas of the world overrule this teaching and substitute selfish aims instead. Yet, since nothing is ever really lost that was once learnt, deep down in the man's soul are the aspirations taught him in his youth, and from time to time these come to the surface and give rise to acts of generosity or kindness contrary to his usual impulses; but unless these deeds are consciously planned they become fewer and fewer as time goes on, and are finally crowded out by selfish desires and actions. If I had the care of boys, knowing how it was with myself and my brothers, I would put a high ideal before them in early life and help them to attain it. If the career of a physician were chosen, I would show the boy how noble such a profession could be made, and warn him also of the pitfalls which may lie in wait for him, and by which he may kill his own soul. The same thing would apply to all professions and even trades. Life's appointed task may be done either well or badly, and scatter good in its train, or leave a trail of evil behind it. Which shall it be? Each one in earth-life has it in his own power to decide, and parents have the lives and future destinies of their children in their hands to a certain extent. It is a solemn thought and should make men feel the weight of their responsibilities on earth; yet how few realise them, and how many are content to live for lower aims in life, to the neglect of the higher and nobler ones of the spirit! I can speak from experience, and I would say to all: "Save your soul while it is young and can be readily moulded!"

March 7th, 1920.

THE TREND OF THE AGE.

There are good and bad factors in this age in which you live. I say you, because here we are not dependent on the times we live in, since the conditions remain the same in the various spheres from age to age; and we only change our surroundings by going to a different sphere. This is a great safeguard in keeping up our standard of conduct, because, should that deteriorate, we should have to sink back into a lower plane. But how different it is on earth! You are at the mercy of factions, of the restless, the agitators, the unscrupulous; all these can mar the lives of their fellow-men and often render it almost impossible for them to improve, because of the hindrances put in their way by the low standard of morality which prevails around them. But in spite of drawbacks and everything that makes life difficult for those who have higher ideals than the majority, I still believe that the trend of the world is towards good. We have seen that man could rise to almost inconceivable heights during the war; and although the tide has turned, and people are for the most part ready to again rush into luxury and extravagance, we, from here, do see signs of improvement in many ways. The continuity of life, and the possibility of communion between the two worlds, are now being considered as a science, and by thoughtful people are discussed as such. It is, perhaps, the most ancient branch of science there is, but the popular belief is that it is a new one, and so it meets at first with the disbelief which every new discovery has to fight against. Then my next point is that there is more

true philanthropy than formerly, though we should like to see, in time, institutions of many kinds abolished and personal service substituted, and we want each citizen to take upon himself the care of someone who, through misfortune or ill-health, needs assistance and sympathy, and we think this feeling of personal duty is growing. People on earth have been too apt to judge others by what they are, and not take the time or trouble to investigate the causes which have made them fail in life. Ill-health makes a man apparently indolent; constant rebuffs make a sensitive person morose; and that man is never seen as nature made him. But from here he is differently judged, and the failures of earth are often the successes in the spirit-world. It is very touching to see the amazement of one of these "failures" when he goes at once to a fairly high sphere, and finds that he can not only equal others there, but after a time can even become a leader in any work for which he may be specially fitted. On earth the trades unions press out a workman's individuality, and make him a machine; but in years to come the unions will cease to exist, since they will be recognised as cumbrous, and an obstruction to individual progress. We look forward with confidence to the influence of women in the work of the world; and they will endeavour to mother and help all who are now suffering, by obtaining better laws, better conditions, and they will give love and sympathy, not bounded by the needs of earth, but stretching out to the world to come and the life eternal.

March 14th, 1920.

THE EGOISM OF A BELIEF.

In speaking of creeds, I do not want to belittle any belief which is based upon a broad moral standard, but only those which are narrow and condemnatory of others. You cannot blame a man for holding to the religion in which he was brought up, but only when he judges others for not being of the same faith as himself. To have a narrow creed a man must be an egoist, because he tacitly says: "I hold the only right belief," and thinks that his sect alone will be saved, and all others eternally perish. It must take the most selfish of men to believe such a doctrine and yet be happy in it. If the tenets to which many people subscribe were truly realised, the world would be a most unhappy place; yet people think they believe in eternal punishment, and yet can see a friend die and hardly give a thought to his ultimate fate, but only regret the personal loss. There are other egoists in religion who have been "converted" to a new faith, and who are as stiff-necked and arrogant in this as they were formerly in their old belief. A really religious man cannot be an egoist; for he cannot and does not believe that because he had a father and mother who taught him that creeds do not count with God, but only the life a man has led on earth, therefore he is singled out for salvation, and others who did not have his advantages are condemned. He pities those who embrace a narrow creed without seeking a broader one, and is only anxious to bring them to a wider point of view. There is a sort of vested interest in creeds which it is hard to break through. A church

has been built by people professing a certain form of belief: that church is henceforth dedicated as the temple of that form of dogma, and of no other. Some of the sects are growing broader in their views, but even now there are few churches that would admit a preacher from another denomination into their pulpits. This is rank egoism, and all sections of religion should unite in one broad basis of belief, and one wish to do the best they can for humanity, and future generations; then alone will there be the spreading abroad of real religion. People are now keen to learn facts about the future life: they are seeking the true bread of life and will no longer be put off with stones; yet from how few pulpits do they get anything but vague generalities! Those ministers who know and will spread the truth are indeed the salt of the earth, and pioneers of freedom of thought. This is growing, and will increase and mould men's lives in a way that the dead creeds of past generations have been unable to accomplish. **May that time come speedily!**

March 21st, 1920.

HOW WE APPROACH PERFECTION.

Not that we do approach perfection until we have risen much higher in the spirit-world than I am at present ; still I feel that progress is steady, if slow, and that in the end all that is now imperfect will be made perfect, as the whole plan of creation is towards something higher and better. You may argue that this is not true as regards inanimate nature, and that trees, plants, and food supplies would not increase in quantity or size and quality without man's ingenuity coming to their aid. That may be so, but this fertility of resource in man is called forth by the struggle for existence, for which man alone amongst animal-nature can find remedies. Yet how has mankind lagged behind in this most necessary branch of science ! If he had only devoted as much thought to it as to the invention of instruments and methods of destruction in warfare, men would be richer, healthier, and more contented than at present. There has been advancement during past generations, certainly, but not as much as there should have been. There is less open cruelty, for instance, but more torture of animals under the guise of science ; there is more extended education, but not of the most needed kind, in my opinion ; it is said that the so-called working-classes are awakening to a desire for better housing, better opportunities, and a higher standard of life. But is that standard really a higher one ? Does it not generally amount to a desire for more amusement, and for pleasures which, although not absolutely harmful, do not raise the moral ideal or teach a higher standard of responsibility as true citizens, and helpers of their

fellow-men? Yet, with it all, I still say that mankind is tending towards perfection. What men do not choose to learn on earth, they will have to learn in the ante-chambers of Heaven, but all will finally pass their examinations, and even those who now seem the most vicious and depraved will have time, in the great eternity, to amend their ways and set forward on the right path; for we cannot and dare not say that any are too degraded for final redemption, bought through remorse and suffering. Finally, to see the onward march of progress we must look back not centuries, but thousands of years, which to eternity are but a moment.

March 28th, 1920.

THE END OF A TANGLED SKEIN.

I want to show you that all the trials through which the world is now passing, can and will, in God's hands, lead to a happier world and a happier people than has been hitherto the case. But to this end all must unite in one grand policy and aim : the putting down of war, the doing away with oppression, greed, and covetousness, and the bringing all men to a knowledge of the future life and its conditions. Men must be taught that the only true path to happiness is to put all their energies into their appointed tasks, and to bring more light into the corner of the world in which their lives are cast. If all did their duty, what a different earth they might make of it ! All that men now strive for as benefit to themselves in a material sense is often only harmful to their own progression. You may think the skein is too tangled ever to be straightened, but we do not see it so. Little by little, knot by knot, it will be parted and pulled asunder till the long smooth thread lies undone, which can now be used with safety and profit. And so I say to you, do not despair, but help where you can to free others from the web in which they have entangled themselves. Selfishness is men's worst enemy. That overcome, there will be faults remaining, no doubt, but none so hard to eradicate. The more you can get mankind to realise that his acts, words, and even thoughts, have a powerful effect upon his future life in the new world, the sooner he will abandon his trivial aims and selfish pleasures in the world of earth. Why is it that people are usually afraid to face facts, and would rather stumble on blindly

towards a world of which they know nothing—nay, of the very existence of which they are uncertain—rather than gain the knowledge which it lies with themselves to acquire, and which would make of their earth-life a thing of beauty and profit? Why is man so blind? Because he grasps at what appears present good, casting away the real gold of life for dust and ashes. No one need be in ignorance unless he chooses, and the man who throws aside the opportunity of learning and does not profit by it, is worse than foolish—he is mad!—and not until he rises to a sense of his responsibility for what he makes of his own life can he be called sane.

July 25th, 1920.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF CONTENTMENT ON THE SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

I have been with you on your holiday, and, studying character as well, I have been more and more impressed by the different natures to be met with in the world. There is the ultra-spiritual person, who thinks material things matter so little that he (or she) is content with discomfort because it touches only the bodily needs; this is not a right attitude of mind, for there is likely to be a neglect of the happiness of others if the needs of earth are looked upon as entirely unworthy of consideration. Then there is the man bound to earth, desiring nothing better than rich food, and comforts for the body. This latter class can be met with everywhere, and one naturally shuns further contemplation. There are other types too numerous to mention; those

who look on the bright side of everything even under depressing circumstances, and others who find clouds even amidst the sunshine ; also the truly spiritual who live on the earth, but are not of the earth, and who never despise or neglect the duties of life even for those higher ones which have become to them a necessity of their existence. It requires someone who is amongst the people and doing the same daily tasks, to make them realise that it is not necessary to be an ascetic to be spiritual, and that earthly duties need not suffer from a knowledge of the future life, but rather they will be better and more conscientiously performed owing to the contentment produced by the certain knowledge of the future. The perfect life lived by Christ on earth could convert the multitudes ; His psychic powers were only shown when some helpful deed could be done, or some doubting soul convinced. Possibly out of a hundred people not more than two or three are living a life which brings into harmony the seen and unseen, the material and the spiritual, and yet that is what is needed to regenerate mankind. As long as the vast majority live for the world's pleasures and successes only, so long will the knowledge which alone can bring perfect happiness be ignored, and life on earth be frittered away on objects which, if not harmful in their right proportion and in moderation, become very harmful if they are made the end and aim of life. I should like to show such people the future they are preparing for themselves. As an acrobat can make his limbs supple by commencing his feats early in childhood, so men can make their entry easy into the upper spheres of the next life by learning their lessons in the childhood represented by their earth-life. I wish we could influence all mankind to this end, but they dally and delay, and think that in old age they will have time to make up for the misdeeds of youth. They never know when the reaper will

come and cut them down, and again the pitiful cry will be heard in our world : " Oh, if we had but known ! " You on earth can help to lighten this darkness, and if you can only save one human being from despair and misery, it is work well worth the doing. It is a work in which very few of those who should be the pioneers take a part, for the churches do not open their doors willingly to welcome those who know and preach the truth, and thus empty phrases and vain repetitions are all that most have to offer any despairing soul who comes to them in sorrow and bereavement. Not so can the contentment of spiritual health be given.

September 11th, 1921.

THE TREND OF MODERN THOUGHT.

You are apt to be discouraged by what you see in looking upon the doings on earth. We, too, look upon the earth-plane, and even from our differing standpoint we perceive that the lessons of the late terrible war seem to have left the majority of the inhabitants of earth unchanged. Those who are now trying to benefit their fellow-men were before the war giving time and labour for the same ends. But vast numbers still continue to fight and scramble to gain wealth or to obtain fame or notoriety of some sort. And yet, so contradictory is human nature, the very men who are amassing money through the poverty and misery of others, will have their sympathies deeply stirred by any suffering, and will give largely to relieve it if caused by a great disaster, such as a colliery accident, or the present starvation in Russia. It seems as if they could not see what lies before them, but must have a perspective of *distance* before they can take in the full measure of the evil. What avails it to contribute to any charitable fund, if to do so a man dismisses his own workmen and so reduces them to the same conditions as those he seeks to help? This would appear a very serious indictment to bring against men who are thought of as philanthropists, and who really are so according to their *lights*. I am not *judging* them, for I honestly believe they do not realise where their theories and actions are at variance. They possibly wish to do good, but fail to see that money given in charity, if gained by means which have pressed hardly on others, is not beneficial but harmful. Wealth gained by sweating,

or similar unjust means, can never prosper either the giver or, in the long run, the participators. These and kindred evils can only be remedied by every man's conscience being cultivated to its utmost point of sensibility ; and although his power of giving help might be lessened, yet the money he could spare would be earned by his own labour, and not be riches forcibly wrested from others. One sin of omission at the present time is that there is so little done for those who have still to live out their lives on earth, and yet have been maimed and wrecked in the war. I admit that many are giving time, money, and personal service to make the fate of these men more bearable, but others shut their eyes to all these miseries and horrors and say : " The war is over now—I did my bit then," and so lull their consciences into inactivity while themselves enjoying to the full all the pleasures of life. I would have everyone think what they owe to these crippled or physically injured men, whose sufferings have saved the lives of those who now pass them by carelessly. I would have the subject brought up in your schools, and I would also teach the children not only their duty to their neighbour, but to their neighbour's neighbour, and even to their former enemies in the war. Have *you*, as a nation, no cruelties to bemoan? Possibly not such grievous ones as they, but many things were done in hot blood which no man now cares to look back upon. Can we then hope that the trend of modern thought is towards the righting of the world's wrongs? In spite of all that I have said I believe that it is. The sores are no longer covered up and hidden, but are open to the public gaze. If the nation slips back into luxury, extravagance, and individual selfishness, it will need an even more drastic awakening than the late war to make a thinking and *acting* people of its inhabitants. But now that magazines and newspapers throw open their

pages for the discussion of almost every subject, though it may take a long time to educate the *majority*, yet an educated *minority* has marvellous power, and it is to that minority, already awake and active, that we on our side look in the future for the ennobling of the aims and aspirations of the race. It matters little whether a man *believes* in evolution or not, but if he *acts* evolution, and endeavours to help others to see the light after he has himself emerged from the darkness, he will have done his part in the earth-world, and be ready for his translation to the higher spheres of activity.

September 20th, 1921.

THE MEANS FOR PROGRESS.

It is necessary and useful to pause sometimes and consider whether all that is possible is being done for the advancement of mankind, and probably the answer would be in the negative; for, without deliberately shutting their eyes to existing evils, men do not fully realise what is being left *undone*, and I would therefore ask each one whether he or she is sufficiently alive to the great importance of this question. Schools do their utmost to place the feet of their scholars in the right path, but often outside influences, whether in the home, or through bad companions, work against their teaching. To counteract such conditions requires self-sacrifice, time, and patience, but surely it is worth it all if only each person could prevent even one boy or girl drifting downwards. In clubs and all associations for assisting the younger generation there must be the personal element of friendship and goodwill, and I think that people are at last beginning to realise the necessity for love in their service of redemption. One means which makes for progress is the cultivation of the sense of beauty—at present the trend is in the opposite direction, and children are given ugly toys, and often are led to prefer them to things beautiful. If this continues, the next generation will lose appreciation for the beauties of nature and scenery, and a paved street will appeal more to them than a noble mountain, and the smoke-obscured sky over a city be preferred to the clear blue vault of heaven. Men drift on and on, and before they realise it a new era has set in, which in this case threatens to be the reign of ugliness and material

utility, usurping the place of beauty and a love of the sublime. It has not been sufficiently taken into consideration that beauty is educative. You may argue that often people and races who live surrounded by magnificent scenery do not appreciate it. That is true, but only where they have dwelt amongst it all their lives, and have had no opportunity of contrasting it with less beautiful areas, and it does not, therefore, strike them as abnormal. In the same way, people dwelling amidst ugliness may not recognise it as such till they have the means of forming a judgment by contrast. We want to bring light and understanding to all such men and women, and teach them to aspire to a higher ideal. If a sense of beauty and a love for it could be instilled into every child born into the world, I truly believe that sin would die out, for all sin must seem ugly and repulsive to those who love beauty. Now I have not done much more than outline these ideas, but though they surge up in my mind, they are difficult to convey to you in words, and I fear I give you but a partial glimpse of the changes which we, from our side, see to be necessary on earth.

September 25th, 1921.

### LIBERTY.

“ Liberty ” means different things to different people and different races. Liberty to follow every crude impulse is unfortunately the aim of some, while others only ask for liberty of action for helpful work. A free country does not mean a nation which has no laws, but one where the laws are the outcome of the desires of the *best* of its population, and where it therefore follows that obedience to such laws is easy. But, on the other hand, liberty in a nation may only lead to wrongdoing if there is no unity of purpose amongst its inhabitants, for the unrestricted right to do evil is but binding men’s souls in fetters which can hardly be struck off during earth-life. It should be the aim of every nation to get such a consensus of public opinion for right and just laws that only those shall be passed which are for the highest good of the country. In the case of individuals there is more likelihood of divergence of opinion as to the nature of true liberty. This has been very noticeable since the late war, when the classes who before would have thought themselves well off with far less freedom than they now enjoy, still clamour for more and more, which, if granted too quickly, would probably not prove beneficial, since, before men are fit to be emancipated from the guidance of those more far-seeing and experienced than themselves, they must learn to give way when necessary for the common good. In great questions they require a leader who has studied the particular subject and can see both sides of it and all round it. *Pioneers* may need to judge only from their own view-point, but a true *leader* is one who gives due consideration to all points of a subject before coming to a decision. A pioneer dominates by force of will-power ;

a leader should convert by logic and argument, thus appealing to the imagination. If the domineering element in mankind could be eliminated, and the logical faculties cultivated, great causes would be more easily won ; but at present most of the leaders of the populace become so merely by the dominance of their own personality. These preach the doctrine of liberty of speech for all. This is quite legitimate if moderation is shown in presenting their side of a question, but there should always be another speaker to elucidate the contrary views, for no man could present both sides of a question with equal force and eloquence, and without his personal belief colouring his utterance. Instead of the best intellects leading the vanguard of progress it is now very often the agitator who, shouting the loudest, thus gains the ear of the uninstructed public and obtains consent to mischievous and ill-considered measures. If the *thinkers* of a nation ruled it, there could be no wars, since war is illogical in any *free* nation : no man being a really free agent who is, or may be, practically compelled to fight when a government declares for war. Conscription only came in during the last half of the late war, but, from the very commencement, public opinion forced many a man to kill his fellow-creatures when his very soul rebelled against it. There can only be real freedom when nations, classes, and individuals are intellectually and morally persuaded that no man can act simply according to his own wishes, but that knowledge, experience, and conscientiousness must lead, and that these qualities *must* be embodied in the rulers of the land. When the people *willingly* follow this guidance, then alone can there be perfect liberty, because there would then be no clashing between the wills of the rulers and the ruled and no rebellion against such authority and legislation as would be for the true benefit of the state and its population.

October 9th, 1921.

PLEDGES.

