

Extracts from Various Books

These are extracts from various
books as the text was thought to
be important.

Extract from 'After-Death Communication'

During Illness.

Mary Wilson was very ill with undiagnosed Lym Disease:

'On one particular afternoon, I was alone in my living room, lying on the sofa. I had reached a stage in my illness where I'd begun to dread the passage of time, as it brought new symptoms and more pain. I was frightened that I might die before the doctors had found out what was wrong with me, and felt overwhelmed by loneliness.

'I noticed some kind of movement in front of a side window, and held my breath as an image of my mother (who had died seven years earlier) began to take form before me. Spellbound, I watched as she moved slowly around the room, turning on the spot every few seconds to become transformed into an image of herself at an earlier age. Her movements were extremely agile, in spite of having suffered with arthritis during the latter part of her life. It looked as if she was conducting some kind of fairy dance around me, her feet barely touching the ground. She never looked towards me, but I had the experience of being bathed in wave after wave of her concern, together with her reassurance that she was there to protect me.

'Then I sensed she was inviting me to go with her, there and then, to another place. I was suddenly filled with the fear of death and leaving my three young children. I spoke out to her, saying that I wasn't coming, that I would be all right; that I needed to stay behind. At that point, the image gently evaporated, absorbed into the light coming in through the side window.

'I felt guilty about having sent her away. But, shortly after that, my symptoms began to subside.

'Since then, I have often felt her presence. For example, when using her sewing machine or baking the Christmas cake.

Last month, my daughter arrived back home for her birthday. She rushed to join me in the kitchen, excitedly describing how, when she put her key in the lock, the door had swung open on its own and an extraordinary warm presence had welcomed and enfolded her. She said that she immediately knew it was her grandmother.'

Extract from Arthur Findlay's book 'Where Two Worlds Meet'.

Page 174 – A Direct Voice Circle with John Sloan held at
Mrs. Lang's House on the 26th of August, 1942

Mr. Sloan asked: "Who was that speaking?" and was very surprised when he was told it was King George V.

We were speaking amongst ourselves, saying what a good king the late King George had been, and what a good man our present King is and how well he worked for his country, when a voice from the other side said:

"That is quite right and as it should be. It would not do to sit and let others do the work for you. You want to do a little bit of service while in the world no matter what station the Great Spirit God may have placed you in. Each one should be willing to help those around in need of assistance and not allow it to fall on one shoulder only. Also, you must not allow anyone to impose on you too much; just see that they take their share of responsibility. It is a good lesson to each one of you to accept your share of responsibility and it helps to prepare you for the journey here, enabling you to take your proper place in the fuller life which awaits you. I am just one of the stragglers who has come through it, and I wish I had done my duty better in the earth life."

Mrs. Lang asked if we knew him, and if he had spoken to us before.

He replied:

"I have never had the honour of being in your company, this beautiful company, before to-night. I have been in the vicinity of such a Meeting but have never spoken. To-night, however, the light was so bright and the conditions so favourable, that I took the responsibility of asking the door-keeper if I might come in. He told me I might do so but I was to watch his hand and, if I went beyond what I should say or do, he would signal to me."

Miss Colquhoun remarked: "But you have not seen the signal yet, have you, friend?"

He replied:

"I do not require to see the signal; I would feel it. There are so many things on this side of life which you cannot understand yet. Of course you cannot, because I could not understand them myself when I first came over. It is a gradual unfoldment. While in earth life I used to wonder what kind of life this would be, and what clothes I would have on the spirit side of life. In fact, I used to wonder if there was a spirit side at all; I hoped for it but was not at all certain.

"The day I passed out of the body I felt very much alone. I knew I was out of the body and I felt afraid. I looked down at myself and found I was nude, and then a voice out of the haze said to me: 'Come hither, my brother, and be not afraid.' I approached

the light, and immediately I drew near to the light I was instantly clothed. I have progressed since then, and now I am able to return to the surroundings of earth life and be clothed in apparel like what I used to wear.

"The clothes change. I cannot tell you how, but, as we draw near the physical, the clothes change, there is no doubt about it. Perhaps I have not put it very clearly to you, but, when I draw near to the Earth Plane, I find myself standing in the surroundings where I used to stand, with similar garments to those I used to wear in earth life, and the robes I wear on the other side of life - the Summerland side - change, imperceptibly to me, when I cross the border through the mist. Of course, there are others who can come, more advanced than I am, and they always come in their spirit robes. I wish you could see them - they are very beautiful."

Miss Duff asked: "Can you see us, friend?", and he replied:

"I can see you all. I can see you just as you are sitting in that chair and apparelled, just as I had clothes in earth life. I see your hair has a beautiful curl and you have a nice complexion."

Mr. Sloan said: "I am afraid you are a bit of a flatterer, friend," but Miss Duff did not agree. "Oh, no, Mr. Sloan, I am sure he means no flattery; he is just trying to describe to us how we appear to him."

The voice then said to Mr. Hart:

"I see you, my worthy friend. I am rather timorous of saying what I think of you. I hope you will not think I am flattering. You will understand, my brother, but your disposition, as I see it just now, is so full of that beautiful composition - that description of a boy in earth life who wants to help everybody. You seem to be moving among many people. I do not know how you are fixed in earth life, but you always find an excuse for everyone's failings. You must be coming up against some who do not work just according to your liking, but you have an excuse for every wayfarer."

Mrs. Bowes said: "What a beautiful description, and that is just like Mr. Hart."

A new voice then said:

"Services rendered to each other. Just talk together for a little while, while we get the conditions right. And how is McConachie to-night, Mrs. Lang? I think Miss Colquhoun has a McConachie as well. What you call an impression or thought sometimes comes your way, Miss Colquhoun, and alters your decision. That is McConachie; he may not be a relative, but McConachie will be your stalwart friend; never serious, perhaps, but just to give you a spirit of hilarity to lift you out of the dumps. He will never do you any harm. I had a few myself in earth life, in fact they were a bit of a nuisance to me - the McConachie which I had with me and around me - but they were also a great help to me. I have been credited with much that McConachie actually did for me. God bless you all. I am James Barrie. It is not McConachie who is talking to you now. I am speaking from my soul's self to you,

whatever man I may be.”

One of us said *The Little Minister*, and he replied: “I was very pleased with that.”

Miss Colquhoun then remarked: “All that you wrote was lovely,” and he replied:

“Not I, but my beautiful Inspirer who wrote through me. I was simply a human channel to convey those magnificent thoughts; inspirational thoughts through a human instrument, and I think sometimes they have done good to the world. If you cannot make the pathway trod in earth life brighter for those who follow, you have failed much in your duty. You have all something to give, and I am sure you will endeavour to give of your best that those who follow after may say: ‘She did it well,’ or ‘He did it well.’ Do so, my friends. Do so, my dearest friends. What a record to carry with you. God bless you.”

End of page 177.

Notes:

McConachie seems to be referring to Guides, Helpers, Inspirers on the Spirit side. James Barrie states that his books – I can only remember *The Water Babies* – came from Spirit.

In these four pages – from a 624 page book - there is mention of King George V. This is unusual as the majority of the ‘speakers’ are normal Scottish people as these meetings were held in Glasgow.

Arthur Findlay invited important members of the Clergy of Glasgow to come and listen to the ‘voices’ of the Sloan Circle. They would not come. This ‘indifference’ inspired Findlay to write his book *The Rock of Truth*.

The description of one man’s passing does not apply to all as every passing into the Realms of Light – if that is where you are going – is different for every person. All communicators describe their own experiences.

J.H.H – Jan 2019

A VOICE FROM THE HEIGHTS

I am obliged to use your words and modes of expression, but I must say at the beginning that they are wholly inadequate to convey spiritual truths. I long to help people who seem to be in the same mistaken conditions in which I once was, for man does not know himself.

We will consider together something of the truth of being, the most essential and the first of all things. You are not the outward and visible form; this is the feeblest and the most distant likeness of your real self. I will explain by illustration.

When an artist paints a picture, he does not put on canvas the reality; he gives you simply a copy of that which is within himself. The real picture is on the spiritual plane and exists there much more truly than on the canvas; the real picture remains for ever, the canvas does not. No poet can give you his true poem. He does his best to convey something of its beauty, something of its life, but even then it is far removed from his ideal. That, too, is on the plane of reality.

There is a vast amount of creative energy working in and through the material plane. Like the picture and the poem, this energy is invisible to you. We want you to distinguish between reality and shadow. The physical plane, or plane of the senses, is a shadow, a faint imitation of the spiritual and the only real. Your work is to show forth higher laws, to live and breathe entirely from the plane of spirit, to create anew from the very centre of all life, to make one the kingdom of earth and the kingdom of heaven. You are not to think of yourself and the universe now visible to you as real. It is this that constitutes the difference between us. We have entered into a larger consciousness of God, whereas you are content with the shadows of things. Just think how all you're finest thought seems to vanish with the passing of great minds from your midst, yet this is not the case, as you will discover when you awake to the knowledge of a life that ever progresses from the unreal to the true. When this consciousness permeates the whole human race, you will be lifted to a higher plane, for growth is simply a larger consciousness.

Heaven is not a place, but a consciousness of God. God cannot be thought of as a personality, since God is all and in all. The Absolute is above and beyond the conception of finite mind, yet infinitely meek and lowly, filling all space. As you emerge into this all-pervading love, the true life becomes manifest and is always the answer to the deepest and highest aspirations of the soul. It is love fulfilling itself. Thank God for NOW. Learn first and thoroughly that you have been, and will be, for ever. Your present condition is an opportunity for spiritual advancement. Make the most and the best of your life NOW.

Conversations with God Book Three

An uncommon dialogue

I want to tell you, My dearest children, that this matter of Who You Are, and Who You Choose To Be, is of great importance. Not only because it sets the tone of your experience, but because it creates the nature of Mine.

All of your life you have been told that God created you. I come now to tell you this: You are creating God.

That is a massive rearrangement of your understanding, I know. And yet it is a necessary one if you are to go about the true work for which you came.

This is holy work We are up to, you and I. This is sacred ground We walk. This is The Path.

In every moment God expresses Himself in, as, and through you. You are always at choice as to how God will be created now, and She will never take that choice from you, nor will She punish you for making the "wrong" choice. Yet you are not without guidance in these matters, nor will you ever be. Built *into* you is an internal guidance system that shows you the way home. This is the voice that speaks to you always of your highest choice that places before you your grandest vision. All you need do is heed that voice, and not abandon the vision.

Throughout your history I have sent you teachers. During every day and time have My messengers brought you glad tidings of great joy.

Holy Scriptures have been written, and holy lives have been lived, that you might know of this eternal truth: You and I are One.

Now again I send you scriptures - you are holding one of them in your hands. Now again I send you messengers, seeking to bring you the Word of God.

Will you listen to these words? Will you hear these messengers? Will you *become one of them*?

That is the great question. That is the grand invitation. That is the glorious decision. The world awaits your announcement and you make that announcement with your life, lived.

The human race has no chance to lift itself from its own lowest thoughts until you lift yourself to your own highest ideas.

Those ideas, expressed through you, as you, create the template, set the stage and serve as a model for the next level of human experience.

You are the life and the way. The world will follow you. You are not at choice in this matter. It is the only matter in which you have no free choice. It is simply The Way It Is. Your world will follow your idea about yourself. Ever it has been, ever it will be. First comes your thought about yourself, then follows the outer world of physical manifestation.

What you think, you create. What you create, you become. What you become, you express. What you express, you experience. What you experience, you are. What you are, you think. The circle is complete.

The holy work in which you are engaged has really just begun, for now, at last, you understand what you are doing.

It is you who have caused yourself to know this, you who have caused yourself to care. And you do care now, more than ever before, about Who You Really Are. For now, at last, you see the whole picture. Who you are, I am. You are *defining God*.

I have sent you - a blessed part of Me - into physical form that I might know Myself *experientially* as all that I know Myself to be *conceptually*. Life exists as a tool for God to turn concept into experience. It exists for you to do the same. for you are god, doing this. I choose to re-create Myself anew in every single moment. I choose to experience the grandest version of the greatest vision ever I had about Who I Am. I have created you, so that you might re-create Me. This is Our holy work. This is Our greatest joy. This is Our very reason for being.

This is the most important book I have read for a long time. Buy it; read it; do it.

Conversations with God, Book One

Extract from pages 154-155

Thinking is hard. Making value judgments is difficult. It places you at pure creation, because there are so many times you'll have to say, "I don't know. I just don't know." Yet still you'll have to decide. And so you'll have to choose. You'll have to make an arbitrary choice.

Such a choice - a decision coming from no previous personal knowledge - is called pure creation. And the individual is aware, deeply aware, that in the making of such decisions is the Self created.

Most of you are not interested in such important work. Most of you would rather leave that to others. And so most of you are not self-created, but creatures of habit; other-created creatures.

Then, when others have told you how you should feel, and it runs directly counter to how you do feel - you experience a deep inner conflict. Something deep inside you tells you that what others have told you is not Who You Are. Now where to go with that? What to do?

The first place you go is to your religionists - the people who put you there in the first place. You go to your priests and your rabbis and your ministers and your teachers, and they tell you to stop listening to your Self. The worst of them will try to scare you away from it; scare you away from what you intuitively know.

They'll tell you about the devil, about Satan, about demons and evil spirits and hell and damnation and every frightening thing they can think of to get you to see how what you were intuitively knowing and feeling was wrong, and how the only place you'll find any comfort is in their thought, their idea, their theology, their definitions of right and wrong, and their concept of Who You Are.

The seduction here is that all you have to do to get instant approval is to agree. Agree and you have instant approval. Some will even sing and shout and dance and wave their arms in hallelujah!

That's hard to resist. Such approval, such rejoicing that you have seen the light; that you've been saved!

Approvals and demonstrations seldom accompany inner decisions. Celebrations rarely surround choices to follow personal truth; in fact quite the contrary. Not only may others fail to celebrate, they may actually subject you to ridicule. What? You're thinking for yourself? You're deciding on your own? You're applying your own yardsticks, your own judgments, your own values? Who do you think you are, anyway?

And, indeed, that is precisely the question you are answering.

But the work must be done very much alone; very much without reward, without approval, perhaps without even any notice.

And so you ask a very good question. Why go on? Why even start off on such a path? What is to be gained from embarking on such a journey? Where is the incentive? What is the reason?

The reason is ridiculously simple.

