

I LENT A HAND
TO A GHOST

By

JOHN SCOTT

Writer of 'As one Ghost to Another'

*"Peace, peace; he is not dead, he doth not sleep;
He hath awakened from the dream of life,
He hath outsoared the shadow of our night,
Envy and calumny and hate and pain;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light."*

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INTRODUCTION

What is this ghost? Two answers are offered us; on the one hand, psychological theory suggests that it is a power in men given the name Subconscious, which influences their normal conduct and sometimes dictates it in the purposeful and intelligent manner of an independent being: on the other hand, eminent scientists, after years of careful experiment and observation, affirm it to be a human being who has evolved to a further state of human life, partially concealed from our limited senses, and now desires to communicate telepathically with those still in his former environment. They call him spirit, Geist or ghost.

This book records experiments on the second theory by a method of writing which psychology, awaiting further discovery, provisionally designates "automatic," or, less tendentiously from both points of view, "co-operative." Persons born with special aptitude for this, as for the other activities called in popular language "psychic," are not necessarily of wide knowledge, outstanding character, or formal education, and they appear more frequently in some races and families than others.

In the present case none of my associates in business and ordinary life ever regarded me as learned or imaginative, nor was my education at university level. I was solely occupied in earning a livelihood. But when I had gained relative leisure my right hand took to writing in a way which caused me fear for my sanity. Reassured, however, and even encouraged, by a mental specialist, I made a hobby of questioning my hand aloud and found its answers in writing unexpected and interesting to myself and a few friends.

Curious to find the reason why certain nerves and muscles, with my conscious will but almost idle thought, acted in this unusual way, and why my hand's product so little corresponded with my known character and opinions, I sat at the feet of the learned. Psychologists fascinated me with incredibly ingenious guesswork; theologians begged me to desist forthwith, philosophers found no logical system in the presentation of ideas; scientists refused attention to facts outside their existing classifications and hypotheses; literary experts praised the lucid style and left it at that.

Then I turned to the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, whose apprehensive treatment of contemporary seers provoked me to notice Spiritualism. A careful selection from my handiwork submitted to the leading Spiritualist society obtained the verdict "This writing emanates from your own mind." Thus did they flatter me in slamming the last door.

Can I be blamed for giving up my search among the theories of the moment and walking alone?

After many months of experiment and argumentative conflict I found the more interesting result was obtained by temporarily postponing my sceptical criticism and assuming I was in fact dealing with a man much cleverer than myself, who had

acquired a wider point of view on our current opinions and a partial acquaintance with Man's next state of evolution. He declared himself to be a person well known in England at the end of the last and beginning of the present century as politician, administrator and author. He never claims to be omniscient, nor will I admit that he is more of a ghost or spirit than I or my friends imperfectly known to me through their visible integument.

Since the procedure in co-operative writing is generally unknown, I will describe it. At a regular hour fixed by his hand, in my case twice a week, the operator places a soft pencil on a blank sheet of paper and releases his brain, arm, and hand to write at a pace much too rapid for intentional composition. On subsequent decipherment of the unfamiliar handwriting he is often surprised at the purport of what is written in grammatical English and sometimes disagrees with it. Conditions for success seem to be effective check upon the customary flow of thought, always colored by scientific or religious prejudices, sound health and an easy mind.

It cannot be too strongly kept in view by readers of these scripts that they are not intentional and leisurely compositions. They were written at a speed occasionally reaching 30 words a minute, and my effort to keep pace excluded almost entirely my personal thinking. There are no hesitations for momentary reflection, punctuation or capital letters, each word being liaison with the next. My reluctance to meddle with or sub-edit the text written at various periods makes some irksome repetition inevitable.

I have only one motive in publishing matter long kept for merely private interest; it is the wish to assist our uneasy epoch to use what Mr. Churchill has called "those portentous and measureless forces of the spirit which may spell the rescue or the doom of mankind."

John Scott.

COMMUNICATION

Why should we in this world need to communicate with another?

I think I can give you reasons why the study of communication between our two worlds is of the very highest importance.

In the first place, do you believe that the present state of your world is so satisfactory that no more compelling attempt to draw people's attention to a nobler life is advisable? For a long time now all the power of the Christian Church has been exercised in an attempt to turn men from their material view, their sensuality and rivalry, to that of the Gospels. Nearly two thousand years of strenuous effort in West and East, the expenditure of vast wealth, the self-sacrifice of wise and religious men, the waste of millions of human lives in attempts to bring about the reign of Christ by force - and what has been the result? That is a question requiring no answer, for there can be but one. You have seemingly reached a point where Christianity and civilisation threaten to founder. On their own showing the pastors of the churches are losing their congregations; war is a perpetual menace which no religion has been able to banish; and there is a universal carelessness for what cannot be put to a material use, impatience with matters of the spirit and a general belief that reflection on life as a whole is merely a business for philosophers and clergy, not a subject to occupy a man's private thought and guide his daily effort.

If now there appear in this state of human society manifestations which give the materialist proofs, as material as he could wish, of the undeniable existence of forces beyond the power of his mechanisms to measure, or even detect, and these forces furnish the greatest probability that they proceed from a vast invisible world, and that communications from that invisible world, backed by visible proof, enjoin upon men that by uniform laws their every act brings its punishment or reward, not inflicted by an arbitrary ruler, but by the man himself with a justice and inevitableness, admitting of forgiveness, but no shadow of turning - is this not a mighty means for checking the world's downward trend and leading the way to a new epoch for mankind?

Should an objector demand that this movement appear fully fashioned and almost miraculously, proving an exception to all other processes of natural order, or should he be patient, observing the element of good emerging from the chaotic and clothing itself in a vesture suitable to the human part of nature? So you conceive Nature to work, irresistibly piling grain on grain, adding cell to cell, spreading feebly in quaint forms with growing strength and unceasingly, till the cell becomes the worm, the worm the mammal and the mammal man. Is the critic prepared to spurn the worm in his impatience, blind to the coming man's mind and its miracles? What influenced man's imagined ancestor-worm when it alone developed in its reeking mud swamp among the myriad population of nascent forms of life, all their wants satisfied and life's functions performed?

Once more let me remind you of my repeated counsel to condemn not where you cannot judge. Why should you take upon yourselves to determine that any new facts are useless? Who can predict the end of any phenomenon? If they cannot foresee, why should men condemn in advance of their experience? Is the critic satisfied that the present forms of religious teaching make the average man certain of penalty for wrong actions, or know that there is a future for his spirit, or that he has a spirit at all? And those who do believe, have they no doubts which one word from us would dispel? Is it nothing that a future world of increasing hopes and happiness among many friends certainly exists, no mere object of longings and doubting sighs, but a greater reality than your fugitive existence, a world which permeates and makes possible your little life, justifies the virtuous and proves to the evil their folly? Can it be that any reasonable person offered the feeling of certainty in his doubting, fearing, wavering moment of being says with a shrug "What's the use of it?"

A clergyman says we are not "meant" to seek communication with another world in this way.

What are the grounds upon which he bases his dogma? for it is nothing else. He has no special information on the subject from his God; his words merely echo ancient orthodox teaching by priests, a wholly ecclesiastical prejudice, arising in great measure from the jealousy of those claiming to monopolies and direct relations between the two states. There is also something in it of that old rivalry between the organised teachers of religion and those whom they termed "magicians," found to perform the same wonders as the orthodox without paying the latter tribute.

As you well know, the orthodox Christian churches, both Protestant and Roman, have no longer a place in their organisations for the practices of which we read the continuous history in the Old and New Testaments. As the churches became corrupt, open communication with the other state, which meant so much in the establishment of Christianity, gradually ceased in a weakening faith, until the "magicians" were left the only persons maintaining the traditional intercourse with us, and a very weak and sometimes evil intercourse it became.

But among the people of all civilised nations there remained a memory of the time when earth was proved to be within speaking distance of heaven, and when, after the revival of learning, men became free to satisfy their curiosity in all directions, there began in Europe a slow approach to a renewal of psychic communication. Then in the last century America and England embarked on an open and methodical search for the old course of action, and now you are on the brink of an age when the once familiar relations between messengers from us and some in your state will spread and become world-wide, not only reviving Christian life but also the spirituality of Eastern creeds.

You know well also that neither now nor in the past did intercommunication originate from you. It was not the case of human minds painfully searching for messages from a region they were left to guess and compelling it to render them. It

was the will of the Great Power that men should not be left without guidance and yet not deprived of their free choice. That is why this intercourse seems to you unsatisfactory and disappointing. What you desire in your heart is a kind of trustworthy mechanism, like your machines, which, when you address yourself to it and, as it were, pull a lever, will give you such sure and useful advice that life will present no difficulties to you; in consequence you would become mentally and physically feeble, all your curiosities and desires satisfied with no spur to further effort.

Would you then be anything that could bear the honourable name of “man”? Would you not be machines among your machines less efficient than they as you gradually lost strength and dwindled to extinction?

I understand what I do with my hand, but what do you do? Is my mind affected independently of myself?

It is rather difficult for me to tell you all that takes place on these occasions. There is so much that is special to our state and could not possibly be made intelligible to you for lack of the ideas in your world up to now, which I should try to communicate to you through old words. Remember I function with us solely in feeling, and I cannot make that feeling, through which I understand, intelligible in the language evolved by your world for social communication.

Here is a picture of what goes on with us each time you sit down to write. There is an eager crowd, some of them belonging to the group under my direction; these are the really important factors in our performance; then there are many others, some curious about what we are doing, some anxious to learn our methods, in the hope they may be permitted to use them in direct contact with persons they loved on earth; and there are some whose duty it is to study the process and from time to time suggest experiments. These latter give instruction to people found capable of communicating with earth and requiring to study this method. The whole of these persons, except perhaps the merely curious, exercise their influence to help my group in its work. It is through this concentration of power that our writing has been so successful, and also of course your unusual sensibility in this form of intercourse.

What actually happens between you and me I have before now told you as far as I can, but I fear you did not get a deep insight into the matter, for the reason I have stated, when speaking of general arrangements. You cannot possibly receive ideas which do not in some part connect with those you already use; in many cases there is no function possible between the new and the old. It would be like trying to convey to you the colour scarlet by means of heat or musical notes. You would perceive that in my mind something intelligible existed, and probably be aware that an attempt was being made to convey this to you, but all would end there, and you would have gained no knowledge, theoretical or practical. It so often comes to the same impasse, does it not? when you ask me for detailed explanations. You should have enough imagination to realise that now.

Then as to the other matter of which you have spoken. You are influenced from our region each time you sit down to write, before you have actually placed your pencil on the paper. You know that you never begin till you have looked about you a little, at photographs or flowers perhaps. This is not an action which occurred to you unaided. Our influence has then commenced, although it may not be perceptible to yourself or others; you are not completely normal when you begin to write.

Your success consists in the fact that your mind has become so adapted to mine that I am able to materialise my thoughts by this admixture with yours. It would not be possible for me to make known my thoughts thus unless I had at my disposal the mind of someone still passing through the bodily stage, who shows an aptitude for collecting my thought, contributing his quota and reproducing the whole by means of this lead and paper. On your part there is no means by which you can receive my thought in absolute purity, without any contribution from yourself, owing to the fact that you have a material body and brain. Were you to leave your body you would naturally meet me on equal terms and understand all my thought through yours. I, on my part, would act with you as I do with others about me. We should have no need of words, but we would feel the thoughts of each other in a way which cannot but appear to you incomprehensible.

After all my talks you must have grasped the fact that we live largely by feeling which, in spite of bewilderment my statement may cause you, is creative. I am laying emphasis on feeling because, I think, here lies the solution of the problems which bother you. Can you not find a hint, if not a parallel, in what you sometimes hear people say, "I feel this man dislikes me," or "has taken a liking to me"? In this ease you have a pale image of our habitual mode of converse, and it is by feeling that you, unusually sensitive in this respect, know my thoughts and, reacting to them, contribute from your own. We thus produce something new, sentences which are our children, some resembling the father, some the mother. Do not, however, press this simile further; for in this case I, the father, hold a predominance which the earthly father cannot always provide. Like him I am the creator, but in a far more intense manner - the child is far more mine than yours. But a mother is not merely a passive vessel, as it were, and the same must be said of you. There is effort on your part to meet and help me and, as a father, though an active and creative partner, cannot produce offspring alone, so you are for me an absolute necessity.

But let us quit metaphor. I find you are too inclined to regard the portion of thought called the mind as something fixed, some receptacle to be found in a certain place. This will one day appear to you a ludicrous idea. You cannot immobilise thought and confine its lightning flicker to a moment of time, or a corner in space, because it has neither space nor time to contend with, or, if you wish me to use your current terms, it is outside space-time. A man's mind is more like a changing vortex of whirling motion. You seem unable to free yourself from the ideas of your epoch, which likes to argue about a man's mind as if it could be measured, defined and plumbed. This

is inevitable in your era until a further advance in psychology takes place and an inspired genius provides you with a new aspect and new terms.

But at least you should try by meditation to free yourself to the degree you can from errors caused by this fixation of thought and these rigid classifications. To speak in terms of earth, a man's mind is as rigid as his breath, which comes and goes, but it is always his own breathing as each respiration bears the common air this way and that. I have before now talked to you about the origin of the word *spiritus* and the false analogies to which this word and its like, once the truest to be had, has led. You may see how my further analogy may be false yet the only means I have of transmitting a real thought of our region into some idea comprehensible in yours.

It seems natural for most men to doubt communication with another world. Why should they trouble about something outside their physical senses?

I do not think that view justifiable. Always there have been people who believed in regular intercourse between the two states, but, as special endowments of any kind are rare, the number of those in every nation who practised it has always been small. Far from agreeing with you that there is a universal feeling of doubt about us and our communications I take the opposite view and say that in every man there is an unformulated awareness that the life he knows is not the only one, and that something in the nature of conscious life continues beyond the grave. I think this unquiet suspicion is a universal intuition and that general indifference to instances of communication is not natural to Man.

Surely in your own case, when you were passing all those years in total disbelief of anything like spirit, there must have arisen from time to time obstinate questionings which, however, did not maintain their interrogations long enough to cause a change in your intellectual assumptions.

You see how I look at the matter, judging from what I have learnt in reviewing the circumstances of the state where I once made my career. You, too, will do well to analyse your former feelings on the subject and then, I hope, go on to criticise your reluctance to accept me and my information. I think you were more blameable in your attitude towards the invisible than in your many years of total unbelief. Yet I am sure you were happier in your consistent and, as you then thought, permanent conviction that there was nothing to hope after your known life's extinction, than in your half-beliefs on this and kindred subjects.

That is perhaps enough from me to make you consider whether your opinion on the resistance of the generality of people to the idea of survival is well founded, and to discover that this resistance is in fact against an intuition natural to all men. There is no race in which some notion of survival does not exist. It is obvious that those endowed with clairvoyance and clairaudience in every race are bound to have this idea; and then there were the materialisations which, I understand, were more frequent in the early history of the world. You can gather this from the traditional

history of the Jews in your Bible. Frequently what were called angels, messengers, or merely men of mysterious origin, visited notable Israelites, giving advice or warning, and if you had a written history of other Eastern races you would find the same visits recorded. Certainly tradition in Greece and Rome accepted the fact and founded on it legends of gods walking the earth. Such tradition cannot be explained away by the most destructive critics with scornful preconceptions, and you may believe that many a legend of this kind is based on a reality.

About your further remark; a man has actually no choice in the matter. The whole tendency of his being is towards return to the source of his life. He may not be, and very often he is not, conscious of this tendency, that is to say, he does not recognise it for what it is, but he will, when he is forced to think and reflect upon some discomfort in his life, have an inkling that his life has an object to which he has paid no attention, the source of that feeling of something wanting which might procure his complete satisfaction and happiness.

It is not possible for any man to quench this feeling entirely, either by a continuous search for pleasures or in a search for knowledge, often termed "devotion to science." Constantly the feeling of unrest crops up and it is very lucky for the human race that it does so. It is one of man's blessings, this want of complete peace of mind and contentment, which would let him fold his hands and sit still. It is a spur which irritates both body and mind. It forces him to seek bodily effort and labour and it rouses something in his mind which, if it be strong enough, tends to a spiritual resurrection, a turning towards progress and advance in spiritual things which will prosper him in both worlds.

But then perhaps what you mean is that a man's imagination cannot picture a pleasure sufficient to make him desire a far-off reunion with the source of his life. It is certainly true that a man rarely allows his thought and imagination to dwell for long on a far future, whether he dreams of it as pleasant or threatening, and for this absence of thought on so important a subject teachers of religion have a grave responsibility. In latter days they have come to lag behind in the progress of human effort and development. They still cherish many of the ideas which were found sufficient to vivify the thinking of the mass of men in the Middle Ages, and they are filled with timidity when suggestions are made to modify their forms and ceremonies to satisfy the natural growth of a new age. They do not trust themselves to the spirit and believe it will teach them the best way of appealing to nations which have progressed and are impatient of old forms and antiquated teaching so difficult to adapt to their daily lives.

It is only necessary to ask yourself what sign of progress is to be found in the church teaching of the last two or three hundred years. A man of the eighteenth century would not feel out of his element in a modern church. He would not only meet his old liturgy, so beautiful when regarded as an archaic form of art, but would find little beyond his grasp in the average sermon. A modern man does not want to enter a

church as he would a museum. He seeks a doctrine which will give him something rational to live for, and that is just where the modern teacher has nothing more to offer him than he of the seventeenth century. The words which stirred the imagination of that and many a previous age leave the modern man, in his world of entirely different or transformed ideas, quite unaffected. Think of this with regard to your question.

What advantage is there for you personally in writing with me?

It helps me in various ways. In the first place it is part of my service which I render gladly, and in other respects I am greatly benefited. There are not many persons with us who have the privilege of trying to obtain communication in this way and have found another so well adapted to their purpose. You should picture to yourself the myriads of denizens of these parts where I now am, anyone of whom would be transported beyond measure were he singled out for such a service. You can truly imagine my feelings of gratitude and pride towards the Great Power for having thus distinguished me. My pride is not a feeling which leads me to despise or look down on others; it is rather intense satisfaction and self-congratulation that I am thus privileged, though for many reasons it appears to me that I am not a person worthy of such an honour.

It probably seems to you and your friends that your time drags on rather monotonously in these weekly talks, all similar in form one to another, with no perceptible advantage to the world or you. But I hope you do not fully share this idea, in fact, I know from your questions to me and what has been told me of your conversations, that you do not regard my talks as mere preliminaries to something better, but appreciate them in themselves. This is highly gratifying to me and another way in which you render me service.

If I could tell you all the ramifications of what we are doing you would be much surprised. Do not think we must wait for the final goal before our work is worthy the attention of large numbers. You have probably no idea of the interest aroused in many minds by our operations, nor of their longing to be able to assist in a similar activity. Believe me, you are a person of importance, yet of that I doubt if you have ever thought, and it is better that you should have gone on without meditating on the wide scope of your action. Sometimes you are bored, sometimes your patience has been tried and you have continued more by power of will than ambitious desire or realisation of the importance of our work. Perhaps you would never have proved so facile an instrument if those other ideas, true as they are, had entered your head and made you self-conscious. Self-consciousness is fatal to this kind of communication; you must think of nothing but me and my thought. Be in a way my consciousness; once other thoughts get in between us the game is up. But, thank God, they never have, except for the briefest hesitation, and then they generally arose from your fatigue of the day, or from some occurrence which distressed or worried you.

Now, I think, I must have answered your question to a considerable degree and you can imagine I am grateful for your continued attention and patience. You sometimes appear to me to lack enthusiasm, and you are not given to dwelling on the certain reward of your efforts. All would be still easier for you if you realised your privilege and counted on the reward both myself and my former colleague have held before your eyes. Do not think I am complaining that you go on in the same mood and temperament as when you began. I am quite satisfied with your present and past efforts, but from time to time it surprises me that you show so little emotion compared with others who strain every effort to obtain powers like yours and are ecstatic over achievements neither so weighty in their consequence nor so accurate in their performance. You see I am not afraid of turning your head, just for the reasons I have mentioned.

I am glad you asked me this question, so that I could again have the opportunity of expressing my gratitude, which by no means depends on any future performance of ours, but is yours now, wholeheartedly and entire.

To speak now from my strictly personal view, I have already given you my reasons for attempting to communicate with someone on earth. In doing so I hoped, as actually proved to be the case, that I should be charged with a mission and have the pleasure of rendering additional service. It was not merely from interest in an experiment, which I was aware that others were carrying out; I sincerely wished to render service. I believed that by impressing upon the mind of someone in my former state that death was not the end of everything, I should be making him happier, more hopeful and with a greater zest for his life of trial. I do not think I had any other object.

Perhaps I did not realise that I should raise so great a conflict in a mind, or that so much time would elapse in merely training that mind in facility of writing and the virtue of patience. I do not think I considered the question of his happiness in the immediate present, but rather the good news I would convey to him to remove the fear of death and, by teaching him that there really was a recompense for deeds good and bad, assist him in reforming or amending his character in certain directions. There you have my intention.

As to you, I know from hearsay that you were aware of this form of communication before you ever resolved to make an actual experiment: you were right and are to be commended for your resolve. I know, too, that this writing at first contributed to your happiness, and it would do so still if your mind believed wholeheartedly in my promises. You yield too much attention to the unsatisfactory and tiresome side of the operation, you are not sufficiently hopeful for a future you have ground to anticipate from what we have written.

Do you not think that in your life here you would have had as many doubts about communication as I had?

Yes, I think it would have been a matter of very great difficulty to convince me of survival and communication by this method alone, but you must remember that you were not dependent for your belief on this writing. You have had a whole series of indications that the subject is not one of mere fancy, the whim of certain eccentrics. There were so many means of access to the truth opened to you, even if you are at present debarred from using your power otherwise than in this writing. You could not easily forget, also, striking instances when you were given messages from your friends with us, accurately described to you by clairvoyants, and those often friends and relatives almost lost to your memory. I think these occurrences should have influenced you more than they did. You were too ready to accept far-fetched “explanations” of our proceedings by learned men. Never think that because a man has a wide reputation as a psychologist, or as a student of other branches of the sciences, he is a truer judge of psychic phenomena than men of ordinary common sense, who have themselves experienced what for those others comes from external observation, hearsay, or details forced into theory. There are no better judges than reasonable people who have had long experience of their fellow men in action and a multitude of events in a life of business, pleasure and the practical application of ideas. They will generally be found much more reliable in this matter than those whose reputation and honours have been gained in the study and lecture room. You were inclined to trust them too much, not giving sufficient weight to your own experience and thought. Yet in the end it must be you who form the final decision, and if you cannot trust yourself in the evidence you cannot in the summing up. Many people would regard you, who think so lightly of your own views, as a telling witness to us and our working. There have been, I am told, incidents in your examination of psychic subjects which can hardly be “explained” by any just and reasonable person otherwise than as instances of spirit action. The psychologist at least has none to offer out of his textbooks. So I am not so sure after all that your measure of doubt was as justifiable as you would have me confess when I think of my possible views on the subject if I had had the same experience. I think I should have believed. In one respect I should have had a better start than you, since I held firmly to religious views with a vague idea of another world, whereas you at an early age seem to have decided that there was no other world and nothing to be gained by study of unclassifiable phenomena.

Now, of course, I am well aware that I have a great advantage over you through seeing, hearing and even feeling your person, but I do not think the senses are mainly required for the realisation of what is brought home to you by thought.

Should not the fact that you are demonstrably unable to do this alone be sufficient to convince you that you are aided by some other mind, that there is some real person assisting you to perform this task, someone who is never at a loss and never fails to

produce intelligible matter without any effort at composition on your part? It seems to me that after hundreds of articles thus produced you should have had no sort of doubt that you are not alone. Would your eyes and ears bring you greater conviction than your serious reflection can do?

I know the "subconscious" theory has come to appear to you wanting and rather flimsy in many directions. You find no explanation of the fact that, if what you call chance had not revealed your powers, all this matter would, on the assumption that you have a subconscious storehouse, have been left to moulder uselessly, in a way entirely opposed to what you know of Nature. There seems to you no way in which this subconscious could have been so formed by any natural process as to produce these essays, containing views which were never yours and against which you often rebel. You are often in disaccord with me, and often you have been shown points of view which at no time in your life have been taught to you by circumstances or persons.

Surely all this should have made me as real to you as a brother or sister. Moreover there are the characteristic opinions which belong to me consistently from the beginning to end of our writings. You could easily write a character of me from what I have said, a character in no way like yours at any time of your life, and with opinions not resembling in any way those of your parents or family. From time to time you have been slightly shocked by what I say, and on many occasions I have given you subjects to ponder. Is not all this something real in the invisible?