The question at issue is the desirability or the reverse of a man giving a binding promise as to his actions or opinions. I think it is only well to do so in the case of those whose characters lack firmness and stability ; but where there is decision and fixity of purpose it is best to allow each case to be settled on its own merits. In religion, for example, one cannot and should not pledge oneself that one's present opinions will not change. If, in the course of time, they do not alter in some respect, it would argue mental slackness, or else a want of capacity to grasp new shades of thought. Most pledges therefore are bad for the character, as either they may be broken, or, if kept, it is possibly at the risk of some greater evil. The only ones that are good in themselves are those promises which a man makes to *himself*, and these should be held absolutely binding. Say, he has a particular fault and registers a mental vow that he will overcome it ; not that he will try to do so, but that he *will* do so. Then there is the highest incentive to be always on his guard in order to keep his own self-respect. Possibly the fault cannot be at once overcome, but such a pledge should never be for an impossible, immediate reform, but that in time the evil tendency shall be conquered. Such pledges are unknown to others, and everyone must be his own judge and jury, and persevere until his task is accomplished. Pledges carelessly given are often only a source of stumbling into paths of prevarication and falsehood. The "bit-of-paper" policy does not only apply to nations but can

be met with every day in business, in commerce, and in private life also. There should be absolute truthfulness in society, in associations of all sorts, and above all between nations. Better a frank and thoughtful "No" than a hasty and ill-considered "Yes." Candour in words, deeds and thoughts can alone make of your world a better place.

October 20th, 1921.

### HEARTS.

You may think this a curious subject, but I want to show you that on the quality of the hearts of its people depends the goodness or reverse of the world. If all hearts were kind and loving it would not be necessary to find remedies for what are now called "social evils," for a kind heart is of more value than mere *intellect*, which often leads astray and makes a man arrogant in his knowledge, and inconsiderate for the feelings of others. You may argue that this depends solely on individual temperament, and that no two men are alike in their natures. That is so; but kindness can be cultivated as well as the intellectual powers. We, on this side, think far more of the former than the latter qualities; yet both are valued here; but should it be a question of which gifts a man shall choose for himself, let him select the qualities of the heart, not the intellect alone. What I am trying to lead up to is this: that the present evils in the world are brought about by want of love and sympathy for others. The frauds and deceits which prevail in some trades could not be practised if, to use an earth-expression, the heart were in the right place. No amount of subsequent charity can counterbalance injustices formerly done to others, and we would like all men to ask themselves how far in their daily work, be it trade, profession, or manual labour, they are guided by the dictates of a tender and sympathetic heart. The barrister who defends an unjust cause may plunge the opponents into misery and despair if he, by his eloquence, wins his client's case. The tradesman who sells adulterated or inferior pro-

visions may ruin the health of many people, as may scamped and unconscientious work on the part of a builder or his workmen. Yet a kind heart often leads to failure of success from a worldly point of view, and the employer who keeps on sickly employees through compassion will probably be a poorer man than he who discharges a workman when his health fails, even should he voluntarily grant the latter a small pension. Too often the leading question in the management of a trade or business is not "How should I treat my brother-man?" but "How can I make him most useful to me?" The earth-world is in a transition state, and large numbers of people are considering these things from a new standpoint, but the majority still holds to the one idea: that so it ever has been and ever *will* be. Let everyone set his own house in order, and ask himself how far he personally is acting in the way conscience prescribes as true, right, and just, man to man. It is better to promote justice and give happiness in the first instance, than, having *caused* misery, to give alms to alleviate it. There will never be a perfect world, or even a better one, until mankind learns that right-doing, sympathy, and fellow-feeling alone can cope with the existing evils which are now treated as individual cases, instead of being dealt with by going to the root of the matter and discovering the *cause* of these evils, and thus finding means to prevent them. The teachings of Christ have become obsolete, yet their spirit still survives in some conscientious souls, and with a little encouragement from them to those who, from material motives, still hesitate and cling to the old traditions, there could easily be a revival of Christ's message on earth, which would meet with a response from many who are dissatisfied with the world as it is, and are keenly anxious for an improvement in its conditions.

November 6th, 1921.

ASPECTS OF PEACE.

Those who contend that modern science is becoming, in *some* of its forms at least, a danger to the true progression of the world, have right on their side, for this progress does not depend on new inventions and discoveries, unless these make for moral as well as material advancement. Too often scientific discoveries retard the spiritual progress of nations, as in the case of poison gases and other modern methods of warfare. Mankind has to decide whether it will produce a race of scientists who, though they may possibly discover many of the mysteries of life, many of the as yet hidden laws of nature, yet can never be true leaders, because their talents are not utilised for the right ends. You may not see what all this has to do with "peace," but I think that the fact that science tends to foster war is now being realised, and it is being seen that the energies of scientists are at present too often devoted to inventions of a destructive nature, and that these are the mainsprings on which future wars depend. I am far from meaning to condemn *all* science, but only such as can be used for wrong purposes. Should a new poison-gas be discovered by another country at war with us, it would be right that an antidote should be found to counteract it, but not that an even more diabolical gas should be brought into use against the offenders. If once science could be yoked up with true religion and love for mankind, it would begin to do splendid service, but these inhuman inventions force the thought of "the next war" on people's minds, and harm is done by the mere suggestion of such a possibility. Yet the

"aspects of peace" look more promising to us than they may do to you, for before any great change can come to the nation, the falsity and iniquity of the present point of view must be brought home, and this can at present only be done by appealing to the selfish side of men's natures, and showing them what another war would mean in bloodshed, misery, and loss of life. Some, indeed, look at things from a higher standpoint: that of right and wrong in the abstract; but these are in a minority, and the ordinary man or woman requires to be persuaded that it would be for his or her own benefit that wars should cease. But if the scientist continues to put forth his murderous inventions, in time the public will be alarmed at the Frankenstein they have evoked, and will use united effort to render the monster innocuous. From our side we are trying to bring pressure to bear to forward this work; but we rely even more upon the influence of those still in the material body, who from personal knowledge and past suffering have realised to what the selfishness of the age is tending, and see that it will bring about its own automatic punishment if allowed to go on unchecked. Sermons from your pulpits would be productive of good results if your ministers were courageous enough for straightforward speaking. Those who stand forth in this way are the pioneers of truth, and should be cherished, guarded, and helped in their noble work by both worlds.

December 4th, 1921.

THE CLAIMS OF EARTH UPON THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

It is a general idea that when a man leaves the earth-plane for a more spiritual one, all links with the past are broken, and his only concern is with his own happiness and that of others who, like himself, have left the body. This is a mistake, for until a spirit reaches the celestial plane he is quite as much interested in the affairs of earth as in those of the sphere which he now inhabits, and he, from his present larger outlook, now realises the mistakes he made while in his material body, and is able to warn others of the pitfalls which lie in their earthly course. If one man, during war, falls a victim to an ambush, his death may save the lives of those who are following him; and in the same way those who have passed the veil can warn those still on earth of dangers which they have not as yet recognised as such. The rich man is envied and fêted, and called "a lucky fellow," but is he really so? It all depends upon how his wealth has been gained. He, who, by study or industry, wins a high place in literature, art, or business, is successful in the true sense of the word; but it is different with the man who inherits a fortune not earned by himself; for then there is the temptation to lead a life of idleness and dissipation. We see so many of these lapses during our work of helping those still on earth, and no such man could be truthfully called "successful." But the term is truly applicable to one whose life has even been passed in poverty and care; for if he has done good deeds and proved himself a true friend to those in distress, he has made the best use of his life, and *we*, from our higher plane, say it has been

crowned with success. To be really prepared for entrance into the spirit-world, several virtues must be cultivated during earth-life. The greatest of these is love; yet, while on earth, even this love may have an element of selfishness in it, which must be eradicated. All sin is antagonistic to love. Selfishness, above all, is incompatible with it, as are all deeds and actions inimical to others, under which head betting and gambling would certainly be placed. Intemperance, too, besides being fatal to a man's own character, may lure others to the same sin, while slander, malice, and jealousy are all in deadly opposition to the love which thinks no evil. Now, a spirit, coming over to our side, is subject to this law of love, and so it is that, while there are sin and sorrow in the world, he, from his happier estate, *must* give his pity and help to the earth-inhabitants. The two worlds are inextricably bound together, and there is no reason to fear that the tie between them will ever be broken.

December 19th, 1921.

CONTRASTS.

You may wonder why I take this subject, but it is a very suitable one as a point to start from ; for what would the world be like without contrasts? Would the daylight be so keenly appreciated if there were no darkness? Not on earth, most certainly, although with us, as you know, the twilight resting-time is a very modified form of your night. Contrasts are necessary in the material world, and even in the variations of character in different people there is benefit. I do not mean that there should be wickedness to create a foil to goodness, but there must be diversity of gifts to make up the variety necessary for development in society, and had there never been any bad qualities in man, possibly his good traits would not have been appreciated as they are now, for the contrast has been seen and noted, and has done its work as an object-lesson. Everywhere there is variety : in colour, in sound, in form and shape of natural objects, and, without these changes, how dull and tame the world would appear ! The beauty of a forest lies in the diversity of the trees that form it. The notes of the birds, if all alike, would not sound so harmonious, and even an occasional discord—as in the shrill cry of a peewit, heard at intervals—does but add charm to nature's orchestra. Sickness and health are contrasts, and possibly he who has never suffered can hardly appreciate the latter to the full. But such lessons should no longer be necessary, and now man's aim should be to do away with the evil which still exists in the world, while not interfering with those variations which are natural and beneficial—

as in plant-life and in the animal kingdom. In the latter, men can seldom coerce nature with advantage, and the racehorse, though bred for speed and swiftness, will hardly equal the pace and beauty of a wild horse in its native surroundings. There is a danger, too, of reducing to one dead level of uniformity all who are crowded together in schools, reformatories, prisons, or any kind of institutions. There should be divergence of characteristics, and the dull, slow, persevering plodder is often more useful than the man of quicker perceptions: for the plodder may perceive details which the quicker brain has overlooked. But *more* uniformity is needed in business-life, where one high standard of conduct should be rigidly adhered to by everyone, which should include truthfulness and also consideration for others; but through all a man must still preserve his own individuality. Everyone's ambition should be to make of the world a better place, though it is not necessary that identical means should be employed in every case to bring this about. I would have even less uniformity in school teaching than at present; so that the special gifts of each child should be cultivated to the full. The three things most needed on earth now are spirituality, common sense, and more brotherly love for all mankind—given these, the world's record would not go far amiss.

January 15th, 1922.

PREVENTABLE SUFFERING.

I mean by this the pain which comes from the sowing of bad seed, and the inevitable reaping of its fruits. I was led into this train of thought by the sermon this morning ; but I disagree with your preacher on some points. It is correct to say that good will finally prevail over evil, but men must not be content to wait for its *ultimate* triumph, but should aim at results emanating from their own efforts. Yet, in spite of all, I believe there will always be a certain amount of sin and wrongdoing in the earth-world ; for if it is really a school in which mankind is prepared for the higher life, were all men perfect, its schooling would not be requisite, and I fail to see why the world should continue to exist after perfection had been attained in it. Just as a child's education must commence from the beginning, and the knowledge acquired by his parents does not automatically descend to him, so I believe that each generation will need the special training of earth, though every succeeding one may evolve and develop and need it less than the preceding one. We *have* to formulate some idea in our own minds as to the reason for the creation of the universe, and unless we do look upon earth as a training-school, the passing through it would appear superfluous, and man might as well have been born into heaven direct and gone forward at once from sphere to sphere. All nature seems to point to life as a struggle : it is so to many plants and animals, and we see that in all nations on earth the same thing is true in mankind as to the *moral* progress of the race ; yet so slow is this advancement that probably the earth will

still be required for its present purpose for millions or billions of years. When musing on such problems as this, one is apt to forget that *time* is *eternity* with God, and to ask that finite man shall be allowed to see the results of his own strivings ; but that is not the way the work of God proceeds, and men must be satisfied with throwing their own stone into the water and trusting to the ripples reaching the far-off, distant shore. What though, even to *us*, there seems as yet little result from all the efforts of men and angels to benefit and improve the human race ; are we therefore to lose heart ? No : from year to year, or even from decade to decade, there may seem little change, but look back from century to century and you will realise that results *have* followed effort, and that progress has been made. Though I do not agree with your preacher that all evil will eventually be banished from the earth, and, after that, the earth still continue to exist, yet I do believe that evil will lessen from generation to generation and will finally be swept away, only *then* I believe that, when this point of perfection has been attained, the earth-planet, having served its purpose, will also pass away and give place to another world of higher preparation, of the constitution and aims of which we, at least in *our* sphere, have as yet no knowledge. Surely, unless there were a struggle for perfection going on everywhere, even Heaven would be unattractive to all but inert and mentally-dull natures ; for conscious effort and conscious progression are essential to real happiness, whether on earth or in the higher spheres of the spirit-world.

February 12th, 1922.

THE NEED FOR RECUPERATIVE POWER IN THE WORLD.

I wish to prove that the entire world is at present suffering from exhaustion and that it needs a period of comparative inactivity to fit it for further effort. The nervous force of a person or animal can be exhausted, and when mankind is considered from an abstract and homogeneous standpoint, as populating the globe, it is quite certain that mental and physical fatigue in all races can supervene on any prolonged period of exertion. The undermining of health and power, owing to the war, has hitherto only been recognised in individual men and women, but it is beginning to be perceived as a fact applying to the whole of the nations of the world, and not until there has been a period of rest and recuperation will mankind be able to commence good and helpful work again. Yet, in spite of this, the world must not be allowed to drift into indifference to sufferings and grievances amongst its members, and therefore it is a question as to how long this initial period of rest should continue, and how men's minds shall best be occupied while it lasts. It seems to me the safest plan to let various schemes be thought out and mature in detail, before being put into action. But who is to regulate this and decide at what point renewal of activity shall take place? I think that may be left with confidence to *our* side, for we shall carefully watch the trend of events, and see how the ground is being prepared for the future seed, and at the right moment we shall impress the necessity for action on those who have the most influence, and are the most likely to lead the multitude successfully. There are gigantic evils

crying out for reform, but they are too vast to be dealt with by war-weary nations. Alert and clear intellects will be required to deal with these problems, and it is of no benefit to try to hurry matters unduly ; it is best to leave them, to a certain extent, to self-development. If you let a field lie fallow for some time, new and strange plants will often spring up, and it is not well to be constantly planting new seed in a nation, but sometimes to wait and see what plants the original soil will develop for itself, as they will be more valuable if of spontaneous growth. We have a full and firm trust in the final upliftment of all the nations, and believe that in the heart of every one of them is the germ of good which will develop, if allowed to grow and increase gradually ; for by over-tilling the ground and over-nourishing our plants we may possibly bring about new varieties, but they will not have the stamina of the old parent-stock of slower but stronger growth. We want to see improvement in all the races of the world, but we desire also that they shall become morally and physically strong—not valetudinarians—and we believe that the spiritual side of mankind will awaken more thoroughly if not forced on too quickly. Often men try to train their roses in a direction contrary to their nature, and the plants would be more hardy and longer-lived if allowed to grow according to their own propensities and not bent and twisted into the position the gardener desires. God is the Great Gardener, and He will see that His garden on earth is cared for, and that it shall in due course bring forth its choicest fruits. But mankind must help in the work, and to this end they are guided from our side ; yet conscience is the only spur which should ever be needed by any man or nation.

*February 26th, 1922.*

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THE NORMAL CHANGE IN ATTITUDE OF MIND AFTER  
PASSING TO THE NEW LIFE.

When on earth, men are as a rule contented with a very short-sighted policy, and consider it will be time enough to think about the next world when disease or illness assails them. But when they pass over they become alive to the importance of realising the nature of the change they have undergone. They see, by the activity of all around them, that indifference and idleness are out of place, and soon the whole mental outlook becomes sharpened and more alert. Even those who have been drones in the past life may be quickened at once into active workers, unless great reformation of character is needed; and even those who do not, or *will* not realise that they are "dead," soon become awake to the active life here. The next thing is to find their proper place in their new surroundings. It does not follow that the work a man has done on earth is the best for him to continue here. If he has not cared for the occupation he has been engaged on in earth-life, then he can be directed to some more congenial employment; for, although we all take our share in helping others, that is apart from what may be called our regular work. We have many professions from which to choose, because there is great necessity for impressing knowledge on the people on earth. A physician, for instance, is constantly with his old colleagues still in the body, in their consulting-rooms and hospitals, and can do most valuable work in diagnosing obscure diseases, and impressing their nature on the mind of the earth-doctor. Most of our work is done silently and unseen; yet in many ways we can give much-needed assistance. What would have become of the sick and wounded during the war without their spirit-helpers we cannot tell; and it would have been quite impossible for the surgeons to cope with all the injuries and decide

at a moment's notice the best course to pursue, without the prompting of our spirit-doctors. Oh! these poor fellows, limping and crippled, maimed and paralysed! How can they ever be helped sufficiently from our side or yours? Some may not at one time have been all they should have been, but suffering is a mighty teacher, and many of these men have become changed characters. Yet too little is still being done for them, and especially for those who have sufficiently recovered to desire work and cannot get it. We on our side will never rest while this state of things exists. Christian England! Yes,—so-called! We know there are great difficulties to be overcome before any country can deserve the name of a truly Christian land; but the *laissez faire* policy does not embody the teaching of Christ; for his was the active religion which compels men to be up and doing while reforms are still needed and there are abuses to abolish. We wish we could preach to the whole world what the inevitable outcome of supineness will be, in the moral deterioration which cannot fail to result from it. I do not believe there is a single person on earth who is not conscious of at least *one* reform which he considers necessary. Let him work for that one then. There may be others quite as much needed, but this one appeals to *him*, so let him put his whole strength and mind and heart into getting it adopted. You must have enthusiasm before you can impress others with your ideas, and half-hearted propaganda will never be successful. You may think that *we* could do more to assist than we do, but this is not so; we have not the proper metal to work on. Men must be open to impressions before we can give them, and though in times of dire disaster and strain, as during the late war, men may become clairvoyant or clairaudient, it is generally only for a time, and on the return to normal conditions the power lapses through lack of use, and our influence ends with it.

March 12th, 1922.

THE NEED FOR A PURER STANDARD IN LIFE.