THERE IS NOTHING ELSE TO DO.

Extract from: Conversations with God, Volume One
Pages 62 - 65

Your ideas about right and wrong are just that - ideas. They are the thoughts which form the shape and create the substance of Who You Are. There would be only one reason to change any of these; only one purpose in making an alteration: if you are not happy with Who You Are.

Only you can know if you are happy. Only you can say of your life - "This is my creation (son), in which I am well pleased."

If your values serve you, hold to them. Argue for them. Fight to defend them.

Yet seek to fight in a way which harms no one. Harm is not a necessary ingredient in healing.

You say "hold to your values" at the same time you say our values are all wrong. Help me with this.

I have not said your values are wrong. But neither are they right. They are simply judgments. Assessments. Decisions. For the most part, they are decisions made not by you, but by someone else. Your parents, perhaps. Your religion. Your teachers, historians, politicians.

Very few of the value judgments you have incorporated into your truth are judgments you, yourself, have made based on your own experience. Yet experience is what you came here for - and out of your experience were you to create yourself. You have created yourself out of the experience of others.

If there were such a thing as sin, this would be it: to allow yourself to become what you are because of the experience of others. This is the "sin" you have committed. All of you. You do not await your own experience, you accept the experience of others as gospel (literally), and then, when you encounter the actual experience for the first time, you overlay what you think you already

know onto the encounter.

If you did not do this, you might have a wholly different experience - one that might render your original teacher or source wrong. In most cases, you don't want to make your parents, your schools, your religions, your traditions, your holy scriptures wrong - so you deny your own experience in favour of what you have been told to think.

Nowhere can this be more profoundly illustrated than in your treatment of human sexuality.

Everyone knows that the sexual experience can be the single most loving, most exciting, most powerful, most exhilarating, most renewing, most energizing, most affirming, most intimate, most uniting, most recreative physical experience of which humans are capable. Having discovered this experientially, you have chosen to accept instead the prior judgments, opinions, and ideas about sex promulgated by others - all of whom have a vested interest in how you think.

These opinions, judgments, and ideas have run directly contradictory to your own experience, yet because you are loathe to make your teachers wrong, you convince yourself it must be your experience that is wrong. The result is that you have betrayed your true truth about this subject - with devastating results.

You have done the same thing with money. Every time in your life that you have had lots and lots of money, you have felt great. You felt great receiving it, and you felt great spending it. There was nothing bad about it, nothing evil, nothing inherently "wrong." Yet you have so deeply ingrained within you the teachings of others on this subject that you have rejected your experience in favour of "truth."

Having adopted this "truth" as your own, you have formed thoughts around it - thoughts which are creative. You have thus created a personal reality around money which pushes it away from you - for why would you seek to attract that which is not good?

Amazingly, you have created this same contradiction around God. Everything your heart experiences about God tells you that God is good. Everything your teachers teach you about God tells you God is bad. Your heart tells you God is to be loved without fear. Your teachers tell you God is to be feared, for He is a vengeful God. You are to live in fear of God's wrath, they say. You are to tremble in His presence. Your whole life through you are to fear the judgment of the Lord. For the Lord is "just," you are told. And God knows, you will be in trouble when you confront the terrible justice of the Lord. You are, therefore, to be "obedient" to God's commands. Or else.

Above all, you are not to ask such logical questions as, "if God wanted strict obedience to His Laws, why did He create the possibility of those Laws being violated?" Ah, your teachers tell you - because God wanted you to have "free choice." Yet what kind of choice is free when to choose one thing over the other brings condemnation? How is "free will" free when it is not your will, but someone else's, which must be done? Those who teach you this would make a hypocrite of God.

You are told that God is forgiveness, and compassion - yet if you do not ask for this forgiveness in the "right way," if you do not "come to God" properly, your plea will not be heard, your cry will go unheeded. Even this would not be so bad if there were only one proper way, but there are as many "proper ways" being taught as there are teachers to teach them.

Most of you, therefore, spend the bulk of your adult life searching for the "right" way to worship, to obey, and to serve God. The irony of all this is that I do not want your worship, I do not need your obedience, and it is not necessary for you to serve Me.

These behaviors are the behaviors historically demanded of their subjects by monarchs - usually egomaniacal, insecure, tyrannical monarchs at that. They're not Godly demands in any sense - and it seems remarkable that the world hasn't by now concluded that the demands are counterfeit, having nothing to do with the needs or desires of Deity.

Deity has no needs. All That Is is exactly that: all that is. It therefore wants, or lacks, nothing - by definition.

If you choose to believe in a God who somehow needs something - and has such hurt feelings if He doesn't get it that He punishes those from whom He expected to receive it - then you choose to believe in a God much smaller than I. You truly are Children of a Lesser God.

No, my children, please let Me assure you again, through this writing, that I am without needs. I require nothing.

This does not mean I am without desires. Desires and needs are not the same thing (although many of you have made them so in your present lifetime).

Desire is the beginning of all creation. It is first thought. It is a grand feeling within the soul. It is God, choosing what next to create.

And what is God's desire?

I desire first to know and experience Myself, in all My glory - to know Who I Am. Before I invented you - and all the worlds of the universe - it was impossible for Me to do so.

Second, I desire that you shall know and experience Who You Really Are, through the power I have given you to create and experience yourself in whatever way you choose.

Third, I desire for the whole life process to be an experience of constant joy, continuous creation, never-ending expansion, and total fulfillment in each moment of now.

I have established a perfect system whereby these desires may be realised. They are being realised now - in this very moment. The only difference between you and Me is that I know this.

In the moment of your total knowing (which moment could come upon you at anytime), you, too, will feel as I do always: totally joyful, loving, accepting, blessing, and grateful.

Extract from: Conversations with God, Volume One
Pages 79 - 81

Excuse me, but I have to interrupt you again here. What about the person who is sick, but has the faith that will move mountains - and so thinks, says, and believes he's going to get better. . .only to die six weeks later. How does that square with all this positive thinking, affirmative action stuff?

That's good. You're asking the tough questions. That's good. You're not simply taking My word for any of this. There is a place, on down the line, when you'll have to take My word for this - because eventually you'll find that we can discuss this thing forever, you and I—until there's nothing left to do but to “try it or deny it.” But we're not at that place yet. So let's keep the dialogue going; let's keep talking -

The person who has the “faith to move mountains,” and dies six weeks later, has moved mountains for six weeks. That may have been enough for him. He may have decided, on the last hour of the last day, “Okay, I've had enough. I'm ready to go on now to another adventure.” You may not have known of that decision, because he may not have told you. The truth is, he may have made that decision quite a bit earlier - days, weeks earlier - and not have told you; not have told anyone.

You have created a society in which it is very not okay to want to die - very not okay to be very okay with death. Because you don't want to die, you can't imagine anyone wanting to die - no matter what their circumstances or condition.

But there are many situations in which death is preferable to life - which I know you can imagine if you think about it for even a little bit. Yet, these truths don't occur to you - they are not that self-evident - when you are looking in the face someone else who is choosing to die. And the dying person knows this. She can feel the level of acceptance in the room regarding her decision.

Have you ever noticed how many people wait until the room is empty before they die? Some even have to tell their loved ones – “No, really, go. Get a bite to eat.” Or “Go, get some sleep. I'm fine. I'll see you in the morning.” And then, when the loyal guard leaves, so does the soul from the body of the guarded.

If they told their assembled relatives and friends, “I just want to die,” they would really hear it. “Oh, you don't mean that,” or “Now, don't talk that way,” or “Hang in there,” or “Please don't leave me.”

The entire medical profession is trained to keep people alive, rather than keeping people comfortable so that they can die with dignity.

You see, to a doctor or a nurse, death is failure. To a friend or relative, death is disaster. Only to the soul is death a relief - a release.

The greatest gift you can give the dying is to let them die in peace - not thinking that they must “hang on,” or continue to suffer, or worry about you at this most crucial passage in their life.

So this is very often what has happened in the case of the man who says he's going to live, believes he's going to live, even prays to live: that at the soul level, he has “changed his mind.” It is time now to drop the body to free the soul for other pursuits. When the soul makes this decision, nothing the body does can change it. Nothing the mind thinks can alter it. It is at the moment of death that we learn who, in the body-mind-soul triumvirate, is running things.

All your life you think you are your body. Some of the time you think you are your mind. It is at the time of your death that you find out Who You Really Are.

Extract from 'Facts Not Fiction'

by W. R. Cross

First published 1982

One communicator who came only once said through Ivy, "Hello, very nice to be with you. I am Nicholas. This is my first time and I have come to see how you operate. I was a bit of a fuddy-duddy on earth and didn't believe in all this mumbo-jumbo, but now I am learning for myself the truth. I am deeply grateful and gratified that there is a life beyond the one who know on the earthly plane. It would be terrifying if we felt that this was the end, that we became as dust and disappeared, never more to rise and take our place in a higher form in a higher system of living and development. We must indeed be thankful if we can learn the truth while we are mortals on earth, for it is difficult for many people who have passed over to learn to develop, for they enter this long period of rest, darkness, and resuscitation, feeling there is nothing left for them, and they cannot reach out for they know not what they are reaching for. It is a long time* before loved ones can reach them. You are indeed blessed that you have learned the truth before passing over to this side. Good night".

- * Bear in mind that there is no 'time' in Spirit as we know it. Time has been referred to as the amount of progress an individual has made. There is a line in a hymn – 'A thousand ages in Thy sight are but a moment gone. Another communicator stated 'your life on earth seems very long but, to us, it is the mere twinkling of an eye.

Chan spoke: 'You must study, observe and think if your spirituality is to have any worth. Consciousness is knowledge, and knowledge comes through mental effort. The intellect and reasoning powers cannot give you life, but they can open the doors for wisdom and life to enter. Spirituality divorced from wisdom becomes fanaticism. The spirit is a seed planted in the earth body, and it grows through the earth body. It unfolds with the help of the atmosphere, turns its flower towards the all-powerful sun, and sheds its fragrance on all who come within its reach.

'The spirit of man needs both the mental and the physical for its development. But these two alone cannot bring you into the light of spiritual life. Spirituality is not just temporal living, nor is it just dreaming. It is not only for self-upliftment, nor for dwelling solely in the transcendental. All this is included, but it is something much more. It is something so great, so powerful, that the whole of life, both on the earth plane and here, is affected by it.

'Experience is necessary for the progress of the spirit. It must act, it must achieve, it must attain. It cannot expand alone. It must endeavour to help those wounded in the struggle of life, to lift others with itself and strive for their upliftment as well as its own. This is the reason you must study. Your life is an experience in itself, and your experiences will push you along the road of life.'

Extract from 'The Airmen who would not die'
by John G. Fuller.

Session with Eileen Garrett.

[page 132]

What I want to tell you is what very few people understand: how it feels to go out of the body: what I personally have been doing ever since the realization of the fact came to me: and finally to acquaint you with the impressions I have gained in the new life here since.

Transition from the physical body to the ethereal body occupies only a matter of moments. There is no pain in the severance of the two, and so alike are they, that it is some while - probably in some cases, days - before this transition from one state to the other is noticed. In my case, it was noticed quickly, because I had been conscious of facing Death for many hours before actually passing.

As you can imagine yourself, when I found myself high and dry in another country (he had been flying a plane over water), I began to think. What had happened? Only one of two things could have happened. Either I had been rescued whilst unconscious and taken to a land I knew nothing of - or I had died.

It was the latter. If therefore the waking up in my case was attended with so little change registered in my mind, you will understand what an easy process passing from one life to another is.

Actually, I feel no different. Nothing angelic, nothing ethereal, nothing one would think of as being connected with Heaven or the Hereafter.

My actual experience is that I am as real in the life as I have been to you, and that all growth towards that great happiness and that great Heaven they talk of, must be a slower process than most people believe.

Milly (his wife's name), people will not agree that this is true, but it is my firm belief that I am right. The soul or ego is such a delicate structure, that no quick change can take place without shocking that soul and, for a moment, putting the whole thing into a disorganised state.

If you ask me where I am, what I am, and what I see, I have to tell you that in the first instance, I found myself in a grey, damp, and most disagreeable country that looked to me barren, almost like the wastes of Belgium I used to fly over. Imagine such a country, with here and there

groups of three or four badly grown, distorted trees visible under a grey fog, and I think you will get an idea as to what I awoke to.

You should know why I should want to get out of such a state - one in which many people dwell for years. . .

I cannot understand why humans say that after Death all is happiness, all joy, all rest, all cheerfulness, all brightness. Surely they should be brought to the realization that as they have lived on Earth, and worked, and done the right thing, so shall their reward be in the hereafter. For though here physical suffering is not, mental suffering is much more severe than it can ever be on earth.

People will say: Why? Because here you are more awake, more alert, more able to perceive things by virtue of possessing a much freer mind housed in a much finer body, which does not bind you as much.

Altogether, you are in a refining process, and not until you have passed through every scrap of refining process there is in every state of life here, are you permitted into the brighter state.

This brighter side exists, but at first you are only allowed to see it for moments. . .

I passed over holding no thought of the future, like the average young man of my age. And as on earth, I always wanted to get out of the mess as soon as possible on finding myself in it, so here did I determine to get out of the dreary, dreary country I found myself in when I first realised I had passed over. . .

The communicator died in an attempt to cross the Atlantic from East to West against head-winds and came down in a storm when the fuel ran out.

[page 140]

What do we do? [the words apparently coming from her husband began]. We do everything for which we are fitted. There are huge systems of education, huge laboratories and institutions that deal with all the conditions for which a man has fitted himself while on earth. Here our necessities are met by mental thought, and are organized and focussed.

The organized thought starts here, travels around the spiritual states, gathering strength as it does, and eventually finds its final capacity for work through its human receiver.

None of this destroys free will. Rather, it helps you who are still on the earth I have so latterly left, to realize your affinity with those who have

gone on, to realize their very great humanity and interest in you. Instead of taking anything away from the beauty of the picture, does it not add to it that your day of usefulness is only dawning when you come over here?

I have not found any evil here. I have found many people, I assure you, who are ignorant of every law, but that does not constitute evil. I have nothing to say about the man who in an atheist. So long as he truly believes what he professes, he stands as great a chance as the man who is bound up in his religion. Each one of us has an absolutely straight chance of working out his own salvation.

There are hells and there are heavens just as we have been taught to believe. There are weak people, dissolute people, vicious people, all seeking to still take part in the life they once knew, rather than enter fully into this new life. The man who takes a risk is the fellow you find in the higher states here. Each of these states has to be reached by man's own endeavour.