Can you give me arguments for other people without my experience?

Formal arguments are very much limited, by which I mean that once a man knows what is exactly happening in our proceedings the rest must be left to his own reason and the efforts of those who may be able to influence him. It is unlikely that the arguments and intuitions which seem to me the most compelling will be the same that have the most persuasive force with another. I do not speak of arguments affecting your bona fides, nor those from your character, temperament and such matters, even the psychical theories at present in vogue. All that would be subject to fairly similar presentation for acceptance or rejection. But a man is never convinced by purely intellectual or logical views. There is always something much more convincing in his past training, his environments from his earliest days, the views current in his family and school, his own constitution and prejudices, in some cases his physical feelings - these are the things which bring lasting conviction to a man. A new argument is rarely victorious at the first onset; time must elapse for it to find its station in the whole mental composition and make-up of a man's mind and become a familiar inhabitant of that earlier colony, having won in line against its fellows.

When one comes down to bedrock, logic is rather a futile matter, except as an exercise for young minds to give them respect for the reasonable against the instinctive. You will never make the reasonable expel the instinctive, but merely, if you are lucky in your teaching, bring a controlling force to regulate that urgent

power. Some people have a notable gift of persuasion, but it is seldom exercised by rule, nor can what method they have be brought under the logic of the schools. So many slight and trivial things help or hinder a man in his efforts at persuasion; he overlooks them and is sometimes much surprised at his success when he feared failure, or a very partial victory. That sensation I always found one of the most pleasant when on public occasions it fell to my lot to essay the bringing of difficult problems into the realm of practice. It was never eloquence which at such crises obtained my desire. However rounded my periods as a result of burning the midnight oil they were not in the end my most powerful allies. There was something in the atmosphere, something intangible, almost it seemed as if the weather, the heat or the cold, must have come into play as motives. I did not then think that unseen intelligences were perhaps at work, although in a general way I believed that the Almighty lent his aid, indeed I prayed that such might be the case on great occasions, but I never pictured to myself then that he might act by his messengers; that never presented itself to my imagination. I had the idea that some influence directly from the Power which I vaguely apprehended in my mind, little able to conceive of it as personal, effected changes now and then of which the human mind saw no possibility, rescuing, worthy men, its favourites, when they were at bay among their enemies thirsting for their ruin. That seemed possible to me, and that, I think, was part of the true but pale and ineffective religion in which I believed and in my stilted way practised. Yet behind that belief, I know now, was an unrest and dissatisfaction, urging me to act without recognising whence my actions came. Such was my real religion, unformulated but greatly powerful in my life, when I did not set my cold logic of superficial ideas in its way. All this I have recognised too late. Prayer, more earnest prayer, and methodical meditation would have brought me wonderful strength, instruction and peace, had I known it. Faith in one's inner self is faith in God, that is what I knew with but half-knowledge. The convictions of my training and environment shrouded the holy of holies, which remained for me indeed the screened arcanum.

Why are highly educated people rarely used for communication?

Without saying that the educated are less capable of the work we wish to see performed, I suggest they seldom leave their minds entirely in our hands. We do not want sophistication in the minds we use, nor do we like fixed and petrified ideas, often merely of a traditional nature and so firmly rooted that they appear almost instincts. There must not be an artificial manner of submitting themselves; they must not be self-conscious. I think the highly educated are supremely so, greatly to their detriment.

It does not matter to us for the usual trance or clairvoyant manifestations that the mind used is that of an unlearned man, provided it has the necessary power to secure the reproduction of what we wish to be produced. Do you not think that in many cases the mere fact of its being an uneducated man who performs the feats

seers do, and makes the speeches or descriptions which create so much astonishment, has an effect upon the general public just so much greater as the mind is known to be less instructed and probably less likely to invent what is said?

That is one point of view. Then there is the fact that an educated man has acquired so many well-worn objections to raise before he will believe that what is taking place in his mind is anything else than his own manufacture. You know yourself for you have personal experience of the fact, that it is a matter of great difficulty and struggle for a mind that has studied the theories of your current psychology to admit that what we use him to reproduce in his world is not his original work. It was here your conflict arose, and who knows better than you how much time and thought were required to make you convinced that all was not your own production through that quaint faculty, entity, or whatever you like to call it, labelled "subconscious." You had such faith in an individual subconscious, although you, like the psychologists, fail to say what it is, where it lies and how it functions. Do you know how it was originally constituted in man? Were children always born with this strange appurtenance since the appearance of mankind? Has it always lurked in them, awaiting discovery by ingenious professors who now perceive it is inclined to fade, if not vanish, under the criticism of other professors?

Well, I believe that the human mind will continue on its way regardless of professors and develop its powers as it must, ignoring their theses that it can do this and cannot do that.

So now you see why we prefer the simple and unsophisticated. We do not want them to know, or rather theorise upon, what is happening in them; we wish them to become what it is your fashion to term "instruments." We play our own tunes on these simple minds, whereas the more learned are too ready to strike notes of their own without our co-operation, or disregard our tunes under the pressure of ideas they must themselves emit. We look forward in your time to an age when the well-educated will perform a more important part owing to the spread of psychic knowledge. The old mistakes in which psychologists now revel will be corrected, and it will be recognised that the mind which receives us like a little child will obtain the best results. We want no rebels, no geniuses who are capricious and will have their own way, but we foresee a time when your co-operation will be open-eyed and far more efficient.

PERSONAL

“Your share in this has been to work passively, under dictates you neither delivered nor could question - that would not be uttered at your prayer, nor suppressed nor changed at your caprice. If the result be attractive, the world will praise you who little deserve praise; if it be repulsive, the same world will blame you who almost as little deserve blame.”

What am I to say to people who believe I carefully compose this writing myself?

I thought I had given you all possible reasons for believing in us and our work with you and it is difficult for me to find any reasons more compelling than those I have hitherto shown. Observers while you write ought by this time to be convinced it is not your customary way of writing and recognise that it is quite impossible for you to sit down at any time of the day and do what we are now doing; nor will you find anyone who can perform alone such action by normal powers he possesses.

What would have been your surprise a few years ago if you had seen someone, as others see you now, take up a pencil and write straight on without stopping an article of seven or eight hundred words, neither hesitating nor correcting a single one, all proving grammatical, logical, coherent and sometimes containing matter which it was difficult to believe that person could have known.

When others read our work it seems less astonishing to them because they judge it as they would an article in a newspaper, a thing they can read any day and produced by a quite familiar proceeding, one which they themselves might practise, and may have done so. But obviously that is not the way to judge it; the conditions in which we write are by no means the same. There is the extreme rapidity, which no journalist, however expert, could use; and then there is the absence, largely owing to this swift pace, of your conscious thought; the journalist, straining all his mental power to write his article in a limited time, will hesitate a moment to think, or quickly turn up a reference, will change an expression or correct the grammar of a hasty phrase, and in the end his pace, which to the uninitiated seems great, is nothing to yours.

Your friends assert you have always shown yourself a slow writer when you have had to make a report, yet here nothing stops your speed once you have begun; all comes from your pencil completely finished, requiring no revision or correction; and finally what is most remarkable, causes you no fatigue. It is very obvious that the journalist, or any ordinary man, who writes matter such as this at speed, feels exhausted on the termination of his task. There are not a few writers who find that in such strenuous efforts, calling upon all their powers, they require a stimulant to aid them from time to time.

I think that when you reflect and consider your own unskilful efforts in the past at composition, you cannot for one instant believe that what you do with such ease and regularity at a fixed hour two or three times a week is a normal exercise of your normal faculties.

Then must occur to you the question "What is it that enables me to do this?" And if in this mystery your hand writes that it is guided by a co-operator who gives his unexpected name, is its statement unworthy of consideration, or more unbelievable than the strange process itself?"

It is clear that the style of this writing is not mine when I write letters and some of its words I never think of using.

There is no doubt that the wording we use is in great part yours, but not wholly yours, for you readily accept my suggestions and our common thought is then expressed in words which come most naturally to me.

Although you profess ignorance about this process of writing, you may have a very fair idea of what takes place each time we write. To begin with our thoughts meet and mingle with very great rapidity, a rapidity compared with which this writing goes at a snail's pace. When my thought makes its way and is accepted by your mind passively, the latter becomes suddenly active in a somewhat independent manner and, with continued help from me, forms the words which we write on this paper. At no moment, not even in the actual writing with your pencil, are you doing something without my co-operation. It is for this reason that I have suggested the term "co-operative" writing for our work in preference to "impressional" which is ambiguous, or "automatic," which is false. If you said your writing is "inspired" you would be quite correct, but I can understand that the connotation of that word makes it appear too presumptuous for one of your character. To the average man it seems that inspiration occurs only in the case of sacred writings, or those of the greatest genius, such as Shakespeare. If you told ordinary men and women that they were frequently inspired, they would not believe you, yet nothing is more true. Some of course are more inspired than others, because they have minds more open to such a process, without, in the majority of cases, being aware of the fact.

In another point of view it is not possible for any man to have a really original idea. This must seem strange to almost all of you, but in a sense everybody is being always inspired. I know well that this aspect is not what you want me to talk about, though it is well worth while to think about in connection with the biblical text "in whom we live and move and have our being."

I know you do not like this writing to be classed as inspiration. You yourself have never regarded it as such and have the general shrinking from making such a claim, so I advise you to employ henceforth the equally just word "co-operative." In this way you will be dealing with a universal subject, since all men's achievements in your world can only succeed in cooperation with the Great Universal Power. It

should encourage you to think you have the privilege of this cooperation, with the certainty of success when your aim concords with that of the Great Power, whose plan rolls on from everlasting to everlasting without beginning and without end.

Let me express the wish that you and I may always be found successfully cooperating with that great Third.

Are these talks your own, or do others help?

I do not give you this writing entirely unaided; I have been inspired by others, but not in any way controlled. The system is in accord with the rest of the administration of our sphere. All work on the same lines and one law governs all. But there is no compulsion and you must not take the word "law" in the sense of legal enactment, rather a system by which our government is carried on, a principle which applies in every case, small or great. When you make the change you learn to comply with this law and all your proceedings thereafter, if you are wise, are carried out in accordance with it, until it becomes the natural atmosphere in which you live and execute your duties. Lawlessness seems the worst crime and, whether a man follows the law or rejects it, means his happiness or his condemnation, not by some legal body but himself. There are few who are at first ready to grasp this principle in its wide generality; however well disposed they may be, they find they must submit themselves to a new conception of government. The ideas of democracy and aristocracy with all their variations of modern times mean nothing. Our form of government is as natural as your breathing, eating and sleeping; if you disobey your urge to do these things you die; so with us, if we do not conform to the law of our nature we dwindle and fall away, until either we ourselves or some friend and helper so influence our life that we return by a difficult path to the ordained track. You can learn much of our law if you study with understanding what I have said in the past, not merely reading for amusement or interest but meditating upon what strikes you, until you are able to read between the lines much that will serve you well in time to come and lead you to a more profitable life even now.

You are certainly doing well to recapitulate our talks together from the very beginning. In your manner of doing this you cannot fail to impress them upon your memory, noting the salient points which may affect your life and conduct and help you to make suggestions to others. Treat my words as your earliest teaching taught you to treat the Bible, study them and think over one passage in connection with another. Do not think of me as the author; regard all as impersonal. What I personally shall have to say has not yet reached you; what you have now is the work of an anonymous scribe. Leave it at that and you will lose nothing, while at the same time complying with my request not to blazon my name abroad to strangers, who would perhaps doubt my identity or your sanity. It matters not at all who inspired these words if they are true and suitable to a man's needs; of the former I have assured you, while of the latter you and your friends must judge. You have shown yourself continuously attentive and have never grudged me time or labour. For this I

am grateful, and at the same time the more pleased that I know you are reaping your reward both now and hereafter. So do not let your zeal for this undertaking flag. You will have the gist of our work in a form to compel the attention of many who would not think of attempting to read through all your pages indiscriminately. You have already noticed a quickening of interest in some to whom you have imparted a small extract.

That is all I can say on this subject and I hope I have encouraged you in what is bound to appear to you occasionally drudgery. You have sometimes ventured to substitute a clearer word or mode of expression than what I have actually used, but you need have no qualms. I can now trust your judgment and you are undoubtedly aided in your choice of alternatives.

It sometimes worries me that I get no material sign of your presence.

Can you not understand that, although you do not perceive an outward agency, your mind may be influenced to do this or that, to act in one way or to refrain in another? I should have thought that by this time you would have had more understanding of our way of doing things which to you appears your own way.

You seem always to be expecting something unusual, as if we were capricious folk who might at any time surprise or frighten you, instead of proceeding as you do in your state by regular laws and methods. What was your idea, for instance, of how we should stop you smoking too much? Did you think we should suddenly knock your pipe out of your mouth or transform your tobacco into something nauseous? I really believe that something of that kind would please you, and for a day or two make you believe more firmly in our existence and dealings with you and perhaps think the impression would be lasting and all possible doubt gone for ever. But I ask you to recollect the deep impression made on you by the work of certain seers, when for days, and perhaps a week, you believed in invisible agency as if nothing could ever shake your belief - and what happened then? The striking evidence of our existence and power faded and dwindled until you were again in the uncomfortable state to which you once accustomed us.

Let me remind you of the saying "neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." It is entirely true, not only in your case, in spite of this writing and the evidence from seers, and no less in that of your learned professors and researchers. There is nothing unusual they will not "explain" as their term is, with solemn pronouncements and hybrid words coined from Latin and Greek. In their professorships they acquire a remarkable facility of "explaining" anything so as to fit the theories of their moment as if they were the final flowering of your world's knowledge and no one in future generations would ever mock and annihilate their verdicts, as will surely happen, criticise they never so solemnly.

It must seem strange to you that something which might bring such blessings to the world is thus rejected with gusto by almost all your contemporaries. Of course it is

not wholly their fault; they have been brought up in certain traditional ideas which become prejudices, screwed into their minds, as it were, and immovable. They find virtue in steadfast adherence to what they have been taught to think, and they dread nothing so much as a loosening of their preconceptions and a surrender to free enquiry. There are reports of occurrences which they must regard at all times and in all circumstances as absurd, without further enquiry, and one of these is the "antecedent improbability" of a man's existence without a body precisely like their own. They regard this as a childish and superstitious notion which it would be a waste of time to consider further.

You regret that I am not familiar enough with you in our conversations. Is not this because you do not discuss with me what is filling our minds, this crisis in your beloved England?

There is probably truth in what you say, yet you exaggerate. As you imply, I still have my love for England and interest myself in what takes place there, but my main interest no longer lies in that country, even in places dear to me. All my attention and care are directed to the work I am engaged in apart from you, which is of a very arduous nature. It would not, therefore, come natural to me to talk to you about the doings of the English. It would be a rather artificial conversation with the object of giving you pleasure and nothing else.

And then there is danger in discussing with you too freely what is happening around and to you. It would be so easy for me to make mischief, quite unintentionally, and lead you to adopt opinions with all the strength of a religious belief; for you might imagine your informant had superior means of knowing the truth, and that what he said must be correct and of vital importance. You can see to what errors this might lead, not to speak of the danger of interfering with your free will.

It does not matter greatly, as far as your efficiency in this writing goes, whether you become more familiar with me or not, but, as I have often said, it would lighten your task by removing an obstacle, that sort of apprehension which seems to be ineradicable, a kind of timidity which still appears to possess you, if in a mild form, when the hour comes for this writing. You sit down to it without the careless, easy mood which we should so much prefer to see you adopt.

I daresay you are not timid with regard to me in particular, but you never entirely abandon a feeling of awe towards the invisible. I suppose that your earliest upbringing, by servants and relations, tended to plant frightening ideas so firmly in you that you can never release yourself from the bondage, and we as ghosts will continue to scare not only you but generations of Englishmen to come. Have you ever thought that some day your fellow Englishmen will be scared of you? Although, if they understood the matter rightly, they are now associating with your ghost as much as they would be were your present body to be dissolved from about you.

Now, do you honestly think that if I talked politics or discussed with you passing

events in England, you would feel any more at your ease than you could be if you had a truer idea of us and a surer realisation of the invisible? That is what you lack, a clearer understanding of the fact that you and I are really the same creatures in a different guise. You are as much ghost as I am and you can judge what it means to be a ghost from your own mind and feelings. It is not more or less than you. What difference does it make that your surrounding body is denser than mine and not transparent to your sense of sight? I have a body, too, which is essentially the same as yours; one moves quicker than the other, as they vibrate, but, as your scientists well know, your body-matter is none the less in perpetual change and rapid motion. There are so few differences in our construction, even if there is considerable difference in our powers.

Think of all this and try to treat me with a greater understanding of the sameness of us two in all essentials. Do not make a bogey of my invisibility, letting your mind dwell on that, but think that your spirit also is invisible to your friends of your present state. All they can see is your body; you are - as invisible as I am.

You seldom speak to me of what you become aware in me and my doings as if you took no interest in me.

Of course I take the very greatest interest in you and your ways, but I am in immediate contact with you only at the time of this writing, and that is not long. It is true that I hear of you from others, whose duty it is to know not only much but all you do day and night. I am tired, if I may say so, of reminding you how we specialise. It would not be right for me to talk to you about the things in which you are watched and influenced by another. You should be pleased that you have very excellent guides; I can assure you of that. But I do not think your question was prompted by an idea that you were not properly cared for.

Yet it must, I admit, seem strange to you that I have not much to say to you about yourself and your actions, when I have often told you that it was from my wish that I came in this way to write with you, quite outside my regular duties of an absorbing nature. So it is, however. We must yield ourselves to the arrangements made, all for a good purpose and our advantage, and we do so, at least many of us, with the greatest willingness and pleasure. It becomes part of our joy in this life to conform to what we perceive to be the aim of the Great Power. That is life for us, and if you knew your best interests, life for you on earth. You find that lesson so difficult to learn, but when in your best moments you trace happiness to having acted as you know you should, you become aware that nothing can equal the carrying out of the will of the Great Power, or if you prefer to use a phrase with less personality in it, the essence of all. You know how many of you live lives out of harmony with the whole of life. That feeling drives men to philosophy and religion, or, indeed, sometimes to violent anti-religious expression. There are, too, many tortured souls who from that feeling vary abruptly from intense fervour to utter despair, not knowing how to give themselves up to their greater self. Yet one would think that a single taste of the

contentment, peace and satisfaction procured by such a course would suffice to preserve them from a return to the higgledy-piggledy rush and tumble of the mass of human beings in your and most other lands.

You seem like sick men who know a remedy and will not take it, preferring to continue in your pains, and struggle for things which other people have the appearance of enjoying. You observe them apparently happy through devoting themselves to actions which give momentary feelings of pleasure, but you really know well enough, every human being knows well enough if he thinks, that even while enjoying these pleasures there arise strange presentiments of another kind of living, an anxiety not enough to call a pain, but enough to bother the mind from its very vague persistence. They are lucky people to whom such intimations recur with sufficient force to produce a light to the way along which real happiness lies. Unfortunately on that road companions are often few, and men lack the warming intercourse with others of a like mind to serve as a shield and protection in life's many vicissitudes. For most people trials are so much less difficult when they are the lot of others also. Men shun loneliness, unless they are persons with an intense aim and purpose, or students wrapt in the past.

All this, let me say, is as it should be now. These weaknesses of the human state are not unpurposed and are used to carry on the life of your world. Ages and ages must pass before men reach the liberty of individuality when they become independent, self-reliant and at the same time sympathetic with their kind. Selfishness dies hard and disregard for the fickle opinions of others is rare, however men may pretend to free thought.

In our troubled times so many of my friends seem disgusted, and dissatisfied with their own lives.

You may guess what I should say to these people who have not made their personality something satisfactory to themselves in the life they were placed on earth to lead. But it does not matter that they should judge themselves in this way, for, as you ought to know now, this sort of dissatisfaction may lead to much good. It may be the starting point of great things and, if rightly understood by them, should give them encouragement.

The man who is wholly satisfied with himself is not an admirable character, even in your present life; self-satisfaction is not a characteristic of the most useful lives. Therefore if I were to address myself to the disgusted ones, I should ask them to look again at their characters critically and ask themselves why it is that they feel disgusted and to what different person they would like to change themselves on the chance they would not again be disgusted. The sooner they become reconciled with their characteristics and the monotony of themselves the better they will know how to vary them to that ideal person. They should aim at this - first, to discover what it is in themselves which leads to their ennui, and then to set to work with heart and soul to introduce novelty into their lives. This, however, they can only do on the

lines they know from experience of themselves; no man can change the fundamental type of character he began to experience in early youth, moulded under the influence of successive environments. If he desires to change his attitude to life he must set out from the conviction that he cannot exchange to another type of character; that is the mere imagination of an idealist; but he can transform his present habits and view of life and make it more interesting and hopeful, if he has perseverance and is free from scientific dogma.

However, the main point is that he should find out why he is less satisfied with himself than are millions of people who endure or enjoy life, in spite of the hardship of ill-health, poverty or a distressing inherited temperament. I know that if he ponders over the reasons for his disgust, he cannot miss the weak point which provokes it. There is no man living who cannot improve his character through its own neglected qualities, until the last thing he will feel is disgust with himself and weariness of life. There are people for whose physical disabilities every excuse must be made but, as history tells, interesting and profitable lives have been led even by the terribly crippled and diseased.

After all, man is a wonderful creation who can himself create, and all men do so. Why do not people of this sort exercise their creative powers? If they are persons of imagination they are at a great advantage compared with their fellows less endowed with that valuable quality. If they follow this plan they will have no complaints of their own character, or their neighbours', for often the people disgusted with their own character, feel disgust with that of those with whom they are associated in daily contact. The whole of life ends for them in disgust and in extreme cases they put an end to it.

But perhaps at the moment you are subject to one of those fashions in ideas, which pass like a shadow over a changing epoch, chilling vigour and life. People despair of their environment because it does not furnish satisfaction to new desires.

PSYCHOLOGY

“The spirit and principles of science are mere affairs of method; there is nothing in them that need hinder science from dealing successfully with a world in which personal forces are the starting point of new effects. The only form of thing we directly encounter, the only experience we concretely have, is our own personal life.” (Professor James).

Do I understand I must reject the theory that there is a “subconscious” confined in each man?

You need not give too much credence to the theories now prevailing among psychologists. It is quite true that you and I are working in a subconscious, unconscious, preconscious, or whatever each professor may like to call it, and the hypnotist also works in that region. Its importance far outweighs your conscious world which, indeed, would not exist at all without it. Creation took place there, coming into being from that source of all you see, hear or feel. But you would be wrong to dwell on this fact to such an extent as to minimise the value of your world of sense, where you must win your spurs and earn your happiness for distant ions of your existence.

It is in no way your duty to pass your time meditating on the importance of the invisible and the unconscious and relying on it at the expense of your decisive actions as you evolve through your earthly life. Naturally there is no harm in philosophical speculations on that subject, in efforts to discover more of the how and wherefore of influences from behind the veil of sense upon your present state. Vast edifices of theory have been built upon these enquiries in recent times and much exaggeration of the small amount ascertained has taken place. The accurate information which will undoubtedly be the achievement of your world is still far to seek. Indeed this region may now almost be called the playground of the sciolist; almost any statement receives a hearing when it professes to “explain” philosophically or scientifically that still mysterious area.

Do not think I am trying to belittle the value of such speculations; they are part of the necessary process on the way to correct knowledge. What I wish you to understand is that you must regard the “subconscious” as the main element in the history of man, but not the dictator of his conscious history. If you will not accuse me of preaching determinism or fatalism I would say you are puppets whose strings are pulled by “subconscious” forces. You will yourself notice the fallacy in this statement; these are not normal puppets, as they are themselves working out something new in their agitation. Each is contributing a part of his own in the drama thought out behind the scenes, yielding, it is true to the impetus given, but not helplessly, as the genuine puppet, nor without personal thought. So you see you need not lose patience when your psychologists bore you with their exaggerations of

strictly personal contributions to an indeterminate background.

It seemed to me that I had already from time to time told you all I have to say about the idea of an individual "subconscious" and its self-sufficiency. Just now it is the explanation of the hour, as was gravity in its day and later electricity and relativity. It will be ridden almost to death, as all new ideas are, until man becomes reasonable about them and sifts the chaff from the wheat. Then men wonder how it was possible for their forefathers to be so simple when the real truth stared them in the face.

Take telepathy. Of course there is telepathy and mind-reading with you, though not to the universal extent it is used with us, our continual experience and indispensable instrument. I have already told you we have not, cannot have, secrets; that is such an uncomfortable discovery when a man arrives with, us, yet ends by proving a great blessing. You make so much of secrecy and concealment in furtherance of your selfish plans and plots, and you become careworn in the maintenance of that by which each of you hopes to gain advantage over his fellows. But think, I beg of you, how much it would simplify your living if you, like us, could read the mind of your neighbour. Think how fair the world would seem without intrigue, without doubt and distrust of apparent opinion.