This is necessary from a *moral* point of view, taking the world in its largest sense, and all life should be on simple lines, and more set towards the one great aim—the elevation of the ideals, and the ennobling of the thoughts and deeds of every man and woman on the earth-plane. At present there are so many side issues sought after that the main end is lost sight of. Take education.—To what end is knowledge unless a man's life is made better by it? To what end to cram the memory with facts, if the character remains unaltered? Here we treat the young people very differently, for we train character first, and give learning only a secondary place. Facts must be taught, certainly, but knowledge is of less importance than to lay the foundation for right-thinking and right-acting. We know that culture and goodness can, and often do, go hand in hand, but seldom during the first period of training. You would grieve to see the neglected little mites of children who come over, untaught and uncared for, with no knowledge but of evil, expressed in every thought and word. It would be futile to commence an education on normal lines on such a foundation; so the child is placed with special teachers, who are kind but firm in their efforts to counteract the effects of bad example, till the purified little spirit is ready to enter one of the ordinary schools. Fortunately these sad cases are becoming rarer than they were and the earth-ideals are slowly improving, but a very drastic change is still necessary before mankind becomes fitted to enter at once into his kingdom in the new world to which all life's travellers are bound. When men first pass over, they are greatly handicapped by preconceived ideas as to what the future world will

be like, and many cherish the false belief that they will at once go to the Heaven they have pictured, without stopping at any preparatory intermediate station. Now this is impossible, for few people are fit for, or would appreciate, our real Heaven, and therefore in most cases the transition is more gradual : ever upward from sphere to sphere. When I speak of " Heaven " I must explain that what we should so describe (though only the commencement of infinitely higher altitudes), usually begins at the *Third* sphere ; and those who have led a life to prepare them for it, and are therefore attuned to its conditions, can enter it at once, and experience none of the grey mists and gloomy surroundings through which the careless, the idle, the selfish, and the sinful are bound to pass to reach their goal. It is difficult to make some people realise that slow progression is necessary, and they are apt to fancy there is injustice and even vindictiveness in this method of purification. That is not so : it is the only way in which those possessing such faults can be reclaimed. Place them in comfort and happiness, and they would not realise that their character needed any change, and they would go on their way as thoughtlessly as before on earth, and we maintain that there could have been no better method devised for turning men's steps into the right path than the present one, and, indeed, that it is the only possible means of doing so. Now if you find my subjects are of too material a nature to please you, remember that it is only to a few that is given the task of writing on mundane topics, and that these few are those who have themselves had to pass through the waters of purification for the faults and sins of which they now warn others. In time I, too, shall deal less with material and earthly matters, though I hope I shall always be permitted to give help to my old earth-world and its inhabitants.

March 26th, 1922.

PEACE PRINCIPLES.

I am not now speaking of war and its alternatives, but of the general principles of peace which should govern a man's life. Peace *within* will show *outwardly*, and will help to repress in others those demonstrations of anger and impatience which the man has conquered in himself; but this peace is most difficult of attainment if not fought for and won in early life. How often an outbreak of temper, bitterly repented of later, could be prevented if the habit of reflection before speaking had been acquired! How often would people be judged differently if their critics did not blurt out, before others, the scathing denunciation, the harsh condemnation which they would afterwards give anything to modify! It is better to be misjudged than to misjudge another. Once get the habit of never giving a hasty opinion or an ill-considered dictum, and men would soon attain to the grand calm and the respect for others which are the attributes of all our high guides *here*. We never hear a harsh or slighting word spoken: pity, mercy, and helpfulness are shown by all our teachers and masters, and we feel that, though perhaps not in their entirety, yet closely following His example, they have partly attained to the meekness and quiet strength of Christ. We, in our lower stage of development, strive to emulate them and, though far from attaining success as yet, the very seeking after perfection enables us to approach nearer to it. Now we want you to understand that when we give advice, or hold up to admiration a certain standard of character, we are not claiming that we possess the same virtues

ourselves, for we are learners still, stumbling along the pathways of our present life as we stumbled in the days on earth, but with this difference—that *here* we do not fall but go straight onward, though it may be in a lame and halting fashion. We, in our sphere, are not yet ready to be teachers of others, but we can hold up to their view the picture of our own experiences, and give the timely warning we wish to convey. Neither do we want you to think that, because we are learners still, our lives are other than happy. School-time on earth is often the most enjoyable period, owing to its freedom from the cares and anxieties that come with later years ; and our learning here, after the first few steps have been taken, is not a painful process, but goes hand in hand with the enjoyment of beauty, friendship, and love unspeakable. If we ever attain to such perfection as to have nothing more to correct in our own characters, we should still have infinite possibilities before us in helping others to similar progression. Yet some still on earth even *resent* the idea that their loved ones can be happy in Heaven without *them*, not recognising the fact that, for those who have passed over, the separation is but that of the *material* bodies, and that the spirits of those on earth can be with us, as we can be with them and communicate as of old ; only of this they are unconscious while in their physical body. Some people, I verily believe, would rather remain in their unrelieved sorrow and woe than accept a new idea which to them is unbelievable. Such can only be taught by personal experience and to that we must be content to leave them.

April 9th, 1922.

UNITY AND CONCORD.

The title I have given is a somewhat open one, so that I may possibly wander away from the strict letter of the subject. "Unity and Concord" describes our life here, for we have no discord and we thoroughly realise the happy exchange we have made from life on earth. Take our occupations: when not for the benefit of others, they tend in some way to our *own* improvement. Music, painting, science, and all forms of art add to our mental stature, and can also be made the means of helping others. Our Halls of Music are refuges and often veritable Halls of Regeneration for those who come over weary and worn with life's earthly trials. Then the love of art is ennobling in itself and our picture-galleries may, and do, act as Convalescent Homes for some spiritually sick. Scenery plays its part, too, in the upraising of those who pass to us unprepared for the new life, and even *we*, when mentally wearied by the failure of some work on which we had set our heart, often go to a glade or shady nook, and there find rest and recuperation for renewed effort. My title does not only describe the inner peace which is ours, but also the peace which exists in our relation to others. No matter how our ministrations are received; even if resented, *we* feel no resentment, but only grieve at our lack of success, and study how we shall best prevail in the future. The change which takes place in those who pass over is very gradual: rebellious, mutinous, dissatisfied souls are almost imperceptibly brought to a different frame of mind, and become calm, contented, and happy. The time has not yet arrived

when all will have the perfect knowledge before passing over, but that time is on its way, and possibly even the present generation will witness a great alteration in popular ideas respecting the future life. The old belief in vindictive punishments can no longer be entertained by any thinking mind, while the idea of rewards offered to the faithful will seem only one degree less repulsive. We wish to teach the truth as far as our experience goes, and we leave aside for the present all theories as to the ultimate goal of the human race. We do not force our opinions on others, but merely try to show them the best and truest way to usefulness and happiness. Peace and concord will only come on earth when its aims clasp hands with those in *our* world, and this can alone be brought about by educative teaching from both spheres. We do our best to give impressions to those who are capable of receiving them, but this is always a slow form of education, and those still on earth, when convinced of the truth, can spread knowledge much more effectually. What is true as to the refining influence of nature, music, and art, is also true of personal influence, and the loving and unselfish can, even on earth, impress those around them with the peace and harmony which in the spirit-spheres alone can find their fullest development and expression.

April 22nd, 1922.

THE MARVEL OF LIFE.

When we look around us with an open vision, even during our sojourn on earth, we are conscious of the wonder of life, and that it pervades and influences everything. Men talk of "dead" matter, yet some has lived in its day, and it is only when the life-principle leaves it that it becomes "dead" or inert. There are, of course, many substances and things which never contain the life-principle, and yet life *touches* them also. Even a so-called "dead" piece of wood may have its millions of tiny inhabitants, to which their curiously drilled holes bear testimony. And so I would say to anyone who professes disbelief in a future life: "Look around you at nature. Do you think that all this movement and energy is to perish everlastingly?" No, it would be a waste, and there is no waste in God's economy. On the other hand, we who have risen to a higher sphere do not believe that every bird and insect will survive in its present form, but we do believe that all life is indestructible, and that the soul of even the tiniest creature will go to inhabit another body, and possibly one of a more developed stage of creation. Life is eternal, and wonderful in all its forms; therefore we should be very careful of life. It may be necessary, under the so-called civilisation in which man lives on earth, to destroy the lives of the too numerous or the harmful creatures,—harmful, that is, from *man's* point of view; but we use a wrong term in saying "destroy," for we do not, and cannot, destroy the life that is in them, but can only set it free to inhabit new forms in the

material existence. You do not quite see to what all this tends. I might say : to the teaching that all life is sacred, and yet that would not be quite true, since I have already admitted the necessity, under *present* earth-conditions, for putting an end to certain species of life. I would rather explain that I am aiming at opening the minds of people to a study of the wonders of nature from a more spiritual aspect, for they then cannot fail to develop a deep reverence for the Mind and Hand, which are working day and night for the upholding of this vast storage of marvels which we call the "world." Suppose that we could be placed on the earth-plane grown-up and in full possession of all our developed faculties, should we not be struck dumb with awe and amazement at the revelation of the beauties prepared for us by our unseen Father? It is because we enter the world as little children, and do not perceive these things at once but gradually, as they are unfolded to us by the ripening of our perceptive powers, that most people are absolutely incapable of realising the wonders that they truly are, but take them as matters of course, and never ask how they came to be at first, and how they continue from year to year and century to century. What can be more marvellous than the migration and return of the birds, than the powers of sight possessed by them or than the protective instinct shown by animals and birds in guarding their young? If these things and hundreds like them were realised as the products of a mind such as man cannot conceive, of a love beyond what he can imagine, and of a foresight beyond his power even to grasp, then indeed might the earth-sojourn become truly educative and fit mankind for the glories of Heaven, which are at first more difficult for men to appreciate than the wonders they failed to value when on earth.

May 7th, 1922.

BEAUTY AS AN EDUCATIVE FACTOR.

I would like to impress on those still on the earth-plane the fact that beauty is educative. Here we recognise this, and our teaching of the young is based on a training in the appreciation of beauty. I do not mean beauty of form, colour, or landscape alone, but the beauty of character, the loveliness of humility, and the charm of unselfishness. All these things are as beautiful as if they were concrete forms instead of abstract qualities. It is not easy to make children realise this, but when once they have done so the hardest part of their education has been achieved. With adults who pass over, the learning of these facts is more arduous, for preconceived ideas, brought from earth, cling round a man, hampering his progression. How can a thoroughly material mind recognise humility as a beautiful trait? To such it merely signifies a certain softness and indecision of character and intellect which will render their possessor a prey to the machinations of others. A man with these ideas may be a long time before he comprehends the part which beauty plays in our world. We seem to imbibe the love of what is noble and fine by contemplating any lovely object, whether natural or artificially made by genius. But we constantly see, on earth, such a much higher value placed on material success than on beauty of character and a good influence exercised on others, that we often wonder how long it will be before the earth-world will amalgamate its teaching with ours. The absence of a power to appreciate beauty is a serious drawback, and even more on earth than here, because

on the material plane good examples are not ever before a man, whereas *here* he sees what will win the approbation of our finest intellects and he begins to wish to emulate their reverence for the highest things. On earth, beauty is often taken to mean something which it does not mean *here*: a person may be thought beautiful because of regularity of features, and yet the whole expression may show conceit, selfishness, and other unlovely qualities. *Here* no beauty of feature would be admired, did not the countenance also express love, sympathy, and self-abnegation. You may think it hard for the earth-dwellers to have to aim at so high a standard. In a way this is so, but perhaps not so difficult as you imagine, for example is a powerful factor in moulding character, and a man, after coming over, may imperceptibly take up a different mental attitude, and regulate his conduct according to the ethical laws common to all who have passed beyond the lower spheres in our world. You may also say that beauty can have nothing to do with the man's changed outlook. This is a wrong idea, for *we* know the ennobling and revivifying effect of contemplating objects of beauty, and when this goes hand in hand with more practical teaching, the progression is much quickened. "Beauty is but skin deep" is a popular fallacy, for it can remain even in old age, if the life has been passed in the upholding of all that is divine and good, and this beauty of expression no years can destroy; but there can also be left the stamp of an *evil* life as indelibly fixed on the countenance for all time. Everything that is made on the earth-plane should be beautiful in design, form and colouring, and it will perform a double function and, besides its material use, will ennoble and upraise the ideals of mankind. While there is oppression, greed, and coveteousness on earth, so long will these base qualities be expressed on men's

features, and the teeming cities will have their miserable slums and degraded inhabitants. The geranium from a greenhouse would perish in some of the hovels where men now dwell ; but even a sickly plant, removed from them to better conditions, would at least have the *chance* of survival and a renewal of life.

May 21st, 1922.

HARMONY IN NATURE.

While still inhabitants of earth, we are constantly met by jarring effects, and yet all that is contrary to harmony could be avoided by a better knowledge of nature's laws and possibilities. If left to herself, there is no jarring note in nature : the colours of the different wild flowers blend harmoniously, because tempered by the soft green of their surroundings ; but plucked by a ruthless hand and massed together, there is no longer harmony, but discord. So it is with the errors and failures of life. If men were their true and natural selves, as God meant them to be, all crudities would disappear, for around the material man there would be an envelope of spirituality which would ward off anything that could harm the soul. Many people succumb to ill-temper, jangled nerves, or bad health, simply because they allow the trials of earth to strike directly on their sensitive spirit within, thus rendering them for the time being incapable of rising to a higher level, dragged down as they are by minor worries and cares which hem them round. For this there is only one remedy : to study the *spiritual* aspect of things, and to get into the mind a firm realisation that the earth-life bears a very small proportion to the spiritual one as regards duration of time, and that one can, even on earth, attain to the harmony which pervades nature. The trees of the forest bend to the blast and, when the wind has subsided, they stand erect and uninjured, save, it may be, for the loss of a few small branches. Your sorrows may break off some of your branches, too, but if accepted as a part of the inevitable discipline of

education for the higher life, these griefs will cause no irreparable injury to your real self, the inner soul. This power of seeing things in their true proportion should be cultivated. Suppose you feel your earthly trials are more than human nature can bear, then turn to the thought that *human* nature is not your *only* nature, but that besides that there is the spiritual one, and that reliance on this will enable you to bear what is beyond the power of merely *human* endurance. Harmony in nature is universal—in the landscape ; in the dashing waves of the ocean, each giving place to the succeeding one ; in plant, and tree, and flower ; all is beauty, all is utility, all is harmony ; and should man strike the only discordant note ? No ; but man has only recently attained the requisite knowledge to enable him to rise above his surroundings and obtain mental entrance to the higher spheres of thought and perception, and grasp the truth that a future awaits him of a beauty now undreamt of, and that, even on earth, he can so train himself that he will not enter the gates of bliss as a stranger, but as one to whom they have long been the portal to the El Dorado of his dreams. Harmony reigns in our spheres, and might reign on earth ; but while wars continue and nation vies with nation for temporal power, such harmony is impossible. Well may the people of earth sometimes despair, but, with more perfect knowledge, hope will revive, ideals will become more lofty, and men will cease to strive only for material success, but will seek to live the life which will ensure spiritual progression. *Here* a pure and upright character is valued for itself, while on earth the rich man's millions have often proved but a millstone round his neck. We are striving for the millennium, truly, but it will come in its time, and justify our faith.

June 4th, 1922.

POINTS OF VIEW.

It is true that each person usually has his own special point of view in every matter, but this is apt to become individual and one-sided, and not to take sufficiently into consideration the opinions of others. On the question of peace-principles, for example, two men may both be advocates of peace, but one will hold that to prepare for war is the only way to avoid it, while the other will declare that warlike preparations provoke war. Which is right? Neither; because both are arguing as to *methods* of preventing what should be impossible. The education of public opinion against war is what is needed, and when this has been done, the *means* of preventing future warfare will come automatically, for if no man or nation desired war, the necessity for it could not arise. But the educative process is slow, and reformers wish for more drastic measures. Let them try these, by all means, but always remembering that education alone can be the real safeguard. There are numerous other questions connected with the earth-life on which opinions differ diametrically. Take capital punishment: the humanitarian argues against it; the "man in the street" has grown accustomed to regard it as a necessary evil, and his mind cannot be moved to sufficient activity to enable him to consider the reasons against it which the thinker and the reformer perceive at once. One standardised point of view is wanted, from which to regard every moral question, and this standard should be fixed by a competent body of people interested in the reformation of the world. The nation is at present suffering from

lack of concentration. It is no one's business in particular to investigate a case of wrong or hardship, and therefore such things go on, and the sufferers are as those crying in the wilderness; but once let there be a sort of moral tribunal established for the righting of grievances and injustices, whether legislative, or as individual practices, and there would soon be an alteration for the better. Any decision arrived at by this council would at once be publicly announced, and all teaching in schools and homes would have to come into line with it. From here we notice great defects still prevalent on earth, for the most pressing legislative reforms often lag behind others, since they usually threaten some vested interest, and thus arouse opposition. The council should therefore consist of men having no personal interest in the points at issue, except to obtain justice for all, and it might therefore be well for them to be unconnected with trade or business, and they should be paid by the State a sufficient salary for an existence free from care, but not one of extreme luxury. Men and women should be equally represented on this council, such appointments should be most carefully considered, and those who have been active in noting existing wrongs should have the largest share in the selection of the members. Difficulties would no doubt arise, but no reform is easy when first launched, and surely no means should be left untried which would enable the conditions on earth to approach more nearly to those in *our* world of spiritual realities.

June 18th, 1922.

CHANGE—THE ESSENCE OF LIFE.

Men are very apt to think the old times were best, and that if the days of long ago could have continued, there would have been more happiness than there is now. Possibly in all ages men have felt the same, but if they had studied the conditions which obtained in the earlier period they could not have wished to share in them. As with the history of a country, so with phases of individual life. One often hears a man regretting the good old times "when I was a boy," but if he realised that change is necessary for development he would cease to bemoan the alterations that have taken place during his lifetime. Boyhood is generally a happy time because there is no sense of responsibility; but when the boy grows to manhood and takes upon himself a man's cares and duties, though he may be less *carelessly* happy, he will yet feel he is more truly *living*. It is the same with a man's spiritual nature. While he does not think about ethical questions, and is content to let his higher faculties lie fallow, he follows the line of least resistance: that of a purely material existence. But in time there comes loss or bereavement; the long-delayed change is there, and with it the alteration in his mental attitude. He is now forced to weigh the relative values of the material and the spiritual aspects of life, and probably has to cast aside his former ideas. If he has lost a son, or father, by death, he begins to ask himself: "Where is he now? He, so interested in the world's doings and his part in them—where is he now?" For lo! the blow has fallen suddenly, and he who was living flesh and blood is, to all appearance, a dull, senseless,

inert mass of matter, perhaps resembling but faintly the beloved face and form now so deeply mourned. Had there been no change, no loss, the man who has suffered this grief might have drifted on to the end of his earth-life in the old careless manner ; but he now sees everything from a different standpoint, and starts life afresh with altered aims and aspirations. We here are thankful that there is so much variety in the spirit-world, and that we continue such a comparatively short time in each stage of our existence. I remember when I was in the Third Sphere, how averse I was to any change, even to rise higher, and how my friends urged and compelled me to undesired effort. We often realise regretfully how we failed on earth, but after a time the remembrance ceases to be painful, and we only rejoice in the knowledge that our old sins and omissions of duty have not been repented of in vain, and that the temptation to commit them has no longer any power over us. In numerous ways change is beneficial. If the whole universe always moved in one set groove it would suffer fatigue, even as metals do, and a slackness of action would result which would spread to the human race, and a period of deterioration, both of aims, methods and ideals would result, detrimental to all spiritual progress. Happiness does not come from a life of uniformity, devoid of all care, but rather from a temperament, whether natural or cultivated, which enables the soul—the spirit of man—to rise superior to trial or loss, and in its own world of spiritual knowledge and aspiration, to seek consolation for all that would otherwise bring grief and disappointment, which are the portion of those who do not possess this spiritual antidote. Without change, both of mental and moral outlook, no progression of the human race would be possible.

July 2nd, 1922.

JUSTICE.