There are laboratories full of youth, full of life, all working for good, just as there are others whose energies are mistaken ones. Really there are no evil spirits. There are ignorant ones, interfering ones, malicious ones, and blind ones - that is blind to their own faults - and these constitute the so-called evil here, just as they are the pests of your life.

I work all the time mentally and in a sense physically, in the things that interest me. One does work. I revel in it, because here in this state, I find myself free, alert and decisive, my energies no longer curtailed or held down by all the pains, ills and depressions.

What do we work at? We work mentally, and rejoice in so doing - except at making money. Only now one desires to possess the gifts for the soul, and the gift of knowledge, and the gift to enable one to see more clearly, to understand and to realise the greatness of the Universe.

Do we eat and drink? That's another question many people often ask. Certainly not in the way you sit down in your lavish restaurants. Such a pity, because I liked doing it. This ethereal body, so like our earthly body, has still some of the physical structure about it, and it is therefore not perfected yet. It must retain something that is very akin to the physical state. We take food in what would seem to you a compressed or compounded form.

Do we use our senses in the same way? Yes, we do. After a while we begin to drop our earthly need for speech, and begin to use thought transference by sending and projecting out thoughts from mind to mind.

Such a lot of nonsense is being told. I assure you this is all the truth. It may upset some people, for few have the courage to tell the truth of their experiences.

While the contents of this extract may be priceless this PDF file is without charge.

Choosing a time to go

Some hospice carers have told us that residents seem instinctively to know they are nearing the end of life. 'It's almost like something has told them "You're nearly there, just calm down because something is going to happen",' said one interviewee. 'I think the people who are dying know right at the end that something is happening,' said another nurse.

Towards the end, from being very agitated they may calm down and just lie there peacefully. Sometimes they will get a sudden burst of energy, so that they are able to talk to their family for the last time. You get times when people suddenly seem to perk up just before they die. They seem to get better - enough sometimes to say goodbye to relatives . . . It's really strange, it's like an extra energy that they've got just prior to them going right off. They become coherent . . . and then they seem to just go.

It certainly seems to be quite common for people to have some intimation of their own death, almost as though it is a decision they have made themselves. They may tell those close to them, quite matter-of-factly, that it's time for them to go, that they won't be there when their friend next comes to visit them. The following account describes Sylvia's experience with her friend, Gwen, who was dying of cancer. Although Gwen was in great pain and often got very depressed, she was afraid to die and never wanted to talk about death. For the last two weeks of Gwen's life, Sylvia and her husband visited her daily in her hospice.

Although she was over 70, Gwen was still very vain about her hair, which was jet black. She would agonize if she saw a single silver strand, and the visit of the hairdresser every Tuesday was the highlight of her week. On the evening of Monday, 6th July 1992, we talked to her. She was in some pain, but quite alert. I asked her if she was going to see the hairdresser in the morning. When she said 'No', I thought perhaps she was in too much pain, but she explained that she had seen 'some people' who had promised to take her out on Tuesday. She did not know where they were going, but they had promised to come for her.

The nurse assured us that no one had been to visit, and Gwen was not going

anywhere. She explained that Gwen was on quite powerful medication and it was not unusual to be confused. But she did not seem at all confused to us.

The next morning I rang the hospice, but the doctor advised me that Gwen needed to rest and would only fight the drugs if she had visitors; her family were coming later in the day. The following morning I rang again, already knowing what I was going to hear. Sure enough, Gwen had died peacefully on Tuesday evening, 7th July 1992.

It is clear that Gwen had the expectation that she was going to be collected and go 'somewhere'. What is interesting is that this was not seen by her as in any way strange - even though she seemed not to know who 'these people' were. This we have seen repeatedly in other accounts - even when the dying do not seem to know who is going to pick them up; the strangers hold no threat and the dying are happy to go with them.

A nurse told us the following incident which happened when she was on night duty at a Manchester hospital. An elderly couple had been involved in a car accident. The man had been badly injured but the woman suffered mainly from shock and bruising.

I went for my break at midnight and on my return I was told the gentleman had died from his injuries but his wife was not to be told yet. I went to her bedside and asked if she would like a cup of tea. She excitedly told me that her husband had just been to see her and told her he would come back at 4 a.m. and they would go home together. I thought that she was still affected by shock. Her blood pressure suddenly began to fall about 3.30 a.m. and the Staff Nurse sent for the doctor.

She was still watching the door intently, waiting for her husband. The doctor saw she was deteriorating fast and did all he could to save her. She was smiling and watching for someone before she passed quickly into spirit. Death was noted at 4 a.m.

The Ministry of Angels

Mrs. Joy Snell

Start of chapter VI

In the hospital I became familiar with death. I saw some die who welcomed death gladly as the deliverer from pain, grief, weariness and care; as the opener of the door through which, released from all physical infirmities, their spirits would pass to a broader, freer sphere of existence where they would realise the deepest longing of their souls. Others I saw die who, overcome by physical weakness and mental weariness, seemed incapable of either hope or fear, and awaited death utterly indifferent as to what might follow.

I witnessed some deaths that were calm and peaceful and as good to look upon as the falling asleep of a babe. And some I saw in which physical agony persisted until the last gasp, and they were dreadful to see. Still more appalling were the deaths of those who, realizing that their end was near, were terror-stricken by the fear of what might befall them afterwards and fought for life, clung to it, begged and prayed that they might be allowed to live. Happily such scenes were rare. Most of those whom I saw die passed away in a state of torpor, incapable, seemingly, of feeling or expressing any emotion.

But I noticed that often, irrespective of the physical condition or frame of mind of the dying, just before the end came they would seem to recognise someone who was not of those at the bedside and was by the latter unseen. I have seen a woman who had been in a comatose state for hours, suddenly open her eyes with a look of glad surprise, stretch forth her hands as though to grasp invisible hands outstretched towards her, and then, with what seemed a sigh of relief, expire. I have seen a man who had been writhing in agony suddenly grow calm, fasten his eyes with an expression of joyful recognition on what to those observing him was only vacancy, and uttering a name in tones of glad greeting, breathe his last breath.

I recall the death of a woman who was the victim of that most dreadful disease, malignant cancer. Her sufferings were excruciating, and she prayed earnestly that death might speedily come to her and end her agony. Suddenly her sufferings appeared to cease; the expression of her face, which a moment before had been distorted by pain, changed to one of radiant joy. Gazing upwards, with a glad light in her eyes, she raised her hands and exclaimed: "Oh, mother dear, you have come to take me home. I am so glad!" And in another moment her physical life had ceased.

The memory of another death, which occurred about the same time, comes back to me. It was that of an old soldier who was in the last stages of tuberculosis, brought on by exposure while fighting his country's battles. He was brave and patient but had frequent paroxysms of pain that were almost unendurable, and he longed for the relief which he knew death alone could bring him. One of these spasms had seized upon him, and his features were convulsed with agony as he fought for breath, when he suddenly grew calm. A smile lit up his face, and, looking upwards, he exclaimed, with a ring of joy in his voice, "Marion, my daughter!" Then the end came.

His brother and sister were at the bedside. The sister said to the brother: "He saw Marion, his favourite daughter. She came and took him where he will suffer no more", and she added fervently: "Thank God! He has found rest at last".

That at such moments as I have described the dying really see some spirit form - someone who has come from the other world to welcome them on their birth into the new life - I never doubted. And the time came when, as will be told later (in the book), it was revealed to me that this is what they really do see. It is not, as some suppose, a phantom creation of their own imagination on which they gaze so gladly just before death occurs, but a ministering spirit, an angel, and more highly endowed with life and vitality than are those who have not yet undergone the change wrought by death.

Note:

The title 'The Ministry of Angels' put me off reading this book until I was having a clear out when I started to read it in order to decide what to do with it; give it away or keep it. Mrs. Snell has chosen to give the description of people she sees from the 'other side' as 'angels', no doubt going by the expressions they have and the way they behave. Others would call them 'spirit people', 'guides' (one who goes before) or 'helpers' (one who helps). The word 'Angels' to my way of thinking is 'romantic' and as I am not romantic, sensitive maybe, not too keen on the word 'Angels'. However, now I have started to read it, I can only highly recommend it as one, extremely gifted, person's experiences during her life as a nurse. Perhaps other nurses have these experiences but do not talk about them in case it goes against them in their work. (I am told that they do)

This extract is the start of Chapter 6 and had been selected by me as a reading for a Spiritualist Church Service. It should help anybody who has had somebody die in whatever circumstances as it clearly shows that each person passing over is met by somebody they know and love. I have read about people, who did not care much for people, being met by an animal that they had loved on the earth. My sister reports being met by somebody she did not know but who calmed her down; she thought the person may have been a 'professional greeter' for people who were agitated. My sister's main concern was the Christmas presents that she had bought and wanted her husband, who had never had anything to do with it, to get them to the right person. She was, and still is, very fastidious so I can understand her concern. Last I heard she was in a group helping people who did not know where they were.

John H. Feb. 2009.

Extract from: The Survival of Man by Sir Oliver Lodge

“The following experience of the Rev. E. K. Elliott, Rector of Worthing, who was formerly in the navy, and who made the entry in his diary as quoted when he was cruising in the Atlantic out of reach of post or telegraph, will therefore be found of interest. The diary is still in his possession.

T. B.

Extract from diary written out in Atlantic, January 14th, 1847

“Dreamt last night I received a letter from my uncle, H. E., dated January 3rd, in which news of my dear brother's death was given. It greatly struck me.

“My brother had been ill in Switzerland, but the last news I received on leaving England was that he was better.

“The ‘January 3rd’ was very black, as if intended to catch my eye. “On my return to England I found, as I quite expected, a letter awaiting me saying my brother had died on the above date.

“E. K. ELLIOTT”

Worthing

The second case I quote is a much longer and more elaborate one, and we owe its receipt to Dr. Hodgson while in America.

There are many partially similar records of people becoming aware of an accident in which some near relative was injured or killed: and it is noteworthy that the emotion caused by injury seems as likely to convey such an impression as anything pertaining to death itself; but the point of the following narrative is that a complete stranger became impressed with facts which were happening at a distance, without the slightest personal interest in any one concerned—so that it seems to make in favour of a general clairvoyant faculty rather than for any spiritistic explanation. The prefix P. 224 is merely a classificatory reference number.

P. 224. Dream.

The following case has some resemblance to Mrs. Storie's experience, of which an account was published in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i. p. 370, except that the person whose fate was represented in the dream was in the case here printed entirely unknown to the dreamer. The

account is written by Mr. H. W. Wack, Attorney, and comes to us through the American Branch of the Society.

“COURT HOUSE, ST. PAUL, MINN., February 10th, 1892

“I believe I have had a remarkable experience. About midnight on the 29th day of December, headsore and fatigued, I left my study where I had been poring over uninspiring law text, and, climbing to my chamber door, fell into bed for the night.

“Nothing unusual had transpired in my affairs that day, and yet, when I gave myself to rest, my brain buzzed on with a myriad fancies. I lay an hour, awake, and blinking like an over-fed owl. The weird intonation of an old kitchen clock fell upon my ears but faintly, as it donged the hour of two. The sound of the clock chime had hardly died when I became conscious [of] my position in a passenger coach on the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha railroad. I was journeying to Duluth, Minnesota, from St. Paul, in which latter place I had gone to sleep. I was aware that I had been on the train about four hours and that I was somewhere near the town of Shell Lake, Wis., distant from St. Paul about eighty miles. I had often been over the road, and as I peered through the coach window, I recognised, in the moonlit scene, features of country and habitation I had seen before. We were plunging on, almost heedlessly as it seemed, when I fancied I heard and was startled from my reverie by a piercing shriek, which was protracted into a piteous moaning and gasping, as if some human creature were suffering some hideous torture.

“Then I felt the train grind heavily to an awkward stop. There was a sudden commotion fore and aft. Train men with lanterns hurried through my car and joined employés near the engine. I could see the lights flash here and there, beside and beneath the cars; brakemen moved along the wheels in groups, the pipe voice of the conductor and the awe-stricken cry of the black porter infused a livening sense to a scene which I did not readily understand. Instinctively I concluded that an accident had happened, or perhaps that a break to the train had occasioned this sudden uprising of train men. A minute later I was out upon the road bed. The brusque and busy search and the disturbed manner of the attendants did not propitiate elaborate inquiry from a curious passenger, so I was appeased to be told, in very ugly snappish English, that if I had eyes I might see for myself that ‘some one got killed, I reckon.’ Everybody moved and acted in a spirit of stealth, and each, it appeared, expected a horrible ‘find.’

The trucks were being examined from the rear of the train forward. Blood splotches were discovered on nearly all the bearings under the entire train. When the gang reached one of the forward cars, all lights were cast upon a truck which was literally scrambled with what appeared to be brains—human brains, evidently, for among the clots were small tufts of human hair. This truck, particularly, must have ground over the bulk of a human body. Every fixture between the wheels was smeared with the crimson ooze of some crushed victim. But where was the body, or at least its members? The trucks were covered only with a pulp of mangled

remnants. The search for what appeared of the killed was extended 500 yards back of the train and all about the right-of-way with no more satisfactory result than to occasionally find a blood-stained tie.

“All hands boarded the train; many declaring that it was an unusual mishap on a railroad which left such uncertain trace of its victim. Again I felt the train thundering on through the burnt pine wastes of northern Minnesota. As I reclined there in my berth, I reflected upon the experience of the night, and often befuddled my sleepy head in an effort to understand how a train, pushing along at the rate of thirty miles an hour, could so grind and triturate a vital bulk, staining only trucks behind the engine, unless the killed at the fatal time were upon the truck or huddled closely by it. I concluded, therefore, that the being destroyed under the train had been concealed near the bespattered fixtures of the car. I had read of death to tramps stealing rides by hiding themselves under or between cars, and finally I dismissed meditation—assured that another unfortunate itinerant had been crushed out of existence. Horrible! I shuddered and awoke—relieved to comprehend it all a dream.

“Now the fact that the foregoing is an accurate statement of a dream experienced by me is not a matter for marvel. Taken alone, there is nothing remarkable in the time at which this vision blackened my sleep. The spell was upon me between two and three o'clock in the morning—of that I am certain. I am positive of the time, because, when I awoke, I heard the clock distinctly, as it struck three.