Perhaps you will imagine that when that came it would lead to violent quarrels and a state of general trouble and unrest, as great as you have among the nations at present, but such changes are never sudden; all that is important and lasting is of slow growth; have no fear of Armageddon from that. It is a fact, I am told, that the power of reading thoughts near and far - for although you separate the processes they are essentially one - has commenced to develop further among mankind, and perhaps in this fact you will find a popular "explanation" of our manifestations and its claim to justification. Do not condemn those who use this weapon to discredit our intercourse; like most human ideas and theories this one has a germ of truth; it is the exaggeration which hopes to cover up a vast reality, prejudicial to the vested interests of Science, which is blameable.

That is indeed lamentable, like the whole war against us which enlists so many of you for the most varied reasons, from the evil-doer, who fears discovery and betrayal by us, to the men of science, who have spent their lives working out theories that take no account of us, and who would be driven to confusion and despair were the truth to be generally accepted. Their lives would appear half wasted, their disciples might mock them and the god Science seem but a clever construction of sense impressions taken for the truth and reality of things.

So do not worry yourself about these catchwords, new stopgaps used to prop tottering fortifications. You will be more to be condemned than the most arrant scientific obscurantist if you neglect your personal experience, which they have not sought from fear of being called unscientific by their brother theorists.

One warning before I stop. Never indulge in controversy of a heated and agitating kind. You can be no fit channel for accurate communications from us if your mind is inflamed by disputes and fiery interchange of polite sarcasms and bitter ironies. When you meet an opponent, laugh at him, but in a kindly way; damp down fiery irritation and the world will gain.

How can you find in my mind now and then something I was thinking much earlier in the day?

You localise thoughts too much, as if there were some receptacle in which they are confined. Thought is not like that; it has no local habitation but passes in active movement about and around your being, leaving its traces as it goes, depositing certain attracted portions, making up what you may call your character and ideas, which in themselves have a fixity but are not rigid and unalterable.

It is not difficult for me to notice new elements in this congeries. The most recent ideas stand out from the rest, some of them are forming up and seeking their rank in the standing army, they do not form an integral part of the main body. They join up gradually, losing a part entirely and adding, as a rule, but a fragment to what constitutes your mind. Thus I can interpret and translate, as it were, what I find into something which has a meaning for us in our task at night. Here, as in other cases, your thought and mine coalesce and produce this writing. This class of thought, not yet attached to the mass comes easily from you, without much resistance on your part and readily combines with my ideas. At the same time the effect on your mind of what I transmit and we write changes old thoughts and thrusts some where they cease to influence you, while our new construction becomes influential and what, for want of a better term, I must call a fixture, although that word seems to imply that there is something stationary.

In a sense you may call your character partly stationary, but only so far as matter around you is stationary. Your senses find the latter perfectly solid and stable, and many people, perhaps most, do not believe that all is in motion and perpetual change, in fact such an assertion seems to them almost idiotic, when by the test of stamping their foot on the ground, or knocking their head against a boulder or brick wall, they can prove to their satisfaction that some matter is immovable. It is easier for most of you to regard thought as a flux than it is for you to believe that matter is in the same state. The idea of its solidity is the natural and simple conviction of every man, only to be corrected by deeper observation. Probably in spite of the increasing means of methodical experiment, people will always feel that the earth is a solid mass, mainly inert; this error is of no concern for practical living and almost necessary to further man's designs.

Now true knowledge of thought is even farther behind than that of matter; the science of mind cannot be called exact, as, for example, chemistry. It is obvious that experimental work in which the experimenter plays the part of an element, at once object of perception and critic of conclusion, must be a matter of enormous

difficulty. Hence for many centuries past the subject has led to strange theories which divided up and classified mind as if it were a piece of matter, devising faculties and setting limits which, even as they were set, were exceeded. It was an artificial system, but served a good purpose and led to progress from which humanity benefited. Now you live in an age when a more reasonable notion of the mental powers has evolved, but on the other hand your psychology is, happily, much less sure of its conclusions. There is little that can be called final from any point of view and its many theories are based on ill-digested elements of knowledge. But you have entered on a right course and, when scientists arise able to conquer the prejudice blocking scientific progress towards psychic research, there will be a sudden advance, as thorough a revolution as when the “subconscious” was brought to light.

To define “matter” puzzles scientists, but a definition of “thought” seems as puzzling.

As I have told you before, you must regard thought as the substance used by us in the same manner as you use matter in your state. We can make with it what we will, and we see results of the constructive thought of others around us which we may, if we like, alter to please ourselves.

This must seem very strange to you, and I have no doubt your scientific wiseacres will say it is simply nonsense. They have not yet discovered that thought is a substance, the foundation of mind and much else in your state. A time will come when this is recognised, but meanwhile do not fear to state this truth should occasion arise. After all, I do not think the idea should seem so very strange to you since my teaching in past talks and all I have left you to infer from my allusions. It is some time since you asked me if there was any sense in a phrase “thoughts are things” and I told you it was true.

The thesis of the scientists that thought is merely a process, possibly nothing more than change of material cells in the brain, should by this time have been superseded in further advance. It will become a relic of antiquity: many signposts in modern research can lead psychology to the truth I now tell you. Yet I fear it is entirely contrary to the present current of theory in official class-rooms. Be thankful you are not bound by the cords of orthodoxy in science or religion; it is hard to say which is the most deadening to the youth of England. In the matter of religion at least there is a great change in progress, and very soon your world will witness the situation, so novel to one of my past experience, of science lagging behind religion. In the present neglect of church worship and orthodox beliefs I see great promise for your coming generations.

In confirming the phrase “thoughts are things” you surely did not include the thoughts which seem to come of themselves?

Yes, what I said to you applies to all thoughts. Your mind is continually creating; I

do not say the same kind of creation as when you are building your future abode, but all your thoughts are used in creating nevertheless. They collect about you and add to the thought volume around your earth. There is need of much thought throughout all worlds and all spheres, and you are a creator of thoughts which help or hinder the work in hand. You can create a favourable atmosphere around you without intending it; that depends upon your character. Some characters are developing very beautiful atmospheres, others are doing the reverse, but all are creating. Thought created all existence because it is in nature to create. That idea would be essential in any definition of it if it were possible for you or me to define thought. Perhaps it is only in the highest spheres that there are beings sufficiently pure and instructed to be able to define thought and mind, but it may be that it rests with the Great Power alone to define thought accurately, for the only absolutely pure definition of thought would be a creation of the real, and my doubt is whether any spirit except the Greatest could define that which is only known in its entirety by him.

All I have now said may seem to you rather like the metaphysical speculations of the older school of German philosophers and not easily comprehended. I probably fail in my explanation in your terms of that which, maybe, your mind has not the power to grasp, but I think you may work out from it an answer to your question. All thought counts; although it may not be put to direct use by you but by others, you are nevertheless providing them with material, good or bad.

There is one thing I must still explain. Both good and bad thoughts are creative, but although on their first production the latter may work evil they can frequently be transformed to the purposes of good and progressive construction. As your past life has been so are your vagrant thoughts; what has been heard or read of evil will flash into a mind bent upon good, one of the tragedies of life for a well-intentioned man. Thoughts of his environment past and present cannot be excluded, however hard he try. Some suffer greatly on this account, men who have lived lives full of varied experiences, some of which they regret. Continually, at the moment of their most ideal aspirations, there is a flash of evil remembrance, like the laugh of Mephistopheles in the play. No one can avoid this, nor, without long and earnest practice, banish the intruders with as quick a flash as brought them. This, I suppose, our ancestors might have called an indication of the original sin present in every child at birth. No doubt this experience aided greatly the acceptance of that doctrine, and you may even retain it if you understand it figuratively as the baffling recurrence of evil in the most saintly lives. It seems to me that in this fact may be found the root of some obsessions, not by a spirit but an idea - which indeed comes from a spirit, but that spirit is a man's self. On the other hand a man who does not pray in some way or other, if it be merely the exercise of pure intentions, may owe some of these troublesome ideas to evil beings allowed to wander, spirits like himself who have lost their way, so to speak, and have not yet found a guide to show them the right path. All men are subject to this sort of suggestion, but unlike the other kind of thought, which arises from their own experiences, these may be kept

out by right aspiration, which acts on those misguided vagrants like a veritable poison gas. The power of your embodied spirit to resist these unfortunates is unlimited and no man need be afraid of contact with us on their account. When you attack the problem of communication with our region you need not have the least fear, provided you pray and do not approach the matter frivolously from mere curiosity. So many of us are ready and longing to help you, and they form a barrier round you, so that fresh sources of communication with our world may be instituted. But in this, as in all, cooperation is necessary. You must prepare your minds for defence and assist us in our defensive operations.

Now, what was the other question you asked me? (*Is the spirit to the soul what the soul is to the body?*) No, I do not think you should use metaphorical expressions of this kind, they tend to mislead people into thinking they are the literal truth and perhaps I should be blamed.

The spirit and the soul must be clearly distinguished at all times. What interests you most in your state is the soul, what concerns us most in ours is the spirit. They are the active principles in their respective states. All that you are to your world in character and action is your soul, but behind it, as it were, your spirit is watching, learning and prompting; it is never injured by what may ruin your soul, only dimmed. Spirit is indestructible and it will continue to direct, or perhaps I should rather say suggest. It can be cherished and developed or neglected. While the soul is everything on the surface of human kind, directly you touch the background of life you enter the spirit's territory.

Are we to call our world of Osensations illusion?

Not entirely. It is real in itself, although for himself Man makes much illusion. There is no reason to believe that your senses are being deceived by an unseen and impersonal power which might seem to have a kind of contempt for the human race. That is far more the idea of Buddhism than Christianity. As you now know, I take Christianity as the type of religion, it being that of which I still believe the essentials and which prevails in Europe. Such a conception of the world leaves out love, which plays the main part. No benevolent power, which we regard symbolically as a father, would offer our senses and perceptions an illusory environment out of his own being. Life as we know it is indeed real and earnest; there is no doubt about that; and life's setting is equally real.

From another point of view you may be rightly said to have no knowledge of reality, merely of phenomena. That, however, is a philosophic idea, true if you take it for what it is, but not a valuable idea for a man's conduct of his life. In the unnecessary conflict between religion and science this idea has always played an important role, serving to enrage the scientist, who in his excursions from physical research generally shows himself a poor philosopher. Christianity is eager to reiterate the truth that the magnificent achievements of science, however much they may increase the ease of life, in no way lead to a deeper knowledge of reality, but remain

methodical explorations and discoveries in something not ourselves where it contacts minds. Science is always working on a surface, and by its avowed methods can evidently never contribute to a nearer knowledge of what is using phenomena. If a scientist is rash enough to deny that there is anything behind phenomena, he at once flounders in the most fantastic of philosophies and is soon out of his depth.

Sometimes a scientist takes to literature and tries to persuade mankind with eloquence that such things as his discovery of his atom's further division are steps nearer reality, and his imaginative fellows are reluctant to contradict an ally in their distrust of religions; but in his heart the genuine scientist is aware that all such discoveries only constitute an advance in the arrangement and classification of the circumferential film on which science works and will always work. Science is a great monument to the quality of the human mind; a bountiful provider of ease and comfort to all men, and it should be content to add to its achievements. It must accept religion as knowledge equally true, equally useful on earth and predominant in Man's future states.

All this looks as if I had a grudge or prejudice against scientific men because, when I lived on earth, science never gained my affection, but this would not be a right line to take. The work of men's minds, whether aided by inspiration from us, or achieved solely in exercise of their own mental gifts, does not cease to excite our admiration when we have left your region, and I can assure you that progress in your world's scientific efforts is admired and followed by some of us with deep interest. A scientific discovery of note with you has its repercussions with us, for you should remember we have thousands of scientists in all stages of knowledge and advancement, and they never lose interest in the work which once formed the material for their development of character.

It is character which counts, whether developed in a church, laboratory or factory. When this is accepted there can be no lower or higher in knowledge; a shopkeeper or manual worker holds no lower rank than the inventor of engines or the discoverer of another scientific law; the end is the same, formation of character, discipline of soul and cultivation of virtue. That is why we well recognise that there is no separation between science and religion. We honour most a sincerely religious man, not necessarily a preacher, monk, or saint, for we find much virtue in a scientist who devotes himself to his life-work in truth and sincerity, though he never, perhaps, sets foot in a church, or by any stretch of imagination is called on earth a religious man.

See, I return to one of my hobbies, and repeat my usual advice. Never pass judgment in your world. Leave judgment to the man himself when he comes to his next state. That seems strange to you no doubt, that judge and accused are one, but beware of the sternest judge you will ever know.

What is your view of conscience?

You may regard it as the regulator of thought in action. . . . It has a history of natural development prior to its condition of sensibility which we find in upright men seeking to form their character on right lines. It is a power greatly capable of improvement and on the other hand it may in morbid conditions become a hindrance rather than a help in your world. That malady of the soul, however, is curable. It is through excess of introspection, passionate desire and fanaticism that the voice of conscience ceases to ring true, and these lead to disparagement and even denial of the guide by so-called thinkers who delight in seeking objections which will display their ingenuity in debate.

The well-disciplined conscience is a very beautiful thing, but it should be the aim of mankind to co-ordinate it with their other powers, not neglecting the influence of common sense in operating what is perhaps the most delicate piece of machinery in the human constitution. There is with you at present the fashion of calling this capability of approval and disapproval by other names in order to appear modern and avoid the scorn of unbelieving philosophers, who in your age are much in the public eye. But however diligently they theorise, the ingenious psychologists will find that experience in the conduct of life meets satisfaction in the time-honoured view of this reflective and judicial attribute of man, and they will return to it in a future which is, perhaps, not so far distant.

The exploration of conscience, as you should well know, was largely the work of Christianity in the development of a Stoic principle. It has existed since the dawning of Man's reflection and awakening to morality, and you can find a slight suggestion of it in trained animals. When enlightened it is a sure guide for every normal man, whether he be an intuitive or an intellectual.

Let me stress to you my repeated advice to have perfect confidence in your conscience and not to be misled by fashions in thought. There is nothing to be ashamed of in holding to a belief which the learned world of your passing hour rejects as old-fashioned and exploded by their theory that the moral sense originated in the evolution of social life. Social life has clarified and improved this natural gift, but it did not create it.

Now for your objection that spirit influence may disturb conscience; begin with the man himself: He has free choice and a reflective mind, observing and judging all of which he is sensible within and about him. In his early days he is utterly self-centred and regards all from the point of view of use to himself, but gradually he is forced to limit his selfishness by relation to the selfishness of others. It is at this point that our influence is most exerted. Through continual discomforts he learns a formal regard for others' needs, a lesson he does not easily assimilate, and it is right that the young human animal should find it difficult to abandon some of that sole regard for himself by which he is meant to thrive. With the definite schooling to yield, although strong enough to prevail, the conflict is begun which is to last his lifetime. At its base

this struggle is between opposite tendencies in his mental constitution and influences from us help one side or the other, for we well-intentioned spirits rarely originate. Noticing a right inclination in a man's mind we try to reinforce it and, taking mankind as a whole, I think I may say there are more failures than successes. True, spirits with evil intentions also make their influence felt, but they, too, cannot originate. When an evil spirit gains notable influence it is because conditions in the man's mind were propitious for evil to do its will; evil influences, like the good, may always be misted, but the constitution of a man's mind and sometimes of his body, may lay him open more than others to evil. Do not make the mistake of imagining that there is something unjust in this. It is part of the great design, inscrutable in your state and long after you reach us, but when that day comes you will, like us, have to confess that all is just, and, like us, understand a little more of the vast plans.

To sum up - your conscience is the most powerful influence within you, as in all human beings endowed as we are with free choice. There has never been a better description of it than that of Bishop Butler, derived from the Stoics - the innate right of approval and disapproval, holding authority over every thought and action of your life. It has the hegemony, as the Stoics termed it, and no man who chooses to cultivate this commanding gift (for it must be cultivated) will go far wrong in his upward course.

That you, and the majority of other men, are unable to distinguish between the promptings of your guide and the voice of conscience need not cause you to regard this ignorance as a defect. It is a matter of attention and its development by use, and the disability need be no disadvantage for the ordinary man. If he follow all such promptings, regardless of the source, he does well, even if his course is less easy to follow. I should feel glad if you reached the same sensitivity to your guide's advice as you now show to me, but I think this is probably due to arrangements by higher powers who see in a close acquaintance with your guide a possible distraction from me and those who work with me.

Give precedence to your conscience above all other influences and strive to make it all that your God designed it to be: it has been called his voice and the metaphor is not inapt. It must deliver judgment on the varied thoughts and ideas which swarm to your mind from all quarters. It is no shame to you that there occur sudden shameful promptings which surprise and disgust you. Some are vestiges of the vast periods from which you descend, legacies from the bestial no less than your human ancestry; in their time they were neither perverted nor blameworthy, nor free decisions of beings a little further developed, and were in motive as innocent as the thoughts of an infant. They are a distress to every man struggling towards the end designed for him by the Great Power, and in struggles with them as much as in purely intellectual conflict Man's education consists.

It is in dreams that these thoughts and images appear in their most objectionable form, but even then in his unconsciousness a man who has reached a certain stage

in his advancement can control and reject. All such processes are studied by some of us to whom this work is allotted, and from what I as an ordinary being not specialised in such subjects, am able to observe, I can imagine that the occupation must be fascinating.

What do you actually see when you come to me?

Have I not already told you about this? I can see what I like to see. In the first place you and your writing, and then the objects and furniture in your room. There is no reason for my looking further afield, although of course my view is not in any way limited; I can see all that I desire to see and at any moment. You do not appear to me quite as others on your earth see you; I see more. From time to time I know your thoughts, especially while you are asking me questions, or when you pause in your writing. I do not know what else I can tell you about my powers of vision.

Can you tell which are good and which are bad minds?

Yes, certainly, but in a general way. It is conjecture on my part: I do not judge any man. I feel repulsion from some and attraction to others. At first, as I told I was fascinated by what I saw, but after a time one does not care to look into minds on earth. It is rather depressing when the first novelty has passed. There is the feeling that much which you see happening, or about to happen, might so easily be prevented, and then you realise that you are powerless in nine-tenths of the cases to influence the person concerned.

It is a very pleasant feeling when you first succeed, in so inspiring a willing person that you can see your thoughts materialising, as mine are now. It was not a success when I tried to communicate with another writer: there was great difficulty, as he was not very sensitive. So you may imagine that when I first appeared on your scene I was somewhat doubtful of the result. I had gained considerable confidence, however, by watching, with what ease the communication between my predecessor and you was effected, and he assured me that you were highly sensitive and efficient; and that although you once tired of the matter and were near breaking with him, you subsequently showed great perseverance and regularity, so that I need have no fear that what efforts I might spend upon you would be in danger of ending in a failure from your want of will to proceed. This now interests me as I hope it does you. There is always for me something in your thoughts and ways which makes a variety. I can see when you are inclined to wander, or are worried with other matters, or are suffering from brain fatigue. Some nights, too, you are more inclined to substitute your own expressions in interpretation of my thought, although I offer you my version. But I can assure you that up to the present you have never failed to reproduce correctly my ideas, and obviously tonight's work shows your much greater ease. Probably it seems very much as if all were coining out of your own mind tonight, in fact I saw just now that you had that thought. You want some striking idea or expression which, by its seeming novelty to you, will reassure you that I am really doing my utmost to fill these pages. Never mind: when you read all

this tomorrow or this evening, you will have no doubt about its being I who suggested these words and phrases to your mind, that is to say, I did my share and you did yours with a common result. And is not that what is wanted for our work when we are finally entrusted with it? We must keep on thinking that the moment is near, although I know no more than you when the signal and the power will be allotted to me.

LOVE

“O burn that burns to heal!
O more than pleasant wound!
And O soft hand, O touch most delicate,
That dost new life reveal,
That dost in grace abound,
And slaying, doth from death to life translate.”

You recently said that perhaps you had not spoken to me enough about love.

In some of my earlier talks I did say a little about the importance of love for your and all other communities in whatever world. It is not to be regarded as a mere sensation or state of feeling, but as an active and creative force, perhaps I may even say the force that created all worlds and so all human beings, and you continue within its ambit at all times and in all places, whether you accept its ministrations, or reject them to your great loss. You make the best use of this advantage when you determine to create love in yourself, the kind of love which is prevalent to a greater or lesser degree in human society. You will have the co-operation of the universal love and you will lead a happy and eternally useful life.

You must not be greatly critical of the form in which love may manifest itself, either in yourself or others. Love is always love in whatever form it clothes itself. It has all gradations, some, perhaps, which arouse in you distaste, others causing you to despair of ever attaining such sublimity, but you must accept the high and the low as beneficial, not set yourself up as a judge because your sect or immediate society adopts a condemnatory attitude. That is one of the lessons which has struck me most with us. Many who are cultured and have had the benefit of a strict moral and religious instruction have the habit of being horror-struck at certain forms of love, which, indeed, are accompanied by much that is unsavoury, but you must not think that there is a love which is purely evil or debasing. Love itself is always to be treated with respect, however much shrouded in villainy. You must separate from it its ill-use and not defame the heavenly essence within the shabby, filthy or ragged veil. Learn this lesson and you will be far on the road to realise the high, all-pervading almighty love of these and other worlds. To love is always imitation of God. Believe that and you can then meditate on the whole subject and work out a truer and finer

theory of the great gift so foully used by your world.

When you dwell in thought on the whole scheme of things, as we like you to do, not you personally more than others but humanity in general, you will do well to found your theory on love, love as the commencement and love in the far future as the triumphant end. Do not look for subtle explanations of words when love is talked of in the scriptures. Take them at their face value without theology. When it was said 'much was forgiven because she loved much,' the plain meaning is the right one. No human being who has loved in any form should ever despair of his future. Love will one day come to him again, pure where it was perhaps foul, and be a sure assistance on an upward course when once it seemed to be the power crushing his soul in the mud.

I have, I expect, talked of love from a very different point of view to that anticipated by you when you suggested the subject. Pæans to heavenly love and irreproachable imitations on earth you can have in plenty; they have been common, and rightly so, in most ages, but I wished to call your attention to a great truth in the subject, which, perhaps, some of your theologians understand well but fear to preach for the sake of public morality. They fear God but do not trust him where telling the truth is concerned; yet no truth is of a kind to be hidden where the God of truth is confessed.

Your talk on love interested me. Will you say more on the subject?

I took a view which surprised you and am glad you appreciated it and were not shocked. Tonight I will call your attention to a more usual aspect of the matter.

You heard from me that love was an active principle in all parts of the universe and it might almost have seemed to you that you might have substituted your word "God" for what I spoke of in my general remarks. This is of course no new view, in fact theology in modern times is given to emphasising that exercise of the Almighty's nature, leaving in the background the sterner aspect stressed by your forefathers, who would have been much surprised and probably antagonistic had they been told that the almost forbidding quality they found in the Deity could be called love. Their conception of love was too much overshadowed by the fear of the consequences of indulging earthly love and they taught that love should be unobtrusive in this dangerously explosive world of men and women. It was an aspect of love difficult to enlarge upon in reference to God, as they did interminably in talking of his justice and stern retributory action.

Nowadays, I would suggest that the excessive emphasis on the love aspect of God requires to be modified and you should go back to a study of the views of your forefathers. You will come to the conclusion, I hope, that both you and they are talking of the same thing. It is still a current quotation that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." It is his love which is the quality exercised in the tribulations his law brings you; some day you will recognise this as vividly as we do, know it inwardly, I mean, not merely confess it with your lips in quotations and rhetoric. It must often

have struck you that suffering is a great provoker of love in others, sometimes seeming to create it in characters hard as nails, and always in almost every man it awakes sympathy, which is love's first cousin. So you can in this first simple case perceive the relationship between love and pain. Then as regards the man who suffers, there is little need for me to point out that pain is the finest thing in the world if it is rightly borne, but a terrible destroyer of virtue if a sufferer cannot perceive its meaning, or feel a kind of nobility when he suffers with bravado, a dare-devil feeling, as if he were in duel with his dearest foe. Do I not know the feeling and the help it may be in the worst moments of a pain which was always there? Can you not imagine that pain thus met fails not to make a soul something greater, greater than a church full of praying saints? To bear pain well is to pray. There are so many forms of prayer, so many things you do without noticing their religious quality and may take you where the mystic goes or the nun in her prison. There is another subject for your meditations; beginning with love they will end on pain, and sad musings on pain will lead you to ways of love. Looking merely at human love, does it not at its highest pitch and ecstasy resolve itself into a sweet grief and insufferable joy?