Much is often said about *injustice*, but very little about *justice*, and the people who inveigh against the laws which govern the world, and call them unjust and arbitrary, are taking a very one-sided view, for it is not possible to judge of the scheme of the universe without a knowledge of the changes and alterations which prevail in our spiritual world, and enable apparent hardships that have weighed heavily on earth, to be righted on *our* side. Take ill-health : there is no such evil here, and those who pass over from sickness or disease have probably a much greater sense of well-being and delight in their new bodies than those who never suffered ache or pain on earth, and by whom therefore the new conditions of life are less keenly appreciated. Then those poor in the world's riches are almost beside themselves with delight at finding that here there is no need for money, and that everything is shared alike by all. There are no rich and poor with us, but there are the educated and those who have not had this advantage on earth. Yet even these will not have long to wait before advancing to a higher grade of culture ; but for this they must, on earth, have had a desire for knowledge. A man's nature does not alter on passing over, and those who have formerly only cared for amusement will not at once take to deep studies ; yet, if their intellectual powers point that way, we should endeavour to instruct and help them. Not all, even here, will attain to the same *proficiency*, but all will arrive at the same *happiness* in the end, and an uneducated man or woman will often prefer to engage

in practical pursuits and may be most successful in rescue-work to those in the dark regions of the probationary spheres. Then there are the natures that have always been misunderstood on earth. A man is reserved and cannot express what he feels. His family and friends think him cold and unresponsive ; but deep down in his heart there are wells of love and longing which have never found expression. He passes over, and at once all is changed : his mind is read, and his real nature is seen ; helping hands grasp his, and all the former sense of being alone and friendless disappears ; he recognises that the disappointment he has felt in the earth-life cannot follow him here, and henceforward his true nature will blossom forth as never before. Suspicious people also may suffer greatly on earth, for they are always looking for underhand motives, and even deeds of kindness are not accepted as such, but some underlying personal end is suspected. When such people pass over, and can read the minds of the dwellers in our spheres, they perceive that actions and words are what they appear to be, and they grow ashamed of their former suspicions ; and though they may still have to undergo a period of probation before they can rid themselves altogether of their faults, they yet see no injustice in this, but admit that such education is necessary for progression. Everything that may have seemed unjust on earth has its compensation in the new life : the plain-featured can become beautiful ; the dull-witted grow quick and alert-minded if they will be so ; the sickly are made well and strong, and those who on earth have pined for lovely surroundings, yet had to dwell in squalor and ugliness, are now placed in the midst of beautiful scenery and have more artistic objects to delight them than their minds had ever dared to picture. Think, too, of men blind from birth suddenly obtaining sight

and being introduced to all this on passing over ! At first they cannot take it in, but we have ways of making it real to them : their eyes are indeed opened, and all the darkness of earth falls away at last and the glorious sunlight is let in. Oh no ! there is no injustice in God's laws, and those who think so are as those sightless ones, who some day will cast off the scales from their eyes and see that behind all that has to be borne and suffered on earth there is the magnificent future of a Heaven open to all, where the justice of perfect love is ever being shown. Only those who have passed to this higher life can have a conception of its joys, but it is worth the *waiting* for—it is worth the *working* for, when the blessed promise becomes the still more blissful reality.

July 24th, 1922.

### THE INFLUENCE OF A WELL-DEFINED GOAL.

It is not necessary to dilate on the difference between good and bad aims in life, but rather to dwell on the ennobling effect which the struggle towards a definite goal has on a man or a nation. Take the latter first. A nation should, of course, aim at being strong, but this power should not represent wealth simply, or natural riches such as mines, forests, or other products, but it should rather consist in the wealth-earning industry, invention, and intelligence of its people. Nor do I mean by "power" the ability to tyrannise over smaller nations and reduce them to semi-bondage, but a strength which can be used to help other less-favoured countries. For instance, if the food production of a country were greater than that of any other land, it could assist these in times of dearth and famine more fully than at present, and therefore that country would be a beneficent factor in the comity of nations. All countries should have the desire for true and rightly-used power, but to arrive at this it is necessary that every inhabitant of each nation should have the same end in view, and contribute his share towards it. Farmers should endeavour to add to the wealth of the country by a surplus production in excess of their own financial needs. All productive work should be so conscientiously carried out as to give the nation a reputation for good and honest dealing which should be an example for others to follow. There should be no underselling of other nations, for that is neither legitimate trading, just, nor honest. All good work should be sufficiently remunerated, but scamped or shoddy work should not

demand an equal price, as is often the case now, though if everyone did his duty there would no longer be any but the best work done. By all means bring up the coming generations in the desire to increase the power of their country, but they must be taught in what its true strength consists. Certain obligations should be paramount with nations and peoples, the most important of these being : never to repudiate an agreement, break a promise, or oppress any man ; never to take advantage of the misfortunes of others, and to be open and honourable in all transactions. If a nation is enriched by the honest industry of its inhabitants it will be looked up to by other countries and will have attained the goal to which we, from our side, would have it aspire. As yet there are few who can resist the temptation of money-getting—a little more and a little more to add to the sufficiency they have already acquired ; and to a nation the temptation is still greater, because at first sight it would seem necessary for the safeguarding of its population that its greatness should be steadily augmented ; but let its people once learn in what the real greatness of a nation truly consists, and they will cease to clamour for the gaudy tinsel and will accept only the sterling gold.

August 6th, 1922.

### THE DANGER OF HASTY JUDGMENTS.

Many who adopt the new thought without much previous consideration are not able to appreciate facts at their true value : they think that because the truths they have accepted are new to themselves they must therefore be new to everyone, and they become blind propagandists, without considering whether their zeal is doing good or the reverse. Their ardour is seldom the result of an unselfish desire to share a benefit with others, but is prompted by a sort of spiritual pride, in thinking themselves specially favoured by their newly-acquired knowledge. The same thing applies to some people on first coming over to our world. All is strange and wonderful to them, and they imagine it is their duty to describe everything as it at first appears to them, and often pass down descriptions and opinions to earth which later on they would wish to recall, finding that these first impressions had been erroneous and misleading. The older guides always warn newcomers against hasty judgments and dogmatic utterances, but in spite of this there is a good deal of literature given prematurely before the writer had fully established his facts. For instance, minute descriptions of houses and other duplicates of earthly objects, are often harmful, as those who are weary of the trials of earth are not anxious to exchange their present state for one which appears to them a repetition of it. In one way it may be useful to give such an impression, as no one would then take his own life under the mistaken belief that he could so escape pain and disappointment ; but for the majority of people such details are not

desirable, and in all that I have given through your hand I have endeavoured to dwell less on the conditions here than on the sins and mistakes committed in earth-life by myself and others like myself. But I am now commencing to understand the life here better, and may, therefore, sometimes give you a few general descriptions—accurate details being impossible from our plane to yours. Those who have only recently become acquainted with the fact of the continuity of life should be very careful in introducing this truth to others. You would not give lectures on botany, or any other science, while still a learner of the very groundwork of the subject, but in spiritual matters that is what many people do, and so become blind teachers of the blind. Such natures do not at once change when they pass over: they refuse advice from those competent to lead them, and cast down the hastily-compiled leaves of their note-books to anyone on earth who will take them up. When we first pass over we are all in danger of thinking our own case and our own experiences are exceptional, and therefore worthy of note; but when we have seen more, learnt more, and *worked* more, we can then perceive how dangerous a thing a *little* knowledge can be, unless we keep it to ourselves and avoid inflicting it on others. When once a regular course of work has been entered upon there is less danger of over-weening confidence in our own opinions and judgments, and we should hesitate to dogmatise without full and adequate knowledge of our subject; for we bring our old earth-ideas with us here, and it may be years of *your* time before we can replace them entirely by those more suited to our present existence.

August 20th, 1922.

TOUCHING THE REALITIES OF LIFE.

I do not think it well to lay great stress on the difference between the "seen" and "unseen," and contend that what belongs to the earth-world is only the *semblance* of what is found in our higher spheres; for this gives the impression that your present existence is less important than the future one, whereas the opposite is the case with those still on the material plane. Men should, of course, always shape their conduct with a view to fitting themselves for the future life, but the importance of the earth education must not be underestimated. Now, life on earth cannot fail to be a more real thing to a man living in it than an untried life in the higher spheres, for unless he is keenly psychic himself, he has to take the heavenly things on trust, and learn their nature from the reports of others, whether mediums still dwelling on earth, or denizens of the higher spheres who give their descriptions through these by means of trance addresses or automatic writing. It is often difficult to draw the line accurately between conflicting duties, but as I have said before, your nearest duty lies in the sphere in which you are living, and if that is incompatible with giving adequate assistance to things appertaining to the spiritual plane you must curtail your psychic work in favour of the material plane of existence. People vary so much that where one man is able to draw a strict line of demarcation and keep it, another will hesitate and stumble and, in endeavouring to serve two masters equally, will end by serving neither. It is all a question

of moderation. People introduced for the first time to the facts of spiritualism get carried away by zeal and enthusiasm, and consider all subjects flat, stale, and unprofitable that have not some reference to the future life. They should remember that when they do enter the new life they will have acquired the habit of restlessness, and may be unhappy in what sphere soever they find themselves, because they are impatient to move on to the next, and then to the next again! All this detracts from their usefulness and delays their progression. It is a dangerous thing to try to swim when encumbered by heavy clothing, and the ideas and desires we bring with us from the earth-life often cling to us like wet garments and drag us down. There is a tendency amongst some writers on earth, in dealing with psychic subjects, to underestimate the value of a good life lived on your present plane, unless there is added to it a knowledge of the world to come. This last is an immense gain to a man, yet he who, without it, has still lived a life of service to others and kept himself "unspotted from the world" is to be as much commended as he who had psychic gifts or knowledge and shaped his life accordingly. Men are not left to struggle alone, or drown when the waves are rough and they fear to sink under them. Even before the cry went up: "Help, Lord, I perish!" the needed assistance was assured. Cultivate love for all mankind and all God's creatures, and the absence of spiritual knowledge, if withheld from no fault of your own, will not put insurmountable obstacles in your way, or greatly delay your progress in the world to come. Even should you believe the earth-life to be the only one (though God forbid this!), then live it so that, when you pass over, your epitaph shall be: "He did what he could for others." No man can do more; but blessed is he who also seeks and gains the knowledge that in the realms

above there is happiness awaiting all ; and that even the faulty and sin-stained can find peace when at last they shall have shaken off the fetters of sin, selfishness, and error which have hampered them on earth and retarded their progress in our brighter world.

September 17th, 1922.

THE MOVING CLOUD.

“ A cloud by day, and a fire by night ” is my text to-day, and I want to dilate a little upon the cloud which, at this juncture, is guiding the footsteps of mankind. At present one sees unrest everywhere: dissatisfaction with things as they are and a desire for more light in the world. Those on earth may therefore seem to be *under* a cloud, and not led by it, as were our forefathers. Mankind appears discontented and tired of waiting for a millennium which does not come quickly enough; but, all the same, the new era *is* approaching, and we may describe it as the awakening of a world-conscience. No man can be happy and contented if he feels that the government and aims of the world are wrong and that he has no power to set them right; but everywhere new schemes are being evolved for putting down war, for raising the standard of commercial and national morality; and for bringing more of the spiritual element into the lives of men. And yet with it all there is this sense of helplessness and inability (on earth) to work out the salvation of the existing generation. Everyone expects much from *future* generations, but nearly all seem to be pessimistic as regards their own time. Now this is not the right spirit. Schiller says (to translate roughly), that what seems from a distance to be our goal, never realises our expectations when we reach it. That is true: men have to deal with the *present*, and not neglect it for a distant future on earth. I think the best goad to stir up the fainting energies of mankind would be if every association which is now endeavouring to bring about some special reform would realise that this reform is only a *piece* of a great whole, and that those who are working for other objects than theirs, may play as great a part as themselves in moulding the destiny of the world. I would propose

an amalgamation of all these associations, to this extent, that, though working as separate organisations, they should meet at intervals of, possibly, six months, to discuss the progress already made, and to discover what is the next most pressing need. Anything that benefits the human, or sub-human, race, is making for the one ideal, and therefore nothing but good could come from amalgamation of effort. I believe in a closer bond between all such workers, and if those who take up the more *material* reforms would realise that even these cannot progress without *spiritual* help, then there would not be the separation and holding aloof that there now is, and which hinders the onward march of spiritual progression. Every material reform depends upon a *spiritual* ideal being upheld; and, *vice versa*, there can be no *spiritual* ideal where there is no *material* probity and honesty of purpose. Wealth can take wings and fly away at any time, whereas the riches of the spirit will abide for ever. At present you have large bodies of people banded together for objects which are good in themselves, and yet fail in their aim because each one keeps in its own groove and does not adopt the scheme of human progress in its entirety. It is as if a number of men set out separately to cross a river where there was only one boat to carry them over, and because they would not enter the boat together they had to be ferried across one by one, thus wasting valuable time. Peace societies, anti-war, and Red Cross associations are all aiming at helping the world, but they row in different boats. Let one craft be chartered, large enough to take them all, and the crossing will be more expeditious, and the opposite shore more quickly reached. Then also will the moving cloud for the first time be seen in front of earth's pilgrims, and will lead them onward to the promised land.

October 1st, 1922.

THE MEANING OF LIFE.

When, while still on earth, we look on nature and see its wonders, we are amazed at the creative power which has brought about such marvels and we are dismayed when we try to unravel even a few of earth's mysteries. And yet why should dismay seize us? for, after all, we have not to solve the puzzle at once, or by our own unaided efforts, but we are led on, little by little, and each step we take on our journey brings us nearer to this wonderful Creative Power. We cannot understand, while on earth, how a plant grows, and it is no explanation to say that it requires such and such gases and assimilates them. All we can do is to try to increase our knowledge bit by bit, and endeavour to profit by such enlightenment as we are capable of understanding. I say "we" for it is the same with us as on earth: we cannot as yet take in the meaning of what we see, much less explain how all is arranged and ordered, but we have learnt a good deal since we have left the earth, and that gives us courage and hope for the future. Now the meaning of life seems to me to be the awakening of men's faculties, so that at last, in the far, far distance they will comprehend more of the laws that govern the universe, and more fully appreciate the marvellous foresight that has planned it all. You can imagine that to *learn* is the ambition of every man and woman on coming to our world, after rising above the first two spheres, and if they had not the wish for knowledge their progress would be retarded. In every new sphere that we enter upon in our upward course, there are new facts and new lessons to learn. You have heard of the power

to which we can attain, of creating birds and some of the lower forms of animal life. This power is not given until we have reached a fairly high sphere, for on a lower plane the *will* would not be sufficiently strong for the task. We do not *need* animals to supply our wants, as you do ; but they exist here for their own pleasure, possibly after a life of hardship on earth, and therefore we try to make them happy, and should anyone have a desire for a particular pet animal he could create it for his own solace and delight. There is always the combined group-soul where the immortal spiritual part of animals awaits a new life, and from this comes the material for the creation of the animal desired. I know this must seem very strange to you, for on earth it is often said that you must not *take* life, because you cannot *give* life. We could not, from here, restore life to a human being on earth in this way, and I have not heard of the creation of the higher animals, such as horses, dogs, and cats, even here, but I believe that with the higher guides this is possible also. It is our own desire, as we rise from sphere to sphere, to comprehend better *how* this creative work is accomplished, for here again explanations fail to explain. We do not see the actual process of creation. It is like the manifestation of a materialising circle. There is a mist, and the mist develops into the form ; but *how* ? Whether we shall ever know remains a mystery, but of this I am sure : that our powers increase as we go upward and onward, and this in itself is sufficient incentive to press forward and attain the highest goal possible. All I know is that these higher powers exist ; but they are so wonderful that, if told to us in our earth-life, we should have looked upon them as fairy-tales, and yet, later on, should have been compelled to admit their absolute truth.

October 15th, 1922.

THE WELFARE OF THE COMING AGES.

You will think I am given to overmuch preaching, and that I might now write concerning the life here more in detail. That is not my task: I am entrusted to give the warnings which shall convey a lesson to earth, and there are others more fitted to describe our present stage of existence. Now what is the real welfare of mankind? Is it a temporarily successful life on earth, and then to be launched into the great hereafter, ignorant, careless, and often totally unfitted for the change? No, it is to lead the life on earth which shall be a preparation for the future one. We have had many writings on this subject, but though the teaching is not new to you, it may be so to others, therefore I repeat it at the risk of being wearisome. Now, I should like to see the reforms needed on earth commenced by the *churches*, and all your divines to undergo an examination, not in creeds and dogmas but as regards the knowledge they possess respecting the realities of the future life. They would then discover how very little they do know of the subject on which it is their special mission to instruct others. You may say that they preach the Bible and its teachings. This is true, as regards the New Testament, but the Old would require for illumination a good amount of knowledge in the hearers as well as the preachers. In the days of Old Testament history, and even up to and beyond the time of Christ, there was a much greater knowledge of psychic possibilities than now, and yet the teaching in the Old Testament is crude, and often breathes a spirit

of revenge and barbaric cruelty. The writing was only possible in the times for which it was compiled, for then no higher standard of morals could be grasped ; yet it has been garnered up, and is even quoted as an example at the present day. There is nothing in the New Testament which is open to the same objections. Though there may be a certain vagueness in the constant use of parables and metaphors when accepted in the mere letter, there is a changed atmosphere when approached in the spirit, for the teaching of the spirit is *love*, and it has replaced the spirit of the letter—*hate*. “ Love your enemies,” Christ says ; “ Hate and destroy your enemies ” is the very breath of the older book. Why then do not the clergy explain, when they read lessons or preach from the Old Testament, that it was written for cruder times and is not applicable to the present day ? They allow their hearers to infer that they approve of the barbaric deeds recorded there ; but this is because they themselves often hold fast to the theory of the direct inspiration of the entire book. Not until a man has investigated for himself the truth of the communion between the two worlds, and the consequent knowledge of the future life, as far as it can be described, should he be allowed to preach to others. At present many of the churches are concerned to keep on in the same groove, because change would, at first, bring about a period of chaos. But this would pass, and then you would get preachers who, from your pulpits, would give the truth to mankind ; who would inculcate the teachings of Jesus, and would hold up the standard of morals and conduct to which all will have to accustom themselves when they pass over to our spheres. This that we advocate is a drastic reform, but it will come, I venture to predict, before many generations have passed away ; for men are getting weary of worn-out creeds and dogmatic dogmas for which there is neither

precedent nor reason. Meanwhile, let those who do know, testify to their knowledge, and the little seed will germinate and produce the mighty tree in which the birds of the air can rest, and which will, in its turn, produce trees like unto itself. No effort, conscientiously made, is ever lost, and even the word, forgotten as soon as spoken, may have far-reaching results.

November 12th, 1922.