“On the morrow, I,—who usually forget an ordinary dream long before breakfast—recounted to the family the details of the night's distraction. From my hearers there followed only the ordinary comments of how ghastly and how shocking the story was as told and how strange the nature of the accident—that no parts of the body had been found. The latter circumstance was, to me also, quite an unusual feature of railroad casualty.

“The evening following the night of the dream (December 30th), at 5 o'clock, I returned to my home, stepped into my study, and, as I am in the habit of doing, I glanced at a page of the St. Paul Dispatch, a daily evening newspaper. It had been casually folded by a previous reader, so that in picking it up flatly, the article which first fixed my attention read:—

“ ‘Fate of a tramp. Horrible death experienced by an unknown man on the Omaha Road. His remains scattered for miles along the track by the merciless wheels.

“ ‘Duluth, December 30.—Every truck on the incoming Omaha train from St. Paul this morning was splashed with blood. Train men did not know there had been an accident till they arrived here, but think some unfortunate man must have been stealing a ride between St. Paul and this city. Train men on a later train state that a man's leg was found by them at Spooner, and that for two miles this side the tracks were scattered with pieces of flesh and bone. There is no possible means of identification.’

“Here was an evident verification of all that transpired in my mind between two and three o'clock on the previous night. I reflected, and the more I pondered the faster I became convinced that I had been in some mysterious form, spirit or element, witness of the tragedy reported in the columns of the press—that my vision was perfect as to general details, and the impression complete and exact to time, place, and circumstance. The next morning I scanned the pages of the *Pioneer Press* of December 31st, and read the following paragraph:—

“ ‘Unknown man killed, Shell Lake, Wis. Special telegram, December 30th.—Fragments of the body of an unknown man were picked up on the railroad track to-day. Portions of the same body were also found on over 100 miles of the railroad. He is supposed to have been killed by the night train, but just where is not known.’

“With this came the conviction to me that, living and asleep, 100 miles from the place of the killing, I had been subjected to the phantom-sight of an actual occurrence on the Omaha railroad, as vivid and in truth as I have stated it above.

“I have not written this account because Mark Twain and other authors have published in current magazines their experiences in what is termed Mental Telepathy or Mental Telegraphy. On the contrary, having read a number of those articles, I have hesitated to utter, as authentic, what I now believe to be a material and striking evidence of the extent, the caprice, and the possibilities of this occult phenomenon.

“HARRY W. WALK”

In reply to Dr. Hodgson's inquiries, Mr. Wack wrote:—

“ST. PAUL, February 20th, 1892

“MY DEAR SIR,—Replying to your valued favour of the 15th inst., I will say that you are right in understanding that my account of the dream submitted to your Society is a true narrative.

“I reaffirm every word of it, and give you my solemn assurance that, as I have stated, I informed the family and friends of the dream and its details, before I had the first suspicion that the public press ever had contained or ever would contain a report of such an actual occurrence.

“If desirable I will make affidavit as to the truth of the substance of the narrative in your hands.

“I enclose a few corroborative letters, the signatures to which I procured yesterday, February 19th. If these serve you, well and good.

“HARRY W. WACK”

The following were the corroborative letters enclosed:—

(1) "ST. PAUL, February 20th, 1892

"GENTLEMEN,—Referring to an account of a dream submitted to you by Mr. Harry Wack of this city which I have read, I beg leave to add the following facts corroborative of the narrative.

"After careful consideration of the article, I find that the story of the dream on December 29th-30th is in substance identical with that which was related by Mr. Wack at breakfast on the morning of December 30th, 1891. On that occasion Mr. Wack stated that he had been agitated the previous night by a dream of unusual features, and then, at the request of those present, he recited what now appears in his article, which I have just perused for the first time. On the evening of December 30th, 1891, when Mr. Wack discovered the newspaper item, he again mentioned the dream and called my attention to the newspaper item, and several of the family discussed the matter. On the morning of December 31st, another newspaper clipping bearing on the same matter was debated by the family.

"Aside from the unusual features and hideousness of the dream, there was nothing to startle us, until the newspaper accounts developed the affair in a mysterious sense. The first version of the dream was given in the morning of December 30th. The first newspaper dispatch appeared and was discovered in the evening of the same day. This I know of my own knowledge, being present on each occasion.

"MRS. MARGARET B. MACDONALD"

(2)
20th, 1892

"ST. PAUL, MINN., February

"GENTLEMEN,—I have read the letter of Mrs. Macdonald, with whom I visited on December 29th, 30th, 31st, and days following, and with your permission I will say that I also was present at breakfast when Mr. Wack mentioned the dream, and at dinner (6 p.m.) when Mr. Wack called our attention to the newspaper item, which he then declared was a positive verification of the dream he experienced the night before. I have read the account of the dream, and I believe it to be precisely as I understood it from Mr. Wack's account given on the morning of December 30th, 1891.

"ROSE B. HAMILTON"

(3)

"ST. PAUL, February 20th, 1892

"GENTLEMEN,—Having read the foregoing letters of Mrs. Macdonald and Miss Rose B. Hamilton, and being familiar with the facts and incidents therein set forth, I would add my endorsement to them as being in strict accord with the truth.

"Mr. Wack stated his dream as he has written of it in the article which I understand he has submitted to you, on the morning of December 30th, 1891. He came upon and drew our attention to the newspaper articles in the evening of December 30th, and on the morning of December 31st, 1891. It was these newspaper dispatches which made the dream interesting, and thereafter it was freely discussed.

"C. E. MCDONALD"

Mr. H. W. Smith, an Associate Member of the American Branch, writes to Dr. Hodgson in connection with the case:—

"OFFICE OF SMITH & AUSTRIAN, COMMISSION MERCHANTS,

"290, E., 6TH STREET, PRODUCE EXCHANGE,

"ST. PAUL, MINN., April 14th, 1892

"MY DEAR SIR,—It has been impossible for me to accept Mr. Wack's invitation to meet at his house the witnesses he cited in his communication to you. I have already written you of my preliminary interview with Mr. Wack, and it confirms in my own mind the high opinion which I previously held of him through our acquaintanceship, extending over a series of years. There is no reasonable doubt in my mind that the statement he makes is substantially correct, at least as respects any and all allegations of fact. Of course the application of these facts to an unknown force is a matter upon which I cannot speak.

"HERBERT W. SMITH"

Page 101 from Dannion Brinkleys book: 'Secrets of the Light'.

..... understanding: Deeply understanding and applying the power of love, combined with the spiritual protection of good cheer, is just about the wisest thing we can do for ourselves. When we commit to cheerfulness and to life lived in the loving expectation of goodness, the world becomes a beautiful reflection of these qualities. Dedicating ourselves to being the expression of love and good cheer, in all we do, guarantees our lives will become the direct image of Heaven on Earth. Our love for one another, put into action moment by moment, and used for the highest good of all, is most assuredly our sacred path on Earth. **Each of us has a unique mission to accomplish in life. That mission is predicated solely upon the gifts and talents we chose to master, for the benefit of humanity, in loyal service to Spirit.** However, in all instances, no matter what the immediate or ultimate goal might be, love is the unwavering path leading to its spiritual fulfillment. Love is the power, ever present and forever willing, to perform the miraculous deeds and unexplainable happenings destined to occur along the path to our success.

Lao Tsu, the great Chinese theosophist and author of the Tao Te Ching, said over twenty-five hundred years ago, 'The only way to do is to be Therefore, I believe that the only way to create love is to consciously be love. If there is to be peace on Earth, it must begin as a seed that first takes root within each of our hearts. We must become the dutiful spiritual emissaries of celestial harmony that we volunteered to be when we came here. All we need to do is acknowledge our essence as love and diligently use.....

The section in red has been a great encouragement to me when I feel a bit depressed and wonder if I am doing the right thing in life. The general assurance is that we are doing what we are supposed to be doing and that is what was chosen by us, with the help of our 'teachers' who are interested in our eternal progress. We are not alone and all things are known to those who love us in the world of Spirit.

Predicated: To state or affirm as an attribute or quality of something

Way of Life

In my line of work death is a way of life. When I first started in hospice care I was quite young and sensitive but after a while I started to feel more comfortable around the dying, and one of the reasons for my more relaxed approach was an experience I had the very first month I started work. I'd been involved in the care of a lady I will call Judith. She wasn't an easy patient, always complaining, and a lot of the staff didn't like spending much time with her. She never had any visitors, and, being young and earnest, I thought I could make a difference and sat with her as often as I could during visitor hours. She was having none of it and told me to leave her be. After a few days of this she realised that I wasn't going anywhere, so she quietened down a bit. Sometimes the two of us would just sit in silence together. One afternoon as I was coming in to check on Judith, she grabbed my hand and told me that I didn't need to sit with her anymore because they were with her now. I asked her what she meant and she said that her sisters and brothers - she came from a family of eight and all had passed except her - were taking good care of her. Then she touched my face and thanked me. It was the first sign of tenderness I had ever known from her. I just smiled and told her I would check in on her later that evening. A few hours later I came back to see Judith and she was quietly asleep, breathing deeply. I gave her room a little tidy-up but then I felt this sudden and strange stillness wash all over me. Hard to say, but everything went quiet - eerily quiet. I couldn't even hear or feel my own heartbeat. Then I noticed that Judith was suddenly sitting up in her bed with her arms stretched towards the back wall. I wanted to go over to her but I couldn't move. My feet were rooted to the spot. I saw this shaft of bright light fall over her bed. The light made her face glitter and she looked radiant. The light got brighter and brighter and at one point was so intense that I had to shield my eyes. When I looked again everything was back to normal and Judith was lying in her bed again. I went over to her and, from the silent, peaceful expression on her face I knew that she had gone.

This was not an isolated incident. About six months later something very similar happened when I was present at the death of a man I will call Jacob, only this time I saw swirling lights and heard the sound of flapping wings. I would say that on average I witnessed something magical like this about twice a year and the experience has become so familiar that I don't even question it any more. Whenever it happens I know that one of the residents will die but it doesn't fill me with dread. Quite the contrary - it makes me feel incredibly comforted and privileged. When I feel it will bring comfort to grieving loved ones I do try to tell them what I have seen happen at the point of death. Reactions vary. Some people are deeply moved, whereas others think I am one sandwich short of a picnic. It's up to them what they think. I see myself as the messenger. I never asked to be able to see what I see, but it happens all the same.

Extract from 'An Angel Set Me Free' by Dorothy Chitty.

The Final Visit

In the last moments of our lives, we are never alone. Someone who has gone before will always come to collect us, whether it's a grandparent, a parent, a partner, a child or a good friend. If you have ever sat with someone who is dying, you will know that an incredible calmness comes over them because they have seen or heard the person they love coming for them. Many, many people have described this to me and I know we will all go through it one day. There is nothing to fear at that moment, and the dying know it. All will be well.

To illustrate this, I'm including a story I heard from a doctor about an end-of-life and after-life experience he had. One evening I was called out to the home of a fifty-four-year-old woman who had a history of heart problems. When I walked into her bedroom I was surprised to see so many people there and asked them to leave so I could examine my patient in peace. Her husband and two daughters left the room, but a man and a woman still stood in the corner, smiling. 'Would you mind stepping out for a moment?' I asked, getting irritated, but all they did was smile. My patient was very weak but she managed to say: "It's only you and me in the room, doctor. The lady and gentleman you can see are my parents and they've come for me because it's my time to die." "Nonsense," I said. "You're not going to die if I've got anything to do with it." But when I did my examination, I realised her heart was very weak and that she must have had another heart attack. I called an ambulance and waited with her until it came. "My mother died at forty-seven," she told me, "and my dad took his own life a year later. They haven't appeared to me since then - until now. That's why I know I'm going to die and they will take me over."

The family went with her to hospital and I popped in later to find them all sitting round her bedside as she got weaker and weaker. She told them that she had left letters for all of them that they were to read after she died. They talked about her funeral requests. Then, two hours later, she passed away with a beautiful smile on her face. Just after that, I heard her voice in my head. "You are free now; free to look after the ones you love." The words were clear and unmistakable and they made me stop in my tracks. I was so moved by the whole experience that it changed my whole approach to medicine.

Now, when I am with a dying patient, I know they are about to be set free from suffering, and I know that they will go on to an afterlife. I have no doubt about it anymore, having actually heard from a patient of mine after her death."

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Extract from The Spirits' Book by Allan Kardec

Question 147: Why is it that anatomists physiologists, and in general those who apply themselves to the pursuit of the natural sciences, are so apt to fall into materialism?

“The physiologist refers everything to the standard of his senses. Human pride imagines that it knows everything, and refuses to admit that there can be anything which transcends the human understanding. Science itself inspires some minds with presumption; they think that nature can have nothing hidden from them.

Question 148: Is it not regrettable that materialism should be a consequence of studies which ought, on the contrary, to show men the superiority of the intelligence that governs the world?

“It is not true that materialism is a consequence of those studies; it is a result of the imperfection which leads men to draw a false conclusion from their studies, for men may make a bad use of the very best things. The idea of annihilation, moreover, troubles those who profess to hold it more than they will allow to be seen; and those who are the loudest in proclaiming their materialistic convictions are often more boastful than brave. The greater number of the so-called materialists are only such because they have no rational ground of belief in a future life. Show a firm anchor of rational belief in a future state to those who see only a yawning void before them, and they will grasp it with the eagerness of drowning men.”