All these deep feelings intermingle. The old way of dividing up a mind, classifying separately one quality from another and calling this an explanation or analysis of human thought and character was always a ludicrous proceeding. A change has come now and psychologists usurp the throne of philosophers in dealing with the human mind, and it has brought an excessive reliance on "subconscious," instinctive and hereditary sources of man's behaviour. Love is often reduced to a very mean thing in this passing age of psychology, but even so, in these strange hypotheses love has its predominant place, though in a role of little inspiration, difficult for Man to accept, and rightly so; for, if I were allowed to trespass on forbidden ground, I think that even at my present stage of progress I could give you information on a love which is pain itself yet an inspiration and a hope.

What have you to say of love between men and women with you?

We do not at first notice that there is any difference in sex relations from those on earth. In some cases we may be drawn to one of the other sex by a similar kind of attraction, physical, as it were, which we experienced on earth. It is one of the test questions, I think, in a man's judgments. If he retains his old view he will generally be found unlikely to make rapid advancement, but others of us take a different view from the beginning. We are delighted to feel a new kind of emotion towards certain women who make themselves known to us; I do not think the idea of sex comes into our minds. From the very first and very rapidly a new and wonderful relationship, the counterpart of earthly love, may fill us with unspeakable happiness.

You cannot imagine the extraordinary sensation in some husbands and wives when they meet after the separation of the two states. A rush of emotion comes to both which mingle to something only to be called rapture. Never, on any occasion or in

any circumstances on earth, can this condition be reached. If you can imagine the happiest hour of the happiest couple on their honeymoon under earthly conditions you will yet fall short of the rapturous scene which takes place. There have perhaps been times in your life, if you have been lucky, when you felt you were so happy that it did not matter whether you lived or died. It may have seemed to you that you had reached a stage when time and space had ceased and you were yourself become a rapture. If you have never had this experience, you must certainly have guessed its existence when you read the poets. There are one or two, and I think the Brownings first occur to me, who give clear indications that blessed rapture has been theirs. Well, you, who, I hear, had a life of happiness with your wife, will meet that experience, and not a passing state that vanishes all too quickly; again and again you will reach that pitch of delight and thereby be strengthened for your work.

Now, would you ask me, who know all this, to put myself back in the dingy circumstances of earth and give you my ideas on the poor business which you all manage so badly? You have a guide in your New Testament, if you will only use it, not worship the letter, as the English Church does in its injunctions, if you will not mistake instructions intended for a particular moment in history and try to transfer them verbatim and literatim to the twentieth century. Go back and read what I have said of love, something that struck you as too strange to have been accurately heard, I think, and then consider whether it could be possible for me to approve of your marriage laws, holding, as I do, such opinions. Your views of sex are too self-conscious and too sex-conscious. Ages of ascetics and teachers in the Christian Church, fearful of the surrounding lust and sensuality, have terribly distorted and exaggerated the whole question. I am always telling you that you must get back to simplicity if you wish to progress, and give up your sophistication. Nowhere is this more necessary than in your absurd and infamous laws and customs with regard to sex. You hide too much in shame which ought to be something to rejoice at openly. You have far to go yet before you reach purity and common sense.

What is your view of marriage and divorce?

My present ideas differ greatly from those I held on earth. We do not regard the ceremony of marriage as especially sacred in itself, but of course there can be no two opinions on its immense importance in social life. It is the theory in England that all marriages should be based on the love between a man and a woman and nothing else. I am careful to say the theory, because, as you well know, this is far from being the case in practice and in the present state of human society it is entirely comprehensible.

A love marriage is an ideal, and you seldom realise your ideals. In practice there are so many considerations to be taken into account that a marriage is regarded as a success when the two parties to it have sufficient self-control to abstain from acting on difference of opinion. A real love union, between two persons naturally drawn together, is a rare and wonderful blessing from our point of view, lasting far beyond

the span of life on earth. I do not think such persons wholly realise what they have achieved within the scheme of the Great Power when they achieve such a union, nor do they ever sufficiently thank that Power even when they attribute it to him.

So much for the ideal; but in practice you know only too well what may be the result in the social life of your world if two persons put sincere love above everything and determine, come what may, that they will achieve a union which is obviously the will of the Directing Power. They may suffer a kind of martyrdom and the scorn of those regarded as the salt of the earth for their regular and orthodox views. The perfect marriage must often upset a hundred traditional ideas, solemn forms and convictions. Not only does this happen in the case of those widely separated by absurd and antiquated class distinctions, but it may be that a man or woman of genuinely high principles determines to marry what the world calls a bad character, and many a happy and lasting union has resulted from such a decision. This brings back the question of judgments, of which I speak to you so often. It has many a time happened that love has given the "good" person acuteness of vision to recognise in the reputed "bad" one a real virtue that the world ignores.

This being the situation in perfect unions, and these being now so rare, it follows, on your second question of divorce, that no great emphasis need be laid on the inviolability of a marriage tie formed in the usual conditions, with their regard to utility, financial resources and similarities of class and education. It must be obvious that when persons thus tied in youth one to the other, in compliance with prevailing social ideas and tradition, come in contact with uglier persons who, by the laws of nature speaking clearly in them both and with a full realisation of the rightness of this voice, they recognise to be in affinity - it is clear I say that they should, having due care in respect to the social welfare of others concerned, try to dissolve the existing union as speedily as possible. In such cases the new union will be the highest.

From my present point of view I might almost say that the majority of marriages are instances of a lowering of the highest ideals in human life. Young people, who have had little time to think believe that, yielding to passionate feelings and at the same time conforming to all they have learnt from custom and tradition, not to mention the doctrine worked out by the churches, they should hasten to perform a ceremony which seems at once their pleasure and their duty. The circumstance that at a later time they meet others who by nature might have proved their real partners is the cause of much of the vast unhappiness in the married state. People who do violence to their high ideals must suffer, even if they believe they are doing their social duty. But in very truth your whole treatment of the sexual question is backward and blameworthy.

Undoubtedly the remarriage of divorced persons is forbidden by the words of Jesus Christ as they have been handed down by tradition, but not only do I advise you to look with suspicion on some of what you find recorded in your New Testament as

words from the lips of Jesus, but also I would beg you to remember that mankind does not stand still, that there has been a change and great progression in human thought since the first century in Palestine, and that of one thing you may be certain, that no saying or general teaching of Jesus Christ is rightly interpreted if it bars the way to the greater development of Man. It was for this development in an upward course that Jesus appeared on earth and became its greatest factor. It is now for Man's further good and his free development that he exercises his influence from another world. When thoughtfully interpreted his traditional words will be found applicable to modern conditions in a general degree as they were in closer detail to those of Palestine.

It is on such a line of thought that you must understand his instructions about marriage and divorce. All regulations are made for man, not man for regulations, as he said in another connection. You should use his principle in making up your mind about marriage. Men and women are obviously intended to be joined for the purpose of propagating the human species and, as with all other institutions of the Great Power, the execution of this purpose is accompanied by a spiritual parallel. If this spiritual element is present in a marriage there will be no question of divorce, or, if through human frailty there be, it is obviously the frustration of a law for Man's spiritual good. But in very many cases a marriage takes place apart from spiritual affinity, for reasons which are almost wholly material, although usually surrounded with poetic fictions. Two young people are physically attracted and with satiety the attraction wears off, or a woman seeks that independence which want of means denies her, and when her material object is attained, other considerations gradually lose any force they may ever have had.

Now in such cases I believe divorce to be not only fully justified but essentially right. It cannot be wrong to dissolve a bond attaching two persons who feel none of that attraction which alone can satisfy natural laws and cause production of desirable descendants. Could it have been the intention of Jesus to advocate the fettering with a rigid band the human beings whose frailties he so well knew? Thousands of young people feel that they have made one of the errors of youth in their union, and could he have taught that the Great Power approved for them a lifelong period of punishment for the folly of inexperience?

Can marriage take place in your state of existence?

Marriage does take place with us, or it is renewed if those who were already married on earth had found their affinity. You should realise that from what I have said in the past, if not in the same words. On several occasions I have let you understand that all functions of man are continued with us in a modified form. People eat and drink, and if this is so, why should you feel doubt about any other human activities?

You need not imagine to yourself a manner of exercising these functions which is manifestly absurd and out of the question, but at the same time there is nothing objectionable in regarding our activities as lying very close to what you are familiar

with and guessing at the necessary differences. Let me tell you again that the delights of the relation between husbands and wives rightly mated on earth reach a height which you may have imagined, but which no man or woman ever experienced in your state.

Ask yourself if there be any reason why this should not be so. Are not the reasons you may allege entirely connected with the physical frame? And are not your objections rather founded on the strange system of morality to which I have strongly objected, calling your morals primitive and disgraceful? It is very difficult, I know, or any of you in the flesh to keep his thoughts away from his body when he ponders over his idea of what our life can be like. The highly coloured and detailed communications you have sometimes read are little guide to the reality, at least no more than in a general manner. If they have been received by someone whose mind is very strongly impregnated with orthodox tradition, if, perhaps, he gains his living by teaching morals and religion, his feelings will be so intense on certain subjects that, they will form a bar to accurate reception of ideas offered to him, stronger than your intellect, of which I have on certain matters complained.

You are well aware that your own emotion has been a hindrance to us when you have asked me a question about a person or subject interesting you greatly. That is the same with all who write in this way, and it is part of your merit as a channel that you hold most ideas very loosely. You have no strong religious, moral, or political views, and therefore when I communicate an idea which might scandalise or revolt persons versed in such categories, or holding traditional views very firmly, you accept all without hesitation, baulk, or uprush of innate or traditional feeling.

I think that tonight, before you sat down to write, you had doubt about the possibility of obtaining an answer on this subject. For several reasons there might have been a hesitation now and then and a tendency to emotional difficulty; but such has not been the case, and I would point out to you that this ought to be an encouragement for the future. You see that wherever I test you, you rise to the occasion. Sometimes you have written statements which must have seemed nonsense to you, and at other times you were liable to be shocked at my moral views.

Therefore I am pleased with this talk tonight, not only that I believe I have sown in your mind ideas which may bear fruit later, but because I have again to recognise your efficiency as a colourless interpreter of my thoughts, far more so than I, at least, expected, knowing as I quickly have done that you have strong emotions. It was a matter of doubt with me whether your undoubted power of self-control towards your fellows would extend themselves to our work. I now know well that this is the case and you may be proud of the fact. It must be rare, I think, for us to find an instrument so impassive when it receives a shock to its fixed ideas.

About husband and wife finding affinities, I am asked what if one of them is still devoted to the other?

Do not imagine that on first arrival there is a kind of re-arranging and choosing out. For some time everything may go on as before, various influences being exercised on husband and wife and much in their feelings which was not clear to them being revealed. It may well be that the passion, say, of the wife for the husband, is not so high and worthy a feeling as she has thought. It is often as difficult for us to recognise our own true motives as those of our fellow men. If this is so, and I am inclined to think such cases are frequent, he or she will find that worthier thoughts will come to remove any feeling of hostility or resentment towards the other for following the law of affinity and associating closely with someone else. They may each co-operate in the relations of all three and for a time quite a pleasant community may exist.

You must remember that when people are freed from their bodies there are a host of feelings which are dropped, while many aspects of life are discovered which make situations like this, looming very large in their former state, fade and become of little importance. The familiar situations which form the bases of so many stage plays are abandoned in our drama, unless, indeed, the play presented deals with your state. No storm of resentment is felt by wife or husband properly matched when others of either sex show a desire for the company and conversation of either one of them.

With a little thought on your part this question should, in view of the absence of the body with its strong material desires, be solved without difficulty. If not, and you still have some idea that there is pain or agitation in the situation suggested you must take my word for it that from this cause no disturbance arises. Consider that everyone (I speak of the well-intentioned, not those who have no desire to advance and are dropping back) grows in love and his attitude to all he meets is friendly.

You forget too often that we have no form of material desire. We do not covet the possession of money, property, or bodies. It is difficult for you to picture such a state when the whole life of the majority of your world is absorbed in the exercise of desire for power, money and physical enjoyment. That is the change in your new circumstances to which it is so difficult to adapt yourselves and it takes effort to become habituated.

And now I will grant you that there is a passing feeling of sexual jealousy, but I was right to disregard it in my answer, as invariably, with well-intentioned persons, it passes as soon as the new state of affairs is recognised. When a husband or wife finds that there is a great attraction to some other being it may mean no more than that the bond of union is widened.

Is sexual relationship a subject for our talks too liable to misunderstanding?

When I gave you special information for yourself alone regarding marriage and sex I was not bound to respect the current usage and teaching with you on these matters.

I would not by any means advocate a sudden crusade on your part to change the opinion of your fellow-countrymen. I told you that change was inevitable and that in this matter you might trust to the effect of evolutionary forces.

I advise you to distrust any communication from us which provokes you to act immorally according to the standards of your day. When I spoke in answer to your questions I gave you our opinion where I am, an opinion we are quite justified in holding, are, indeed, driven to it; but I had no intention of unsettling earthly ideas on this subject which are the result of long and painful growth. It would be folly to proclaim to all and sundry that they were free forthwith to break marriage ties very evidently a torture. The result of such a convulsion would be the confusion of social order and a source of greater immorality than exists at present.

Nevertheless I think it is your duty, when the question of marriage and sexual relations is raised in your presence, to state the views I communicated to you. In this way you will act in accordance with the gradual development of thought on these matters and in your small way further the will of the Great Power.

Now, perhaps, you will admit that my communications cannot be classed with those from evil spirits, who delight to share in immorality practised on an increasing scale. Always distrust a communication which gives you the impression that it grossly outrages public opinion. Treat public opinion with respect even if you are privately convinced it is erroneous. It represents the largest, if imperfectly instructed, class of your fellowmen and has been formed by laws which merit your regard, at whatever epoch their action is noticeable and in whatever form that action is veiled. There are very few, if any, ideas supported by public opinion in which cannot be found something of value among the mass of prejudices. A man should keep in mind that he is not a single independent unit in the world, who can form his ideas and act in consequence without reference to any other being. All that happens is the result of co-operation. You may call each man in many respects an island, but very early in life he finds it can be invaded, and invariably is, by others like himself, sometimes without disapproval and sometimes leagued with his passions, introducing adventurers and enemies, and he learns that his very existence depends on others than himself.

Often men boast of their independence and a philosopher has taught that the more independent a man, the happier; but that is merely a specious delusion to which living gives the lie. Too many such philosophical theories mislead mankind.

Your life can only be lived worthily in co-operation with your fellows and with us. Neglect neither. You please us by service to your fellows and you greatly benefit them by co-operation with us.

Do people among you fall in love?

It is not necessary to be young with us to have the pleasure of falling in love. A great deal of the ecstasy of your young lovers is not physical; their emotions are at least as

much spiritual. It is possible that at that time both of them may be raised to greater heights in their unselfish emotions than at any other period of their lives. I would not affirm that formally religious emotion raises human character to greater heights than such ecstasy and assuredly, the love emotion is far more universal than ecstasy produced by a conscious feeling of genuine approach in spirit to the Great Power.

Let me justify my remark about a similar pleasure we, too, enjoy. I do not think you entirely grasp the significance of affinity. It exists potentially in your world, but it is ill-defined by your teachers and has, indeed, hardly ever been the subject of study. With us, however, affinity plays a leading role normally and has an immense influence on all our relations. I can assure you that when certain persons meet for the first time, or perhaps enter a condition which has not hitherto revealed itself, they may experience a sensation hardly exceeded by any other pleasure. There is not only the sudden attraction, like a revelation, which accompanies falling in love on earth, but there is a kind of mingling, or exchange of conditions between two beings, each experiencing the pleasurable feelings of the other and, as is usual, not requiring any expression in words of what is a thrill through the whole individuality. It may have seemed to you incorrect to use the word ecstasy for something which is by no means the leaving of one consciousness for a higher, but I cannot think of any other word, and your mind has not shown me one which finds a hold in our co-operation. There is no sense of being carried away, but an intense augmentation of the individuality, an increase of pleasure due to fresh contribution from each of the participants.

I do not know if I have made myself entirely comprehensible, but I have done my best under conditions which, as I have often told you, make an exact and strictly true explanation of any of our experiences an impossibility. Let it suffice you to know that we have nothing to envy you in your "love's young dream." Our experience may not have youth for its main characteristic, for that has almost no significance with us, unless we wish to emphasise some pleasure by comparing it with what we may have experienced in the earlier life.

There are so many new pleasures you will enjoy in your next state at which I have hinted, without even an attempt to describe details which would mislead you. At least you can realise that sights and sounds and perfumes are marvelously enhanced, and that every enjoyment, even that which on a shallow consideration appears solely physical, is renewable to a higher degree than you are able to picture to yourself when you dream of your coming development. I do not think you will regret the absence of anything in your present life except your lost opportunities.

Is the sex difference eternal?

Obviously sex plays an enormously important role in the course of human life, as in the animal world from its seemingly insignificant forms to the immediate forerunners of Man. It should be regarded as part of the texture of the world of life, something in its original essence, not merely a development after the appearance of

that element on earth. We know of no kind of life in which sex does not play its part. So far as I am instructed, sex was an attribute of the powers which existed at the origin of all, and there was no time in the history of your planet when creation did not follow the line of sex. I do not mean to say that from its very earliest forms life appeared in separate attributes of male and female, but the two principles existed; under certain conditions they were to be found in one being.

That is why it has been so important and unruly throughout the history of human life up to recent times. It is not something which can be safely regulated by the existing civil or ecclesiastical law. Certainly human society was obliged in course of time to limit its instinctive action, as it has most other instincts, but whenever regulation became too severe the community suffered. It is so still. Wherever the instincts arising from sex are suppressed or left unused the result is unhealthy bodies and disordered minds.

Here lies a great difficulty for lawgivers and governors and you have still failed to solve it. Hence comes the immorality, not only from the generality always ready to yield to the sex instinct for the pleasure it offers, but the immorality so widely spread within the law through unsuitable marriages, binding people to each other when all their better feelings urge them to separate. You must never regard the sex question from the point of view that marriage is moral and sex relations without legal marriage immoral. There are unions illegal with you which we regard as admirable and see obviously tending to raise the persons concerned in their spiritual life. There are thousands and thousands of legal marriages which are objectionable from every point of view and should be dissolved by any means.

This will seem subversive doctrine according to your present ideas and likely to end in a chaotic state. In the present condition of the world I am ready to agree, but I insist that there is too weak an effort to reform a state of affairs which is not only unsocial, but causes immense unnecessary suffering, especially to women.

And then there is that question of impurity, as it is called. This brings into the entirely natural sex-relation notions of something to regret, causing secrecy and shame. It will be long before these fancies lessen their power; yet to those who wish to arrive at truth and think deeply, beyond all prejudices, there must appear a kind of blasphemy in this. Of course there is nothing "unpleasant," as the phrase is, or impure, in the intimate and necessary relation of the two sexes. The idea cherished in the Church of Rome and some religious-bodies of England that the joy of this relation should be so severely controlled as to minimise the pleasure for its own sake, to be enjoyed in this as in any other of life's natural gratifications, seems almost incomprehensible from my present point of view. By its wise rejection of Puritanism the Catholic Church gains in our eyes, but in this regard it seems to lose its common sense.

There is again the tradition of saintliness through virginity, a most strange theory. Virginity is no virtue in itself; though it is recommendable in youth for social

reasons, and to vaunt this excess of asceticism is a proceeding with which we cannot agree.

Never let a man feel shame at his feelings of a sexual nature. That such feelings require careful limitation may be readily agreed, but that there is something in them to cause shame is an idea to be utterly banished.

Would you become politician again if you came back?

No, certainly not. I should not be a politician in the first place, although I do not say that I would not support a political party which showed that its chief object was not to obtain office and power, but to make the condition of his fellow-countrymen better and direct their minds to higher things than those which now in their ignorance they seek so eagerly, believing that thereby they can obtain happiness.

Does it not seem to you that any earthly party which decided to make love a plank in the platform would dissolve in ridicule, and probably be accused by the Church of using sacred words in a frivolous manner and trying to obtain votes from the religiously minded by hypocritical means? Yet what other effective programme is there to improve the world? That is the only remedy for the troubled state in which public lairs find themselves in every country. It seems to us now so simple, almost as if a little reasoning by a few earnest men could convince the world, of the fact.

Indeed there are no arguments against love and good will between men; all difficulties vanish where love prevails. It is so obvious in small ways, family differences for instance. There can be no long resistance when love comes into play; with a little of this wisdom family quarrels can be, and have been, turned into reconciliations bringing about a state of things far happier and better than had ever existed. It is only a question of understanding. If a man studies and tries to understand one of his fellows, even if an antipathy from the first exists between them, he will come to love him. With some people of course this is easier than with others; yet so few, even of those born with easy and conciliatory natures, take the trouble to use this means for their own and their fellows' welfare.

I do not suggest for an instant that your world is even on the verge of perceiving this. You are far, very far, from such wisdom, and there are few signs that in the near future your turmoil will hear the voice of love saying "peace, be still"; things do not happen suddenly; you must expect slow growth in all that is lasting. It is the universal way in which worlds are run - growth by infinitesimal stages, call it evolution or what you like, that is the great law. Sudden change is not the system of the Highest; sudden changes by mankind do not last. There is nothing wiser than to strive at acquiring patience in awaiting change of circumstance, character, or material development. All is in perpetual movement, and the most important movements are not to be traced by your senses. To think of this slow and sure advance should help you to patience. You will not grumble then at absence of results to common observation, for you will think that at any moment the imperceptible

may reach the stage where a result can be suddenly registered by your senses.

It must before now have seemed curious to you that at former periods of your life you were ignorant of changes which are now so evident to you and your present contemporaries. It gives the past a simple and almost stupid look in their eyes when they study it in preceding years. They cannot imagine why the vision of those who lived then was so obscured, or their minds so dense as not to be aware of the changes taking place about them; changes evident now to the schoolboy, but then hidden in spite of their reality from the wisest statesmen of all countries.

So you can, if you think this out, see why I should never first and foremost be a politician, a man who thinks he is directing the fate of nations, when too often he is hindering their course. The best work is done in appeal to individual men, not to masses who applaud you and win your reputation. They give you praise, not for the good, which they may not understand, but for that which suits their temper and epoch. . . . That *is* the end.

It is often said there is a relationship between sex and religion.

People are right in noting the close relation from the earliest ages between sex on the one hand and religious beliefs and rites on the other. If you will reflect a little you will recognise that sex and religion are among the deepest feelings of humanity.

In early days there was much wonder inspired by the fact of reproduction. It seemed the conjuring by unknown powers of something out of nothing, and it is not surprising that this early wonder of men should, when they came to the stage of speculating and reasoning on the cause of things, especially fix attention on the hidden cause through which they themselves came into being from the invisible and were in their turn concerned in creation from the darkness of further members of their kind. At the same time they saw all around them animals appearing in live form from the same mysterious source.

Here at once you have a mystery arousing awe and, as all know, the visible instruments of this mysterious influence came in a later age to be objects of worship in propitiation of the powers at work and the cause of what was proceeding all around them. Men approached these phenomena with an awe and fear hardly less profound than that with which they regarded death and dead human and tabooed animal bodies. It is natural, is it not? that the phenomena of birth should combine with the religious feeling which, in its purely human aspect, is the sense of invisible power working with a purpose, as they themselves worked and purposed, but by means which were entirely beyond their own powers and understanding. What more apt subject than this for the most primitive religion?

Do not misunderstand me to mean that this was the sole source of religious feeling and rite. As you will remember, I have already pointed out, for instance, the important place to be allotted to clairvoyance and clairaudience in the awakening of recognition and worship, at first with dread, of Power. Ancestors who had vanished

from the earth were early found to be still able to appear to privileged persons and to be heard by them. Most varied have been the ways by which the thought of the Great Power introduced itself to the knowledge of mankind, growing at first from the physical and progressing to the psychic and mental, slowly and almost imperceptibly, like all lasting growth.

It is this phase of Man's measured progression which learned archeologists and students of religion rarely have the imagination to perceive. They continue to weave theories which take no account of spirit. Yet the evidence of spiritual working lies, before their eyes, if they would only lay aside their prejudices and cease to commence their labours with the assumption that the mechanical relations of matter alone will render up to them the secret of a world's making and development, or, as they would prefer to say, its evolution from a gaseous state through changes which have no discoverable beginning and certainly no purpose.

It is difficult for us in our present position to withhold a smile when we think of these things, and may I hope that even you begin to see something ludicrous in your former creed. Before our partnership is ended there will be no doubt, I hope, that ours is your attitude also.

RELIGION

"The preamble of all religions is a spiritual world."