### HASTE—A CONTRAST.

I wish to show the difference there is in the earth-life when all the daily affairs and duties are conducted calmly ; and should define "haste" as the anxiety to do a thing at, or in, a given time, though it should be less well done than when completed in a more leisurely fashion. *Quickness*, on the contrary, is not to be deprecated, but the reverse, for it generally means that the thing to be done is already matured in the mind, and that it can therefore be carried out well under the given conditions. A fixed time, or time limit, is always a rather doubtful procedure, for it causes the sense of hurry, even if the time allowed is ample. I am thinking particularly of the examinations I went through as a boy, on earth, when every idea seemed to vanish as soon as the fatal words were seen : " One hour allowed for this paper ! " Well, *here* we have no set time of that sort ; the consequence is that everything we undertake is done to the best possible of our powers. Now if people on earth could get rid of haste they would escape a great many misfortunes which result from it. The mental attitude of haste, too, is bad. Men need time for quiet reflection, and how can that be given if life is a constant drive at the point of the bayonet ? If calmness and quietude are cultivated, haste will be eliminated ; and you must not think that a man or woman is rendered less useful thereby, for hasty work is generally badly or only half done. Now, these definitions are what many people would call mere quibbles, or distinctions without a difference, but I can assure you they are not so : they are very real and

important. Apathy and calmness, sensitiveness and sensibility, are distinctions of a vital nature, but are often erroneously taken as descriptive of the same characteristics. *We* should say that a man was *apathetic* who sustained a great misfortune and sank under it without an effort to retrieve it; but *calm* when he met it bravely and immediately set himself to find a remedy. Some sensitive people take offence easily, and are always on the look-out for slights, but a man of *sensibility*, even if sensitive, never thinks a slight can be intended, and he is too considerate of others' feelings to imagine a different attitude on their part possible. He can mentally put himself in the place of others, and feel for them when they are in pain or trouble, whereas the *hyper-sensitive* man often cannot bear the sight of either physical or mental suffering. We could carry on a review of these and similar contrasts indefinitely, but you will have grasped my idea and can elaborate it for yourself. Let the nations act with calmness at the present juncture, and let haste be banished from their decisions; but let *quickness* be their watchword when once the best course of action has been decided on. So shall peace come to your world!

November 26th, 1922.

LESSONS IN LEARNING.

This title may seem mere tautology, but you will find it appropriate, and what I want to bring under your notice is that so many of the lessons which should be learnt on earth pass by unheeded. For instance, sad as was the late war, and terrible in its after-effects, yet much might have been learnt from it, as warnings, by those eager to absorb new ideas; but less has been effected than we, from here, should have liked to see. We welcome the League of Nations and its promise of a greater spirit of brotherhood between nation and nation, and we rejoice when the same spirit of unity is shown among the *churches*; but we fail to find the same friendly attitude amongst *all* people. We still see a great deal of class prejudice both in those who are called the workers, and those in a different station in life, though equally "workers." Until the two cease to act in opposition to each other and can mutually clasp hands, the peace of your country and other countries will never be assured. Now, what lessons should the war have taught? First and foremost, that, where a common need is present, all class distinctions vanish and men are simply men and brothers knitted together by a danger shared by all, and by hardships and sorrows common to all. This lesson, however, has only been partially learnt, or we should not see the strong feelings of animosity shown, and hear the reproaches hurled by one class against another as we do now. Why should unity of purpose only be brought out in times of common danger; why should it not come from a common spiritual knowledge and a common goal and

aim? That goal should be the improvement of the world and, if every man and woman had this end before them, they could not fight and hustle for place and power for themselves, but would unite in electing as their rulers and leaders those whom they felt to be the most capable of bringing about the desired end. The lesson of unity would also include the aim of upraising the manual workers by means of proper housing, suitable training to fit them for practical life, and a thorough moral and spiritual education. There should be the spiritual and the moral ground-work on which to build up the edifice of knowledge, or else it is like erecting a house on the shifting sand. Another lesson which is hardly ever learnt on earth, no matter what a man's experience has been, is that *love* must govern all, underlie all, and be the fundamental structure of all. What is done only as a *duty* has never the right spirit in it, so in teaching children the great aim should be to implant in them that spirit of love which must rule and direct their lives. It is not necessary that love should always be expressed in *words*, for it carries with it its own atmosphere, which is quickly discerned. Now this love has been, to some extent, shown during the war, but not in its full measure; and since the war ended it has become, with some few exceptions, a negligible quantity. We do not find, in looking on earth from here, that there is more consideration shown than formerly between those whose opinions are in opposition; there is no more "give and take" and, indeed, with many it is more "take" than "give." How few there are who will sacrifice unnecessary luxuries for the sake of having more money with which to help others! How few will curtail their amusements for the same reason! Yet these people are far from being unfeeling, but they have not yet profited by the lesson which has been before them. Another branch of teaching which is still much

needed is a large-minded toleration for *incapacity*. There are people in the world who, without being absolutely feeble-minded, are in so far *weak-minded* that they are unable to decide on a straight and definite course of action and follow it out. Such people can be greatly helped by calm and judicious advice from a friend of a more decided type of mind. If reasons are given plainly why a particular course of action is the one to follow, the indecisive man will generally act on his friend's advice, and very often his own will-power will, little by little, be strengthened. There seems to have even grown up since the war a spirit of contempt for want of decision of character, and this attitude has to be condemned—it cannot exist where love prevails.

December 24th, 1922.

THE GRIST WHICH THE MILL GRINDS.

We may compare the earth-life to the mill-wheel, which, in the quickly passing years on earth, grinds and changes the nature of the grain and makes it useful and capable of forming a nutrient food, instead of being, as before, a hard and indigestible product for, at any rate, the *human* race. In the same way many, on arriving at an age which fits them to enter upon the serious business of the earth-life, are not particularly well-fitted for it, for they are selfish, or at least, thoughtless, and do not fulfil their duty of helping others on the journey of life, until softened and changed by the mill-wheel of life's sorrows and disappointments. For some years the former selfish existence may content them, but if they have in them the germs of improvement, such lives cannot satisfy for long, though it usually takes misfortune or trouble of some kind to alter such natures. Now when the mill of life has them in its grip they are *bound* to change to something more refined and spiritual. They are very often quite unconscious of the alteration that is taking place in them, and probably they would resent it if told that a gradual reversal of their former outlook on life was going on ; but in time they cannot fail to perceive that the old attitude of mind is no longer theirs ; that they take a more lenient view of error in others ; that they are less prone to judge hastily and harshly ; and that they no longer shut their ears to any genuine tale of distress, but at once seek to alleviate it. Some there are, more in touch with the spiritual and who are sympathetic by nature, and even as boy or

girl have always been helpful, but these are the exceptions ; for the nature of mankind seems to lean towards selfishness rather than selflessness. We have the great example of a selfless life in our Master, Christ, but even He could not get many to follow in His steps, and those who did so were mostly men who had not to give up *riches* for His sake. We see that wealth can do much if rightly used, and that a rich and yet unselfish man or woman can not only be of assistance to others, but will thereby raise and ennoble their own characters. The selfish person, on the other hand, receives no blessing from his wealth ; for, spent on himself, it becomes a curse, and the end of that man or woman is loneliness, dissatisfaction, disappointment, and gloom. The two paths of selfishness and altruism lie far apart, and blessed is he who, at the commencement of his journey, chooses the right way. You may think that all this is self-evident ; and so it is, but for that very reason its lessons are ignored, just as we really do not consciously see an object which we are constantly passing on our daily round. The eye sees it, but fails to register it on the brain, and therefore the mind does not grasp the image. So it is with selfish people : they have been so accustomed to think of themselves first that they are blind to the fact that they have been selfish all their lives, and though they may confess to a few other defects, they hardly ever recognise this greatest one of all. When the new life is entered upon here, there is hardly any fault which is so detrimental to progression as selfishness, except, naturally, the great sins such as murder, robbery and suicide, as well as intemperance and the somewhat minor sin of gambling. All sins of impurity, too, are of the *major* kind, but selfishness is so little recognised by its possessors that it is really one of the most insidious of sins of the somewhat lesser degree. Much could be done in the earth-life by wise

counsel and good example to young people, but this teaching cannot commence too early, and often the unselfish father and mother foster selfishness in their children by indulging every whim even from the cradle. We have all had lessons to learn before we were fit for the Heavenly Kingdom, but these lessons need not be such painful ones if the training for the next world were commenced in early childhood.

January 7th, 1923.

THE LEAGUE OF THINKERS.

I am not now only referring to those on earth, but to the enormous band existing on our side as well. You will find that all who are considering the problems of the present day and pondering over their solution are working in conjunction with those in our spheres who have these evils at heart and are co-operating with the workers on earth. We often hold meetings here where the wrongs and abuses which exist on your plane are discussed and remedies planned. Of course, we cannot find a panacea for every evil, because we are working under different conditions to the earth ones, and we find great difficulty in impressing earth-dwellers with our ideas as to remedial measures even when we have thought them out to our *own* satisfaction. We could give you schemes for making distress far less than it is at present, but we have first to seek out someone on earth who is receptive to our influence, and when we have found such a man it is often a disappointment, as he is not really concerned about the subject, though he can hear and record our ideas. He, therefore, lets the matter drop from lack of interest in it. In this way we find constant hindrances to the communication of our wishes to earth. But it is not only with the remedies for evils on earth that our thinkers here are busied. They are, as you know, very much occupied with education, and with moral training of every kind. Not only so, but they desire to discover how the whole outlook on life can be raised and ennobled. It is not sufficient to have a learned,

cultured, and well-informed population, for often under stress or trial such men and women can develop the veriest savagery ; but we want to refine their natures in such a way that nothing can change them, so that in spite of poverty, sickness, or pain, their serenity shall remain unaltered. That is the type of our higher guides here, and although they have no longer any personal suffering to bear, they can feel for others and help to lessen their sorrows. Are we asking an impossibility ? We fear so at present ; but knowledge of the link between the two worlds is growing, and we believe and hope this will have a great effect in bringing about a different way of viewing life, and that its trivial amusements, worries, and cares will be relegated to the background, while the great life-issues will come forward and be looked upon as the only matters of real and lasting importance. You must not think we underestimate these minor cares and troubles, for we have gone through them ourselves and we know how almost impossible it is to get away from them while on earth, but we know now, as we did not *then*, that another side of our nature can be cultivated even while inhabiting our material body, and that we can learn to send our spirit to obtain strength and fortitude in the higher world even while we still remain on earth. The thinkers *here* would like the thinkers on earth to know and believe this great truth ; then a wave of thought would be constantly passing between your sphere and ours and we should be able to send our communications more freely to you and thus assist you better in your schemes and plans. This is not impossible, and, in fact, it is done by some few at the present time, but these few are in too small a minority, and we want their numbers increased until they become a strong force to be reckoned with. There are evil-disposed people on earth who would stop all reforms,

and their power is reinforced by impressions given by undeveloped and mischievous spirits *here* who try to hinder our work. Amongst those on earth who endeavour to stop the progress of reforms may be classed the profiteers, the miserly, the selfish, and those who trample others underfoot while climbing up the ladder themselves. Our League of Thinkers must become strong enough to counteract and outbalance their influence, and then the League of Nations and the League of Thinkers together may yet establish the reign of "peace on earth, goodwill to men." Amen!

January 21st, 1923.

THE PROBLEM OF THE AGES.

This "problem of the ages" to my mind takes a three-fold form which we will put as questions. First: Why was the world created? Second: What is its aim? Third: How is its final destiny being evolved? Now the "Religion of Humanity," as sketched by some writers to-day, does not even touch the fringe of the subject, for it leaves out altogether the why and wherefore of the world's creation and makes very little attempt to solve any problems beyond those which can be grasped by the average materialistic mind. It leaves men in blindness when that blindness could be cured. It has been proved from our side *ad nauseam* that the dwellers on earth *can* receive communications from the unseen, and while this is so there is no excuse for either ignorance or denial. To take our first question, why the world was created. To call the first appearance of man on earth "a combination of fortuitous circumstances" is merely begging the question, and one wonders that any clear intellect could be satisfied with such an explanation. We *here* believe, and are corroborated in our belief by others higher in progression than ourselves, that the world was made as a training-place for mankind, and that man was sent there for his preliminary education, as being the highest mental type which could be evolved under the then conditions, he having within himself the power to develop and progress if he so chose. This answers, though it may be imperfectly, the first two questions. Then as to the last query: there we can partly uphold the theory that the world itself will in

some way finally disappear ; but not that human life will perish with it. I have more than once given expression to my belief that in the course of long ages, mankind will so develop that his training will commence at a very much higher point than at present, and what is now the earth-life will begin on another planet of a much higher grade of development than the earth. From there men will probably be ready for a much quicker progression when they arrive at *our* side, and therefore it is quite possible that our probationary spheres *here* may no longer be required. If the believers in *one* life which ceases with the death of the earthly body would only give a little unbiased thought to the matter, they would see that such a contention gives a flat denial to all the laws of nature as at present known to science ; for to create man only to live some 70 or fewer years on earth, and then to be annihilated utterly, would be putting him on a lower level than the lowest forms of animal life, or of plants or gases. We who have passed over *know* that the higher animals share, to a certain point, the future of man, and that life continues when the earthly body is cast aside. Those still on earth know, too, that nothing is really destroyed on their planet. You burn something : its form changes, but the essence or spirit of it remains and proceeds to join with some other gas or vapour and create a fresh element. Plants give out and take in, and when they decay their spirit joins the air and forms new combinations. Shall we then believe that all we see of nature's laws is to be set aside in the solitary instance of mankind ? No, it were better for a man not to have been born than to live with the anticipation of such a fate in store for him. There is in the human heart a longing for the invisible : the unseen, yet *not* the *unknowable*, as it has been called by the materialistic mind. No,

it may be, and I think it *is*, in this grasping out for something beyond our *physical* needs—for something more than the earth-life can ever give us—that we get our highest and best education while on earth. As long as we are content to know only what we can see with our physical eyes, we keep on a low plane of thought, but when we mentally arrive at "Seeing the invisible" then we have mounted to a higher stage of progression. The final end of the world and every person in it is to join together the seen and the unseen, and to make life one continuity of effort both on earth and here; and in that strenuous effort men shall find their highest joy. That is my answer to the "problem of the ages."

February 4th, 1923.

THE CHOICE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL AS A  
LIFE-PRINCIPLE.

We do not believe that any man makes a deliberate choice of evil, but the two paths are there, and the decision made as to which shall be entered upon is as real as if the way of wrongdoing were consciously chosen. The lesson of this is that, first of all, there must be will-power to direct the choice; there must be a definite *goal* as the life-aim; and finally there must be the steady weighing of every action, and the consideration of how each deed will help to turn the scale in favour of a good or evil life. Not that every life is either very good or very bad: therein lies the great difficulty—that so many lives are always swinging from one side to the other and have no fixed hold on goodness. The man on the trapeze seems to fly carelessly from one pole to another, but in reality he has carefully calculated his distance and the exact time when it is safe to let go his hold and launch across to the pole swinging towards him. So should every man calculate before he takes deliberate action which requires a real decision. When he has once arrived at the point of deciding promptly and carrying out his decision at once, then, to the onlooker, he will seem to be acting carelessly and without thought, whereas his actions are the result of just the opposite cause: they are like the unconscious assimilation of food by the human body. You have not to think of digestion while in health, because it is part of the automatic machinery of your body and goes on without your volition. I desire therefore to impress upon you

that thoughts and acts which are constantly repeated *become* automatic, and that men can cultivate, say, either a good or a bad temper ; can give way to deceit and become habitually deceitful ; or fall a prey to vice and evil habits. Yet, on the other hand, all these faults can be overcome by a constant effort of will, persistently repeated. A man may have to go through the burning fiery furnace of desire and temptation first, but he can overcome, if he is earnest in his wish for reformation. But such purgatory should not be necessary, and no one is compelled to endure it, for the effort could be made at the beginning, when the will-power had not become weakened, and therefore the difficulties to be faced would be less hard and painful. A soul struggling to free itself from the bondage of sin has great sympathy from our side, for most of us have also had our own darling sins which we have cherished to the last. I am not now speaking of great sinners like myself, but of just the ordinary everyday sort of people who are neither very good nor very bad, but who have to pass through the refining fires when they reach this side. We help them as much as we can, but the very fact that they do not see the danger of their condition makes it more difficult to assist them. We would therefore like to impress upon you that in the education of your young people on earth, greater stress should be laid upon the formation of *good* habits, not only in acts, but in words and thoughts. Thoughts beget words, and words may give rise to acts which have their root in suggestions commenced by words. Therefore be careful of thoughts, for they will rise up into deeds good or evil according to the tendency of the thoughts which gave them birth.

February 18th, 1923.

NORMAL MEASURES.

This word "normal" is often much misused, and it might be better described as the *laissez-faire* method of dealing with problems, social, political, and moral, as they arise. The world has yet to learn that this "go-as-you-please" method is not likely to accomplish very much in the end, and that until men definitely bestir themselves and really set their wits to work to make the world progress, it will continue to drift on, possibly with long years of "muddling through" and probably to a period of what will seem chaos and despair, from which it will arise once more only to pursue the same fatal policy. What is, then, the remedy, for it seems a rather hopeless problem? We are doing what we can from our side to give impressions of what should be the course taken, and one of our desires is that each thinking man and woman should set his or her whole mind on some definite reform and work for it in season and out of season. You will never do any good by thinking that reforms will be started by *large bodies* of men, for every really good thing is commenced by one or two earnest people, and generally in the first instance emanates from a single brain. Earnestness and enthusiasm spread to others, and so the work is set going and is finally accomplished. Are there not sufficient earnest men and women for this purpose in the world? Must morality decay? Can home-life become an effete thing? Should young people sneer at the "old-fashioned" wisdom and experience of their elders? Must commercial honesty be set aside? Should the

manual worker be underpaid and the people who are the backbone of the nation live under depressing conditions? Must there be poverty allied to extreme luxury in the opposite scale? Should all these things be taken as matters of course and as the "trend of the times"? No, a thousand times, no! The world can never be a place of peace and real progress until a very different standard of ideals prevails, and until each man and woman on quitting the earth-life can truthfully say: "I have left the world a little better than I found it." Ah, well! we are told such ideas are dreams of fanaticism, yet they are no dreams, but the waking visions of God's intentions; only, if men do not do their share while on earth to carry out His will, then there is delay, misery, and finally despair, and the downfall of those nations which have been reckless of the warnings and deaf to the impressions which may have been sent to them from our side. We see Europe seething in rage, malice and rancour. We see countries taking the bit between their teeth and trampling on the records and ideals of the League of Nations, and we cry out for another "writing on the wall" which shall give them pause in their reckless career; but would they heed even such a warning? We fear not; for nations that have gone through the miseries and desolation of war so recently, and yet can continue a policy which may again provoke warfare are beyond warning and deaf to entreaty. Nothing but fear can turn them into the right path, and this compelling force will only be effective when they *know* and *believe* in the automatic punishment which our world deals out to those who commit such deeds of horror and drag others down to commit them also. Do not think me vindictive in saying this, for if people only could and would listen to our friendly warnings they would not need such rude awakening; but as it

is they go on their own way in the darkness of ignorance and false security till the end comes and they find themselves in the pit of misery and despair to which they drift on their first awakening into the new life in *our* world for which they are so unprepared. Those who are still on earth can do more for these unhappy ones who are ensuring sorrow for themselves in the hereafter than we can do from here, and, therefore, it is that we want mankind to preach action ; to rouse those over whom they have any influence to a sense of the necessity for such active service, and to point out that each little bit of influence they have is worth using, be it ever so little ; and that in the final agglomeration of all these tiny morsels of influence lies the renewal of the broken mosaic on which the future of the world rests. Never hesitate to speak out and speak up for the right and truth. A word may bring a thought, and a thought may cause an act, and according as that word and thought have been, so will be the higher or lower level of the deed. Little things are not little things in the aggregate, and each kind or noble action unites with others to form a splendid whole.