There are those who, through an aberration of the intellect, can see nothing in organized beings but the action of matter, and attribute to this action all the phenomena of existence. They have seen, in the human body, only the action of an electrical machine they have studied the mechanism of life only in the play of the bodily organs, they have often seen life extinguished by the rupture of a filament, and they have seen nothing but this filament. They have looked to see whether anything still remained, and as they have found nothing but matter that has become inert, as they have neither seen the soul escape from the body nor been able to take hold of it, they have concluded that everything is reducible to the properties of matter, and that death is consequently the annihilation of all thought. A melancholy conclusion, if such were really the case for, were it so, good and evil would be alike devoid of aim every man would be justified in thinking only of himself, and in subordinating every other consideration to the satisfaction of his material instincts. Thus all social ties would be broken, and the holiest affections would be destroyed forever. Happily for mankind, these ideas are far from being general. Their area may even be said to be a narrow one, limited to the scope of invidious opinions; for nowhere have they been erected into a system of doctrine. A state of society founded on such a basis would contain within itself the seeds of its own dissolution; and its members would tear each other to pieces like so many ferocious beasts of prey. Man has an intuitive belief that, for him, everything does not end with the life of his body;

he has a horror of annihilation. No matter how obstinately men may have set themselves against the idea of a future life, there are very few who, on the approach of death, do not anxiously ask themselves what is going to become of them for the thought of bidding an eternal adieu to life is appalling to the stoutest heart. Who, indeed could look with indifference on the prospect of an absolute and eternal separation from all that he has loved? Who, without terror, could behold, yawning beneath him, the bottomless abyss of nothingness in which all his faculties and aspirations are to be swallowed up forever? Who could calmly say to himself, "After my death there will be nothing for me but the void of annihilation; all will be ended. A few days hence, all memory of me will have been blotted out from the remembrance of those who survive me, and the earth itself will retain no trace of my passage. Even the good that I have done will be forgotten by the ungrateful mortals whom I have benefited. And there is nothing to compensate me for all this loss, no other prospect, beyond this ruin, than that of my body devoured by worms!" Is there not something horrible in such a picture, something that sends an icy chill through the heart? Religion teaches us that such cannot be our destiny; and reason confirms the teachings of religion. But the vague, indefinite assurance of a future existence, which is all that is given us either by religion or by reason, cannot satisfy our natural desire for some positive proof in a matter of such paramount importance for us; and it is just the lack of such proof, in regard to a future life, that, in so many cases, engenders doubt as to its reality. "Admitting that we have a soul," many very naturally ask, "what is our soul? Has it a form, an appearance of any kind? Is it a limited being, or is it something undefined and impersonal? Some say that it is 'a breath of God,' others, that it is a 'spark' others, again, declare it to be 'part of the Great Whole, the principle of Life and of Intelligence.' But what do we learn from these statements? What is the good of our possessing a soul, if our soul is to be merged in immensity like a drop of water in the ocean? Is not the loss of our individuality equivalent, so far as we are concerned, to annihilation? The soul is said to be immaterial; but that which is immaterial can have no defined proportions, and therefore can have no reality for us. Religion also teaches that we shall be happy, or unhappy, according to the good or the evil we have done; but of what nature are the happiness or unhappiness thus promised us in another life? Is that happiness a state of beatitude in the bosom of God, an external contemplation, with no other employment than that of singing the praises of the Creator? And the flames of hell, are they a reality or a figure of speech? The Church itself attributes to them a figurative meaning; but of what nature are the sufferings thus figuratively shadowed forth? And where is the scene of those sufferings? In short, what shall we be, what shall we do, what shall we see, in that other world which is said to await us all?" No one, it is averred, has ever come back to give us an account of that world. But this statement is erroneous: and the mission of Spiritism is precisely to enlighten us in regard to the future which awaits us to enable us, within certain limits, to see and to touch it, not merely as a deduction of our reason, but through the evidence of facts.

Thanks to the communications made to us by the people of that other world, the latter is no longer a mere presumption, a probability, which each one pictures to himself according to his own fancy, which poets embellish with fictitious and allegorical images that serve only to deceive us it is that other world itself, in its reality, which is now brought before us, for it is the beings of the life beyond the grave who come to us, who describe to us the situations in which they find themselves, who tell us what they are doing, who allow us to become, so to say, the spectators of the details of their new order of life, and who thus show us the inevitable fate which is reserved for each of us according to our merits or our misdeeds. Is there anything anti-religious in such a demonstration? Assuredly not since it furnishes unbelievers with a ground of belief, and inspires lukewarm believers with renewed fervor and confidence. Spiritism is thus seen to be the most powerful auxiliary of religion. And, if it be such, it must be acknowledged to exist by the permission of God, for the purpose of giving new strength to our wavering convictions, and thus of leading us back into the right road by the prospect of our future happiness.

Kardec, Allan. *The Spirits' Book: Revised Edition* (pp. 60-62). Kindle Edition.

Book Excerpt Taken From: SCIENCE

IS MATERIALIZATION TRUE?

Published in 1878

Part 6 of 12 Parts, page 77:*

The Spirit of Benjamin Franklin speaking through The Mediumship of Cora L.V. Richmond after being in the Spirit World at least 80 Years.

A Few Historical Facts about the Earth Life of Benjamin Franklin:

Born in Boston in 1706, he passed into the spirit world 1790. He became one of the greatest statesman of the American Revolution and of the new born nation. He was the delegate to the Continental Congress, was appointed Postmaster General. In 1776 he was appointed to the committee that drafted the *Declaration of Independence*, which he signed.

Benjamin Franklin, the son of a tallow chandler and soap maker, left school at 10 years of age to help his father. He apprenticed to his half brother, a printer and publisher of the *New England Courant*, to which young Ben secretly contributed. Going on to be a printer, scientist, inventor and writer, owning various publishing interests, he extended his own knowledge by studying foreign languages. Published from 1732 to 1757, the well known: *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Franklin also interested himself in selling books, established a circulating library, organized a debating club that developed into the American Philosophical Society and helped to establish (1751) an academy that eventually became the University of Pennsylvania.

He brought about civic reforms. He had studied philosophy and science; repeated the experiments of other scientists and showed his usual practical bent by inventing such diverse things as the Franklin stove, bifocal eyeglasses, and a glass harmonica to name just a few. The phenomenon of electricity interested him deeply.

It is therefore not surprising with all his exceptional talent, which space does not permit to be listed here, that he was quite prepared and ready to continue his work for the improvement for humanity on arriving into the spirit world.

Note: Benjamin Franklin is a fine example of the universal law. His soul was well developed by the service he gave because of his love for humanity. Gaining knowledge through that loving experience, 'is' the alignment, the becoming a part of the creative Life-Force, the powerful wisdom of a higher truth. This power is creative energy, eternally being used for progression of the earth and the spirit worlds.

THE OCCUPATION, CAPABILITIES AND POSSIBILITIES OF DISEMBODIED SPIRITS

1878

The Spirit of Benjamin Franklin Speaking through The Mediumship of Cora L.V. Richmond after being in The Spirit World for nearly 90 years.

Mr. Chariman and Friends. The words of my chosen theme this evening have not been idly selected: 'The Occupation, Capabilities and Possibilities of Disembodied Spirits'

Into the region of that world which lies beyond death, and into that portion of it which it has been my good fortune to dwell for many years, I invite your cordial presence; a presence which is possible if you will only free your minds from all fears concerning death, and assume that it is simply a voyage through another country, narrated to you by a traveler who has sojourned there.

It is usual to you to disencumber your minds so much of time and space that, either with panoramic view, or with the aid of word pictures which the traveler can portray, you easily traverse distant countries, become accustomed to the habits and manners of the inhabitants there, familiar with their laws, and, indeed, know as much of them as though you were really there in person. This is possible concerning the spiritual life. If you unbar the doors of death, take away from the gateway of the angels the terror and fear that have so long sat there, and disencumber your minds of the thought that there is aught in connection with the future life of which man has need to be afraid, you will then easily perform the journey.

Death is no barrier at the gate of life; death is no fiend, shaped in hideous image to frighten you from the precincts of immortality, only a natural change--one which all must inherit, and sooner or later pass through; the method of it is familiar to those who have watched the departure of friends or dearly loved ones; the consciousness of it is present ever, alike to the studious and to the thoughtless. Surely in this theme there is nothing that should inspire with fear nor profane the silent shadow with terror or despair. Birth into your world were a more fitting opportunity for sadness and mourning, since you do not know into what scene of terror or misfortune the newly born infant may be plunged in after life; but in the spirit world, when the body has fulfilled its outward function, and is again gathered to dust, there is nothing to fear aside from what a man may take with him into that world, namely, his own spiritual condition. No fiends of terror await to plunge him into abysmal torment; no one watchful with vindictive glance to judge of his slightest look, word, or deed in life; he has no more severe monitor than his own conscience; than consciousness, when disrobed from outward life, of being in spirit, perhaps impoverished by a lack of excellence in his external life and knowledge.

Into the spiritual state, therefore, the usual human being enters as freely and as gladly as you would pass from the winter clime of the frigid zone to the regions of tropical warmth and beauty. Into the spiritual life usually the spirit enters gladly, as though freed from a prison, unfettered from chains, and released from the thralldom of the encasing physical clay, that even to the best of human beings is to some extent a bond upon the spirit. I can therefore say that with the fullness of years and the consciousness of having tried to do my duty, death came to me as a welcome messenger.

I knew little of the state into which I would enter, but I had an abiding faith that the Infinite Power over rules these things and that we enter that state for which we are best fitted, and that to me there could come nothing worse than, what I had encountered, and in some way triumphed over during my earthly pilgrimage.

I assure you, friends, the consciousness of this fact abode with me for many years before my departure from the earthly life, I assure you that I had gleamings of this sublime philosophy that fills the void between the outer and the loftier life, and that I therefore was somewhat prepared for the reception which seemed to await me in the spiritual spheres; a reception that more than surpassed all earthly recognition, all visitation to home and friends, all possible conceptions of outward life, since it was not marred by any thought of the absent, or by any approaching severance of the chord by another change of death.

The needs of the human spirit speedily force themselves upon the consciousness of the newly departed.

I found that affection, kindness, charity, the graces and thoughts that I had admired in my earthly friends, were the real inheritance into which I came when I entered spiritual life. I found that external surroundings, shapes of beauty, or usefulness, were in accordance simply with the needs of the spirit, and secondary to it, while all that pertained to the vital existence of life - I mean to the thought of life, to its good qualities, to those things that make up the real man or woman - these were apparent and manifest in the surroundings that awaited me.

Hence, in the abode of family affections, to which I was first admitted, I found the kindred of my fireside, and of my spirit awaiting me as joyously as though I had been in long banishment, or exile, and was returning to them. I found my youth, all impulses and hopes of early manhood, every form of young life, restored and more than fulfilled in the fruition of the spirit, I found that the physiological change of death had wrought a greater miracle than Arabian wonders; it had wrought the miracle of absolute departure of age, of infirmity, of pain, and the consciousness of it - of all things connected with matter, so far as physical suffering was concerned.

I found to my sorrow that much of my life was not perfect, and that the portion which was not perfect was reflected in my brain, to which my friends, however, kindly seemed to turn a blind eye and deaf ear, and only allowed me to discover the imperfections. These imperfections were the results which, of course, every human being possesses, and must ultimately become aware of--any lack in the mental or moral perfection of the nature on earth. Such lack is distinctly portrayed in the spirit, and unless there is very great moral perversion the spirit becomes distinctly aware of it the moment disenthralment from the earthly body takes place.

Nevertheless I was admitted into the abode prepared for me by the aspirations of love and the loved ones, who were present. I did not find the distance far, although I presume upon actual measurement it would be many thousand leagues from the earth; but so rapid was the transition, and so sudden was the rising from earth, that it seemed an instant and I was there, though I could look back upon the earth, and it appeared as a speck or atom of dust in the atmosphere.

I found that the spheres of spiritual life are not of necessity connected with the earth's atmosphere, except by mental or spiritual ties, and that those having friends upon earth still hold an interlinking chain; but the orbit that connects them with the earth and with the spiritual state may be far away.

I found the sphere into which I entered was a vast belt of interstellar light, which seemed at first, as I approached it, to be like the Milky Way, of those nebulous masses that the astronomer discovers when contemplating the heavens. This belt was not limited to any especial planet or world, but seemed to stretch far away in different directions through the orbéd spaces, and each planet seemed to have an interlinking avenue connecting with this interstellar belt.

I asked one who appeared to me as a luminous star of light what sphere, by name or number, I had entered. He said: "The spheres are not numbered to us, but for the purpose of external information they are frequently numbered. This is the second or interstellar sphere - the heavens indirectly removed from the earth or other planets - that state which the spirit enters in its second stage of spiritual growth."

I said: "Then is there another sphere nearer the earth?" "You have passed through one," he says, "which connects those spirits with the earth who are more nearly allied to it, and whose affections and ties are of an external nature. Such spirits are earth bound, and have yet their passions, their prejudices, their human proclivities, to overcome. Look back!"

I looked back, and I discovered what I had not seen while passing through it. Dense masses, seemingly of vapor, floating over the speck that I called the

earth. These dense masses the spirit, who seemed luminous and orbed with light, told me were the first spheres of spiritual life beyond the earth into which those spirits entered that from moral obliquity, earthly ties, selfish habits, or any external cause whatever, were still bound near the earth.

I noticed, however, that even the dark masses swept away towards other planets, and he said there was a connecting link between the atmosphere of earth and the atmosphere of every other planet in a similar stage of spiritual growth, so that these lower spirits, or spirits less spiritually developed, were connected with whatever planet represented their average state, and frequently received an augmentation of their own shadow by the shadow reflected from the planet equally undeveloped.

Into the sphere, however, which I had entered, there seemed no absolute moral obliquity. There were imperfections enough, the results no doubt of failures in earthly life to fully comprehend the nature of the spirit and its latent powers. I could readily see that these failures were not the result of intention, and that they were soon overcome, as indeed my own delinquencies seemed to be overcome by my earnest desire to have them overcome. I prayed, that is, I strove earnestly with myself to overcome whatever of personal pride, ambition or earthliness might remain with me, and I beheld, as I entered nearer and nearer the abode of my loved ones, a shining stream that seemed to flow all around the borders of this sphere into which I had entered, through which I must pass to enter their abode..

Without hesitation I plunged into the stream, but instead of water, according to the standard of that substance upon earth, I found each globule seemed life like, and was laden with some essential pungent power, that probed the weakness of my moral nature and expurgated it from me. Every globule seemed distinct, and like a lash would scourge, at the same time leaving no sting but the consciousness of renovation.

This was the sphere or state of self examination; and during my passage through this stream I distinctly remember that all of the faults and failings and mental imperfections of my earthly life seemed to pass before my mind. I distinctly remember that I judged them all, one by one, and wished that they might pass from me.

As I emerged upon the other side I beheld my dearest friends extending to meet me; the members of my own family fireside group who had long since passed from gaze were there awaiting me. These had prepared, as it were, an encircling bower, that shut out all view of the surroundings and scenery, but at the same time might open out any time directing my volition to it.

Here was my wealth, here was my greeting; here was the reception which for a long time I had awaited; how long I know not, for an age would seem as nothing

and a moment an age in the consciousness of the joy of being disenthralled from earthly sense, and in greeting again the friends whom I knew upon earth.