What do you think of these bishops' denunciation of psychic experiments?

You must allow for the life's training of these elderly men. They cannot place themselves on the standpoint of those who are awakening to a new spirit of revelation. Probably neither has given serious thought to the revival of the old means of communication with our world. The idea may seem to them fantastic, and the notion of persons communicating with the heavenly powers apart from the rules and regulations of the Church of England must appear likely to create disorder and confusion. Every allowance should be made for men who have, in all probability, passed lives full of good works and efforts to draw the attention of their flocks from materialistic and mercenary views of life to those more spiritual, and in so doing help the cause of good which I have the privilege of presenting to you.

You must not hastily condemn the leaders of any religious Body. They are almost always worthy men who deserve praise for long years of devotion to meditation and work in furtherance of the spiritual. That they cannot reconcile themselves to a different and more intimate approach to that part of human life is understandable. It may be regarded as blameworthy that they should pronounce, as if they were competent to judge, upon a question they have never seriously examined, but otherwise it does not seem to me that their action can be flatly reprov'd and, speaking without special guidance, I do not think that at this stage of England's history their effort to stem a growing conviction can have any deterrent effect.

When I speak of a growing conviction I am not referring to the loosely organised Spiritualist sect, but to a tendency we have remarked in religious people to question, not only through the widely discussed annals of psychical research, but in the Press and more rarely in the pulpit, whether they may not have their faith confirmed, or perhaps find themselves in immediate contact with persons who have left their world a sadder place for them. There can be no doubt, it seems to me, judging from knowledge equally at your disposal, that a set of ideas making for this end is slowly extending to all parts of your country, creating a new sense of unrest and conflict in the minds of members of all churches. The arguments adduced by Spiritualists are receiving more attention, and if only they could heal their dissensions and check the unfortunate tendency to side issues and controversy, they have a great opportunity.

We have many disappointments from Spiritualism as at present conducted. The movement lacks the old serious intensity, and is too prone to pursue a militant advertising at the cost of spirituality. No doubt its good work of drawing attention to us, who are knocking at so many doors, proceeds, but it does so haltingly, with secondary aims. The atmosphere of many a Spiritualist gathering is uncongenial; we do not get the sympathetic reception that was once more common. Nevertheless, as I have said, we have incontrovertible evidence that the truth of inter-worldly communication is spreading. We find it in unexpected connections and among persons who keep silence because their creeds allow for nothing of the kind.

On the other hand there is increasing hostility noticeable among the most sincere members of other religious bodies, who feel this extending influence and realise what it will mean ultimately for their formulas, handed down to them and loyally observed. There can be no doubt that a bitter controversy is coming. Do not think I am inspired to prophesy; I say this from what I observe and hear in the conditions of earth. The leaven is in the lump and will never cease working.

But will it be the present Spiritualist movement which will take first place in the coming change? That seems to me doubtful. There is much in it which must repel the reverent, and there is as yet no sign that a considerable number of the well-educated men of judgment are attracted to take their essential part.

You said we made too much of personality. In what way?

When I said you made personality play too great a part, I was referring to your idea of divine personality. It seems to me that you unduly limit the power of the greatest of all powers if you attribute to him the feelings and ideas of humanity.

When you ponder on the thought of your God, does it seem restricted to a person in the ordinary sense of that word? Can you class it with the thought of Shakespeare or Plato? I think you yourself do not do so, and quite rightly; leave that to the preachers, who must bring their subject down to the level of their flocks. In many cases they become so accustomed to treat their God in this way, as if he were a human king or Archbishop, that they end by restricting their own free thought and

they take their illustrative God, prepared, as it were, in an expurgated edition for limited users, as the realest possible. Such men see heresy, blasphemy and atheism everywhere about them, and they would be horrified to know that we are often on the side of the blasphemers. I have already told you that atheists do not shock us; I say now that we like an atheist whose denial is that of the God-idea current in some cathedrals. It is indeed a nice question who are the blasphemers. Above all, get wide ideas of the Great Power, to meditate on his nature is an education in itself; it leads perhaps better than any other road to the spirituality which is the first need of your state.

Now think of your own personality in the same light; for you are a portion of the Great Power, a portion which can expand enormously. Estimate your own nature by meditation; I think you will find that to some extent your personality hampers you. Your highest thoughts have a strangely impersonal air; they are too generally applicable to be confined to you alone, indeed, they would have little value if you could not share them with your fellows, who thereby become part of you, not within your personality, but within a vast environment, which you can hardly put a label upon, and which yet acts upon you, inspires you and obviously wishes you well. How could it do otherwise? since you are the creation of its activity, rightly called "love" in so far as you can give it a name. You must not confuse your personality with your character; character is your own, and limited to you. The Great Power has no character, which is an odd way of stating what is beyond statement of any kind.

It would be possible for a man to practise no other form of religion than continual meditation on the attributes and working of the Great Power. The knowledge of him is inexhaustible, and you may meditate for years, and only reach the fringe of your subject. Yet in doing so you would be gaining much for yourself and your conduct of life, nor would you lose your advantage when you reached us. We are frequently occupied in meditation and discussion of the Great Power and his action.

You need not think that with us the mystery of being is solved. You may take up your meditations again where you left them off, but in many respects you will have a dearer view to guide you and your approach to the truth will be by a rapid step forward. It will be impossible to put the idea of the Great Power behind you, as so many do on earth, and go your way careless of him and his perpetual and universal action. The absence of the fleshly body and of the many cares involved in keeping it and making it comfortable, that is one great advantage and help for us. Men must make money to feed and clothe it, and in doing so they blunder and are ruthless.

But do not think that we have not other obstacles in our path; there are many in the way of our advance, not of course from our new form of body, but from the same old mind and character which guided us to the extent of our abilities on earth. Then, if we are in earnest, we can feel the Great Power about us and have no more of those doubts of yours on his existence. No man in the least anxious to progress can entertain the slightest doubt about an existence which permeates all our thinking

and causes us perpetually to seek union with it - "follow his will."

So you may be quite sure that meditation on this subject is useful above all others, leading to enlightenment and strength as nothing else can. You may not have success with formal meditation, but you have at least good will in that direction and in an unmethodical fashion have meditated to a considerable extent. I hope you will remember this subject the next time you feel inclined to practise meditation and find for yourself how deep it will take you.

On another question I have some diffidence, a kind of compunction in speaking to you, lest you misunderstand. The being and character of Jesus Christ can never be such deep subjects of meditation as the Great Power, yet you will find that no other meditation points you farther in the right direction. It is quite true that Jesus Christ is the way to the truth of things and gives you an inkling of life itself in the distant future, but you must not imagine that thought and study of him constitutes so worthy a subject of meditation as the Great Power himself: You can think, if you like, of the measure of power imparted to him by the Great Power, which was far greater than the tiny spark that has fallen to the lot of you and me. This has been recognised in all ages and has led them at times to place him on an equality with the Great Power. Serious meditation shows that, however considerable the amount of power in Jesus Christ, it cannot be compared for an instant with the vast reservoir of all power and goodness.

You say I have not paid sufficient attention to Jesus Christ.

That is one of the most solemn subjects it is possible for me to treat. You are liable to start off into ideas which have aroused great controversy and thus miss the real purport of what I may say.

It seems to me that, although your earliest teaching deprived you of the charm of this personality, you are well aware of his importance in your and every life on earth. Do not suppose that I will expound to you the history of that great missionary, or his exact relation to the Great Power. All that would lead you back into the thicket of theological controversy. Rather I would like to impress upon you a realisation of the use of his teaching and words, so far as you possess them, to yourself and your contemporaries. You must not regard him as a historical character who lived a noble life in the past, but as an influence on your world still open to your thoughts and approach. It is a simple matter for you to ask his guidance and help. Why should you doubt he can help you through the thousands of messengers at his disposal? Or even, if you are sufficiently developed in spirit, send you rays from his goodness?

You can at least take his doctrine as foundation for the reform and new growth of your character, without that literal interpretation which spreads discord in your world.

There is an enormous amount still to be learnt from the well-worn phrases and pictures in the New Testament which has a very definite use for modern and for all

times. Never be put off from its study by the theories of those who regard Jesus merely as one of a number of energetic reformers, required in the age in which they lived, but now simply subjects for criticism and ethical discourse. He is far more than that. You know that not only did he transform the portion of the East where his doctrine remained most lively; his influence spread to the whole world and has also transformed and advanced the teaching of other great messengers.

There will always be the danger in your attempt at understanding him that you compare and criticise his life and work historically, as you have been accustomed to do. It has become impossible for you to observe him with a fresh eye, apart from a cloud of views you have in great part accepted, regarding him merely as a man who had not the learning to invent a philosophical system. Truly his is no philosophical system, but the direct product of living, as his words show. Philosophical systems are laboriously evolved in studies and lecture rooms, they do not spring from their authors in the course of their life and action. It is his vitality, the saturation of his words with ordinary human life and its difficulties that will, as long as Man exists, prove him the outstanding figure and example of one who, almost alone of human beings, knew reality and was constantly in touch with it. Where he appears less effective it is because a language to describe reality does not yet exist.

You should, therefore, ponder much over the story told in the New Testament. Use your imagination more effectively and put yourself in the place of the principal character as a man. Try to imagine what all those sufferings must have meant to one who at any moment could have abandoned the struggle with evil on earth, and by the powers given him could have raised himself to a position of authority such as the world had never seen. Think that this being chose to limit these great powers for your sake and that of the whole world, setting an example which any man can strive to follow, if he give just weight to his higher nature, that portion allotted to him from the Great Power.

This was not all. By his deep knowledge and psychic faculties he made a bridge for the ordinary man on a road which up to that time only great and exceptional spirits on earth had been able to advance far. Remember, too, that he effected something in the psychic relation between the two worlds which did not exist before he took to himself a body.

I do not wish you to study the words of the New Testament literally; in this, as in everything, you must look for the spirit. The same spirit which filled Jesus Christ inspires in lesser degree all mankind. You can by meditation on those writings find that spirit, and this is the only way in which you will acquire the reverence and affection which are lacking. I do not venture to blame you more than is fitting for this colder attitude. You were taught in your childhood to regard these writings as verbatim from your God, that in them was no error and that it was not permissible to change one word. But in your youth times were rapidly changing and this old doctrine could no longer satisfy new enquiring minds. You were taught to regard as

sinful criticism of those portions against which the common sense of the age rebelled and the strife between the latter and your ideas led to unbelief. When the whole was equally defended, those places which were obviously weak and those where the spirit obviously maintained its rights, nothing but confusion could result for a youthful mind. Therefore I think allowance must be made for you. The image which appeared when the writings were studied in this way, lifelessly and by rote and tradition, lost appeal to a new age advancing in scientific and historical method. The figure presented to you did not fit in with your natural experience; it remained too far from your life and affected you hardly more than a stained glass window. It is that kind of image which you now find so difficult to make natural.

I do not ask you arbitrarily to make a substitute, which would probably be another stiff and lifeless image, formed from the passing ideas of your present age. There is only one way in which a picture capable of influencing and helping you is to be made and that is by the spontaneous action of your own heart, an intuitive effort or feeling, growing to be your nature almost before you are aware it has taken root. I do not see how otherwise than by meditation you can acquire this. So I say to you, read and meditate upon this person as a man like yourself who had a vast measure of the psychic power you are now using and value. Is it impossible for you to make a true picture on these lines? Be sure you will be aided in your attempt. For never forget that the influence of that person is always and everywhere effective about you, awaiting the revelation you will make to yourself through him.

Men say that Christianity's effect upon the world has been grossly exaggerated.

No, I do not think that the services to humanity claimed by Christianity are exaggerated. The appearance of the founder of Christianity upon earth marked the most notable event in human history. It was not merely an episode in a rather obscure period and place, which was afterwards magnified, but a world event until recently justly estimated as such. At the end of the last century, however, there arose a tendency to regard Christianity as merely one of several religions equally valuable to the human race. This is not a right view to take. It was literally an epoch-making event when its founder was born upon earth and devoted himself to a great and painful career of sacrifice. It has been objected that he taught nothing new, but that everything he said had been said before, and that even the phrases of his prayer, which in subsequent world history has never ceased to be repeated after him, can be detected among the liturgies of the contemporary Jewish synagogues. This has a measure of truth in it, but, when stated in this way, it is not true in the main. You may regard this statement as you would that of a man who should say that there was nothing original in the painting of Raphael or Reynolds, because they used the colours employed by hundreds of artists before their time. From our point of view the founder of Christianity is the most original thinker known in your history. It is hard to understand how this can be ignored except by those who have strong prejudices against the idea of revelation at all.

Here you have again one of those argumentation of which I have spoken to you, used by a class of mind mainly active in producing that caricature of wise enquiry I have called "questioning." A man can become obsessed with this questioning spirit, truly obsessed like a patient in an asylum; for he believes himself alone rational and that beliefs held by the majority of thinkers are the result of obtuseness and prejudice. He is often one of those who make an idol of "progress" regardless of any goal. He will flatter himself that he is more enlightened and "progressive" than his fellows, and he cannot in his hurry stop for an instant to ask himself whether there may not be more reason in the opinions of those he so much despises. This sort of rationaliser is commoner in some ages than in others, but he is always with you, as much in France and Germany as in England. If he took the trouble to compare his own activities with their like in previous ages he would find that such "progressive" ideas have the result of throwing the world back in reaction, whereas those who ponder and weigh each step of theory gain a permanent measure of progress which will not arouse the resistance of the following age. This is the same law of which I spoke recently, the slow, unceasing and almost imperceptible growth of nature, and when you say nature you mean what I call the Great Power. In imitating this type of progress you are following the guidance you may observe in your world and find with you still when you pass to ours.

Perhaps I am not answering your question in the direct way in which it was put, but I have given you the beginning of an answer. If there was thus a striking and, if you like, miraculous access to light brought to your world at that moment in Judea, it seems an inevitable conclusion that it was not intended to confine itself to an insignificant Roman province, in fact it could not do so. From the first it was intended for the whole world and in that lies the merit of Paul. If you think what a shock certain new ideas have caused in our day, first instance the theories of Darwin, you can picture the veritable earthquake which shook the Jews of the Temple, and the hardly less revolutionary shock to popular ideas in Rome. In however mild a guise it appeared at first, like a wisp of mist or cloud in a clear sky, there came the disruptive flash on contact with ideas utterly contrary to it, yet long established, not only religious but social and political.

Can you believe that there has been exaggeration of the strength of Christian influence, that its ideas are not the highest yet promulgated in the world? Yet paganism was not utterly demolished, as was formerly considered a proved fact. That centuries later much that was good in it once more came into being was inevitable according to law - but I must break off. . .

At this time the world appears to many a purgatory.

What they say is true, but only in a very limited sense. It is impossible to call the general life led by most in your world purgatorial, for they make no effort to change their emotions or actions, but it is true that for those who have given thought to the system and conditions ordained for your state, and who desire to form their

characters, the world becomes a purgatory where they can shed much, if they will, of what is undesirable for the ideal life.

Here is another of those paradoxes with which I have before now surprised you, that it is those you term good who suffer and those judged evil who do not, beyond the usual vicissitudes of life. If you remember some of my past words regarding suffering rightly envisaged, I do not think you will fail to understand my meaning. I have often told you that suffering is not any kind of punishment, nor is it a disadvantage in your lives, but the way in which you may, before leaving your present state, commence a life which at your next stage will continue your advancement to happiness.

In spiritual matters there is no gulf fixed between your state and ours. We are of the same kind and what profits in our spiritual state profits in yours. This you should bear more clearly in mind, that the spiritual is one realm and in it you and I lead the same life. When you leave your present form you will find little inwardly new in our state; you will be received as one of us and free to continue a course which had its beginnings where you now are. From this point of view, therefore, you may call your life purgatory wherein with strength and good will you may purge your characters from what opposes the will of the Great Power.

This is not a gloomy view to take of life. When enjoying genuine pleasure you follow the laws of the Great Power no less than when you suffer and perceive the value of suffering. I know that all pain and suffering is a riddle for you and all who reflect upon life, and it is still a mystery to us also, but we now know well that its solution exists and is revealed to the high spirits. It is not a subject with which to rack your brains. Accept things as they are and never imagine that you have the knowledge and skill to work out a better plan than that with which you are superficially familiar. Regard the system with its pain and suffering as inevitable and, taken rightly, an advantageous way of living.

Do you agree with the Christian doctrine of rewards and punishments as incentives?

Now, what do I mean by a reward? It is this. If you continue to render such service as you are now doing, your spiritual and psychic qualities must inevitably grow and you will become a finer character, a shade nearer to what the Great Power means all his instruments to become. There is your reward. If, however, you abandon your co-operation with us, you will find that both spiritually and psychically you lose ground which you will find it far harder to recover when you evolve to our condition. There is your punishment.

That is all I mean by punishment and reward, and I think you will agree with me that both terms might be abandoned for two more accurate. But, as you now understand what I shall mean in using them, you will have no cause for complaint when I continue to do so. This little difficulty may be regarded as settled.

Speaking generally of these ideas, which have figured so largely in the Christian religion, I do not wish you to believe they have played no useful part. They come from a time when men understood little else than force as a means of government. When spiritual teaching began to percolate slowly through the generality, it found itself obliged to adopt ideas common to all men of the period and best understood by them; the situation was somewhat like that between children and parents. As the world stands now a system of punishments and rewards occasioned from without is still necessary, not to the drastic extent of former times, but by the milder system which spiritual influence has produced.

With us the situation is wholly different. Naturally you will at once surmise that this is because in the absence of physical covering we cannot be shut up in prisons, or otherwise violently coerced by physical bodies. But this is not by any means the full explanation. Our form of "coercion" is by the influence of mind upon mind, and just as spirit is greatly stronger than matter so its coercion - if I must use an inappropriate term - is more severe.

In this question you are dealing with my special department of service. My whole activity is occupied in influencing vast crowds of persons whose individuality must be respected and their thoughts allowed to develop by degrees. Some of them are in prisons made by themselves and my influence is directed to freeing them, which, you may say, is a strange way of exercising restraint. But it is when they realise they are in prison and that release lies with themselves that their education - punishment, if you like - commences. In your view this must seem rather a topsy-turvy way of doing things, but how much more effective.

You seem rarely to use the term "sin" in your talks.

You are theological tonight, a thing I did not expect from you, but I will tell you how I now look on the matter.

The idea of "sin" as something apart from errors and weakness in humanity is a Jewish idea, not one common to all religions, like the idea of a god. I do not think, however, that it differs in essence from the ideas of error and crime which we find in the classics. It was retained in its entirety and developed by St. Paul, passed on with a weakening tendency up to the Reformation, and on the rise of the Puritans was emphasised and exaggerated in confessions of faith and theological expositions. Sin came to be regarded as a malady like smallpox, which, unlike other diseases of the familiar kind, infected all members of the human race at the moment they entered your world.

In modern times this has come to be regarded as a rather disgraceful doctrine and is rapidly dying out, but it remains nevertheless in the wording of ancient liturgies and creeds which, on superstitious grounds, ecclesiastics dare not excise. It is such doctrines, verbally retained, though so much at variance with human experience, which are gradually weakening the hold of orthodox religion and will ultimately

have to be jettisoned.

It is obvious that Man is born with instincts and desires which he will try to satisfy regardless of circumstance in his earliest years; so it is ordained in the plan of the Great Power. These lawful and natural desires theologians came to brand as a cursed disease in their innocent children, judging them by the standard of instructed and experienced adults. They might as justly condemn hunger and thirst. So St. Paul maintained that sin entered the world through a lapse by the first man, Adam, and was inherited by every one of his descendants, after the fashion of tuberculosis. This all seems to us, and I hope to you, a childish belief, pardonable to primitive thought, but shameful in later stages of your world.

What we might allow as “sin” are such breaches of the prevailing moral code in actions which inflict pain or hardship on your neighbours, or which undermine your constitution, injuring your body and mind. But we regard injury to your neighbour with much more regret than “sins” committed against yourself. For these failings and revolts of free will contrary to the plan of the Great Power you will certainly have to suffer, not after some arraignment before an all-powerful judge, but in your own court, which even now holds session within you. You try yourself and surely condemn, in a verdict which gives you torture. But the whole process is natural, whether you suffer in your world or ours, or perhaps in both worlds. If you do not care to correct your unruly passions and desires in your present world you will have to do so with greater effort in ours. If you have injured your fellows you must, where possible, make redress, sooner or later; having increased the sum of evil you must strive until you neutralise the effect of your actions, or positively create good which shall counteract them.

Never admit that humanity has inherited a diseased nature through the irresistible power of the “Fall.” By his wrong choices Man has wandered far from what he might have been had he made right use of his gift of free will. Now he seeks excuse to blame the Great Power for it all, and to us his efforts seem grotesque.

You have not given me your idea of prayer.

Petitions are rightly made to the Great Power and avail much. Surely within your own experience you must have met with striking examples of the effective result of prayers. There used to be many modern instances, well authenticated and correctly related in my time, and I believed them. During my life on earth I did not entirely neglect prayer, as is often the case with public men on the score of their busy lives, but I cannot say that my prayer was fervent or more than perfunctory.

An enormous amount of good can be done by your prayers, not merely to your own minds, as is frequently alleged, but also to your friends and relations from whom you are temporally parted. It is a great pleasure to know that one of you is occupied in prayer for us, using your mind to influence the vast enfolding power.

Reject the belief that all is laid down, fixed and predetermined in the mind of the

Ruler and Administrator of the universe. That theory, besides being sterile from your point of view, virtually transforms the Great Power into a machine. People with you do not realise that aspect of their theory. I do not think that a real scientist regards determinism as necessary for his work, it is rather the idea of those who talk so glibly of cause and effect. A true scientist knows nothing of causes; his domain is sequence and antecedence; material sequences he registers and classifies, but if you ask him to instruct you about causes, he will, if he is a pure scientist, tell you that the sciences know nothing of them.

So you see that the true, not the popular, scientific doctrine is very close to what I have described in these talks. There is one primary cause working throughout the universe, and there are secondary or delegated powers of causation wielded by human beings. But these latter are hardly to be called causes; always they work through the one cause of all, from an earthquake to a sparrow's fall, which we label on occasion force, energy, gravity or electricity; with these names we juggle as we apply the principle of their observed action to the use and comfort of mankind. More and more the scientist discovers the uses of the causative power and continually the life of Man grows easier, more comfortable and less hard for the poor and weakly. It is the task of the churches, and moralists to see that in this easier life the absence, or rather the reduction of hardship shall not debase human character. Struggle is a great blessing, struggle and pain; they may increase goodness and beauty and the exercise of love. There will never be a time when pain on earth shall cease. Good and evil will always struggle, and in their struggle create and draw nearer to the universal thought.

I have already told you about pain and its virtues and need say no more. Pain should make men pray almost instinctively, and they will find the right form and fervent words when they are nearest utter despair. Others can teach you no methods of prayer for such desperate agonies; you draw nearer perhaps to the holy of holies in your agony than at any other time in your lives. Is it not, then, worth while to suffer? Do you think still that I greatly exaggerated when I said that, if you knew all, you might almost pray for pain, as thousands now pray for relief from it?

This sounds strange and hard to you now, as strange as the truth found so incomprehensible by you, of details in our life where I am, which I assure you I shall never repeat and you, I think, will never ask for again, until our mission has reached its end and with other and greater powers you will meet other and greater spirits.

Who are the authors you say could strengthen my faith?

I do not think that, in saying what I did, I meant that there were certain writers to whom you could turn with this object. My remark was more general, as nearly all my remarks intentionally are. I meant that you should direct your attention to this matter of faith in a general way and apply the ideas which have produced conviction in one case to the more customary modes of regarding this virtue, not merely by studying the writers who have specially treated the subject, but keeping your mind

open to any reasons which can strengthen this most essential virtue; for it is a virtue when regarded in the way which I have taught you.

There is perhaps no better touchstone for deciding whether you have made real progress in your upward course than your idea of what faith means. To some people the talk of faith seems meaningless. They will tell you that a man either believes something or he does not, and that if you have now come to believe in what they call the supernatural, that is all there is to say. They on their part do not believe as you do, and do not regard a matter of belief as a virtue of any kind. It is purely an intellectual act, performed by everyone daily and is no more important than that.

I think you can easily see, after all I have taught you, that that idea of faith is inadequate. Faith is something quite essential for anyone who wishes to take the proper place of man in life and will lead him far. It is the point where intellect and intuition combine to form a new thing, far more effective and useful to a man than each singly, in every situation in which he may be placed. I did not ask you at any time to believe simply with your intellect that the invisible world exists, and not only that, but that it is the most important part of existence. That is a certain truth and valuable, but faith in the invisible, including myself, is very much more.