March 4th, 1923.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

This may seem a trite subject, but it can be taken under different aspects, and I do not now refer to the usual idea of holiness, which is often sacerdotal and, to a certain extent, sanctimonious; but I mean the beauty of the *spirit*, which can dominate and subdue the material nature in mankind. Such holiness shows itself in consideration for others, in brightness and charm of manner, in unselfishness, and, above all, in the giving of not only a helping *hand*, but a helpful *grip* of the hand to those who are in distress or need. There is no moroseness about one who has the true spirit of holiness within him. Let evils befall him and he may sorrow, but never rebel or carp against fate, but he is always ready to pick up his banner again and march forward. Perhaps "holiness" does not best describe these qualities, and they might possibly be better termed the possession of a trustful serenity of mind. No one who has won this can ever be tossed like a cork on the waves, of destiny. Such men and women rule their own lives, and though they cannot prevent storms assailing their frail bark, yet they can always save it from absolute wreckage. This serenity of spirit acts on the physical frame also, and will probably not only prolong life on earth but will cause that life to be a much happier one. That is the aspect of a spiritual life lived on earth that I want to convey to you; for as a small quantity of oil spread over water seems much to exceed its original proportions, so the influence of a spiritually-minded man has a far-reaching effect on others with whom he comes

in contact. Did you never hear the remark, "I've just been talking to so-and-so, and he always does me good." Why has he this good effect on others? Because above the turmoil, the rush, the hurry of life, with its sorrows, disappointments, and trials, his spirit soars in the radiant blue of the clear sky, leaving below it the mists and darkness of the gloomy world beneath; and in this way he helps to raise others also. With such a one there is no parade of goodness, no self-conceit, no idea that he is living a higher life than others; he just *is*, and stands before men—the example of a nearly perfect life. He lives apart and yet not apart; not isolated by his spirituality, but at one with all men, even when on a lower level of character than himself, because of his sympathy with their trials and his love for humanity. *In* the world but not *of* it, would best describe such a man, and when translated to *our* spheres he finds nothing strange, but sees everything realised that he has always desired and wished for. Such men have truly a "place prepared" here, and if we could increase the number of these saints on earth there would be fewer reforms needed on the material plane.

April 8th, 1923.

THE SPREAD OF A NEW IDEAL OF LIFE.

It has been urged that art and music have somewhat taken the place of the religion of the Puritans and Methodists in the times of Cromwell; but with this I am not entirely in agreement, and I am more inclined to think that in the present stage of the world's progress, if music and art had not been brought into the lives of the masses of the people, religion would have died out completely as a guiding factor. Do we not find that in looking at any beautiful object, whether natural or artificial, or in listening to soul-stirring music, there is a sense of nearness to God and His creation which is not with us at other times? I, even I, used to feel this very strongly when abroad, and gazing at the distant snowy peaks, or in England in looking upon some sylvan, peaceful scene, or when wandering through a picture or sculpture gallery, surrounded by beautiful paintings and graceful, noble figures of the human form. I have sometimes thought, since my passing over, that if natural scenery and the galleries of art had possessed as powerful an attraction for me as the gambling hells, I might have been a good man; but alas! I turned away from the right path and followed the evil course. I think it is necessary, with young people, to *form* their minds on the subject of beauty, for some are apparently born with this sense entirely lacking, but it can be cultivated by their elders, and should be. Take one boy for a walk and he will see nothing but a bird's nest to rob, ducks to stone, or dogs to tease; but another will go the same round and will come back full of delight at the lovely

tints of the trees, the luxuriance of the wild flowers, and the interesting ways of the birds and animals he has seen. But the first boy can be *taught* to recognise beauty in all these things, and he can be cured of the desire to torment and tease, which is the product of an empty mind. Put something else into that mind and the evil impulses are pushed out and cease to exist. Idleness, whether mental or physical, is sure to open the door to all sorts of evil propensities, and therefore the first thing needful is to store the mind with useful and beautiful ideals. Teachers should realise this before they become leaders of the young. School-cramming cannot take the place of moral training, for personal influence alone can count in this. Is the ideal in life higher than that of formerly? I believe that it is, since errors are beginning to be admitted as facts, and are no longer carefully hidden and concealed. Certainly the present standard is a higher one than, say, in the time of the Puritans, or even as late as the Georgian era. There was a great pretence of austerity in the former period, but very little human sympathy shown between man and man, while true morality and consideration for the weak and helpless were practically absent. Sports have been barbarous and cruelty rampant even up to within the last fifty years. Well, the world has progressed in that respect, and in *some* countries, at least, cruelty is recognised as detestable and cowardly, though from this condemnation the law still exempts many regrettable forms of torture. Those who argue that any cruelty is justifiable which may, even possibly, benefit the *human* race, thereby put themselves outside the pale of civilisation, and stamp themselves as descendants from the dark ages of mankind.

April 22nd, 1923.

PRESENT-DAY TENDENCIES.

Can we say that all modern thought is moving in one direction? No, that is not the idea I wish to convey. I want rather to indicate in what way the different grooves of thought are tending to amalgamate and produce one definite effect. Now in poetry we find a great deal which is non-comprehensible unless to a trained poetic mind, or, on the other hand, we see in it such a materialistic representation of modern life that it can hardly have an ennobling effect upon the readers. In fiction we see the same trend towards realism, but I am glad to perceive that this is less marked than it was fifteen or more years ago, and that there is a decided tendency in many of the later writers to revert to the drawing of character rather than the depicting of sensational incidents. But again, the upraising effect of good fiction we perceive from our side being counteracted by the picture films, where the most exciting, and—to a healthy mind—*repulsive* scenes of danger are often set forth, to the undoubted production of a morbid interest in such scenes in real life. In spite of these drawbacks we admit that the teaching in schools has somewhat improved, in the fact that not so much stress is being laid upon wars and their attendant carnage as upon the growth of nations and the causes of the rise or fall of the different countries. The modern schoolboy or girl, if asked to give the reason for the downfall of Greece and Rome, would probably reply that the causes were cruelty, extravagance, and luxury, but this answer does not go deeply

enough, the most potent reason being that the life lived in those empires was a purely material one, devoid of spirituality. Against this moral training in the schools, however, we have to set the establishment in them of military corps, thus making of nearly every schoolboy a potential soldier ; and, while this is so, there is little chance that war will become extinct. However, those in the spirit-world see that the stream of progress has already commenced to flow steadily in spite of the sets-back which I have enumerated. All these errors come down to you from a prejudiced and backward *elder* generation, and we cannot expect its ideas to die with it, so that it may take quite two generations before the upholding of militarism is looked upon otherwise than as a patriotic virtue. But there will be no real peace until that feeling of nationality can be eliminated which makes an Englishman, a Frenchman or a German, believe that *his* country alone is worthy to rule the world. Men condemn conceit in individuals, but fail to see that self-laudation in nations (being only conceit on a larger scale) is even more to be deprecated. If all nationalities could be united in ties of brotherhood, and all men joined in helping their fellow-men, there would be no occasion for war, and all countries would live on terms of friendship. What is wanted is a world-wide system of education to bring about this desirable result ; but ideas grow slowly in men's minds, and the need is for more preachers of the doctrine of universal brotherhood, as the great mass of mankind goes on its way, unthinking and unheeding. The walls may fall around them in their own city, but if *they* escape unscathed they still argue that all is well. Selfishness is at the root of this attitude of mind, and the selfishness of nations is the worst form, because the entire population is dragged into the *appearance* of consenting to measures which many of them may

detest and abhor but are utterly powerless to prevent. Often a country drifts into war, urged thereto by those who have power but not principle, and by those who would make profit out of a nation's agony. How long shall these things be? Let every man set his face steadfastly against such sins, and the end cannot be long delayed.

May 6th, 1923.

THE PLENITUDE OF OPPORTUNITY.

Many people, when looking back on a wasted life, are apt to say: "I never had a chance!" In some cases this may be true, but with the majority it is not so, and the cause of their dissatisfaction with life has been in themselves and was not the fault of circumstances. Many, indeed most people, do not seize the opportunities which come in their way. A man may have been hampered by being a spendthrift: for when he wanted anything, at whatever cost he must have it, and being constantly given way to, the habit of self-indulgence is formed and money in larger and larger sums is frittered away uselessly. The same may be said of the opposite quality: miserliness. It does not at first sight seem wrong that a man should desire to keep a balance at his bank, but if he has the fixed idea in his mind that it must be always increasing in amount, then he will omit doing some deed of kindness; or he may stint his family in household expenses, or even grudge the money for his children's education and send them out into the world ill-equipped! Such faults always commence by giving way to very small insidious temptations, and so habits are formed which in time become obsessions. Selfishness may begin by the thought that a certain piece of self-denial is really not called for and cannot be expected from a man; but he will find that he cannot succumb to temptation *once* only, he will fall again and again, though each time vowing mentally that it shall be the last time. But there never comes a "last time" and temptation finds a weaker resistance from day to day. All this giving way to weakness is a waste of opportunity. A man who needed to perfect himself

in some new thing for the extension of his business would not give up the attempt at the first difficulty he encountered, but when it is a question of the overcoming of some fault, then he fails to recognise the significance of the first fall, and goes from bad to worse. There is, perhaps, nothing so difficult to get rid of as bad temper, and of this there are many varieties. Personally, I would rather, in my old days, have had to deal with a quick-tempered person, whose anger flared up and dispersed, than with one of a sullen and sulky disposition, who brooded over a fancied injury, and would neither forget nor forgive. That sort of person could not exist *here*, and many who pass over have a long period of probation before they can fit themselves for the atmosphere of love which prevails with us. But there is one form of bad temper for which we can pity its possessor, and that is the more apparent than real surliness which comes from self-distrust and lack of self-reliance. Such a man thinks himself too insignificant to be a favourite, and, therefore, he imagines slights where none are meant, and deploras the lack of a sympathy which he has never invited. Such men are frequently overflowing with love for others, but are too tongue-tied to express it. If they receive a favour they cannot show the gratitude they feel, and so their reputation for moroseness and ill-temper grows, and these unfortunate people become more and more lonely and isolated. But the men and women, on the other hand, who at once recognise a fault in themselves and strive to overcome it, even if they fail at first (and sometimes even if they fail *altogether*) are recognised *here* as having done their best to seize the opportunities afforded them, and their place in our world will be allotted them, not according to what they have *accomplished*, but according to what they have *striven* to do.

May 27th, 1923.

THE TRIUMPH OF A REASONABLE FAITH.

I wish to prove that the faith in a spirit-world is a reasonable and a logical one. It has been said to doubters: "Suppose you had to imagine an ideal Heaven, what could you suggest more perfect than the one described through spiritual revelation to mankind? The idea of an eternity of *idleness*, or even spending the whole of it in incessantly praising God, is unthinkable either for intellectual or physically active human beings. But it is just because people do *not* think that they accept the idea of a Heaven of clouds and golden harps and imagine they believe in it, whereas their minds are really a complete blank on the subject of the future life. Ours is the reasonable Heaven, which satisfies all the aspirations of the human soul and which enables the work attempted on earth to be carried on under happier and more favourable conditions. The difficulty in making the majority of people realise this is that they have not set themselves any great ideal to work for while on earth, and therefore they cannot perceive the beauty of the progression which is the moving power in *our* world. If you were to inquire of the great mass of men and women on earth, how much spiritual progress they had made so far, they would either be unable to answer or would reply that they thought they were much the same as they had always been. This is not making a proper use of their opportunities, and there should be, with everyone, a sort of moral stock-taking at intervals, to enable them to gauge their spiritual progression and judge whether they are becoming better and happier;

for goodness and unselfishness produce happiness and contentment, while selfishness and pleasure-seeking as the aim of existence can only bring discontent and dissatisfaction with life. If you consider life here in our spirit-world, as revealed through ourselves or tried and trusted mediums, and compare it with the conventional Heaven, you will see its vast superiority. I have called this belief "a reasonable faith," but it is more than faith—it can be *knowledge* if only men will open their minds to what is passed on to them by those who have already crossed the border. We are saddened by the hostility of many who *should* support our teachings, but we are gladdened by the adherence of those who have believed our words and have endeavoured to live the life which will fit them for the life hereafter. Their progression thus follows logically on a faith and a belief which have led to a knowledge of facts not only reasonable in themselves but which are the only explanation of the mysteries of the earth-world. Do we not see good men and women suffering there in "mind, body, or estate," and what are termed "bad" people (but whom *we* only call *undeveloped*) flourishing like the "green bay-tree" and leading materially-prosperous and successful lives? *Our* side once reached, however, disillusion confronts them, and the grey mists of the educative spheres close round them. Riches, popularity, the applause of men, all are gone, and they are left alone and desolate to the contemplation of themselves as they really are, and unless they have a strong desire and an earnest intention to atone for their former misdoings, they will undergo a long period of unhappiness, remorse and mental misery; for without these their hardened natures could not become softened. We see many sad sights amongst such new-comers here, but where there is repentance there is hope, and it is rather the unrepentant and



callous who claim our pity and our help. For these we do our utmost, yet often we find ourselves repelled and pushed back by the mental attitude of those who deem themselves harshly treated and consider that their former wealth and position on the earth-plane should entitle them to special consideration in the spirit-world. Ah! how clearly we see now how we have wasted our opportunities on earth; and were it not that we are mercifully granted the life eternal for our redemption, many of us would hardly be able to retrieve our past errors and recover the ground we have so wilfully lost by our blindness and folly when in the material body; yet mercy is shown even to the most undeserving.

June 10th, 1923.

THE DIGNITY OF LABOUR.

We should all agree that an idle life while on earth is much to be condemned, but possibly few realise that true and honest labour—whether manual or mental, whether for the benefit of a large section of the community or only for the helping and upraising of the individual, is an ennobling factor in the training of character. It is usually conceded that a selfish life is demoralising to the one who leads it, but it is not so generally believed that the positive labour itself is beneficial. One may spend one's time on earth in many pursuits which are distinctly labour, and yet would not usually come under that category. The man who thinks and plans for the improvement of the conditions and lives of his fellows as truly gives his labour as he who under his directions carries out these schemes by the work of his own hands. Without brain-work little could be done for the benefit of others, and the greatest need now is to make the manual labourer realise that he himself would be powerless to ameliorate the conditions of his own class, did not someone with more capacity for initiative, direct the work. At present the former imagines that he alone is the *worker*, but he would soon find that the abolition of the thinkers would render his work useless, as he has never been accustomed to use his mental powers for the formulation of new ideas and methods of progress. We want more of a bond between the different classes of workers to remedy this. The foregoing may not quite express the idea of the title I have given to this paper, but I want to prove that,

unless a man does do useful work of some kind, his life is not dignified but sordid and narrow. We cannot, however, always judge by outward appearances; for the apparently idle man may yet be doing valuable work quietly; but there are some who only use wealth for personal pleasure, and these are they whom we condemn. How far is it justifiable then, you may ask, to use one's wealth for personal aims and enjoyment? That question is easily answered. For instance, suppose that a man has inherited or gained a large fortune, he is certainly justified in keeping up a house large enough to enable him and his family to live in comfort, and in also taking reasonable holidays; but he would not be justified in spending his entire surplus income in prolonged absences from home, and thus neglecting the duties which go with his position. He should contribute generously to well-organised charities, but to give personal help in addition is most desirable. An order passed on for a hospital without personal knowledge of the one who benefits by it may do the latter the same physical good, but in seeking out the recipient and showing sympathy and personal interest, the donor would establish a friendly relationship which would knit an unbreakable bond of brotherhood between them. All this is very self-evident, but from *here*, looking upon the affairs of earth, we see so much hardness and callousness even when practical benefits are bestowed, that we want to put forward *our* views and to beg for the larger charity which stands not afar off, but comes to the sufferer and lays its hand upon him in brotherly love. This spirit is slowly growing, but we should like to see a more rapid advance in that Christ-love which should permeate every thought, word, or action. Then only will all classes be helpful one to another and the spirit of distrust and unrest die out.

June 24th, 1923.

THE NEED FOR EXPERIENCE.

At first sight this seems so self-evident as to be hardly worth discussing, but a little consideration will show that the reverse is the fact. I am going to take "experience" in its broadest sense, and, when considered in this way, we shall find that the need for it is indeed great. Men gain experience in the earth-life by repeated failures. Their best and most cherished plans go wrong because they have had no previous knowledge of how the slightest mistake can overturn them. In worldly business, men often commence by being too trustful, and it is not until they have been "taken in," as it is called, more than once, that they begin to require some guarantee as to character. We might multiply similar instances; but if experience is necessary when dealing with earthly affairs, how much more important is it when considering questions concerning the spiritual life. Men are told in the Bible to "try the spirits and see whether they be of God." Why, with the unthinking classes, there is so much prejudice against anything that savours of a knowledge of the next world, is because they are only awake to frauds and deceptions, and do not take the trouble to study the real proven facts. Perhaps the argument may be advanced that few people can get first-hand evidence from the other world, but that is a futile objection, for it is possible to obtain reliable evidence at *second-hand*. If relating to *earthly* matters, a man, having the opportunity of verifying a statement and failing to do so, would be looked upon as next door to a lunatic, but with the most important thing of all—

what the future life is to be—the whole question is usually shelved until the time comes when exchanging the earthly for the spiritual body is inevitable. People often talk of “the experience of Life,” but can there be any true experience of life if it does not include the *two* worlds? Mankind is part of one great family, some still in the body, and others having passed to the beyond; how foolish, then, to separate the two classes as if they were not of the same human race, and to speak of those who have gone before as “the dead,” especially as the two worlds are interblended. The disembodied are more alive than they ever were on earth, and possess greater powers. But this brings to mind another great objection often raised: why the communications received from *our* world do not show any intellectual superiority over the mental powers possessed by the person in question during his or her earth-life? The answer is that in speaking through a trance-medium, or communicating through an automatic writer, either of whom is *accustomed* to function for the communicating spirit, much more valuable information *can* be received than was possible for the communicator to give in earth-life; but stress must also be laid on the fact that the speaker or writer and the medium *must* be accustomed to work together, for even the finest intellects in our world find it difficult to transmit messages of literary or scientific interest through an untried medium. That is why so many of the communications appear trivial, but let a regular series of sittings take place with the same medium and communicator and it will soon be found that the messages attain a higher level, and that they will continue to improve with each sitting, so far as the mental receptivity of the medium will permit. Experience is wanted even in this case, for it is not all at once that those from our side can find out how best

to impress their ideas on the medium through whom they have to work. It is a great mistake to think that experience can only be gained as regards practical earthly matters, for the material side of life is absolutely less real than the spiritual one, and for both experience is necessary. Before going to an unknown foreign country every prudent man would consult those who have already been there, concerning its climate and the necessary equipment for it, but regarding the journey to the spirit-world men are not so far-seeing, and do not make any preparation for it, or even seek to discover what is needed. It is not only the "foolish virgins" who neglect their lamps, and there are few lamps on earth which are kept trimmed and ready; but nevertheless mankind is slowly learning the much-needed lessons of preparation for the world to come.

July 29th, 1923.

CREDESCENCE AND SUSPICION.