As we passed out again into what seemed an open space, I was led by the spirit that appeared from a luminous body of spirits, to contemplate the change that had come upon me. I found substances, new in name, but apparently as tangible as those of earth life, and I found structures that had no resemblance to earthly things, but at the same time were typical of the thought, wish or desire of those who inhabited them. I found that the atoms of these spiritual existences were transparent; that I could see all the performances of life within my own frame as well as in the frames of those with whom I came in contact. Thought itself seemed luminous, and I could distinctly tell by the radiations of light around my companions and friends that their thoughts were toward me. I soon understood that we had no speech; that it was not necessary to make vocal signs, as the thought itself became palpable to the comprehension of the spiritual vision or consciousness of the other.

I then said: "Have we no physical senses here? Speech does not seem to be necessary, and I do not require to hear when you think."

"Physical senses," was the answer, "are but the measure of the human body and its weakness. The spirit only wants avenues of expression and avenues of understanding. If senses were here they would blockade and prevent the expression which you so much covet."

"They do upon the earth," I said. "The sight is limited, the hearing can only be relied upon at random, and the physical senses impede frequently the expression of the spirit."

"How much more, then, in the spiritual state will they do so," said my attendant, "when the spirit itself requires none of these outward avenues, but has avenues of expression according to its own state!"

I then speedily discovered that every mental vibration produced as distinct an impression upon the atmosphere as though a photographic plate had been there to receive its rays, and that this aura surrounding a spirit was at once a sign and token of the condition of the spirit, and of the, different thoughts emanating from the brain.

"Is thought then a substance?" said I.

"Not a substance *per se*, but it affiliates with the substance of spiritual life, producing vibrations upon it, as sound does upon the external or earthly air. Hence if a person *thinks* in spiritual life it is equivalent to speaking in earthly life, the effect being just as palpable on the finer substances of spiritual existence as is the vibration of sound upon outward substance."

"Then in what manner is thought received?" I said.

“By vibrations. The corresponding wave of thought reaches your own spirit and produces impression there, just as the wave of sound reaches the hearing and produces impression there.”

“Then,” I said, “of what use is this form?” for I perceived that I had a form distinct and conforming in shape, and I judged in appearance, with my earthly form, except that there were no lines of age, or care, or pain upon it.

He said: “The organs of physical sensation are but the expression outwardly of spiritual sensation, hence they are a symbolic representation externally of what, the spirit really possesses in a greater degree. Hence, sight and physical touch, then, in spiritual life become submerged into one sense, but each of the avenues are preserved to complete the oneness, just as a complete sound or chord is made by several notes in unison; so the senses of the spirit are as separate notes of music out of which a chord of melody is made; or better still, are as separate rays of light, of which a single perfect beam of light is made. You do not use the senses separately in spirit life, as on earth, but all sensation is alive at once through all the avenues, quickening, or receiving, in proportion as the spirit thinks, or is acted upon, by surrounding spiritual intelligence.”

Of course I then discovered that the methods of this life must be widely different from those of earth, that the slowness and inadaptability of earthly life are vastly unfitted and unqualified to sustain anything like the rapidity with which thought itself acts upon the mind and brain of another. Speech itself is slow to human consciousness; thought is rapid in its vibrations. The movements of the physical form are necessarily cumbersome, and vary in grace according to the ability or construction of form. In spirit life gracefulness of thought depends upon its perfection, not upon the external expression, and he represents the most perfect beauty and symmetry of form and shape of life whose thoughts are the most perfectly formed, and therefore who expresses them the most perfectly.

I saw an entire change to my comprehension in the manner of construction of things. In the external life, you will observe that all things proceed from organic properties and functions, and that life unfolds gradually from the germ that is acted upon by extraneous influences and substances. I discovered in spirit life that all emanations proceed from the spirit itself; all attractions, or accretions of matter, are the result of a greater or less degree of perfection in the mind or in the spirit, and that therefore there is no necessity for organic construction; that whatever construction takes place in spiritual life, is what you term subjective in earthly life, but to the spirit is certainly objective; while all forms of earthly substance and organic life upon earth seem to the spirit in my stage of existence purely subjective and shadowy.

I see the radiations of matter, as I shall presently show you, not from the external but from the spiritual standpoint, and will endeavor to portray the

changes in my senses and consciousness, while comparing the two stages of life, and my observation of substances in each.

As I soon became interested in these forms of external observation concerning myself, of course my immediate interest in home ties and home friends disappeared, and I became anxious to enter a wider range of observation, where, I could discover the various processes of the life into which I had entered. I perceived forms all about me, of beauty and comeliness, some of them similar to forms on earth. I mean external objects, but all of them seemingly dependent upon the radiations of some given mind. Hence if I approached the habitation of a spirit there were flowers and forms of beauty, foliage, external objects it is true, but these all, seemed dependent upon and radiating around the spirit that was their life and centre. If that spirit moved, the whole of this structure seemed scintillant with the thought of the spirit; if there, was a pulsation of joy it seemed as though the leaves and foliage were conscious of it; and even the habitation in which the spirit dwelt became more luminous; and I speedily discovered that the thought of the inhabiting spirit affected all substances within the orb of its life, and hence that the attraction of other spirits, the home ties and all, were a congregation of spirits of similar grade, who formed their habitation by the attraction of as much substance as their own minds could control; and that the power of the spiritual will, its volition or consciousness, became the secret spring where with these substances were attracted.

I then said: "how was it that my own habitation was prepared without my presence here?"

"You have been living upon earth," the attendant spirit said; "you have had thoughts and occupations there, and whatever thought belonged to this stage of life, instead of to the earthly, produced its impression upon this stage and upon the corresponding substances here; so that your spiritual structure was fashioned by you while you were an inhabitant of the earth life." "Then we build our spiritual habitations," I said, "while upon the earth?" "Yes and perfectly or imperfectly; the structure is fashioned according to the perfection or imperfection of your thoughts; if they are continually broken and shattered by external things, or if the ties of matter encroach too strongly upon the spirit, it makes habitation appear fragmentary and frequently very imperfect, but that is speedily remedied by the spirit when it comes to this state of existence."

"Then," I said, "Is there a continual connecting link between the earthly state and this state of spiritual life?"

"Most certainly; there are connecting links," says the attendant spirit, "between all atoms of matter in the universe, and certainly there are connecting links between all atoms of spiritual substances that make up the vast spheres of spiritual life."

I then discovered that the occupations of the spirit begin not externally, as they do upon earth, but inwardly. For instance, if on earth a young man wishes to build a home he saves up a few dollars, he gathers together his earnings, and he makes a habitation out of such substances as accord with his means. While his mind may be very lofty, his aspirations very meritorious, he cannot build a greater habitation than the dollars which he has will warrant him in erecting. He, builds his habitation and takes his companion, and they together make up the home; first, of course, from their affections, but the external property from the substances around them.

In spirit life the novice enters seemingly without a possession, but he soon finds that he has laid up his treasures, or his lack of them, in heaven. His lack of them will consist of a vacant space, which certainly he may occupy, and which, if he has any friends or kindred or loving thoughts, will be measurably peopled by their kindness; but if he has been entirely lacking in spiritual graces and aspirations it will seem to be an impoverished country into which he has entered. I am told that in the lower stratum of spiritual existences there are vast barren plains inhabited by persons who have not had aspirations sufficiently spiritual to make populous their home with any living thing.

I am told that there are barren deserts stretching far away into space, the outgrowth of the earth and other planets, which souls must for a time inhabit, because they themselves have failed to create beauty in their thoughts. But in this sphere which I entered there was no such desolate places; there were certainly many imperfect, and many that seemed devoid of what I would consider grace and beauty. My habitation, when I entered that part of it that I myself had created, was sufficiently imperfect, and I found it like another famous place in history "paved with good intentions," and I speedily set to work to rear upon this somewhat substantial basis the edifice of my new life. In doing this I did not look around for wood or marble, or any outward substance; I was told that I had to build from within. I said, "How shall I do this? I know the trees grow and all things unfold from within upon earth by attraction of atoms from the sunlight and the various substances of the soil; but I am not aware of any such property in man, except indirectly."

"You shall see," answered my attendant. "Give yourself no uneasiness about your habitation, but try to reform the methods of your thought."

"Reform the methods of my thought? Have I then been inebriate? Have I been imprudent? Have I been immoral? Have I misjudged my kind?"

"You are to decide."

I looked within my mental structure, and I discovered that the walls had largely crumbled away since I passed from earth-life; that things very real and very substantial to me in the external life were nothing; that precepts and maxims

which I had considered essential and important, became as nothing; that they were mere shreds and sophisms. For instance, I discovered that the external policy of honesty, unless accompanied by the genuine impulse, is void. Of course I always thought so, but I stated it wrongly. I discovered that an external morality typical of life is void, unless there be a corresponding probity of spirit. I understood this, but I was not sufficiently alert to its importance of being first a Spiritual state. I was of the opinion upon the earth that the external inculcation will eventually produce the right kind of state, and that the semblance of it ought to be cultivated that the real may come. I discovered that no semblance can imitate the reality; that the real foundation of all moral excellence must be by inculcation of it from within.

I believed in modern science that outward observation and the pursuit of various mechanical and mathematical discoveries would eventually lead to the perfection of truth. I now perceived that wall, also, crumbling away, and an insight entering my mind that outward science is but the form or clothing of the spiritual principle, and if that principle be not correct the science itself is void.

In religion also I found that while I had no creed which made a barrier between me and my Deity, or between myself and my kind, there was still a mistake in the fact that I failed to recognize the absolute nature of the Divine Personality in the guidance of all worlds and men. Of course I believed that too much can be done by man himself; I recognized too little the unseen agencies that are alive in the universe to shape and govern all things.

I must be pardoned if I seem prolix, but in order to arrive at an accurate comprehension of the change which every spirit must pass through, I must give these individual experiences.

I then discovered that as I unraveled one by one the meshes of external sophism or external philosophy, I seemed to be ensphered in an atmosphere far more luminous. There were certain indications of fabric growing around me; I perceived that as my thoughts regulated themselves harmoniously there were spherical arches, and various forms of beauty like rainbow lights, around me.

I said, "What is this?" The attendant, seemingly watching me from without, said, "You will soon discover." And I at last found that my entire method of thought became inverted, or introverted; that I looked upon substance as a shadow, and upon what men call shadow as substance; that I discovered in the external life no organic property separate from spirit. Remember this: "In atoms no organic property separate from spirit" - that I probed to the very foundation of my philosophy and discovered that nature has of herself no activity independent of the spirit inhabiting nature. I found this out in my own structure, and in the spiritual body which my soul animated and the life into which I was admitted.

I then said: "From this standpoint can I investigate outward science? Can I now become familiar with the processes of the contact of elements in external nature?"

The attendant said: "From this standpoint only can you understand the processes; the external scientific man has no groundwork; he perceives at random; he discovers seemingly, by accident; he follows no line of investigation, and if he arrive at the truth it is simply because the truth is in his way, not because he has a correct aim."

Then I said: "I may safely study the elements of than earth's atmosphere and planetary substances, and the laws governing their control?"

"Most certainly," he said. "But you are not fitted to enter upon this study until you shall have at first perfected your own habitation. By this I mean," he says, "until you shall have become self-centered, properly poised in your own sphere of life, and understand thoroughly the scenes by which you are surrounded."

I then said: "I will follow your Instructions; I seek only for guidance. Let me know the methods."

"The methods are still self-examination, still self-scrutiny, still the undoing or perhaps the overthrowing of the thoughts that were with you on earth."

Then I leaned still more toward inward contemplation, and thought that I had not sufficient power of spiritual growth to reach the point of my desire in the pursuit of the investigation of the sciences connected with the elements of the earth and the heavenly bodies. Soon, however, I became tranquil, and my mind was breathed upon by a consciousness of humility.

I said: "I will study as a little child, and listen to these spirits or witness what they shall do until I learn."

I then perceived groups further and further away nearing us, and that each seemed to be occupied with their own pursuits, not intruding nor interfering with the others, but ranged in family groupings and in social order and occupation.

I said: "How busily and constantly employed they seem to be! and yet I have no clue as to what their occupation may mean, or the effect that it may have upon themselves or others."

I sat down in contemplation with the habitation unfinished, much as one would sit on an unbuilt edifice for which he had no capital to proceed further. My capital was gone; I had nothing further to invest; I did not know how to proceed. By observation I discovered lines of sympathetic light extending from one spirit to another, that formed these groups. These lines of sympathetic light radiated, or scintillated, as they approached one another, and of one accord they seemed to understand, as I described previously. They then seemed to pass off in groups

further and further away, either into space, or sometimes they seemed to me to descend into darkness.

I said. "What do they do? I then thought intently with a desire to know their occupation. I discovered that these were self-centered family groups, or social circles, who had a distinct line of thought and occupation in spiritual life, and that this line of thought and occupation was connected with some social state beneath them, or some planet to which they might be attracted for use or for work.

Then I said: "I have the clue: it must be what they do for others that gives them capacity to increase their power of building their own habitations." Instantly all the atoms in the fabric of my own habitation thrilled with this new light.

I said: "I will seek some person, or spirit, or state, that is not as attractive as my own, and see what good I can accomplish." I was not long in seeking. I seemed to pass into a stratum of atmosphere beneath and darker than my own, among persons who seemed to be without the power to rise, and some without the aspiration; and I thought, as I breathed upon them from my mind--this breathing being a real exhalation of my spirit -- "Would you like to enter a region of greater brightness?" And a spirit looked upward and said: "Oh, I cannot; there seems to be no way; I am hopeless. I have no unhappiness, no fixed condition of misery, but I am inert."

I said: "Do something," giving the same advice that I myself had sought.

"What shall I do? there is no outward work for me to perform. Clothing is unnecessary, we weave it seemingly of our thoughts; we, do not feed upon substances like those upon earth. I have no necessity for these things; and one cannot always *think*; it is too inactive."

But I said: "Do you not know one in outward life whom you wish to benefit? Is there no such one living upon earth?" I ventured this without even knowing that I myself could do it. "Is there no one that you would wish to benefit upon the earth?"

Oh, if I might," said he, "communicate with some one whom I love, that I might tell of the inertia that fills my mind, it would even be a blessing to do that!"

I said: "Think intently of the one whom you would like to communicate with." And I saw that he was thinking, and with that thought he disappeared toward earth, and there followed a portion of the light which seemed to come from the sphere that I inhabited with him as he went upon his way.