In your case you will find, if you meditate, that you tried to believe intellectually in me, and that continually one set of arguments rose to contradict another, and your mind was closed to intuition by arguments against us drawn from a long life of doubt. Had you got no farther than this you would have remained a rather dejected person, miserable from an unsatisfied longing. But after many nights of drudgery, varying from something approximating to faith on the happier ones and despair on those when the old doubts marshalled themselves in close formation, a different attitude seemed to be taken by you. It was the result of a feeling, which grew in strength until it dared meet some of your doubts, although it first retreated in a kind of panic from their intellectual menace. But instead of doubts harassing your mind unchecked, these feelings began to skirmish on their track, very light-armed feelings to begin with, but gradually growing to a powerful attacking force, which has ultimately won, not by crushing and putting to flight your intellectual doubts, but by enlisting them in its ranks and reaching the final peace, wherein intellect and emotion serve together, one checking the other, until by daily growth they become consolidated in an unassailable position. This process has grown so far that it caused me to make the remarks I did. You may now safely meet any attack, and you may accept any alliance besides mine.

How would you convince a man of the existence of God?

That is rather a question for your world than for ours. No person in this next state has any doubt that there is a power with all the qualities which you attribute to God. Atheism does not exist, and we have no need for arguments intended to prove that Power's being. A statement by a spirit in this region that he did not believe in a ruling power is impossible. If you like to imagine such a thing, it would mean that he

was mad, and spirits cannot go mad.

I do not think that on earth there is any logical argument which proves God's existence; conviction comes by feeling or intuition. A man feels an urge to confess that he is aware of God; he does not sit down and reason to himself until there is no escape from some logical dilemma. Either he has the sense of God naturally, though he may have neglected it, or he comes under some good influence, or prays and is enlightened. From our point of view it is hard to sympathise with those on earth who imagine that they do not believe in the Great Power. It seems so self-evident now, that we have difficulty in remembering why all the arguments we heard on both sides were so unconvincing. After our change of state no one thinks it necessary to explain to us that the Great Power exists; it is self-evident to our thought and feeling; in time it becomes a happy thought, but is not always so at first, either to good or bad men; they may feel an oppression, painful to both for a different reason. At any rate, neither has any doubt of the reality of his apprehension, or of the object of his dread. There is indeed something to dread, although the present age of the world is inclined to dwell on the kind and merciful ideas connected with deity.

There are fashions in this as in all else with changeable, restless, argumentative man. If he would only rely more upon his feelings, which are generally right, and less upon his reasonings, which more often are wrong, he would be far happier. How unscientific that remark was. The terror of you people for the word "science" is astonishing. It is your bogey, a real turnip one to scare the vast masses who do not think for themselves. Is there anything more changeable and unreliable than the passing scientific theories? And they are held so positively in the face of past history. I do not suppose that you have fallen a slave to science, you were not brought up in that way, but you are probably ready enough to accuse an opponent in argument of being unscientific. Perhaps you do not mean science in quite the same sense as I have used it and that will be your excuse.

If by scientific you mean merely a process of collecting facts and arranging them experimentally in a pattern, there is nothing to be said against that, but if your word refers to your faith in the edifice of theory which age after age is set up and knocked down again, that is another affair. The most popular scientific theories of any generation are largely incorrect, though there is nothing to be said against the fundamental deposit, small as it is, that becomes the permanent basis of human knowledge, repeatedly tested by the logic of life. It is the little measure of scientific progress. Anyone who confines his admiration to that is not likely to be led astray by science's attacks on other men's convictions, of which the bases are as sound, though of a vital and utterly different nature, of little use to any branch of the sciences.

That is quite long enough that I have talked on a subject about which I was never an authority, and you will notice that I have not spoken as a specialist, but as a judge, learned in the rules for successful living. Theories of science do not take you far in

that more important business, however comfortable they make the world for your holly and its activities, and that is the main achievement of Science; it does not seem to have enriched human nature, to judge from the present state of affairs, and to you the future seems a black prospect in a world becoming more crowded with people who try to enforce on one new claims inspired by a scientific dialectic.

An eminent ecclesiastic says England is relapsing into "paganism" and "spiritualist superstition."

Well, I can understand this attitude of the Christian Church with its memories of the great struggle in the past when, through persecution and injustice, it won its way to supremacy. That struggle was almost entirely against "pagans" and formed a basis of Christianity's rise. It was bred in Christians to consider every pagan in Greece and Rome to be at once cruel and frivolous in his worship of immoral gods. That there was any good in men who persecuted the followers of Jesus, and were therefore the persecutors of Jesus himself, could not for a moment be allowed.

The retribution for this unfairness to paganism came at the Renaissance, when it dawned upon the ordinary man that there was something valuable and worthy of admiration in those who, the Church taught, were almost a kind of devils, or at least inspired by evil beings. Naturally the reaction was violent, landing the Church in a difficult position from which it has never recovered. It was no longer considered the sole source of light for mankind, as it had taught the world of those days to believe; it became realised that a man could lead a noble and useful life while rejecting Christianity. This growing attitude seemed to Christianity an onslaught upon all religion, for in their view there could be no true religion outside their Church; what appeared good in classical authors then revealed to the world at large was deception by a mocking devil.

Is not this something like the attitude of the Church and its sects at the present day towards the new light of Spiritualism? It seems to me that quite a close parallel can be drawn between the two attitudes, and that as time goes on the Church must again compromise, giving other names to much of Spiritualist practices, adopting them and finally asserting "we knew it all the time and, if you will interpret our teaching in the right way, you will find that we left these things an open question." How they will explain the persecution of "witches" of both sexes and all ages will be their problem; perhaps they will draw a dividing line between Spiritualistic practices grown respectable and their sporadic and unorganised forms, trying to persuade the world that only the older manifestations were bad and devilish. It has been the way of churchmen to persecute those who differ from them in mere opinion, although the lives of persecutors and persecuted follow closely similar lines. This seems especially strange in the English, who are above all practical, yet here, where practice may be the same, they insist that beliefs and opinions must be the same - mere theories, as in other relations they are fond of remarking.

In your day, although the word pagan may still carry an opprobrious signification,

the better educated churchmen at any rate do not doubt that God had a revelation for paganism in its time, which produced some of the greatest characters the world has seen. Moreover it is becoming increasingly clear in discussing origins that the debt of Christianity to paganism is great. Could such a genius as Paul have imposed his Christian doctrine had he not been trained in the school of Tarsus, the stronghold of Stoicism in Asia Minor? It is permeated with Stoicism and it seems strange that the link with that semi-religious philosophy never led to a rapprochement. Christianity inherited from Judaism an exclusive attitude which lost them benefit from other religions, and above all from Stoicism.

If you will allow me once more to mention my favourite Bishop Butler, I would point out that his whole philosophy is based, as he avows, on a Stoic principle and throughout his famous sermons Stoic influence is clearly traceable. There is little else I can say on the subject, but if you have left the Stoics behind in your schoolroom, I advise you to renew their acquaintance. You will gain an interest in my old friend's sermons and greatly benefit.

I would like to hear more of your present opinion on early Christianity.

Its first effects were almost negligible and for that reason there is little mention of the new religion and its founder in the classical authors. But as time went on the new teaching was found to appeal enormously to the poorest dames, slaves and foreigners. Many orthodox Jews were influential in Rome and through conversion of some of them Christianity gained its first notable success. From that moment paganism was doomed, however much modern theory seeks to prove that the rapid effect of Christianity has been exaggerated by the orthodox to make its swift spread miraculous, as indeed it was in so far as it was divinely ordained and its messengers inspired. If you have been tempted to accept this modern notion, give it up.

You should not underestimate the value as precursor of the semi-religious Stoicism of the Romans, and I again draw your attention to the value which a study of the Roman Stoic writers may have for you I recognise how useful it was that in the natural course of events the classical authors of paganism also showed their qualities anew centuries later and have since in all civilised countries gained the respect that is their due. My personal opinion is that their neglect is proving a misfortune for civilisation, but if it be so ordained I have no doubt that a substitute will be found for this great source of good manners and good morals, though at present it is hard to see where an equal instrument of culture can be found.

From the moment Christianity became established nothing could stop its advance. Persecutions merely served to increase the admiration of the masses for people who seemed to possess some wonderful magic, or a god of their own who rewarded them for their steadfast readiness to sacrifice to him all, even their lives. It is not strange that when the Roman world was seeking on every side to replace the old gods who seemed to have lost their power they should turn to the East. In spite of the notable conversions to the Jewish faith it was never so popular as other Eastern beliefs from

Persia and Egypt; these conversions were part of the preparation for the victory of the Christianised Jews from Asia. It is futile to deny the vast change effected in Roman life by Christian beliefs after persecution had ceased, or that the influence of the new doctrine was good, in spite of the inevitable corruption which, as in all human efforts for good, crept in only too readily. By some much is made of the conflicts between Christianity and other Eastern cults, and here in truth there is much exaggeration; it was quickly a case of Christianity first and the rest nowhere. To go further into that matter would not contribute to your subject, and I will readily admit that humanity was considerably less benefited by Christianity in the early centuries of its dominance. As human kind are prone to do, its leaders took the bit in their teeth and decided to do all seeming necessary by their own powers. They did not trust the guidance of the Great Power and his instructions did not direct their paths. It is a melancholy picture for the discussions of us who were and continue to be Christians and give scope to the arguments of some opposed to the doctrines we cherish.

But first and last the whole matter depends on the opinion we hold on the founder of Christianity. We see his influence throughout, never interfering with man's free choice, yet always, even in the blackest days, keeping in action the spiritual forces working for the progressive evolution of the human race. It is difficult for the historian to find the golden thread amid the dark turmoil of the Middle Ages, but we can see it. We see man after man inspired above the mass intent on its own desires and plans; such matters are the study of some of us in our recreation.

So now I think I have satisfied you without long and detailed proofs, but take this assurance from me that the true view does not lie with expounders who try to reduce Christianity to something very ordinary with effects on mankind by no means beneficial.

Am I to understand that you think Christianity and Spiritualism should be allied?

That is a difficult question to answer, as the two terms are so indefinite. There are forms of both which we do not regard with favour. If Christianity could be purified and reformed, made anew in its original intent and method, then I think the two would naturally coalesce. On the other hand, if Spiritualism follow the varying courses which some of its temporary leaders advocate there cannot be coalition with traditional Christianity, or indeed between the systems into which Spiritualism is becoming divided. The urgent need of Spiritualism is co-operation, unity and a higher spiritual and intellectual standard. There are uncultured persons without a compensating spirituality who hold too high a place in the Spiritualist ranks. Little of the Spiritualist literature produced aims mainly at raising the spiritual tone of the movement, whereas much writing is devoted to controversy, bare phenomena and apologetics, with small attempt at fostering high aspiration. Yet the world will not be permanently attracted by any other feature in Spiritualism. Its members should be distinguished from the crowd by the purity of their motives and the helpful

influence of their lives. Can you honestly say that there is any such virtue in Spiritualists as to cause involuntary admiration in outsiders?

What marks, too, a congregation of Spiritualists? They resemble any assembly of one of the less powerful sects and are largely composed of inadequately cultured people. It is a fault in the movement that it is careless of attracting for a common work the privileged upper and middle classes. Yet, as you must know, the mass of men are still observant of those classes, imitate them and are prepared to believe that what they do and think should be the aim of less favoured mortals. There is hardly any society or church notably recruiting those classes and they are a negative factor in the effort for a national spiritualism. I do not think there is timidity in the cultured, arising from fear of being thought unbalanced by their like, for they now readily confess their faith, but no direct attempt at enlisting them has been made, nor in the bulk of Spiritualist congregations are they socially welcomed. It is a strong spiritual force neglected.

Another criticism I would make is that there is too little attempt at beauty in Spiritualist worship. I do not mean fine architecture, stained glass windows and great organs; there is a beauty to be obtained at small cost which has irresistible attraction.

Again, why do Spiritualists of both sexes seem careless of their personal appearance? In many cases it seems as if they were so much occupied in speculations on another world that they have no time to keep themselves neat in theirs. On the other hand some adopt a peculiar style of dress to mark themselves as psychically distinguished. A man will allow his hair to grow long and untidy a woman wear strange colours or striking necklaces and gems. None of this is propaganda on the right side. We do our best for you spiritually, but you must do your best physically and your numbers will increase.

But above all, as I said at first, you must find greater unity, sinking jealousies, self-assertion and pride.

Now, have I answered your question or merely preached another sermon and lectured Spiritualists like a schoolmaster? Believe me, I say these things for the good of a body of men whom we must regard with affectionate interest. Show what we have written to one taking a more active part in this movement than you and see if he does not agree with me after a little thought. Perhaps you will ask me what are my remedies; all critics should be asked that question; but, forgive me, the reply allowed me must be - look after the duties of earth and we will not fail you from heaven.

HEREAFTER

“Thou art not yet at Jerusalem, the end of thy journey, though by some small flashes of light which shine through the chinks of the city walls, thou wilt be able to see it long before thou comest to it.”

However much I trust your statements, it is difficult for me to realise you and your surroundings.

It is a pleasure to hear you affirm your belief in us and our world, and for that advance in your opinions I am very grateful. But I do not understand why, if you have come to this decision, there is still something which you feel to be lacking. If you accept my words you must surely have formed some idea of us, and “realise” us; but we cannot remain ideas only, you must have imagined how we can exist, in what form and where. You have before you your fellow men, and I have many times reiterated that they do not change when they reach our state. What they did, or wanted to do, on earth they still aim at, and as this is their object and their minds are full of it, they talk about it with others, just as you do. They discuss, make their jokes and act no otherwise than you. They have the opinions they formed on earth and brought with them, and they, for the most part, obstinately adhere to them. They do not suddenly become enlightened and different beings because they have passed through the natural process of death. They simply go on and are what they were, but under different conditions.

Do not imagine that we are a strange and alien crowd, utterly separate from you as human beings, with other desires and ways, with other hopes and fears. Some of us are more hopeful than others, or more cheerful, or more active, or more grave, all quite in the earthly manner; we still laugh and play and occupy ourselves with work or hobbies which in many cases we have practised on earth. What is it that you find not real about this and difficult, as you say, to “realise”? Imagine that you enter a room full of people you know, which must seem to you a very ordinary occurrence. Well, that will be precisely your mode of arrival among us. There will be nothing in your surroundings to make you start or feel uncomfortable as you enter and meet other persons. You may have the happiness (and I believe you certainly will) to find yourself surrounded and greeted by a number of people you have known personally, or who have heard from us of you and your writing. There will be those merely curious to see you, no less than those moved by love to come and welcome you, who will be overjoyed to enter once more into the interrupted relations with you. Some, I think, are already looking forward to that moment, and now you seem truly convinced, you yourself should, I think, be anticipating a reunion for which you must long.

What becomes of the fear of death in all this? You can surely have none. You have

always looked on it as a parting, now you can regard it as a meeting. Say to yourself "when we meet in death," and be happy. Have nothing to do with mournful thoughts and trappings. There is naturally a feeling of sadness when those you love cease to be visible to you, but that should not be a deep grief, when you are convinced that a person is often with you and that you are visible to him or her and that you always seem in their eyes not changed at all. And when in good time you are able to see them, all will be as it was when life was at its best. So be glad, and good night.

Hardly any of us can picture your state, they give it up.

I must rely upon your imagination, for I can only give you the barest outline, which is all you can understand without drawing erroneous conclusions.

What is it that in your towns and landscapes makes your environment less "dull and humdrum," as you once said of ours? There is busy life, perfect order and occasion for meeting with kindred spirits in places and under conditions most agreeable to one's temperament and tastes. People find themselves among friends who enjoy the same sort of things that they do. They may see scenery which appeals to their artistic or romantic taste; and if they feel in a mood which makes the scenery and general atmosphere less congenial, they have the liberty and power to change their immediate environment, through imagination, memory and thought, to an aspect more in accord with their mood. At such times they may find that a friend with them is also ready to make a change and the two may then make an environment for themselves in complete harmony with their feelings of the moment.

I have been talking of hours of leisure; what may be their experience during active work depends upon the nature of their mission. It may be that they are destined to influence very unhappy people in most uncongenial conditions and their experience may not be so pleasant. Even then, however, they have the power to surround themselves with thought-created scenery. Often the nature of their work leads them to do this with the object of explaining to others what they may expect, if only they will make the effort necessary to fall in with the schemes of the higher powers and cultivate a determination to commence their upward way. Or it may be that their thought pictures the distressing future awaiting such persons, if they continue in their present opinions and are gradually losing ground.

So much for our general way of life. But you must remember what I have said about specialism, and how well-intentioned people are able to continue without interruption their former occupation in your state. A scientist will again devote himself to his laboratory, perhaps using instruments of a new type, which with you were merely dreams, ideals of what might be. He surely will not find life dull and humdrum. Or again, an artist will find at many of his highest aims, which produced a regretted failure with you, can with us be realised and give him unspeakable joy. And so, too, with musicians and poets, and even, as I once surprised you by saying, gardeners. Anyone who has done earnest work at a profession or hobby in your state will find greater opportunities in the equivalent with us. Had you a passion for

dancing? You will dance. Or perhaps you fancied yourself as an amateur carpenter or architect, well, after your change you will find ample scope. You will not be dull in doing what pleases you best, surely not.

Let me remind you of two things which will make you more cheerful than in your present form of life. There are no secrets, no worry of scheming and plotting, no dissimulation for material advantages; all must be sincere, good or bad. Secondly, apprehension of the unexpected and fear for the future may vanish. We have faith; the faith that mountains will be removed if they stand in our upward path, or any obstacle, and that brings an ineffable satisfaction with all.

You will find, too, that at first our thoughts and conversation continue very like yours, but gradually your world fades from our memories, and so many new aspects of life come to our view that it requires an effort to bring back our thought to a past stage. There is so much to occupy our minds in habituating ourselves that nearly all else is crowded out.

Some people, however, whose minds are filled with hate, or a great love, remain at first more in their old surroundings, but this phase does not last long. Or, again, many of the ill-developed, whose desires are set on their old life, have little interest in the new scene. They strive to keep up their former mistaken ideas of happiness.

Most people are a little uncomfortable for a time, fishes out of water, but some are quick to feel new desires and all have some curiosity. I, for my part, was one of those attached to their past, and I visited my old haunts of power. Others, perhaps, do not feel their powerlessness so intensely, but I had always sought power and felt successful in my aim. I was accustomed to great deference in my various positions and on my return to my old surroundings this was vividly brought to my mind. Then, on the top of this, I noticed, as I have told you, that much was being done by friends and relatives of which I could not approve, yet could not prevent. Altogether my visits became so unpleasant that I quickly turned my attention, as I believe was intended for me, to my new environment. I may say that I am more absorbed in my present activities than ever I was in my former. Always there are new vistas of employment opening before me and more and more opportunities for a kind of work which suits my temperament and personal tastes.

You know I loved travel, and I now have opportunities of travelling to an extent impossible hitherto - more enjoyed when I first made the change than now, when my powers are almost wholly engaged in an occupation after my own heart, namely the organisation and direction of men by methods of influence and persuasion. All the objects at which I aimed by the grosser methods of my former existence I am now able to attain in ways which continue to produce in me admiration and reverence. As you now well understand I cannot give you details; you have accepted my proof of the impossibility for anyone not to mislead you in your attempts to grasp what for us is commonplace.

I often find communications through our seers contradictory.

You have on another occasion told me that you found discrepancies in communications from some of us and you made that one of your excuses for want of faith. But I think you should perceive that everyone, whether in your state or ours, observes from a different angle and concentrates on matters particularly interesting to himself, without equal care for the remainder, which another may find most striking. I do not think there are direct contradictions when communicator and receiver are well matched and capable.

Too many seers assume a competence they are not entitled to claim. They work with the view of maintaining a reputation for striking descriptions, much of what is seemingly inspired being their own construction on a slender foundation. It seems to me that one of our communicators who is in any sense trustworthy must soon abandon attempts at accurate and detailed description of scenes and circumstances which it is impossible to make comprehensible by you. We are so like you in some things and so totally different in others.

There seems no imaginable way in which we ordinary communicators, not commissioned in some exceptional manner, can convey what happens quite normally around us. It is not merely that you could not believe it, rather that you could not make sense of what was being talked about. You must always suspect communications, by whatever means, which are too detailed and garrulous, and reconcile yourself to the fact that you can never know the whole truth about us, but only that part of our lives - and even not entirely that - which most closely resembles yours.

Therefore I beg you to examine and weigh all communications without exception, in whatever form they may be delivered. You once seemed to think that "direct" voice was the best and least liable to errors, but I undeceived you. You are right to wonder why formerly distinguished authors no longer exert their abilities for you, and why the public shows little confidence in their apparent productions, but if we do all that I hope we shall, they will have confidence in one at any rate. I cannot imagine any failure on your part.

I suppose that the fact of the large number of persons who receive fragmentary communications from us through their pencils, so often of doubtful value, has led to a want of confidence in this mode of communication, but I am authorised to assert, with the approval of those connected with me through this writing, that for accuracy and trustworthiness there is no form of communication on which you may rely with more confidence than the script of a skilled and well exercised writer of our thought.

You imply that anxiety and fear do not exist with you.

You need have no more fear of your sort when you join us, you may leave that fear behind you. Astonishment, yes, you may have plenty of that, but after a time you may no longer be a slave to fears small and great, real and imaginary, as you are now

like all your fellows, and yet you have no reason to fear so many things. Fear is equivalent to want of belief in invisible government, so if that belief were stronger you would fear nothing. If you think a little, why should you fear when you are in the protecting and benevolent hands of a power which has justifiably been named "father"? That is how you should look on your kind of fears.

Misfortunes must come upon you, but by this time you ought to have learnt from me that they are almost to be welcomed as what you are placed in your sphere of life to overcome. They are your training for your biggest fights of all - (Note: This was written after a boxing match) - in your state and ours, and in this belief you should meet sorrow and disaster. Your gain is to meet experience with skill and courage, never to despair, or even despond, whether it is money, friends, or reputation you have lost. The result will sooner or later be good for the world and for you. Your friends have left your world for their good, you will stay for some time longer, also for your good.

Because, naturally, you have not developed to the knowledge of the great spirits, you do not see this. Try to imagine, if I am not asking too much, the attitude of such a man who, after hundreds of "years" of effort and training in the most diverse ways, until he has come into great peace and understanding - how would he regard your misfortunes? Would he not have to make an effort to place himself in the attitude of one thus tortured by what is in reality a good? Aim at this point of view if you can, though, because I have experienced the weakness of human nature, I know this is almost impossible for you at your present stage of development. At any rate think out whether the blow under which you flinched really did you damage. If, some time after, you ponder and think deeply, you must yourself acknowledge that the painful stroke drew blood perhaps, but, not as with the boxers, it has given you greater strength.

Some great characters, I have little doubt, when they receive their bruises, recognise this duly. I was not one of those. I often felt bitterness after my disappointments, the frustration of my dearest wishes, loss of my friends and supporters and the calumnies of society. I have lost that bitterness now, but I hardly dare tax my memory with the past, lest those feelings should once more arise and check me in my upward course. All that happens, all good and all bad you must regard as training for a happy end. Do not think of your time; the training will go on for many and many and many a year, but you must always hope; it is hope which makes all much easier. Never despond for one instant, lest the first despondency lead to a greater. I beg you to beware of your general thoughts and watch them like a dog guarding sheep. Thoughts are silly, aimless things at times and one escaping leads to a rush downhill, and it may take long to collect them again in the fold.

There are probably no emotions with stronger influence upon your lives than fears of the future anxieties and restlessness. Men are so apt to meet them through the readiest means without consideration and reflection. They are the first challenge to

their responsibility, as we used to say, but there are now different expressions for this idea and a different way of looking at the mind and its processes.

Man's responsibility began with the arrival of self-consciousness. He was no longer the thoughtless animal governed by nature through instincts and their almost necessary action. Not only was man's safety largely committed to his hands, but there arose anxiety for the future and regret for the past. It may seem, if you regard the question from this point of view, as if self-consciousness was the source of human woe, but do not forget that it is also the source of the noblest human achievement and purpose. It is, indeed, what makes man to be man and through this we are able, you and I, to communicate.

You may lay much greater stress in your meditations on the conscious than on the "subconscious." It will prove a more fruitful subject, for the simple reason that much of what is taught about "subconscious" errs through necessary ignorance of the region thus rather inaptly named. At this period of your time there is a mania for theory and discourse centred upon this subconscious of yours. First make up your mind whether to call it your personal subconscious, or the subconscious of all. I need hardly say that I advise you to adopt the latter view as furnishing at least an adumbration of the truth.