Many people would term the first of these qualities "credulity" or a disposition easily led by anyone, and a mind that believes everything and does not distinguish the true from the false. But that is not the meaning conveyed to me by "credence." I would rather describe it as the open mind which is ready to assimilate new ideas and yet is not disposed to accept them on trust, without proof of their worth and sterling value; for all ideas are not good simply because they are new, and, unless well considered before being acted upon, in many cases great harm might result from their adoption. *Suspicion*, on the other hand, is a state of mind which prevents any new ideas being taken in and utilised even if useful. Every new invention, scheme, or social reform is looked upon as undermining some long-held and cherished opinion or faith. Suspicion is also fatal to both love and friendship, for personal ends are suspected even in real friends, and many an otherwise happy marriage has been rendered miserable by wrong motives being attributed by either one or the other. The man of *credence* is ready to consider a new idea and, though he may at first think it impracticable, he does not therefore cast it aside, but studies it carefully and thoroughly before deciding for or against it. The *credulous* man, on the contrary, takes up the idea warmly without investigation, and probably has to suffer disappointment in consequence. What is true as to material affairs is certainly true as regards psychic and spiritual matters. In these also one should be cautious and not jump

hastily to a conclusion ; for if a man has never investigated for himself but believes all that he hears at once, then he stands on an insecure basis ; but if he has received evidence at first-hand, or studied written records by reliable authorities, then he has a backbone for his faith. It is better to take a step at a time when in a dark passage, or there may be a pitfall which you do not see, and into which you may blindly stumble. The reason why many people distrust what are known as " psychical evidences " is because the few experiences they have had were intermingled with the disappointments that must naturally come to everyone at times, set up through cross-currents of communication, and they then declare that the whole thing is fraudulent. Such people may probably have been unduly credulous at first, and so eager to get at the truth that they failed to see the real and only way to arrive at it. In saying all this my desire is to point a moral and give a warning. The belief in spirit-return is advancing by leaps and bounds, and we are a little afraid, looking from here at its rapid progress within a comparatively short time, lest it should be too much dragged into the limelight by enthusiasts, and its real advance checked by the bringing forward of mediums whose powers have not yet had time to mature. Some indeed are born with natural psychic gifts and need hardly any training, but others have the gifts as yet latent and need careful direction from those who have had more experience. When one medium after another is consulted on some matter of absorbing interest (such as the present condition and state of a dearly-loved relative who has passed over), several of the mediums may possibly give the same report in almost the same words, but *one* at last conveys something which seems in contradiction to what has been said through the others : what is the anxious enquirer to believe ? Let

him reserve judgment and study and learn, and he will probably find a perfectly logical solution of the problem' for the first mediums may have reported correctly, but the *last* one may have been unable, on account of a too-dominant personality, to convey the message which the other side wished to pass on, and some of the medium's own ideas have tinged the communication. Thus there is caused distress and disillusion, which might have been avoided by a more thorough knowledge of psychic conditions. A cautious advance is the wisest one ; let every step be tested and every foothold proved secure before a further advance is made ; for communication between the two worlds is a proven fact, and nothing that may *seem* to contradict it should be left without a thorough investigation, which must be continued until an explanation has been discovered.

August 12th, 1923.

THE PASSING OF A DARK CLOUD.

There does, indeed, appear to be a dark cloud hanging over the earth-world just now, and the gloom seems so to envelop it as to shut out the possibility of seeing even what light there may be. This is inevitable after the horrors of such a war as the past years have seen ; for not only have material difficulties resulted, but men's minds have received a shock, inasmuch as the old landmarks have been removed and the ideal standard of life has been sensibly lowered. You cannot commit murder and remain a philanthropist ; you cannot steal and then preach honesty ; you cannot grasp for yourself at the expense of others and yet continue fair in your business dealings ; and all these sins are part of warfare and nothing that can be said will alter the fact. You cannot change the nature of war ; it is not only fundamentally wrong, but it is demoralising and brings with it a long train of other evils, and these will be felt for another generation or even more. How, then, can we assert that the dark cloud will pass ? We do, because the world *has* to progress in order to fulfil its purpose. If it were to steadily retrogress, then in a comparatively short time the world would cease to exist altogether and a new world, under new conditions, would have to be created in its place. But from the standpoint here we see that progress is the ultimate universal rule in nature, and that even death, whether of plant, animal or man, bends to this law, which we know is eventually progressive. Should a forest be cleared by the cutting down of trees, there spring up new and beautiful flowers

immediately, not indeed having a money-value as the trees had, but valuable in the scheme of nature, for beauty is the aim of nature, and whatever increases the loveliness of the world is of more real worth than things which are precious merely from a commercial point of view. We see also that this war, although it may have apparently reduced the world to chaos for a time, is not going to wreck the final progress of that world. Those thousands of young lives the war has taken have not been lived in vain, even though the allotted span of life has not been reached. They have left behind them memories which will never fade: their parents now think of them as pure and unspotted souls who have gone to swell the vast company of white-robed angels in Heaven. Were they selfish and headstrong in their youth?—it is all forgotten and only their good qualities are remembered. Love for those who have “gone before” is an ennobling thing, and no one who now loves a memory can ever be quite as careless as he was, for there must be a tenderer feeling for others just because of the beloved recollection of one who on earth “is not.” Is this sufficient to bring about progress? Not by itself, but nature works slowly, and you will find that insensibly mankind is commencing to see the wrong and misery caused by war, and when once this has been fully realised it will not be long before the cry will go up: “This shall not be—war must cease!” I may seem to be speaking of war as if it were the only evil in the world, but it brings so many sorrows and sins in its train that when the world has once put an end to it a new era of progress will have arisen. Cruelty is fostered by war; robbery is not looked upon as wrongdoing; to deceive is thought meritorious when it is the enemy who is deceived; murder is condoned if it is wholesale, but men are punished for the killing of

a *single* fellow-being ; all sense of logic, justice, pity and mercy is destroyed by war, and then punishment follows for acts which are the logical outcome of such teaching. Suicides have become common since the war, for those who have seen the slaughter on a battle-field are not likely to have much regard for the sacredness of life, and if they have a grievance against their present world they are quite ready to take life, and too often pass ignorantly to the other world.

October 7th, 1923.

THE PROTECTIVE GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

There is a larger capacity for love here than is ever possible on earth, and I would like you to realise what this implies. Its effect is that help, quite impossible to be given on earth from one man to another, can be easily and promptly transmitted from our side to an earthly brother or sister in distress. When all earthly aid and comfort are lacking and seem unattainable, then through this higher love, ordained by God's merciful providence, we can give sympathy and assistance. I will cite a case. A little child had died, and the mother was inconsolable. We managed to impress her to visit a neighbour whom she knew but slightly. This lady had the gift of clairvoyance, unknown to the mother, and the latter felt a sense of peace and consolation the moment she entered the house. A very few moments after greeting her hostess she was told by the latter that the child she had thought lost to her for ever was standing by her side, and joy and hope returned to the bereaved mother's heart. This is a very simple and ordinary example, and is hardly worth giving, except for the fact that most people would argue that the visit of the mother to her neighbour was merely caused by "chance," whereas we can testify that it was deliberately planned and brought about by our side. When anyone is hesitating and perplexed as to the right course to pursue in any case where there is choice of decision, we, from the spirit side of life, often bring light and leading; for, after pondering the matter and arriving at half a dozen different solutions, all to be finally rejected, there

comes into the mind of the troubled man a course of action, unthought of before ; suggested by us but grasped by him and accepted at once as solving the problem. Whenever you feel indecision suddenly leave you under similar circumstances, you may be sure that a guiding mind is directing your action. We do not want to take all the credit of right judgment to ourselves, for if the earth person is able to solve the difficulty by himself it is the best thing for his development, but there are many cases in which the issue is not clear, and where it seems that *every* course must lead to further complications, and then our help is needed. Direct impressions are only given when all else has failed of effect. Such impressions are not difficult to give to most people, but our task at the present time is a much harder one : that of trying to influence the rulers of the different European countries in favour of peace and against war in the future. Here we seem to be endeavouring to wreck a tower by casting stones at it. The will of a ruler is hard to influence, for that ruler generally becomes a *dictator* in seasons of stress and trial, and little is heard of "the will of the people," so glibly quoted at other times. Now we, on our side, can do little without co-operation on yours, and this is difficult to obtain at present. Try, therefore, to realise our difficulties, and do not imagine that we have abandoned our task in despair. We are working for the regeneration of mankind, and that is an object so near our hearts that we cannot abandon our efforts, even though they should seem to fail of effect for the time being.

December 2nd, 1923.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

I have already been called an optimist, and am becoming more optimistic every day as my knowledge increases. Take this movement in the Churches of every denomination, to bring Christianity into all the affairs of daily life ; can anything be more necessary, or more calculated to benefit the earth-world ? It is a gleam of light illuminating a war-darkened world ; it shows that there is dissatisfaction felt with the present conditions ; and also that the Churches are at last beginning to be awake to their duty. Too long have religion and all the affairs of ordinary daily life kept apart ; now there is a desire to clasp hands together in the bonds of friendship. It is a good work and well worth striving for. Pressure should be brought to bear upon the conferences and study circles, to include the teaching of humanity not only to your brother-men, but also to the sub-human family. We, from here, will uphold and strengthen your efforts, but much must depend upon yourselves, and the teaching of consideration for all sentient creatures must necessarily carry with it the condemnation of the practice of vivisection. There should be a crusade, too, against capital punishment (which we are glad to see has already commenced), as this lets loose on *our* world a number of undeveloped and bitter-minded spirits who impress others still on earth with feelings of revenge and hatred. Bring before the people elevating amusements, thus counteracting many of those at present provided for them. It is not enough that the theatres and picture-shows should *amuse* only ;

they should be made the means of inculcating higher aims in life. Let a Conference be started, and carried on, and in time it may be led to include all the reforms for which we in the higher spheres are now working. When once a higher ideal has been raised, then all the evils and causes we deprecate *must* become impossible, because they sin against all the teachings of Christianity. Reforms may indeed come slowly, but they will be real ones and not merely on the surface, for no reform is thorough unless it goes to the root of an abuse and digs it up until not even a fibre is left to propagate its kind.

January 6th, 1924.

#### THE MEANING OF THE PRESENT CRISIS IN THE WORLD.

At a first glance it would seem as if the existing disturbed state of the world were an unmixed evil; but there is another side of the question to consider: what are the reasons for this disturbance? Is it not true that below the apparently smooth surface of things prior to the war, there was already perceptible the hissing and seething of the boiling masses of eruptive material below? While there is this upheaval going on beneath the feet of mankind he can have no solid foundation on which to build up reforms, and it is best that the eruption should break out openly and its causes be acknowledged and remedied. The history of the world and of man's progression in it must be studied before a true grasp of the evils which have led to this state of unrest can be understood. While the wages question has generally been the ostensible cause

of strikes, yet beyond this there has also been the feeling of injustice in the minds of the manual labourers, in that they possessed no real interest in industries which yet could not be carried on without their work. You will find, I think, that in all trades or businesses where the workers are made co-partners even in the smallest degree, this sense of injustice does not exist. There are more examples of this arrangement than formerly, but not enough, and until the whole business life of a nation is conducted on these broader and more humanitarian lines there will never be internal peace amongst its inhabitants. Women, too, albeit more patient under hardships than men, suffer greatly from the lower wages paid in unskilled employments, which are, for many, the only alternative to starvation. The philanthropy which only palliates and does not touch the root of the evil is of no permanent value, for the source of the hardship must be thoroughly understood and dealt with, so that there shall be no chance of its recurrence.

February 3rd, 1924.

NOTES ON CURRENT EARTH-EVENTS.

The first thing to be noticed is the change of government, and we welcome it because we think it will remove many causes of dissatisfaction and will lead to some very pressing and needed reforms. Parliament has, until now, been the stronghold of what are called the upper classes. They have undoubtedly tried to do their duty, but it is quite impossible that men of a different type could see eye to eye with the proletariat in matters affecting the latter, and so it is that distrust and suspicion have crept in, and that employers have become, to the workmen, typical of oppressors and slave-drivers. Now, however, that their own class is more than adequately represented, and when the manual labourer finds that even his own class cannot produce an immediate El Dorado, he will begin to ask himself why this is so, and what are the real reasons underlying scarcity of work and dearness of food and other necessaries, and instead of putting it down to the oppression of the employers of labour he will begin to see in strikes, wars, and in want of consideration for others the true causes of the state of things he wishes to alter. Not till then can class join with class to bring about the much-needed reforms. I therefore welcome the new Government and the admission of women to Parliament, since, to have a perfect or even semi-perfect world, you must have *all* opinions represented, for the best intellects will lead the others and the standard of ideals will be raised. There are faults in all men and all women, but they are rarely the *same* faults, and the differences will serve to

maintain the just balance. A government by men only has not proved satisfactory, and one by women alone would not be so either, but a union of the two may produce the best results. If mankind could once be made to see that happiness is only to be sought for in himself, and depends upon the view-point from which life on earth and the life hereafter are regarded, then there would be a larger outlook, and the trials of earth would count for less. The spirit of the martyrs of old who could pass through pain almost unheeding can be revived: it is not yet dead, and in that spirit the ills of life on earth could be almost disregarded in the face of the glorious future of the life to come. Another thing I rejoice to see is the growing concern for right methods in the teaching of the young. These have not yet been perfected, but they are being sought for and no quest of the Holy Grail is doomed to ultimate failure.

March 2nd, 1924.

MENTAL TELEGRAPHY.

What a power thought might be if it were only rightly directed? By it men could almost move mountains, for, guided by a strong will, its action is as sure as that of an arrow speeding swiftly to its goal. If only mankind comprehended the possibilities of thought, then its powers would be gradually increased and eventually the apparent marvels we can do here would, in a lesser degree, be possible on earth also. Suppose it was wished to make a friend at a distance refrain from a certain course of conduct, you could concentrate all your will-power on making him realise the evil consequences that would ensue from this course, were your will-power sufficiently cultivated. On earth you cannot as yet obtain the powers that we have here, because the conditions are different, and are not understood by you. What men have to learn first is that this power exists in an embryo state in every man and woman, and that it only needs perseverance for its cultivation. For example, should you be writing a book, and desire to embody in it the knowledge that a friend has gained of a certain country through his travels, but of which country you yourself are absolutely ignorant; if you concentrated all your will-power on endeavouring to make his mind act on yours and supply the necessary information, you might possibly find your pen running on without your own volition, and the description flowing easily and readily. When it was finished you would wonder whether you had invented it all, but you go to your friend and find that what you have written is correct in every

detail. Now, with us this is a very usual method of obtaining information, but on earth it would be thought marvellous; and yet thought-reading, even when practised as an amusement, is only the same procedure in its initial stages. Unfortunately perseverance is not a strong feature with most of the earth-dwellers, but here we have to practise it from the moment that we take up our work, and if we fail to do so we either cease to progress, or we may even slip back into Borderland and remain there for a considerable period. Perseverance, unselfishness, and love are three great qualities which need to be cultivated on earth to fit mankind for the work and happiness in the future life, and if not learnt before we pass over to it they are more difficult to acquire later. Many things which are possible to us, you also could learn to practise. For instance, you could sit in your own room and concentrate on an absent friend and, when you had turned his thoughts to yourself, you could dictate a message to his brain which he would receive consciously, as if he were thinking for himself, and yet it might convey something of which his normal mind was quite ignorant: which he did not know and could not have known. Pain and sorrow in the parting between friends and relatives could be lessened were such methods of communication generally known on earth. But at present it is easier to establish communication between our plane and yours than between two people still in the material body. Having accepted wireless telegraphy as a scientific fact, why will not people realise that there can be similar waves passing from brain to brain all over the universe, without any receiving or transmitting instrument except the brain itself. Scientific facts are accepted as proven without demur when dealing with purely material matters, but if the earth's rotundity had been revealed by *psychic*

methods it would have remained *flat* to the imaginations of most people even up to the present day! To what does all this lead, you may ask. We hope, to the awakening in the minds of a few at least, of the thought, whether these powers, now latent, cannot be developed, and whether partings cannot be rendered easier to bear than at present. When so-called death removes a beloved relative or friend it is now very often possible to meet him in spirit and either talk to him or receive a message; but there are separations which cause almost as much pain: as where an only son leaves home to seek his fortune on the other side of the world. Think what it would mean if, instead of written communications at long intervals, he could still talk with his parents, mind to mind, as in the old days at home. Believe me, death itself is often no more a sorrow than a parting like this, which may last for long years, and may mean that the father and mother may not live to see their son face to face again on earth. "There is no death," *we* say who know; but then we might truly add "and there is no parting."

But the opposite and darker side of thought-transference has to be reckoned with, and men who are cultivating this power must recognise to the full that evil thoughts and desires can be projected on the brains of another as well as good and helpful ones; and therefore, with greater knowledge, it is necessary for all to be alive to the grave dangers which accompany its misuse.

April 6th, 1924.

THE PRESENT TENDENCY OF MANKIND TO  
RETROGRESSION.

This danger is probably due to a laxity of effort, having its origin in the strenuous times during and after the Great War. People of the present day are mostly very weary, because all business and professions require more arduous work and more personal supervision than was formerly the case ; therefore there is a very strong temptation to only do the work which is necessary for material ends, and to let the claims of helpfulness, social reforms, and spiritual progress be neglected. But though it may at times be necessary to fix the attention on purely material objects, this soon becomes a habit and continues when the necessity for it has ceased. It may be that a man, desiring to amass as much money as possible, keeps a smaller staff of clerks than his business really needs. He has to work harder himself, and gradually loses all interest in anything outside his daily duties. He has no time for recreation or recuperation ; therefore, sooner or later his health suffers and the end of that man may be a sad one. To employ a larger staff might mean less money-gain, but that would be more than counter-balanced by peace of mind and development of character ; for the man who has only room in his mind for, say, the gratification of worldly ambition, is not likely to progress spiritually. His mental idea is a purely *personal* one, and differs from the idea which is really an *ideal*, and which it is even meritorious to push to the exclusion of all others ; but no merely selfish object should be allowed to be the end and aim

of a human life on earth. The retrogression of *one* man might have little effect upon the lives of others, but we unfortunately see the same tendency in entire communities, all vying with each other in the rush for wealth, and in display and luxury, to the neglect of the really important things. Cannot mankind be led back to a more simple life? Are people more contented when careering over the country in motor-cars than when they walked or took train to some beautiful spot and there enjoyed a delightful ramble? Now they go long distances at full speed, and many have as little idea of the country they have passed through as if they had been blindfolded. Most of the new inventions are welcomed as contributing to the sum of human happiness; but do they? Take the question of aerial navigation. Is a man or woman better off in crossing, say to France, by this latest method than by the old way? A saving of time, some may reply. Granted—but what is saved in time may be lost in shattered nerves, the result of all this rush and hurry of modern life lived at high pressure. There is now no time for true leisure, and (except with those who have learnt their lesson from our side of life), spirituality has almost become a dead letter, when “hurry becomes the death of prayer.” And yet we hope and believe that this is only a passing phase in the development of character in the dwellers on earth, and that sounder and better ideals will prevail later on. We have little sympathy with those who depreciate the present age and extol the past times, but we do think that certain tendencies are gaining a dangerous hold on mankind, and that their progress must be arrested before they have become too firmly established to be checked in their growth.

September 14th, 1924.

THE CALM AFTER THE STORM.