I returned to my spiritual habitation, and behold! a recognition had taken place; the formless portions were shaped and in order, and all around the base was seemingly the foundation of a perfect structure. It is well, I thought; I will try again; and so little by little I went beyond the precincts of my own habitation,

seeking to influence minds that were evidently less employed than myself. To my utter delight I discovered on each return from such a visitation that my habitation grew more and more complete; and when I had finished it so far as it is possible for any spiritual state to be finished, I then was conscious of the presence of the attendant who had advised me. He said: "You have found the process now of increasing your activity and powers; now you are fitted to study the elements." I said: "Why now?" "Because the spiritual is the centre here, and that must be in order and well balanced before any material thing can be touched. You cannot even become conscious the methods of outward life until you are conscious of the methods of spiritual life."

Then I said: "Are there no spirits in communication with the planets and with the external elements save those that are spiritually self-centered?"

"Certainly; but they are not consciously so, and have no knowledge of their office or employment; they perform it mechanically, and act under the impulsion of higher minds. I take it that you wish to act intelligently."

"Certainly I do."

"Then," he says, "come with me."

I passed to the stratum of atmosphere that we had seen as I was passing from earthly life. I found there various unemployed spirits upon barren plains; found them in habitations that seemed to be void of beauty and intelligence.

He said: "Do you wish to perform anything upon earth?"

I said: "I would like to find out, if possible, the methods whereby spiritual beings, or spiritual forces, control and act upon earthly beings."

"You then," he said, "wish to enter the sphere of study of the elements in connection with spiritual beings and intelligences?"

I said: "yes."

He said: "Select from these persons whom you see those whom you consider most fitted to act upon."

"How am I to select?" I said. "Think toward them," said he.

As I fixed my mind upon one and another, I saw them in various degrees of promptitude or slowness turn toward me and gradually come near. Those who came the most readily, and those who seemed the most anxious to respond to my thought, were chosen.

He said: "Now, anything that you will these persons to do they can perform, but it must be through your will and your knowledge, and not theirs."

I then became aware that other spirits had in the same manner gathered around these groups of spirits that occupy the plane nearest the earth; that they were intent upon solving the problem of communication between the outward

sphere, which is the earth-life, and the spiritual spheres; not only in the manner of impression and guardianship, which I discovered to be a distinct spiritual power, but in the manner of affecting the currents of the atmosphere and occult forces lying around the earth. I joined this school. I speedily found that my attendant was one of the number, and that in the second sphere, which was my home, in a higher grade beyond me, was their habitation and group, or council, and that I really was to be admitted to this council as one of the message-bearers to the earth ! One of the message-bearers! The thought itself electrified me. Could it be possible then to open a direct line of communication?

I bethought me of the subtle force that a portion of my life had occupied intently my thought and mind. Could it be through some such force as electricity in one or other or both of its vibrations? Was there some method whereby this substance which was spiritual and yet tangible to me, could be brought in direct contact with matter, and made to reveal the consciousness of man's spiritual life by the stepping-stone of physical science? Here was a problem.

I commenced first studying gradually the forces surrounding the earth. I discarded the idea of electricity very soon, as I found it too material in its vibrations and too directly connected with the elemental contact of the earth.

Magnetism I found also governed by the laws and currents affecting the earth and its atmospheres. Then I said there must be a still more subtle force, which is amenable to the direct control of the individual will, and is not so sensitive to the casual currents or changes of the external atmosphere as electricity seems to be.

To my surprise I found electricity to be a simple vibration, and the result of counteracting currents of magnetic life upon the earth, and which in their various orders and rotations may be easily measured and guarded against, and placed in accord with the various electric mechanisms of the earth, and adjusted according to human wants and needs.

This certainly was not the force to be employed in connection with the contact of spiritual beings with earth, or with earthly matter. I looked still further. I discovered a subtle force or aura, surrounding minerals, and surrounding all vegetable substances, and finally surrounding all human beings. I found that the aura surrounding mineral substances was not amenable to the action of spiritual volition or will-power. I found that the aura surrounding vegetable substances was not amenable to the action of will-power in the individual capacity. I found the substances surrounding animals, especially the dog and horse, or bird, to some degree amenable; so that under some circumstances of human contact or surroundings, these animals could be made to express an unusual degree of supposed intelligence, and to give tokens or signs of what would seem to be supernatural power.

By experimenting upon these, I found that gradually the substances surrounding human beings, by an action upon the organs of the brain and sensation, would become susceptible to the expression of volition, independently of the human being.

This was the desired element. 'Upon this element, then, all the force in the school of message-bearers, to which I belonged, was intently fixed, and into a particular vein or current of thought, which we, by converging our minds at a given time and place, were able to send into that centre of thought.

We made our first expression of individual contact with matter, in connection with the modern phase of Spiritualism. (See Rochester Knockings.) I then said, "Is this a new thing? Is it for the first time discovered?"

"By no means," said the eldest and centre of the band; "this has been known for ages, was practiced in all the various forms of magic in ancient times, and is the key that will finally unravel all these ancient mysteries"

"Of course," he says, " It is the first time that it has systematically been presented to the thought of modern science, in the light of science; but it will soon grow to that degree of observation externally that it can be tested, at least, by the usual methods of scientific observation, and finally tested by actual scientific apparatus."

I found that no measure of electricity or external mineral magnetism could affect, or alter in any degree, the manifestations from our world. I found that the outward atmosphere only affected them, by depressing or changing the nervous currents of the medial organization, and not because of any superabundance of electricity or magnetism.

I found that the nerve-aura consists of minute particles or globules, that form in themselves a radiating atmosphere around every human being, and which, when properly directed, constitute the means of motion of the physical organism, as well as constitute the means whereby a disembodied spirit independently of that organism moves bodies and produces concussions in the atmosphere. The concussions in the atmosphere are not the result of what may be called vacuum, are not the result of electric vibrations, but are the result of this nerve-aura which is centered at a given place, and which produces by the rapidity of action, or volition, the action upon table, chair, musical instrument., or the atmosphere itself.

The capabilities of spirits in connection with these manifestations must be limited at the present time by their own knowledge, by the nature of the instruments that they have to employ upon earth or other planets, and by the intermediate stages of thought and observation that qualify human beings to understand, step by step, the stages of these manifestations. The capabilities at the present time are limited, as I say, by these things, and by another - that

accompanying every external step in any science, and preceding it there must be a prophecy of the philosophy itself. Spiritualism has had that prophecy and that philosophy, and these must go hand in hand, or the attestation of the physical proof of it will have no corresponding soul to vitalize it and keep pace with it.

Hence the manifestations are continually checked by falsehood, by deception, by discoveries of fraud, by the various temptation to which humanity is liable, for the reason that the soul and its growth must keep parallel to the manifestation and its demonstration; but remember that this is only in connection with an *intelligent* contact of the two worlds, physically. Behind all this is a substratum of spiritual laws and forces of interlinking sympathies and amenities, that continually unites the two worlds, whether there is any outward demonstration or not, and makes up a complete chain of inspiration, even if there had never been a physical manifestation in the world. Remember that the external expression is only the smallest portion of the sublime contact of the earthly and spiritual states, and of your subjection to spiritual beings and impressions by them. In whatever sphere of life, or in whatever state, morally or spiritually, you may be, you are acted upon continually by spiritual powers, for good or ill, for your elevation or depression. These spiritual powers, by continually acting upon your affections and sympathies, move your capabilities to surpassing excellencies, or gravitate with you toward those darksome places and conditions that at some time form the bane of human life.

The possibilities of spiritual existence I can only portray to you in a faint and dim outline, an outline itself so glorious that it can scarcely be believed by those still immured in the external plane, but of which I as much have assurance as I have of my existence as a disembodied spirit.

If a spirit can move one atom of external substance to do its bidding in response to its intelligent wish and will, then it solves all the problems of the heavenly bodies, places us in communication with the great forces that lie behind nature, and makes the revelation to our consciousness that planets and systems, as well as men and immortal souls, are under the guidance of angelic powers as the agents of the Divine Mind.

No orb is left to perform its functions and rotations without an ever-present and ever-active intelligence; and yon lovely flower, [referring to a bouquet on the table] that is painted in the summer sunlight or destroyed by the cold wintry blast, is in its every atom and function guided by the intelligent power that lies behind the ray of light and behind the wintry blast, to the end of doing the work of the spirit.

These possibilities are within the human grasp. Do you not govern substances? Is not the earth itself amenable to you? Is there any place upon it that man does not intend to inspect? And may you not with the power of mechanism, with the grand inventions of human thought, with the continued explorations and

impressions from spiritual sources, finally hope to vanquish that which has been nearly vanquished--time and space and substance - altogether?

If the swift-winged messenger of electricity has already made the distance between the two opposite portions of the world almost nothing, may not the more rapid method of thought itself finally supplant the slow method of electricity, until at last you shall converse together by vibrations of human thought?

If the power of steam has caused the ancient coach to disappear and the methods of usual locomotion to seem tedious and heavy, may not the more rapid transit of aerial navigation, by some still more occult force, become within the possibility and grasp of the next half or full century of time? And is it too much to suppose that that mind which sets upon these substances from the external with so great success, is also able, when freed from the external form and fetters, to act upon it with still greater success, if not by moving worlds in their orb'd places and guiding the elements to their appointed tasks, doing lesser things, not for the individual benefit of sections or classes of people or conditions upon earth, but for the great expression of the perfection of the planet or world ?

I see behind all these forces and mechanisms of nature the guidance of an intelligent power and will. I see, as you see behind the helm of the ship; as you see behind the engine that bears you across the country; as you see behind the messenger that carries with lightning speed your thought to the dearly loved one; so behind all these forces I see the powers of great disembodied minds that have risen from the limited comprehension of the narrow place upon earth to a loftier and diviner comprehension of the elements of life. They lie in the comprehension and the possibility of the soul of man.

I find it no fable that Jupiter commanded lightnings or that Hercules might overturn the world. I find these powers embodied in the thought of man; and the divine intelligence that shapes the infant's feet to do the simple act of uplifting the body for the first time from the dust, is capable of shaping the winged angel to the fulfillment of the task of moving a world or a solar system.

These are some of the gradations of thought that have come to me since I understand the glimmerings of that science by which man as an external and man as a spiritual being can rise from the dust and triumph over human clay.

END.

Extract from an Unknown Book

Extract begins on page 22. There is mention of a Course but no idea what that might be.

.... the illusion. One, called wrong-mindedness, is based on fear and chains us to the world. The other, right-mindedness, is based on love and reveals to us the real world.

Life under the Course's teaching, then, is supremely simple. It is not enmeshed in the battle with the world; lamenting the past, worrying about the future, agonizing over the manipulation of forms. We make, over and over again, the one simple choice between love and fear. To make this choice, though, we must first understand it, and so we will now examine these two mindsets in greater depth.

WRONG-MINDEDNESS: THE EGO

Wrong-mindedness is a comprehensive thought-system that includes within it its own perception of the world, other people, God, everything. But this thought-system is anchored in a particular image of ourselves. The Course calls this image the ego. The ego, very simply, is our deeply engrained belief that we are a separate self. It is the natural and obvious picture of the self we seem to be in this world. Housed within our own personal body is our own private mind to which we alone have direct access. We seem to think and feel, will and experience, suffer and find happiness, independently of anyone else.

Being a separate self may seem harmless enough, yet as soon as we believe we are separate we are inevitably drawn into a destructive relationship with the world around us. The reason is simple. If we are separate, what we gain, the world loses; 'That it has, we do not. The ego thus very quickly becomes an image of attack on the whole for the sake of ourselves. To eat, to be safe, to succeed, to survive at all, it appears that we must be the victor over our surroundings. This thought permeates us so deeply and so completely that it seems to be the essence of life itself, both human and natural; the maintenance and benefit of the individual based on the devouring and conquering of the world around it.

This pattern is the central dynamic of the ego and is what has traditionally been called sin. Sin is the violating of someone or something else for our own benefit. It is the individual will pitted against everything outside of it, waging war upon God and upon the world, breaking law, denying truth and violating reality.

What exactly is the goal of all this furious activity? The goal, and in fact the central purpose of the ego, is the building, the maintenance and the protection of the ego itself. Because we think the ego is what we are, we spend all of our time taking care of this image, carefully sculpting an ego that will give us self-worth and worth in the eyes of others, an ego that we hope can be loved. This is the commodity for which we compete against the world. We seek to wrest from the world and possess for

ourselves the precious currency of love. We seek to be a 'special' ego, a unique ego; one that is not only set apart, as are all egos, but is also set above, attracting to itself the priceless treasures of pride, power, adulation and love.

Under the goal of **specialness** and the means of sin, we relate to the world in two major ways. One is **attack**. Attack is the direct and natural expression of sin, in which we seek to overpower another, and from the defeat of his ego feed the specialness of our own. At root, attack is a mental act, the essence of which, ironically, is to *see sin in others*; to condemn, to be angry, to resent. Attack seeks to bring love to us, but is itself the direct opposite of love. 'It is the judgment of one mind by another as unworthy of love and deserving of punishment'

Direct attack, however, is a painful way of life, leaving us guilty, alone and encircled by enemies. We, therefore, set about seeking allies, who can support our cause, ensure our safety, and feed our need for what we think is love. However, to obtain these allies, we must hide our real motives and sacrifice some of our interests. We must play their game while trying to win at our own. This is the second way we relate to the world, through **bargaining**, or **giving to get**. Here our apparent love may seem to be directed at the other person, but actually it is a boomerang, a baited hook, whose real trajectory lands it back at our own feet. Relationships based primarily on giving to get are called **special love relationships**, in which the two members strike a bargain, an implicit agreement that 'love' will be mutually given on the condition that it is mutually returned. Whereas these relationships may seem opposite to **special hate relationships**, those based on attack, they are actually ruled by the identical strategy of using others to inflate our own specialness. The attack is subtle, but not absent.

Attack and giving to get have the selfsame purpose of collecting to ourselves what the Course calls **idols**. Idols are all those things we surround ourselves with to prove how special we are: money, possessions, achievements, abilities, beautiful bodies (our own and others'), vanquished enemies and prestigious friends. Idols seem to be what life is all about, and the more special are the idols which we possess and the more spacious and glittering is our entire collection, the more we seem to have fulfilled the essence of life itself.