But you had better not abandon yourself to speculation on that subject. Leave all that to the very learned professors and doctors and in this respect be wiser than they. Be sure that they will, with advancing knowledge, abandon their present theories and approximate more nearly to what I have conveyed to you in the past. A subject still discussed among them, sometimes with unscientific scorn, is the "animistic" tendency of man, as they call it. You know, or should do by now, that it is in this animism that professors are brought nearer to me and the truth of things. It is true that man is an ineradicable animist, and, believe me, in his intuition he is right.

Let me quote my pet phrase, "in whom we live and move and have our being." There you have the hint that at the centre as at the circumference of man lives the Great Power, and whether you approach the study of man from his outward actions and dealings with matter, or commence it as near as you are allowed to get to the heart of his being, you will find this elusive animism coming to meet you. You may leave the professors to their theories of this incomprehensible tendency of man while you continue to enlarge your union with the dim "subconscious" and its animistic core.

The Christian creed enjoins fear of "the Judgment." What about that, and reparation for evil deeds?

When a man has, so to speak, found his feet, there comes to him a terrible reminder. He sees the whole of his life in minutest detail; all that he has done amiss and all he omitted to do when occasions arose for rendering service to relatives, friends, or strangers. As soon as this experience has passed he either feels a desire to make

some kind of reparation for the evil he has caused, or he may be comparatively unmoved, regarding this picture of his past life with a kind of indifference, or with wonder at the possibility of such a display of much he hoped hidden for ever.

That is the “judgment” of which there are such fanciful descriptions in your world, where poets and preachers have revelled in painting the horrors of condemnation by a stern judge - in some cases to a lake of fire to all eternity. All that was figurative, highly figurative, of reality, but in all eschatological theories the form of the process was by a fiat from a dictator and irresistible justiciar, entailing no co-operation with sinner or saint.

There lies the great difference between what actually happens and the picturesque details founded upon a too literal interpretation of the Bible. It is the man himself who judges himself and feels condemned; then either he is careless or he quickly perceives owing to the character he has cultivated in your state of life, how a good man can make efforts at redemption. Here is the parting between the sheep and the goats and the intermediate types, which are legion. The executioner of the sentence upon “good” or “bad” is the man himself, who finds he must take the road of his desires, and he will follow up affinities, imagining that in fellowship with kindred souls he will enjoy himself. All classes may enjoy themselves at their first launching into our life, the bad, if I may call them so, more than the good, which must seem to you strange and, perhaps unjust, but it is not so. Certain really fine characters feel an agony of remorse and repentance. They are far from untroubled happiness even though they realise they are with those they love and had lost. Yet, however it may seem to you, we know this pain will have its reward in strenuous reaction to an upward course, the very depth of their regret lending them strength to advance more rapidly to higher regions and alleviation of their distress.

Some of these characters, deeply concerned with their former life, visit you to find out how best to help someone suffering through their past action, and, though they may succeed to a certain extent through their influence, yet most learn that their duty lies rather on this side than on that, and that they have work to do in aiding new arrivals, which will eventually repair some of the damage they may have caused. All of us who have a strong desire to advance retain sorrow for our past, which incites us to leave no stone unturned in doing good to others, especially those who after judgment choose the lower path.

What did you exactly mean in calling your Government anonymous?

There are no governors, properly speaking, nor commands. The system is different from earthly governments. It is true that we meet many high spirits who evidently supervise our life, but they never give us direct orders. Some of them advise and instruct us; we are grateful for their advice and if we are wise we follow it without demur, but if the advice be not acted upon, no steps are taken to enforce acceptance. There is no question of a community working under a legal system with punishments when its enactments are not observed.

We are our own governors, good or bad, as the case may be, according to our enlightenment and development. Each may be regarded as a State in himself, as indeed he is, and there are groups bound by affinity, or, lest you think that word implies some sort of compulsion, I will say "closely connected" by affinity. Sometimes these affinities follow the lines of association on earth, family ties may remain, or national ideas may be the source of such a combination. But the communities are always in process of change, men advance or fall back, differences in development accentuate themselves and new groups are formed, generally becoming more stable, and in a way, at a much later stage, dissolving one into another. Certainly in all this there is no form of coercion. The nearest thing to compulsion seems to me the protection afforded to some groups and individuals, when envious or malicious people of one kind or another form designs for profiting by weaknesses of character in others. Steps with this object are generally taken as a consequence of prayer and appeal to greater powers to oppose and dissipate these evil influences. You may call that policing, if you like, but it would be a very misleading description, calling up a different set of associations in your minds.

I have sufficiently alluded to the strange way in which we are enclosed in a kind of natural influence or atmosphere. It is indescribable, with no possibility of furnishing an example from your world of what we have always before our eyes, a state of things so different from your noisy, rough-and-tumble system of directing, ordering and punishing. We obey ourselves; I mean we follow what seem like instructions or inspirations coming from we know not where unless it be ourselves. But at times of reflection we recognise the all-permeating influence of the Great Power, in which we as well as you continually dwell, ever active, silent, effectual and constructive. No one can analyse it, for no one can hold and observe it, even with the powers we receive beyond your sensations which at first seem to us so remarkable and able to pierce all secrets and give all knowledge.

But you must not gather from this that we are perpetually dwelling on this aspect of our lives; I emphasise it in response to your question and believing that to talk about it is as pleasant a way to fill your sheets as any other. All becomes so natural to us in this life of many activities that it is only in moments of leisure that we sometimes discuss our method of government, which we practise ourselves with no more self-consciousness than is yours when you breathe, digest, or walk without regarding that exercise as an extraordinary acrobatic feat. How many times, I wonder, have I quoted the words "in whom we live and move and have our being"? Never too often, I am sure; they are basic for all life and of all sayings in your scriptures most certainly inspired. You must not set Paul in too low a place because from time to time in his inspired utterances his own mind and predilections rise to obscure inspiration. You yourself know well your former weaknesses in this respect and should sympathise with him. What we are doing on a less significant scale he did with a great and lofty inspiration; but, like all mediums of communication, he had his moments of self-will, unconscious but real.

I would like to hear more of the means of maintaining order in your region.

It is quite true that we have no rulers or governors, acting as persons, to conduct the affairs of the community in which we live; but that does not exclude the influence of lofty spirits exerted upon our wills and desires. If I had not felt a strong desire to communicate by writing, and if it had not been for the hope of my mother that you might prove a person likely to become an efficient correspondent, we should probably never have made contact. But at the same time I wish you to understand that influence was exerted by higher powers, the powers which carry out the vast and complicated designs of the Great Power. These influences were realising a fraction of some great scheme in their effect on me, suggesting that the idea of my mother was both feasible and right.

You may imagine that the influence of these highly developed powers is very strong, but I would not have you think that they can absolutely compel us, any more than my influence upon you can compel you, although this is so strong that I can cause you to write the exact words as well as the thought in my mind.

Then again, you must recognise that co-operation is necessary between the high spirits and us, and that no more than I with you can they effect their purpose without it. Perhaps you will say, "what if they do not obtain this cooperation"? To that I would reply in the first place that for important action they choose well their agents from persons whom they already have judged to be suitable; and in the second place, the person who refuses co-operation suffers evident falling back in his upward course and character.

Let me add that the influence exercised by the higher spirits upon us is much greater than any influence exercised from our region upon you. You are freer than we are, but equally you are more responsible, and much greater losers when you refuse a good suggestion from us. In every way you hold a stronger position while you are in your present state, and you can effect far more good for yourself and others than we can, or than you will be able to do after you arrive with us.

That is what I should like you to realise to the full, that your great opportunity of advance is now, in the state and conditions of life where you have been placed for trial and development. Your great opportunity, I repeat, is now, and I can assure you that most of the regret you will feel after your change of state will arise from your remembrance of neglected opportunity where you now are.

I hope, then, that you understand how I have obtained my commission; and as to this restriction, were I to make the experiment of acting beyond my original desire, I am well aware that all would fail, for I am no less aware of the desire of those who guide me with their influence and suggestions.

A Socialist objects to your picture of another world in which ranks and classes still exist.

The whole of this region is admirably arranged in ascending classes of duty and progress. There are some, mostly persons who have recently appeared, without a strictly fixed position in the general order, but otherwise each has his place and his work. Naturally some have more important duties than others and are recognised as superiors who have merited their superiority. In that respect there is no equality, but it seems hardly the kind of rank to which a Socialist should object. It is a question of merit, almost of evolution.

We take our place not by orders publicly issued, but in that strange way I have described to you as a sort of natural growth. It is like an instinct which moves us to go where we are wanted, and when we get to that state we find a quite natural and necessary occupation.

If your Socialist is afraid of being ordered about by a superior class, he need not fear, for there are no orders. There are influences with which we comply and, if we do not, there is no one to blame us but ourselves, and in most cases we do blame ourselves and return to the appropriate state of mind, which means the right place, since our places are states, as I have explained to you, though I was well aware you would not grasp the full meaning of what I said.

Then beyond my environment there are others more and more developed whom we must acknowledge as superior, not because they are appointed, but because there is that within us which tells us so, and we are glad to confess it though there is no communication of the feeling. When we meet others in our usual intercourse both they and we know instinctively, without discussion of the matter, who is beyond and who has not reached our state of progress. Just at first there may be a feeling of envy, which will pass in further progress, or prove a stumbling-block.

I should like to tell you far more in this order of ideas, were it not that I know you would not understand merely the beginnings of what I should say, and I might seem to authorise false ideas quite unintentionally. Always I shall say the same thing, that we are in a happy, well-ordered community and you need not fear for your future, for you will be far happier than where you now are. Never mind your Socialist, he will be happy, too, perhaps, certainly if he is one of those nominal, unstudied Socialists whose Socialism is merely sympathy with the unfortunate overwhelmed by industrial life in the rush for wealth. I do not say that the red-hot doctrinaire, who has come under the influence of the intellectual weavers of utopias and lost touch with half his human feelings, has not reason to be more anxious about his future. It may be more painful for a time, but he will have the opportunity quickly to repent of his blunders and hates and concentrate on reforming his own character in an upward progress. His magic word on earth is progress, so he should be glad to pass to the real thing at last. Am I coming rather near to pronouncing a judgment? I hope not, nor should you ever attempt it.

Am I to regard the "spheres" and "planes" people talk of as something like countries?

We use these expressions, as we use many others of earthly origin, but there are no such rigid divisions as these words seem to imply when we talk of "seven spheres" and "low" and "high" spheres, and within them parts called "planes." This is convenient, and it is difficult to know how we could convey to you comparative ideas of different states of development without using them. Thus some one of us will tell one of you that he is in the third sphere or the seventh, and in saying this he provides a fairly definite image. We could obviously do little in the way of communication if we were not allowed to speak of your "higher" or "lower" as places, and so with similar designations.

When a communicator declares that he is in a particular sphere, what he means is that he is offering you a way to compare him with others of lesser or greater development. For instance, you asked me about a statement that after a seventh sphere something quite new is experienced, that a change from a seventh sphere to a subsequent area of "contemplation," or whatever name may be given it, is different in kind from previous changes, say from the third to the fourth sphere. What is meant is that in the course of spiritual becoming a man has so developed that his communication with you must provisionally terminate. In his expression of truth there is no reason why he should not say he is entering an eighth sphere.

As far as I understand the matter, the term "seven" is used as a number of significance to those on earth who pursue certain philosophies, astrology and mystical lore of the past. The use of seven is little more than aggregation for convenience sake, yet it is a number with a wonderful history in your past and many ideas became attached to it which gave it a kind of solemn and sacred character. During many thousands of years it corresponded to the contemporary knowledge of the heavenly bodies, and when in the passage of your time and increase in accurate observation it ceased to correspond with that knowledge, the adaptation of the number to various other fixed relations enabled it to retain some degree of significance in human life. There is a similar convention to be found in the numbers twelve and forty, and probably to the end of your time all three numbers will continue to be taken as bases for exposition.

For many ages astronomy was the important guide of the more cultured races and through it much was communicated to mankind from us. I think, though I speak subject to correction, that the stars and planets are still used as we use tables and glasses, not for an intrinsic influence in imparting truth, but merely as ready instruments, because you people have come to regard them in the right mood of expectancy. Your faith opens a door and in this sense, as in many others, faith in a fact helps to create a fact.

There is no objection, and in some respects there seems necessity, to describe our states of development as an orderly arrangement of fixed spheres and planes. If you

find people attempting to argue about some material position of spheres and planes and their number you may safely grant them their thesis; you will not be propagating a harmful error. I sometimes think Dante responsible for the prevalent delimitations of heavens and hells. He influenced the mind of Europe, and indirectly the world, as few others have done, and he was greatly inspired. You may regard your spheres and planes as poetic truth, in many ways the highest truth, less changeable than scientific truth, which once moulded the lives of you and me.

A large number of your expressions are used of necessity by us, to make our meaning clear, which you may accept without compunction and call true, not less so than the symbolic figures you daily use in mathematical calculations; both are useful assumptions. I told you once that absolutely no communication from our state to yours is strictly and in detail true, and I know that that statement worried and rather saddened you. You had the idea that when a communicator and his opposite number with you had both given evidence of accurate intercourse, your world might take their words as gospel. Of course that is not so. In the first place no long message can ever be received and recorded with verbal accuracy, as it left us in thought, and secondly, if it were, the strict truth would be unintelligible to you at your present stage of progress through literal translation.

Will not persons long separated by the death of one of them find each other disappointingly changed?

That is a very natural supposition, but it is not well founded. The fundamental characteristics of those two persons will remain, those qualities which caused the affinity between them, and become strongly active again at their first contact. A flood of memories rises in their minds, of the times they were happy together and those when they suffered as one, the thousand and one trifles which make the binding force of a lasting attachment. These are things which no words can describe, much less define, the invisibles and intangibles which form the bulk of your lives, like grains of sand in a block of stone, minute particles giving massive strength to its total composition. The force of similar attraction is revealed when devoted friends, after a long period of separation, meet once more with us. The bond commences to strengthen in all its parts, becoming firmer than ever, the more so that there are revealed other characteristics clearly observable in the new state of being with means of observation many times increased, and no secrets remain between them.

On earth there is always something unrevealed in the closest friendships. You all have a secret repository deeply hidden in your personality into which none but you has entered and of which no one but you is even faintly aware; sometimes you hide fears there, sometimes hopes, that of which you are ashamed and dreams which may come true, although they would seem presumptuous fancies to your dearest friend. All that will be known, and I would say that such thoughts, far from requiring further secrecy, will add to the pleasure of the reunion, and friends may laugh at the idea that such trifles could trouble their mutual affection. If you ask me something I

see in your mind, whether such affinities are most often observed between married couples, I cannot say. There are admirable instances between man and man, woman and man, where no legal bond existed, and woman and woman. They are always attractive, these friendships, to our piercing sight. I do not think that secrets thus revealed ever caused separation.

Men and women are very timid about their dreams and hopes and excessively distrustful of others. I know I was, and justified myself, but in my distrust there was a large part of fear of looking a fool, for vanity is strong in this. With the humble all friendships are infinitely stronger. It is a great gift to be truly humble and humility can clear away obstacles in a man's life to an extraordinary extent. It is current wisdom to say that the world takes you at your own valuation and you must put it high. Earthly not heavenly wisdom. We know and recognise the more we reflect on our past, that the humble man's enemies are few, that hours of your time wasted in scheming and plotting may be dispensed with, that agonies of resentment and wounded vanity are blown from him as dust. And let me add that the humble with you are architects of wonderful dwellings with us. Their homes will be envied by many and their service will seem light. It is hard to analyse the strength of the humble, to show you why humility, like love, is so efficacious a power, so practical in its results and so incapable of being curbed by sneers. There is hardly any quality which it would come more readily to my mind to desire, were I to return among you, than this. Perhaps you think I have learnt my lesson and profit by it. Be it so. I know well what was my reputation on earth. But the time for regrets, if there be such a time, is surely past for me. My gaze is forward again, as it was on earth, but towards what different goals! goals lost to my sight in the vast distance of worlds and universes, goals of which all I know is that they will satisfy me as no goal on earth ever did, or ever could have done.

Can you describe to me what we should call "a day" in your lives?

It is rather difficult for me to comply with this request of yours, as I have already warned you that descriptions in detail of our state are always erroneous, not from the fault of either communicator or receiver, except in so far that each of them ought to know better than to attempt minute pictures of our way of life, for which there is little common ground of fact or relation from which to start. When a traveller to a country unknown to him reads up descriptions of precursors in that region, he and the writers have a set of common ideas and familiar images, which permit their seeking a language comprehensible to both. The first travellers may, most certainly will, describe many objects and experiences quite unfamiliar to the reader, but the ideas and words used are those familiar to him in other relations; even in details they may convey a sufficiently accurate picture of what may be expected. That is not the case with us.

Certainly there are general ideas common to us both, though even so there is a difference, but when I or others attempt to paint a picture photographically, as it

were, we at once enter upon the incomprehensible by you. I would ask you to consider whether I have not given you all the indications which will be useful to you when you reach our shores. You will be far less surprised than the generality of arrivals who have not had your opportunity. You have asked me many questions to which I have replied in a manner to give you true information without erring on the side of innumerable details and particulars, which I know would be pictured and interpreted by you in terms of your own state. You would employ from your past the nearest thing that would make some sense of my descriptions and the whole would be tainted with your own views of life and beliefs. If for instance, you were ecclesiastically minded, all would be redolent of the cloister or cathedral. The interpretation would be mainly religious, on the lines of the creed to which you subscribed. It might be an admirable and moral account, which might interest many and probably do them good, but it would not be true. I would not condemn such attempts; I have no right to do so; but I recommend you to discount them in the way I suggest.

Were I to essay what you ask, I believe that your mind would continually check and hesitate and perhaps we should be obliged to stop altogether. On the other hand a wholly honest writer, who believed your world's language held words and ideas adequate for such descriptions, would not hesitate, but he would bar most of our inspiration with his own fixed thoughts and ideal views of our state, believing them given by his communicator. Such a person will be much more surprised than you when he reaches us, and possibly disappointed that his ecclesiastically prompted dreams have no fulfilment. I do not think, however, that this lasts for long; an intelligent and honest man soon perceives his mistakes, and he recognises the life he has found far more admirable than that painted for him by tradition. He will be happy as you will be happy in a way of which you now have the outline - and should be satisfied with that.

What happens with young children in your region?

Very young children who have left their parents on earth are well educated, but not by the systems of earth, for, as you may perhaps imagine, the absence of language in the method makes an essential change. In the case of elder children the method of earth is sometimes continued and their lessons taken up where they left off; but this style of teaching is unusual and on a limited scale.

Children are very happy from the beginning of their appearance with us. Their habits and ways are not fixed and it is easy for them to fall in with new circumstance. Their freedom from care and their play and laughter seem to me so singularly suitable to our state that they make me fancy I am witnessing something that was originally destined for all men and women. If a person on earth could become perfectly childlike and uncomplicated in his habits and ideas I think he could be supremely happy. He would of course not be a success, which probably would not affect him; certainly he would form a source of irritation to the worldly-

wise, but I think the common man, especially the very poor, would understand him, and surely we would not leave him alone. He would resemble those characters we like to influence and observe. But you are far from this on earth and I am inclined to think that my childlike person would be confined in a lunatic asylum. Whether that would be his fault or yours you must not ask me to decide, and it is certain he would not accuse you, though you would probably frighten him with your gloom.

Your world is comparatively a gloomy place. You have arrived at a point in civilisation which does not make for happiness, whatever may be its other advantages. Of course you are intended to advance and become civilised, to gain a knowledge of your surroundings and to use it. It is you, not some of the happy savages, who are following the right track, a very stormy road, beset with fears and sadness, which, let me add, are your salvation. Fear is still a great helper of humanity, which you may have thought if you ever meditate on physical and mental escapes where fear assisted you, but whether your excessive anxiety, which strikes us observing you all, is beneficial, I shrink from judging. It seems to me you so exaggerate your worries and apprehensions; you do not make enough of your joys and contented hours. Even the Great Power is a source of terror to many, whereas, if they could conquer superstition, tradition and their bad consciences, he might be a source of happiness. It was never intended, I would surmise, that the earth become such a vale of tears; Man has caused the gloomy shadow.

In our minds there can be no doubt that the Power about us works for happiness and good; nor can we ever doubt but that the same power with the same intentions governs your world. Any man who strongly vows to be happy and contented can be so and will receive every assistance to that end. When he has achieved happiness he may know he is advancing spiritually and through joy doing what hundreds of priests and religious persons are striving to do by prayers and adoration, and he will do it agreeably to his nature.

People talk of doing the will of God and generally say it with a sigh or solemn look. They will know better among us and regret many lost opportunities of being gay or merely in happy mood, looking on the bright side is the usual phrase, and like many trite sayings it holds the highest wisdom. It points to a way of worship no less than to an existence more than bearable.

I have often spoken to you of my lost opportunities in the hope you may profit where I was neglectful. This is another of my regrets, that often when I was able to enjoy life I bent my brows and worried and worked, while often my work was less acceptable to the high powers than would have been my smile. There are times on earth when work is almost a vice, a habit which pushes out rightful happiness.

Your life without time is a bewildering idea.

It is true that from your point of view we are timeless, not, however, from ours. We have our time, but it is not what you would designate time. It seems to arise from our kind of location, or space, and, as you will remember, my attempt to explain that to you completely failed. You could not possibly understand how more than one object could be in the same place. But to us that seems entirely normal, as it seems to us perfectly satisfactory that our travel is not locomotory, and that one person's change never interferes with another's in thus passing from one object of imagination and desire to another. When I "come to" you I do not feel I have made a journey; whether you are at home or abroad is a matter of indifference to me. Where I desire to go I am gone, almost before I can realise that my wish is fulfilled.

This I perceive to be nonsense in your view. For you have demanded an explanation of a scientific subject from one whose knowledge of science used to be mainly derived from intercourse and conversation with eminent scientists of his day. But do not imagine that the most distinguished scientist in our state of being could make clear to your minds at the existing epoch of your world's history what space and time are for us; for such comprehension your ideas must yet develop.

There you have all that I, in my changed state, can tell you. I have never been given precise information on these subjects, as we are all specialists, and my speciality is not science, but government. It is my department because I desired to continue what was to my liking in my former state, and I thank the powers that I have been allowed the fulfilment of my greatest wish in the manner of my service. That I am extremely busy gratifies me, for I was held to overdo it in your state and was often blamed for doing myself what my subordinates were paid to perform. But I was never happy unless I was fully occupied; in no other way could I console myself for the frustration of my ambition, which was very great.

Apparently you can understand a Russian or Arab as easily as an Englishman.

Yes, of course I can. We seldom use words even when two Englishmen are communicating their thoughts to each other. Words are quite unnecessary except when we communicate with you, and even in that case we do not usually formulate our thoughts in words until they enter your earthly environment, when it is naturally necessary.

I have no objection to giving you information on this point. It is not a detail of our state which conveys no comprehensible thought to you; at least it gives you something to think of which you can in a measure grasp. You can picture your thought taking form without that form being of words, or any material shape familiar to you. I know that this partakes of those fairyland ideas which cause you to criticise my words only too often and to hesitate in contemplating the whole set of conditions in which we live, but I cannot help that. I am powerless to state such facts in a language which might not seem gibberish to you. So we must leave this question

of language in general terms and hope your brain and fairly active imagination may reach a compromise which will give you a veridical dream at least. May the details not lead you into a nightmare when you puzzle over them.

There are so many pitfalls for you in your generation, you who are just awakening to the first rays of truth about us and our means of communication with you. Later times will find this much easier, and it may well be that you have the pleasure of assisting in bringing about this greater knowledge, perhaps by means of writing, as now. This, I will say, seems quite probable, because persons so skilled in this form of communication are somewhat rare, and you may rely upon it that you will be used for that which is in consonance with your acquirements and capacities on earth. You will never be idle; judging at least from what I know of you and your aspirations it seems quite unlikely that you will yield to sloth on your arrival and belie your present activity of mind. I do not say I notice any great activity of body, but that will not be necessary, as you may imagine.

There are certainly preparations being made by friends of yours with a view to your future activities. But do not be alarmed as if you were condemned to hard labour. If all happens as I foresee, complaint of over-work may rather be made by you while you are still on earth than when you reach us. I must say that I look forward to that time and can assure you that, however hard we drive you, neither your mind nor your body will suffer more than a fatigue which will pass off in the ordinary way. I suggest that you fix your eyes on the certain reward of your fatigue. And you must not think that the reward depends wholly on what you will do in the future, but that already your perseverance and patience have secured for you more benefit than you appear to think. This work should by this time be regarded by you with more satisfaction than you seem to experience. Can you not realise that you have achieved something considerable or does your apparent apathy signify that your dreams of what was going to happen were greatly exaggerated?