I am going to try to describe a few of the differences between life on earth and life in Heaven. To many the earth-existence has been a period of struggle, of failure, and with some, like myself, of miserable deception and deep shame. Had my true character been known I should have had no friends amongst decent people; but it was not until life began here that it stood revealed. That is one of the differences: we cannot plume ourselves with borrowed feathers, but are seen in our original nakedness of sin. But there is also the compensating difference that help is given to the repentant sinner by all who are more advanced than himself; and so it is that the rough path of expiation is smoothed and made possible for him to tread. The next alteration is the change of aims; for even the miser, after a time, ceases to desire gold, and unselfishly tries to help others. Selfishness, so common on earth, is not possible here, except in the very lowest spheres, and everywhere we see the action of the mental attitude which makes backsliding impossible, and the forward progression the only possible one. Did we dislike a man in earth-life? Here we see him with altered vision, and perceive that those qualities which made him repugnant to us were not a part of the real man, but were attributes of his *material* nature and have been cast away in the new conditions under which he is now living. It is very wonderful, this universal love for others which we feel after our transition. It is not really so much owing to the change in others as in ourselves. We see what has been hidden under a possibly unprepossessing exterior,

and we recognise that if we could mentally have put ourselves in that man's place we should have felt sympathy and love for him instead of distrust and dislike. Other things, too, are altered here. We have scenery which, while more beautiful by far than that of earth, is yet different, since the wildest scenes, the highest mountains, the most terrific crags, the widest rivers and most rushing torrents have no power to inspire fear. We know that on the highest peaks we cannot fall; in the deepest waters we cannot sink; and that what seemed threatening and fearsome to us on earth has no terrors for us now, for nothing in nature can harm us, and all these varieties of scenery do but lend charm to it. Then the buildings in our large cities are miracles of beauty in architecture; for all the former genius of the earth-world gives thought to their creation, and the result is an almost inconceivable grandeur. Colour also, being so much more varied, enables the most vivid hues to be employed in decorations, since they melt imperceptibly one into the other like the soft radiance of a rainbow. Then, too, as there are no diseases or feebleness of mind or body on our plane, as on earth, we are no longer grieved by saddening sights, and can give all our material help to those who are still struggling with physical disabilities on earth. Many more are the subtle changes we find after passing over, yet although it is impossible to describe all of them in the old earth-tongue, yet it is true that "eye hath not seen," nor can it picture the glories which all can share if they cast off their sins and do the will of their Heavenly Father, so near, yet even to *us* invisible save through his reflected radiance in Christ. We shall pass on and on to further heights, we are told, and each step will reveal to us more and more of beauty and the delight of service to mankind.

October 5th, 1924.

### REASONS FOR HOPE.

One reason why we should be hopeful is because we may, if pessimistic, bring about a state of depression under which no good work can be accomplished. In saying this I am speaking as regards both worlds—ours as well as yours—because nearly all of us have sooner or later to undergo the same experiences that some of us have already passed through—that is, a purification as by fire. Some come out unscathed ; others who are now passing through the flame find it a painful process ; yet we see that, however sharp the pain may be, its end is peace and well-being for those called upon to endure it. Now, when we, from personal knowledge, can assure you that all is well with those who have passed over, and that, whatever failures their lives may have been on earth, here at last a new life can be entered upon, and that, though it may be but slowly, the final victory will come to each one of them—when, I repeat, we can testify to the fact of this great truth, have you not reason for hope? If there were no possibility of messages from our plane to yours, then indeed there might be grounds for pessimism, but as it is—No ! Then, too, on earth there are abundant reasons for hopefulness, for already we see signs of greater spirituality ; a greater receptive power amongst thinkers ; and above all, a greater desire to arrive at the truth, on the part of those who formerly derided and mocked at it. It is also a hopeful sign that a more simple life is being sought after by many, and that the use of alcohol and animal flesh as drink and food is becoming less general ; for the medical

world is beginning to see in meat-eating a possible cause for many of your diseases ; and so, little by little, the new teaching spreads, and the old and worn-out theories are cast aside. Other crudities will perish later on, for men must get rid of many wrong beliefs, many false opinions, and many prejudices ere the Millennium can be arrived at. There is much to be unlearnt, but from our side we can see the progress that has already been made. Whenever a prejudice or false belief has been conquered on earth, there is rejoicing in the spirit-world, and a meeting of workers is called to make plans for new impressions to be given to your world, so that further progress may follow. You may often feel regret that some valuable scheme, some new law, or some much-needed reform, has had, for the time, to be abandoned ; but fear not, for when such an idea has once entered the earth-world from here, even if it has only been received by one person, that idea will never perish, but be passed on from mind to mind until all have grasped it. Even in looking back to my first volume of essays you can see that some changes, which were advocated only from our side a few years ago, have now entered the field of practical reforms. What matters a little delay, in our eternity of time ? Though life on earth may seem short to each individual soul, and you may wonder why such an amount of misery has often to be endured during that brief span of existence, you should remember that life on earth is, after all, but an infinitesimal part of life itself and its duration ; and so our hopefulness grows apace, because we realise that already the fruits of our labours are becoming perceptible. There are but few on earth who are aware of the impressions received from our world, and the effect of these on their actions, but this knowledge will increase, and we look forward confidently to seeing great changes for the better during

the next decade. Hopefulness, trust, and love are qualities which, if extensively practised on earth, would soon make the probationary time there almost unnecessary, and would render the passing over to our world an object of desire and pleasurable anticipation, instead of, as now too often, a horror to be avoided and deferred to the last possible moment. The soiled garments of earth will one day be joyfully exchanged for the gleaming robes of those who have, with clean hands and a pure heart, passed through their probation, for of such will be not only the Kingdom of *Heaven*, but that of *Earth* also.

November 2nd, 1924.

ARE THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FUTURE LIFE TRUE  
TO FACTS?

I want you to understand that in describing any state beyond and higher than that of earth we labour under great difficulties, because we have no adequate terms of expression by which we can make you realise where the differences between the two worlds lie. The things around us *here* bear the same relation to ourselves as do yours to you. To make it a little plainer: suppose a giant and a dwarf inhabited different islands, and each were asked for a description of his particular island. If they had visited none other, naturally each would be tied to his own environment and give a description accordingly. If the trees, say, on the giant's island bore the same proportion to his height as those on the dwarf's island did to his lesser stature, then both would describe the trees on his island as, say, ten times his own height—about 90 feet for the giant's trees, and 40 feet for those of the dwarf. Both would be right according to fact, and each judging from his own experience, yet one description, if compared with the other by anyone unacquainted with the circumstances, would not tally or would give a wrong impression. The same is true as regards form and colour *here*, and what we now see is in the same relation as the approximate things were to us when on earth. For instance, just before I came to you I was looking at a most exquisite landscape, and if I could describe it in the radiant tints as I saw them, you would not believe that such colours could exist; and yet they are no more dazzling to us than your much less

vivid colouring is to you. I am, therefore, not very eager to give descriptions of our surroundings, since those contributed by different people from the spirit-land must of necessity vary in some points, and convey the impression that it is impossible for *all* the differing accounts to be true and that some, at least, of those who receive the communications must be drawing on their imaginations. Of course, those who have some knowledge of psychic things and can appreciate our difficulties in conveying ideas and conditions foreign to those of earth, are willing to accept our facts as we give them, when the different conditions obtaining in the two worlds are explained to them. If you looked at a stick distorted from a straight line where it passed under water, and if this common phenomenon were new to you, you might imagine the stick to be broken. People from earth, on first coming over here, until accustomed to the new surroundings, might get a distorted view of things and declare that the reality did not tally with the descriptions given by older dwellers on our plane. If they had waited until they had grown accustomed to the new conditions, they would have found all exactly as it had been described to them. The spirit-mind has to have a little time before it can entirely cast off the earth-ideas; so a mental attitude of belief and trust is the right one, which, however, need not prevent a certain reserve of judgment when first entering the new life. On earth you have to be very careful before taking as absolutely correct all that you may receive from our side through an unknown communicator, since there are also, unfortunately, some mischievous spirits who would delight in giving misleading information. Therefore again we say: "Try the spirits and see if they be of God."

January 4th, 1925.

THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

What I wish to speak about is the light that streams from everything in nature—human beings, the animal, plant, and bird creation, trees and shrubs, stones and shells, road-dust, coal, and every product of nature. You may wonder why this law prevails; but we, on our present plane, could not have the possibilities we enjoy, without this universal law. You, on earth, do not see this light, unless you are exceptionally clairvoyant, but *we* see it from here, and therefore when we come to a séance, even where perfect darkness prevails, we distinguish every object by its own light, and the room is to us as bright as in strong daylight. You know that we can read, write, or move objects on earth as well in the dark as in the light, but you do not realise that for us there is no darkness, except when we go to the probationary spheres where, as no one gives a light of his own, that of all objects is very dim, so that a grey darkness prevails which is trying to those from another and higher sphere. But the curious thing is that the dwellers in these denser atmospheres are not at first conscious of *our* light, for it has to be modified or they would have an uncomfortable feeling of heat, although we are invisible to them until they begin to desire to progress, and then we can, to a certain extent, make ourselves perceptible to them. The light which every object gives out, more or less, may be called the product of the vital force within. Suppose this did not exist, then anything made artificially would fall to pieces because there would be no force to ensure its cohesion. I know all this seems hard to believe; but

scientists are beginning at last to realise that there is a (to them) unexplained perpetual "force" in all matter whether "living" or "dead." But there is much more affinity between living things and inanimate ones than at first appears possible. A cat or dog will often persist (if allowed) in occupying one particular place, even if the same cushion is removed to another equally comfortable. This may be because out of the wood or the covering an aromatic essence emanates which gives the animal peculiar delight; or, more likely, it feels the sympathetic vibrations left by an animal-lover. I have also seen curious likes and dislikes shown by animals to human beings, and a dog or cat may take a violent antipathy, or the reverse, to someone seen for the first time, even though, in the first case, he or she may be a friend of the animal world. But what is the use of these affinities? you may ask. Ah, that we cannot tell you; but they are some of Nature's processes which all fit together like the different parts of a puzzle; and which have been necessary to carry out the great plan of the universe. When science is studied by its votaries not merely as a means of making *material* discoveries, but as part of a great spiritual scheme; and when they recognise that no new law can be truly grasped until the spiritual as well as the material aspect is considered, then there may be hope of a more thorough comprehension of these laws of nature, which at present are only understood in full by the One great Intellect which planned the world and rules it. We do not believe, nor are we told, that even the celestial spirits have a knowledge of this great plan in its entirety, and possibly none but One is great enough for its comprehension, for the more we learn in this, the celestial world, the more we feel that Eternity is not too long for initiation into all the marvellous wonders of creation.

February 1st, 1925.

THE LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE.

Does the increase of knowledge make for moral improvement and the spiritual development of the race? I do not deny that knowledge in itself is good, but it must be built upon a firm foundation. At present this cannot be, for long before a child's mind is formed, and while its character can still be moulded for good or evil, it is sent to school and taken from home influences; and, although the teacher may endeavour to give moral as well as intellectual training, and to study the character which is developing in each child and frame his teaching accordingly, it is impossible to do so under the present system of large classes. The earlier a child goes to school the greater becomes the danger of the growth of hidden faults of character, whereas, if the boy or girl had remained longer under home training, every phase of his or her development could have been watched and guided. Of course, this only applies to the wholesome home atmosphere. I have no fault to find, as a rule, with the later education in schools, but I do plead for a good and sound moral basis on which to place it; for you can see, by some of the ideas advanced in modern literature, how easy it is for great mental powers to exist and yet be used for harmful purposes. Modern discoveries may be able to accomplish great things in the future, and give possibilities to the world which would even now be deemed marvellous, but I believe that owing to want of the knowledge of how to utilise the forces of nature, these may under existing conditions become a source of real danger.

The wise man lives for the future as for the present : the foolish man lives only for the present, or else morbidly in the past, letting the future take care of itself. We much dislike the drastic classing of mankind as " mostly fools " by some writers, but we do believe that even great mental attainments can go hand in hand with folly as regards the use which a man makes of his life. What marvels could be performed by science, were it built upon the basis of belief in God and a future life, of man's responsibility for the use he makes of his life on earth, and how he shapes the lives and characters of those dependent on him. There might, indeed, be an earth-world of " heavenly pattern " under conditions such as these, but as it is, we fear that the new life will come as a shock to many when they pass to our world, and have to alter their outlook and revise their ideas as to the real value of the things they most prized on earth.

March 1st, 1925.

### THE NECESSITY FOR FAITH AND TRUTH.

This does not mean that one should believe without, as far as is possible, obtaining proof of the truth, but that when once a spiritual fact has been proved without doubt, it should be accepted once for all as proven. A spiritual revelation has provided a belief in God in mankind (though not as yet universal), so as to establish it as a proven fact to many. So with scientific data. Other examples could be quoted, where facts, as given, have been accepted; but one must always be careful that faith is based on a solid foundation which has stood the test of time, and on the criticism of those competent to give a judgment. In the matter of religious belief, beyond the mere fact of the existence of God, it is difficult to get any proof through the orthodox religious teaching, and it is only those who have passed beyond these dogmas who can have a firmly established faith, for they alone have real proof of the existence of the spirit after the death of the body. Faith and Truth should be one and indivisible, but how wide apart they often are! Faith, with many people, only means a *hope* that things in the hereafter may be as they are taught to believe by the churches. Their belief is not an active one; it is but faint, and even the *hope* they cherish resembles more a resigned acquiescence in a vague possibility. You may raise the objection that even in *our* world we have no *positive* proof of the existence of God. Well, you have no positive proof that there is a communicator speaking to you at the opposite end of a telephone, because you cannot see him. You hear the voice, but might argue

that it was a delusion of your brain. But it can be proved, through the evidence of others, that the communicator is a real personality. We receive our information about God from our own personal guides, who in their turn have angels of a still higher grade of spirituality, and there are those in still more advanced spheres, till at last the information can be claimed as a direct revelation of Divine Love. No one should be credulous, but none should close his mind to a possible truth. When Faith and Truth walk hand in hand, then there will not be the dogmas of one religion contradicting those of another ; nor will there be the clashing between the standard of conduct set up by religion and that permitted by universal consent in the transactions of everyday life. There would not, then, be perfidy and fraud in business dealings, nor the extremes of wealth and poverty, luxury and want, happiness and misery, now met with on earth. Surely mankind will not be content to continue for ever in the same faults, weaknesses, sins, and errors ! Such phrases as " It will last *my* time ! " now heard as an excuse for some malpractice or injustice, must die out, and each new generation should begin, as regards conduct, beliefs, and moral character, where the previous generation left off, and so the standard be raised for each succeeding generation. This will take a long time to accomplish, but for what other object than progression are we given the eternity we are promised ? Certainly *one* lifetime would not be sufficient, nor even many life-times, but even a *little* improvement in each generation would work wonders, for help would be given from our world to all earnest souls who sought for truth and goodness, purity, and love between all mankind ; so that all races should look upon each other as brothers, and goodwill and justice reign over all the earth.

April 12th, 1925.

AN EASTER MESSAGE.

You have the idea that anniversaries are nothing to us, and are not kept here ; but this all depends on what the anniversary commemorates. We rarely keep our own earth-birthdays, although many who have recently passed over may do so for a time because of the thoughts of those on the earth-plane going out towards these anniversaries. As a rule people are glad to cast off thoughts of the earth-life, unless they have beloved ones who still remain there, and with whom they wish to keep in touch. All the important anniversaries we do keep, such as Christmas and especially Easter, and this has been my reason for singling out one time in your year more than another to write upon. We often hold a special service ourselves at Easter. Should a soul on earth change his opinions and become a convert to belief in the continuity of life, then we might probably commemorate the day on which he made his first public avowal of belief, by endeavouring to send him messages of support and goodwill. But Easter stands on a higher footing. Christ's work on earth was the most important ever accomplished ; by it the ideals of the world were raised, and if the belief in Christianity were to fail, then the earth would certainly return to its pristine darkness of outlook. *Our* services are not held merely to keep alive our love for Christ, since we have Him with us here, but because we wish to join with all in showing the devotion and homage which are His due. You may not know that our Easter-tide services once set the example for those celebrated on earth, and

that we are deputed to attend as many of these as is possible. On earth Christ is with you at Easter, and showers on you His helpful love. You may wonder what our services are like. There is no set form, but Christ stands in our midst and we throw out grateful and loving thoughts towards Him, and then He prays and gives His blessing to all. After he has left us, the organ breaks forth with solemn but ecstatic strain, and all join in a psalm of rejoicing which is usually the inspiration of one of the angels who are very near. We all feel uplifted by the service, and more eager than before to help our fellow-creatures both here and on earth. What is *best* on your plane is but a reflection of what we have *here*, and surely the Great Festival of the Resurrection is worthy of being celebrated in Heaven as well as on earth and in all the spheres.

May 3rd, 1925.

WHY THE CHANGE FROM EARTH MUST PRODUCE AN  
EFFECT ON CHARACTER.

As you know, there is often no immediate alteration in the nature of a man, and after passing over he can live years in much the same mental condition as on earth. Yet this cannot go on for long, at least with normal persons, although a very depraved man may frequently be more than a hundred years in a semi-conscious state, dreaming of the old life, or herding with other sinners, yet unable to take any interest in the sins to which he gave himself up in the earth-life. But some day his character must automatically change ; this death in life cannot continue indefinitely, for a sense of dissatisfaction has gradually been awakening in him, often amounting to a feeling of despair at the conditions in which he finds himself. As yet there may be no very great desire for a change in his mode of life, but his dissatisfaction and despair increase, until at last an unconscious prayer for help arises in his mind, and this is a sign that he is ready to accept *our* guidance. You may object that possibly there is even then no real change in the man's nature, but that all he feels is a desire for more personal comfort and ease. No, this is not the case, for we can at once detect the difference between that and a real repentance. The latter begins slowly, but spreads through the whole nature, while simple dissatisfaction with his life would be quite compatible with the same low aims and desires he had cherished in his former state of existence. It would be impossible for a man to go to a higher sphere and remain there, if not sufficiently advanced for its

rarified spiritual surroundings. His apparent penitence was merely *self-pity*, and he would be compelled to return to the sphere he was fitted for. Still, it is only a question of time, and sooner or later, *all* will be able to exchange the lower spheres for those of a higher grade. Those whose characters are more refined and ready for spiritual development seldom go to any of those educational spheres where vice becomes odious through its own repulsiveness, and anyone who has led a fairly good life on earth can at once proceed to a higher sphere, which, although still a school of education, is not inhabited by the vicious and depraved. You can hardly realise the horrors of the lowest spheres, but of these we do not class the "suicides" section; for although those who have taken their own lives rank with us as criminals, yet they are so in a different sense, and some may have even committed the wrong action from an unselfish motive, as where a man afflicted with a painful and fatal disease takes the short cut in order to relieve his family from the strain of witnessing the hopeless suffering which they are powerless to alleviate. Also, where life has been taken in a fit of temporary insanity, no blame attaches, and the man or woman does not drift to the suicides' sphere. You are often puzzled, we know, as to why coming back to earth should help these suicides. Those that are earth-bound and are attracted to the scene of their deed have experienced spirit-guides sent to them, because they then get a new light on how such acts are regarded on earth as well as in *our* world. We find that a great enlightenment can result from these visits to their old earth-plane.

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*Printed in Great Britain by*  
**MACKAYS LTD., CHATHAM**