It does not take penetrating insight to see that most of us spend most of our time in the ego's way of life. It is also quite obvious that it is not a very uplifting sight when looked at clearly. It is, in fact, grotesque, and this is the problem with the ego. Somewhere in our minds we are always looking at it clearly. Even though consciously we establish our identity through how the world sees and treats us, subconsciously our eyes are riveted on how we see and treat the world, as the true commentary on what we are.

The strategy of sin, then, produces massive **guilt** inside of us. If we sin, we deserve to be punished. If we condemn, we deserve to be condemned. Guilt is our self-punishment, our self-condemnation. Therefore, sin, which was designed to create

self-worth, brings instead self-loathing. It seems to be an abysmal failure.

Yet, completely undaunted, the ego feels supported and strengthened by guilt. Guilt tells us that the ego is real, that its sinful picture of us is what we really are. We now have no one to turn to but our ego and no recourse but to run from our guilt. Defense mechanisms are the means for our escape. Their purpose is the straightforward one of simply throwing guilt, for the moment, out of sight.

The Course focuses on two defenses, **denial** and **projection**, which go hand in hand. Whereas denial hides guilt inside, projection throws it outside. Denial is the very simple act of suppressing our guilt, pushing it out of awareness into our subconscious. Projection, on the other hand, reinterprets our guilt, telling us that what seems to be our guilt is actually someone else's. In short, it blames others in order to escape blame ourselves. Projection fills our field of vision with guilt, blaming others, the world, God, anything but ourselves, for the sins we secretly believe to be our own.

Obviously, projection has no power to heal guilt. The sad truth is that this supposed escape from guilt actually causes guilt, setting in motion a whole cycle of guilt. This is because projection is just another form of attack, for the essence of both is to accuse others of sin. All that projection does is add another dimension to the same ego dynamics. Before, we used attack to steal 'self-worth' from others. Now, we use projection to dump onto others negative self-worth (guilt). Whereas before we were the aggressive victimizer, now we are the weak, defensive victim. We visibly nurse our wounds, sending to the world the accusing message, "Behold me, brother, at your hand I die." But, whether predator or prey, it is clearly the same attempt to save ourselves by damning others.

This entire system simply does not work. It, in fact, inevitably leads to the state of fear that the Course describes as the essence of the human condition. Having accused ourselves and others of sin, we have no alternative but to shrink into isolation and hide from the punishment of the evil without and the guilt within. This is the end result of the ego: fear, isolation, guilt, loneliness.

We now are in a position to grasp the essence of the ego more firmly. Earlier we said the ego is an attack on the whole for the sake of ourselves. In this the Course echoes many of the world's great spiritual traditions in identifying our core problem as what we call the 'self' and its 'selfishness.' The Course, however, prefers the word 'ego' and does not often use the word 'selfishness' in describing it. It has a reason for this. The ego is not *really* an attack on the whole for the sake of ourselves. That is a lie told by the ego. It is an attack on everything, *including* ourselves. No one benefits from the ego, ourselves least of all. It destroys all as one. It is only an idea, but one that is nursed, pampered and brooded over at the expense of our own happiness and peace, and that of everyone around us. It is a parasite and we are its host.

That the ego is an attack on ourselves is obvious. By saying we are apart from and at

war with the rest of reality, the ego accuses us of being small and alone, sinful and evil. It is a damning image, one that, if true, makes us deserving of the unhappiness we experience and the eternal punishment we have been told about.

Fortunately, the Course says the ego is not what we are. This is another way of phrasing the Course's core distinction between the reality of Heaven and the illusory world. We are not egos. We are not separate and we are not sinful. We are still as God created us: pure, innocent and infinite.

Even within this world the ego is an illusion. The mind which seems to be trapped in time and space is actually a portion of the Christ Mind and, therefore, cannot truly violate the laws of Heaven. What this means is that we are by nature incapable of the very cornerstone of the ego: sin. Sin is a mask, a disguise. Sin says that we gain pleasure from hurting others. Yet, in truth, hurting another hurts us, tormenting us with guilt. It therefore cannot be our real goal. It is, in our minds, a means, a necessary evil, a guilty way of attaining our real goal. Our real goal is the, only thing we want, the only thing we *can* want: love. We saw earlier that this was the single goal of the entire machinery of the ego. No matter how cruel and ruthless we seem, we are really just seeking love, in the form of self-worth, seeking to be loved by others and by ourselves. What looks like sin, therefore, is a call for love. It is not the strong, confident, fully aware expression of what we are. Sin is really just a mistake: an attempt that does not succeed. It is a blind, frightened, desperate appeal for love.

Sin, therefore, is an illusion. It is something we are psychologically incapable of performing. It has literally never happened. We are not evil creatures deserving of guilt and torment. We may seem fearsome, but we are merely afraid. In truth, we are innocent children of God, who are not fallen and who are not evil, but are simply mistaken.

FORGIVENESS: RIGHT-MINDEDNESS

Forgiveness is the cornerstone of right-mindedness, and is the central teaching of *A Course in Miracles*. It is the perfect practical embodiment of the core lesson that fear is an illusion and only love is real. It is, therefore, the perfect transition from this world to Heaven. Locked in the dynamic of forgiveness is the power to heal our minds, to dispel our pain, and ultimately to awaken us from the confines of time and space.

By choosing forgiveness as its primary focus, the Course is making several very important statements. First, it is saying that the fundamental human problem is the pain which comes from sin: the guilt and fear of punishment. Forgiveness, of course, is the traditional remedy for the effects of sin, releasing the sinner from his debt of punishment and guilt. Second, the Course is saying that its goal is love, for the aim of forgiveness is the restoration of love. Forgiveness in effect says, "I will forget your sin and will instead love you." Third, by emphasizing forgiveness instead of love, the

Course is saying that the problem of sin must be undone before the goal of love can be achieved. No matter how much energy we pour into trying to love ourselves or others, we will never succeed until we erase from our vision the dark cloud of sin.

The Course, however, says that forgiveness as normally understood cannot relieve the effects of sin and cannot achieve the goal of love. Normal forgiveness is based on the belief that sin is real, and if sin is real, then guilt is valid, punishment is just and forgiveness is a lie. Forgiveness thus becomes 'a vain attempt to look past what is there; to overlook the truth ...' Furthermore, if we are undeserving of forgiveness, then we cannot give it to ourselves. We can only beg for it. We can only hope and pray that the party we have injured, either another person or God Himself, will condescend to grant us the unmerited gift of forgiveness.

The Course's position is radically different. Sin, it says, is an illusion. Sin does not create a debt we must pay and does not need to be pardoned by an outside force. It is only a dream we must awaken from. The problem is only in our mind, and it is there it must be resolved. Therefore, the Course says, "Ask not to be forgiven, for this has already been accomplished. Ask, rather, to learn how to forgive." Nothing outside of us needs to change to make forgiveness possible. Forgiveness is the choice of our own mind to awaken from the belief in sin and have that replaced by the experience of love.

Although the Course urges us to forgive both ourselves and others, its main focus is on the forgiving of others. Why is this? The answer is to be found in the nature of the ego. The essence of the ego, if we recall, is in an antagonistic relationship with all of reality, with God, others and even ourselves; a thought of separateness from the whole and attack on the whole. The undoing of the ego is therefore the restoration of our mind's broken relationship with reality, a reuniting with ourselves, others and God. In this mental process of reunion it is other people that are our most immediate and potent representatives of the whole. God is too abstract. Our true feelings toward Him, both our infinite love and our titanic fear, are buried much too deeply. We ourselves are not appropriate representatives of the whole, for the ego has so profoundly convinced us that we are separate, that we gain from the loss of others. It is other people that become our best symbols of the whole we have rejected. It is in relation to them that our mind can best work out its severed relationship with totality. For it is in relation to them that the ego shows its true colors: attacking, rejecting, resenting; making manifest the ugliness that it really is. Furthermore, it is in relation to them that we can completely transcend the ego by reaching past separate boundaries and establishing a true joining, characterized by genuine love and giving; Therefore, in how we see other people we can both get in touch with our ego and get outside of our ego.

Forgiveness of others is indeed the single greatest challenge to the ego. Our ego is usually undisturbed by our weak attempts to love God and to feel self-worth, but is rocked to the core by a true relinquishment of the entrenched condemnation and

fear that keep us separate from another human being. No matter how difficult and against our best interests it may seem, forgiveness of others is the key to clearing away the twisted, malignant citadel the ego has built inside of us.

Forgiveness goes well beyond the pardoning of specific offenses. It is, in principle, a deep-seated transformation of our entire defensive, suspicious and uncaring posture toward another. And by healing our relationship with one we transform our relationship with everything. Instead of constantly taking, of being a black hole that drains the lifeblood of the universe, we become a radiant point of giving. We come out of the closed, depressed stance of fear, and enter into the openness and oneness of love.

The Course, then, is identifying our belief in the sinfulness and evil in other people as the key element in the dream. It is this that locks in place the separateness and suffering that characterize the world. If we can just realize that the sin we see is an illusion, if we can pull this single lever, this invisible trigger, then we will overturn the entire basis for this world, and it will all begin to change. The light of Heaven will start to shine on our minds and on the world as well.

How do we forgive? Forgiveness follows a three-step healing process, of which the first two steps are ours and the last is left completely to the Holy Spirit.

STEP ONE is *identifying the problem*. Essentially, what this means is taking a clear, honest look at what we believe about another. This is quite a challenge, since the ego has tried to hide its darkness, using denial and projection to place itself beyond the realm of choice and change. Therefore we must reverse denial and bring to full awareness the condemning thoughts we hide. The Course often urges us to 'search your mind for ... unloving thoughts,' for, 'it is so crucial that you look upon your hatred and realize its full extent.' We must also reverse projection and understand that the sin we see in others is not necessarily their reality, but is simply our own mental creation, our own dream.

Now that we have our hands on the nuts and bolts of our ego, we are in a position to evaluate them. No matter how frightening this step may be, if we can stand back in calm detachment it will not be difficult to realize what we have discussed already: that the perception of sin in another is both untrue and unsatisfying. Our condemnation is neither a true expression of us nor a true reflection of our brother. What we thought was the sin of an evil mind was merely the cry for love of a son of God. Furthermore, our illusion brings us no reward. In the end, it only causes us pain, the pain of being a guilty ego alone in a fearful world.

STEP TWO is *letting go of the problem*. This is the step of forgiveness. The key to forgiving another is not to fight against our anger and seek to tear its "evil" from the living tissue of our heart. The key is to realize that the sin we see in the other is an illusion, a dream that hurts us, a laughable mistake. There is no reason whatsoever to hang onto our hatred, no reason to express it or suppress it. We can simply let it

go.

This is forgiveness. We empty our minds of all the darkness we see in another and all our limiting judgments of what he is. We wipe the slate clean. And now we can reach out to a light in him that is not of this world, to a breath of God in him. We ask to be shown something inside him beyond the sight of our eyes and the grasp of our ego, something that can awaken our primordial sense of love and oneness and our innate desire to give. Forgiveness, therefore, is the relinquishing of the illusion of sin and is simultaneously 'an earthly form of love,' which carries within it the wish to be joined and the impulse to give.

STEP THREE is *the healing*. Forgiveness is an implicit prayer for the healing of our mind's sick picture of another person. This ushers in the power of the Holy Spirit, Who transforms our mental structures and infuses us with the gift of love. Now we can truly love this person. This profound change reverberates throughout the height and breadth of our belief system and causes a general shift in our entire outlook on life. We step increasingly into right-mindedness and find a happiness and peace we thought we could never know.

The Holy Spirit also brings healing to the other person. All of his pain came from the sad belief that he was an unworthy sinner. Now he sees in our eyes a new image of himself, one that is washed clean of guilt and filled with the light of God. He may not experience healing instantly, but on some level of his mind there is more light, waiting for the day when it will be accepted.

By healing our relationship with the whole, forgiveness also heals our own self-image. Just as our attack on others proved we were guilty, so our gift to another shows that there must be something good in us. In other words, we find a true sense of self-worth. 'The perception of self-value come[s] from the extension of loving thoughts outward.' Also, by joining with another we dissolve the very nature of the ego. We prove that we are not alone and separate; we are not an ego.

The effects of forgiveness do not stop there. Because all minds are joined, any act of forgiveness rolls through the entire universe like a healing wave, lightening the load of all living things, bringing all minds closer to Heaven.

We now can see that forgiveness is the direct counterpoint to the ego, for the ego inflicts pain on everything within its grasp, shattering its world into fragmentation. Forgiveness, on the other hand, brings happiness and peace to all minds, uniting all under the healing umbrella of love. The ego looks outward to a dangerous world and inward to a guilty self, pulling us into the lonely, contracted whirlpool of fear. Forgiveness, again, does the exact opposite, showing us the light of God within everyone and releasing us into the outflowing, joyous union of love. Furthermore, the ego's system of fear is an illusion. Love alone is real. This is what makes possible the Course's central prescription, which is to let go of the illusion of fear, allowing it to be replaced by the reality of love.

Because genuine forgiveness is such a challenge to our ego, it usually does not come easy. The attainment of it involves deep-level transformations that for most of us seem to take a very long time. And yet the change of mind that forgiveness entails is the only thing that really works. It is the only answer that goes beyond superficial and temporary change, and brings true, lasting happiness.

Forgiveness, therefore, is not an isolated, part-time activity. It is, according to the Course, our sole function while on earth, our purpose for being here. We are to become teachers of God, saviors of the world, who, through bringing forgiveness to everyone, find forgiveness for ourselves. Through this process we both teach and learn that we are all one, not separate; that none of us makes it back until we all do. Therefore, we devote all of our efforts to seeing and making manifest the real world, the reflection of Heaven on earth, from which we all return home together.

Forgiveness is the perfect application of the Course's central distinction between the reality of Heaven and the illusory world. It shows us, in practical ways, in the heart of our daily lives, that all the obstacles we see to Heaven are simply the hallucination of our own minds. For, by simply changing our minds, by forgiving, we come to see a part of Heaven in everyone and everything we look upon. Thus, it is through forgiveness that we will return to Heaven. One day, in the distant future, the very fabric of time and space will unravel, the world will vanish, and we will be back in Heaven, with our Father, again.

Reading this through indicates that the 'Course' may be *A Course in Miracles*. A book I have not read.

How this extract came into my hands I am not sure. It must have been a long time ago either at Stansted Hall, where I first met Don Galloway or during seminars of the Lynwood Fellowship, which was started by Don.

J.H.H.