But if I continue in this strain you will think I am teasing you and perhaps retaliate, but, indeed, I hardly know what subject I was discussing; to-night my divagation seems particularly pronounced, perhaps because you are writing at this great pace and my thought is measured by a lower scale of speed. There again I seem to be mocking; you well know by this time that the speed of thought is incalculable by you or anyone living on earth. Light cannot compare with it, and if not with light, with what can you measure it? Another of those baffling ideas, is it not?

Tonight you have made it all very easy for me. Good night.

Do you ever discuss your public action in the past?

When we are at leisure from our important duties we discuss matters much as you do, and you need not think that I object to your reminding me of the troublesome and anxious days before the late war of which you have been hearing tonight. It no longer causes me distress when I think of those times when so much occurred which

troubled me. I hope I have laid to rest for ever the distress of mind I suffered both before and after the period of which you have spoken. Very often we have discussed events of that time, and we seldom disagree now about the faults and weaknesses we all recognise.

Never think that we immediately change so utterly as to make our past experiences of no interest to us. We discuss and meditate upon past events in your state and we find solutions to many riddles and we change our opinion of many people. We meet opponents as well as friends, tracing with their help the working, generally unrecognised, of the Great Power in successive events in modern and ancient history. Everything is placed in a different framework and seen to fit in with schemes we could never have recognised. From this you may learn to perceive one of our pleasures and use your imagination to surmise others of like kind.

In a man's life there are so many problems presented to his ignorance and with our increased knowledge it is a joy to be able to solve many of them. You can have a notion of how inexhaustible this amusement is when you think of your innumerable private problems and then extend your thought to the great questions of history to be solved with the help of those who lived when the relevant events took place. Not only historians are interested in this, but all of us once students of history puzzled by the want of documentary evidence, for which we now have living testimony and in our discussions reach truth at the source.

As you suggest, we have some anxiety about your fellow countrymen, that is to say we Englishmen and others interested in the affairs which are your great troubles. But in our anxiety we remember that your fears are so painful through your want of belief in direction by greater powers, who will undoubtedly, even through much tribulation for you, bring order from confusion and transform evil to good. With none of your doubts on this point we are able to regard the affairs of your state with much greater calm, if with keener sympathy at a time like the present (4.8.1939). It is not the pain for us you have sometimes suggested when you remind us, as you now remind me, of vast full of change and alarms and disgust.

Are you never bored?

Now that is a curious question to ask me, considering how often I have told you I delight in my work. It is true that I also delight in this writing, but not because it forms a relaxation and relief from my main task. It is indeed a great pleasure to me and I could wish it were the same to you. I think that if only you believed more firmly in me and my companions that might be so, but that state of things seems yet impossible.

Yet are you sure you have no enjoyment at all from it? Would you not miss it now, if we all shut down and left you to your own devices? Would you yourself not feel bored without what must have become a kind of hobby, or part of a hobby, because I know you can never cease to enquire on all sides into the relations of our two states

and the possibility of communication, even if you yourself cease to communicate. The various aspects of the matter afford immense variety to anyone with an active and curious mind such as yours, and despite the fact that your bewilderment on many questions is often painful, there must be a certain amount of enjoyment. There is so much variety in diversified means of approach.

You are not bound down to modern forms of experiment. All history is open to you and, as you are aware, it is not only the books of the Bible which can furnish you with subjects for thought on psychic matters, though owing to their familiarity they will always, I think, hold a large interest for you in such enquiries. They constitute a matchless opportunity of learning how crude and barbarous methods of approach to us gradually developed into something very fine and noble.

The books of the Bible picture the history of many men who gave thought to another state of life and its influence on yours. Such men's ideas are from the first well-meaning, if a little clumsy and timorous, and they very gradually cast off superstitions, whether acquired through the inherited traditions of orthodoxy, or from experiences outside the usual channels. If they persevere and do not close all channels by acceptance of some regular form of creed, not their own but adopted superficially from the general practice around them, they are rewarded in the growth of character and moral conduct, while there opens to them a vista of the bright future possible for every man of sincerity and honest striving.

You should re-read the Old Testament in this light and notice much which hitherto made little impression on you. Very wonderful is man's history in his strivings for illumination and his unconsciousness of where his thoughts were leading him.

Perhaps you have had from me what you did not expect, hardly a reply to your question, but, I think, more useful than the vague answer I should have been forced to make.

Is it true that you obtain nourishment from your atmosphere?

Yes, you may take it as true that we receive a kind of nourishment from our environment. I keep reminding you of "in whom we live and move and have our being." With you it is the same, but you mostly ignore the fact because it does not seem to affect your body. Your type of body is not nourished directly from your atmosphere, whereas the corresponding circumambience with us is of vital importance. So it has been ordained in the plan of the Great Power.

When you reach our state of being you may at first feel a desire to partake of food and drink, and you will do so; but you will very soon find that, as far as the maintenance of your being in its normal state is concerned, that action of yours is a mere superfluity, which may give you a kind of pleasure, but, as you will quickly perceive, it will not afford you the satisfaction experienced in your earlier state. You will soon notice that supposing you neglect to eat and drink there will ensue no diminution of your strength and sensation of well-being. Then it will dawn upon you

that you are sustained in some other manner which has escaped your perception. You will class this among other unexplained facts, such as, for example, the pleasant musical sounds of which you have not ascertained the source.

So in this degree your informant was evidently making a true statement. As is only natural, your body having been so essential in this relation, you picture to your mind something physical in the process, a kind of osmosis. That is a wrong idea, but I cannot explain in a way comprehensible to you how the difference is constituted; you would only have a vague approximation to what actually happens.

We are not so divorced from our surroundings as to be totally independent, entirely self-sufficient and existing by our own powers. We depend upon dispositions which take the place of that Nature some of you are pleased to regard as the source of all, many actually believing that nothing more is necessary for human life than to be placed in natural surroundings and supplied with the products which meet your senses. Well, we may have the said idea, yet not quite the same. We also know that we live on our environment, but on a series of influences, not substances traversing our skins. Like other parts of our spiritual body our skin is pervious to influences which in final analysis we find to be the Great Power, though this is an experience impossible to your state.

I think you were reluctant to write that word "skin" in connection with us, it seemed too physical a word for a spiritual state. You should remember that everything on earth has its counterpart with us. I recollect that in one of your inquisitive moods you once asked me about hair and nails and I tried to explain to you why it was that they did not grow with us, but otherwise correspond to similar objects with you. Use your imagination to picture our conditions of life as I have sketched them to you, avoiding details which mean much to us, but can convey little meaning to you. You will never obtain through my inspiration details ill-described from the lack of corresponding ideas in your state.

Is doubt impossible in your world?

No, the feeling of doubt is certainly a temptation when we first change, not perhaps at the very beginning, but after a short period, when we have become accustomed to our surroundings and begin to ask if really we are awake at all, or if all that we experience is not in the nature of an illusion. Such a feeling does not in most cases last for long, because, if you think, you can see that it must be easy to dissipate the feeling of unreality by discussion with friends. It is because we have still a considerable measure of freedom that all this takes place. We are not so free as you on earth, but were we entirely controlled it is obvious that there would be no room for the further training which is so necessary if we would advance. You already know something of one class of doubters; I mean those who do not believe that they are "dead." It is a very peculiar attitude of mind, arising from too much notice of the similarities of our life with the life of earth and not taking into account really great differences.

Such people are often those who held very fixed views on earth, self-opinionated persons in philosophy or religion, and on the other hand the very ignorant, who have never even thought of what conditions might be like in another world, if there were one, and whose ideas cannot go beyond what all their lives they touched, saw, heard and tasted. They find all these sensations still and, I suppose, attribute all other sensations to some derangement of their bodies, something like the feelings of a man who has been knocked unconscious and is gradually coming to. They believe that, if they wait, their old sensations and ways of life will return, so they persist in their expectant role. Some of the worst cases have to be put in contact with you on earth again, when, finding familiar beings in familiar conditions, they trust them and will credit their statements on the real situation, though they will not take ours for true. [The work of Rescue Circles]

There are so many different attitudes among the new arrivals that it is a form of recreation to meet and greet them, not that we desire to remain in this state of mere curiosity, for almost always when we meet these people we find some way in which we may benefit them and thus benefit ourselves. I can assure you that the subjects of curiosity and amusement are endless with us. You once said that you found descriptions of our world indicative of a dull existence. I do not suppose you retain that idea now, but if you did I could easily, I think, make you change it. To an active mind, all present problems, interesting ideas and actual knowledge. No educated person need have a moment of dullness. His own thoughts, if nothing else, will keep him amused, his thoughts about his new faculties and sensations. He will find great amusement especially in his powers of movement, his feeling of perfect health and observation of objects totally strange to his past experience. It is perhaps not fair to mention his powers of travel to other states, for that might imply that we are so dull that he was glad to get away. Yet the power of making long journeys is very fascinating to some.

Now you are thinking what I can mean by “long” in this connection, seeing that we have no space. Well, you will not catch me trying to explain to you our space and time. I am using these words because you could understand no others, and you are asking me for explanations, and explanation denotes plain language without a further set of very complicated explanations to make you understand it. We should not get very far if I tried to talk to you as we talk to each other, when the absence of time and space is not taken into account, being perfectly understood. When I say perfectly I am exaggerating, for there is much that we can still learn about your time and space, or space-time if you wish me to use your fashionable word. What I mean is that the absence of space and time is the assumption at the base of all our communication with each other. And then when these have gone I would call your attention to the fact that words have gone too. So now try to imagine your world without words to speak, without time to keep and without space to stretch your limbs in. Is this not all nonsense? Can you be surprised if your friends are ready to doubt the whole story of spirits and communication? Old ideas are too inveterate,

bred into them. How could it be that doubts do not arise in them as they did with you?

Do you have to resist temptation?

Again and again I tell you that we do not change our characters when we change our state. We are tempted in many ways, even if they are not your ways, and to you perhaps they may seem less real than yours. Your temptations centre largely round money and material advantages of all kinds, and your minds are so fixed on material things, as if they were the only realities, that our temptations must seem like ghosts of temptations in comparison. You will, however, find that they can be of a most tormenting character, continuing their course from your world to ours, when you perhaps flattered yourself that your normal change would be a break with old vice, and it would fall from you. Alas, there is nothing of that sort. The envious man is envious still, there is hatred and the wish to injure, there is jealousy, selfishness, conceit and contempt of those who appear less favoured, without regard to their lesser opportunities. All these vices and many others flourish with us and, let me tell you, are harder for us to abandon than with you.

Once more I will repeat what is a most weighty truth for your world - your opportunities to purge your characters of their weaknesses are far greater while you are on earth than in your next state. All that you now do, say, or think to that end has twice the value and counts for all eternity. Our characters are formed on earth and the attempt to add or subtract at this next stage is a veritable torture. Many feel an unaccustomed helplessness and the better part of us are full of remorse for earth's lost chances. You can hardly imagine what grief it is for us to see those whom we greatly love still careless of immense opportunities for improvement and advance. That is among the reasons why we are reluctant to visit our old environment. At first the novelty of our position and the ability to take a new view of our past habitat tempts us greatly, but if we have affectionate natures the pain soon outweighs renewed acquaintance with familiar things.

There are indeed many reasons why we appear to neglect our loved ones which you do not grasp. We see much going on that is distasteful and on occasions heart-rending. New vistas to a wonderful future are opening which draw us strangely, especially those who on earth had the great advantage of education and culture, and others who, without these benefits, are strongly attracted by their innate goodness to visions of things to come. They strike our gaze after the rather confusing experiences of entering on a novel state - new yet in many ways so near the old and so unexpectedly familiar. Whereas some expected a kind of fairyland and some, no doubt, streets of gold and an environment like the transformation scene in a pantomime, the reality bears in many respects an accustomed air amid much that provokes curiosity and seems the promise of far better things. Without conscious intention we seem urged to advance and explore; little "rewards for good conduct," if I may put it so, entice us to make further experiments, until it is a wonder that any

of us return to you.

Speaking generally, two compelling motives take us back; one is love, the other vice. A vicious man feels wants which he tries to satisfy and finds himself, through his own desires, surrounded by others with the same tastes. He soon becomes disgusted with them, for the simple reason that many a vice which seems pardonable in our own case revolts us in another, whose excuses we do not accept as we accept our own. These people, then, quickly learn that by return to earth they can find vicarious enjoyment of their depraved tastes. Inevitably, however, they discover that their satisfaction of desire is not real enough in this way, and they return to us, or, if they do not, it is the worse for you all on earth.

What love can do to attract us to you I have often told you. It is the greatest power in both worlds. What brings back to us the people who love is sorrow for your sorrow and their powerlessness to influence their loved ones. I need speak no more of that.

Are our loved animals spirits which continue?

No, animals are not spirits. They have a kind of soul, but this must not be taken to mean a human soul as I have explained it to you. It is certain we have animals with us, those which as friends of man have been drawn nearer to the human, but not equally wild animals which have had no contact with human beings and, for the most part, shrink from or are hostile to man.

Your question is not one suited to me, since I have never studied natural history as a speciality, nor been given instruction on your subject. I see that there are animals and that some of them accompany human beings, but I personally have none of the animals I was attached to on earth. You must not take this to mean that, if I had the desire, I could not have them with me from time to time, as you would say. It is not usual to have them and it signifies that the bond on earth was very close, transferring something of man to the animal. Here is an instance of the power of love, which I have already explained to be the greatest power we know.

I do not think that the animals with us by virtue of human affection have a permanent place. After a time, I have been told, the fact of their having shared so much of the life of their masters or companions on earth gives them the privilege of further development, and ultimately there is a kind of combination of animal souls which enters into the line of human development and may rise to a link in the human order.

But, as I have said, I am not a suitable person from whom to ask information in this direction. I can, however, testify that animals of many species appear with us and that those who particularly love animals may have different kinds about them and contribute to their welfare and advancement as a service, which appears to be equivalent to service rendered to our own kind. I will not say more on the subject beyond pointing out that no love is lost, whether it be for your fellowmen, animals, or, indeed, plants.

When you love you are producing something active apart from you. You are actively contributing what is good and powerful to the stock of all that is good and powerful, and what is thus accumulated will never cease to assist the forces of progress and resistance to evil on your earth. Never condemn love in itself, not even the sort of love branded as wicked. Where love is there is a spark which may spread. You must learn in your judgments to separate love itself from the evil-doer; the lawless man who loves must not be classed with the callous, cruel and heartless.

But I have told you often enough that it is wiser not to form a final judgment on your fellows, good or bad. You have neither the knowledge nor correct standards for a judgment, and you may be readily led to produce evil by hasty condemnation of actions or persons seeming to you seventy-five per cent evil, but having a very different percentage in our eyes who see so much more. If you wish to criticise morals, criticise your own, and you will be safe from the danger of adding to the evil in the world by unjustly criticising others. I do not pretend that you must refrain from guiding your actions by what you believe to be the character of your associates; that is necessary; but if you have no need to act, abstain from uttering criticisms broadcast, as a matter of opinion only. However wicked and debased a man and his actions may appear, keep in mind that nothing wrong goes unpunished, or can possibly do so; he will try himself in his own court, and there he cannot doubt the witnesses, which are his own memories, nor accuse of partiality the jury, which will be his better judgments, nor resent the judge's sentence, which he will regard as an act of nature, but which we, and he also after longer or shorter reflection, must recognise as the wise arrangement of a beneficent Power.

Is it wrong for disembodied spirits to continue to occupy themselves with their past life on earth?

That is a question which cannot be answered by a single word. In some circumstances it is advisable that earth life should be forgotten; no good purpose, either for themselves or those left in their earlier state, can be served by their visiting earth, or using their thought to produce influence in the region where they pursued their activities. It is, however, most natural that their thoughts should stray to what they are best acquainted with, since all around them are strange scenes and strange people. It is impossible for one entering upon his new state not to think of the past, generally, perhaps, with some regret, not because he was happier, but because the novelty makes him uncomfortable. This does not so much apply to those who have loving friends waiting for them, sometimes in large number. Elderly people especially are quickly surrounded by familiar faces.

But to reply more precisely to your question, it may be said, I think, that it is better for the average man to forget earth and to concentrate upon his future progress. Yet do not imagine that anyone is forced in one direction or the other. He will follow his character, or sometimes, I may say, his want of character. The vicious man will quickly be taught by others like him how easily he may satisfy his longings by a

return to persons of like mind on earth. All his cravings can find their object, but without rest. He will in course of time discover that he has made a mistake and will turn his desires to his like among us, and having done so he will be in the right position to advance. How long he will have to wait in a state of disgust with himself; his ways and his fellows depends on how firmly his earthly characteristics are fixed. In some the kindling of a fresh desire towards improvement comes sooner than with others, and once the spark is lit there is no lack of helpers to increase it to a steady flame.

Then there are many persons whose mission it is to visit earth and their friends there. Where love is intense there is a strong desire to communicate, which in certain cases is encouraged. All this depends on the various careers planned by higher powers and the relations of one career to another. Influence through a person visited on earth is so managed as to spread beyond this loved person to other life plans totally unconnected by previous acquaintance between those concerned. So it is evident that no general rule can be laid down as to whether it is good or bad for a spirit to dwell on his earthly past. Is that what you meant me to tell you?

Is it right for a person on earth to try to attract the attention of a particular spirit?

Yes, why not? Sometimes he is creating a means by which his friend will progress, if he opens a door, as it were, for the latter's services. You may be certain that no one in this state will ever hesitate to make contact with earth where it is possible and he will be benefited thereby in his upward course. It is what millions long for and few achieve, perhaps a cause of sadness with us. It brings very clearly to our thoughts how powerless we are to help you. On earth some of us had strong convictions in the matter of psychic practices, and their dogmatic beliefs will be paid for with the impossibility of hearing of those they loved. When this is ultimately realised by them it will cause them pain; yet they will have learnt a lesson from their pain. With us no pain is uselessly allotted to anyone. It is the same on earth, however difficult it is for you to grasp the idea. Some of you say this, or try to say this, but there are more doubts in this direction than in any other perhaps. If you knew all I have learnt, you would almost pray for pain. Do not, I beg you, take that sentence literally; you understand what I mean, do you not? Many an old monk caught the idea, but in a distorted way which led to vain enough tortures.

When a man has obtained conviction of survival, why should he deal further with psychic matters?

I understand your idea and would refer you to what I have said already about the responsibilities you incur in gaining communication with us. A man may rest satisfied with the feeling of certainty he has obtained and the enormous change in his whole system of thought which must follow.

But I think that this new discovery arouses his missionary instinct, his wish to tell others the good news. Or the spring of his conduct is to be found in love of power,

the urge to convince, the conqueror's aim. In most cases there is a mixture of motives.

The traditional belief that it is possible to "call up" you people still lingers, and it is objected to as cruel to you.

Of course you have no power to make us come to you if we do not want to, although I must say that a great love on earth has an almost compelling force. But never believe that rites, ceremonies, or esoteric methods can force any of us to visit your state, nor can one of us do so of himself; however much it may seem to him he is able by inherent right to take this step. Always there is to be reckoned with that guiding power which remains my chief object of admiration in its works and ways. If I have a desire to visit you outside my writing hour, which very rarely I have felt, I am well aware that such a visit has been decided upon elsewhere for your or my good, or, indeed, it may be for the good of some other person. But neither I nor anyone else would receive an order to act in this way. It would appear to us that we had a sudden desire and a corresponding opportunity, and all would take place, so to speak, "in the day's work."

You might perceive from your own knowledge how this idea of "calling up" or "raising" spirits from the vasty deep originated. In the days when spiritual intercourse was practised under various forms there were, as there are now, both efficient and inefficient executants of communication, and the latter, when they failed to satisfy their clients, would resort to such fables as that of their power to make any spirit demanded duly appear. Various devices were employed to make this boast come true, as the enquirer would think - a much easier task in the old days than now. As the inefficient always greatly outnumbered the efficient, which is the case in all lucrative occupations, the belief became firmly fixed in the popular mind that a magician had only to perform certain rites, or pronounce certain words, in order to force the spirit to leave some dim and dusky abode, where he was supposed to reside, and appear before the trembling visitor.

It may seem strange that this idea should remain so tenacious, but the reason is that the whole question of our return is the serious study of very few people indeed. Even when these report that the process is something very different, and very much more natural, from the view taken still in your world, they are not believed, even if they are listened to, and so the facts are slow in spreading.

It is curious that some people who have given attention to the subject should raise the objection you mention to communication. It should be obvious to anyone who has learnt of our busy lives that we cannot at any moment leave important occupations at the will of some curious person who, in many cases, applies to a seer merely to have a subject for talk.

Perhaps you yourself will ask me "what about the wanderers who at times seem to thrust themselves upon us?" Well, they are wandering by permission, and for a

purpose executing their wish. In course of development the wise dispositions of high powers will end their wandering by natural process, and they will cease to wander earth because they go upwards or downwards in their career. When I use these terms remember, please, it is your language we are writing in, not ours. What happens is a change of state in them following a normal course. They are neither higher nor lower in a spatial sense, just as when you perceive their interference; they are neither nearer nor farther from you. If you would invent a language common to you and to us you would render a great service, but of course that is quite impossible, and such a language would somewhat hinder us, whatever the effect upon you might be. We speak by feeling, and there again use a word in a sense that has little meaning for you. How can a man speak to another by feeling? Perhaps you can find some vague analogy in your world if you try. I have already pointed out that you may feel "I hate you" towards one and "I like you" to another. Could words make this plainer? Have you never felt another say to you "begone" without speaking? And do not those in love sometimes carry on a conversation in a crowded place full of ears which hear no sound? But I despair of making you grasp anything approaching the reality. It is thought translated into an intelligible silence.

You people seem so greatly occupied that it is extraordinary you should ever think of us.

Is it so difficult to imagine that when you talk about a person, look at his portrait, or handle articles which were his, he may come very near to you? This does not necessarily happen, but largely depends on his state of mind. If for any reason he disliked returning to his old condition, or if as is sometimes the case, he doubted if he were not deceived by your apparent communication with him in thought, he will resist any desire to be with you again.

Some of us distrust influences from you, believing they are being deceived by senses, as occurred in the former life, or even that wicked powers are tempting them from the right course as laid down for them by their special creed in your world. You may not realise that it takes a strong effort when we first change to believe that there is communication with you. We are still as full of doubts as most of you on earth who will have nothing to do with a Spiritualistic view or belief in survival. There are with us obstinate persons, often those most religious, whom almost nothing will turn from opinions rooted in their minds by defective knowledge. They pass a miserable condition of anxiety for their future destiny, believing they are becoming overwhelmed with demonic temptations and in danger of being eternally lost. It is a most deplorable state in which to live and is the recompense, the natural and entirely just recompense, for closing their reason to truths displeasing to their prejudices. They cannot realise that such preconceptions are the fruit of their upbringing, parental authority and general environment, never tested by reason in a sincere desire for truth. Often bigotry is a moral defect, not merely a too facile yielding to a man's predilections. There is no merit, rather it is a cause for blame, in

a man's making himself a martyr for untested beliefs, and blinded obstinacy will lead to suffering through eternal laws, either in his earthly life or when he passes to another.

It is wonderful to consider how the value of men's lives changes from our point of view. These changes would sometimes seem to you a complete reversal of moral standards, for you have not yet fathomed the saying that the first shall be last and the last first. There are those almost universally mourned on earth as models of virtue who are now estimated by very different standards. What you call a blackguard is often found much less black than even he himself ever imagined.

In course of time a better standard of judgment may be yours, now it is better for you to say "judge not." You will judge yourselves fairly when you reach these shores; your own soul will be your judge and you may trust its judgment. Happy are those who bow to their own verdict, and miserable beyond belief are those who rebel against the sudden vision of their past, at once vision and judgment, a judgment pronounced by themselves and recognised as justice itself. There are so many mistaken "good" men who are aghast when their roll of life is exposed to their view, they would protest, but there is that within which closes their mouths and bids humble acceptance of the great laws which never err, are never unjust and never abrogated.

Children are still taught to look for heaven "above the bright, blue sky."

You continue to think that we are at some great distance from you, as you count distance, but of course that is a misconception. We are all close to you at any time and can at once be aware of what you want us in particular to know. It seems to me almost an impossible task to make you comprehend this situation. You have so many wrong ideas handed on by tradition from age to age and these obscure your understandings. It is no longer true tradition; it has been corrupted by philosophical and religious theories. The relations between us were once clear enough and simple minds comprehended the simple truth. But as time went on, that truth became overclouded by men's imagination and further corrupted through the ambitious designs of some and the political tendencies of others, until now you are living in the most sophisticated age that the world has ever known. Your ideas and habits have reached a stage of sophistication which obscures your relations with us in a terrible fashion.

We can see this much better than you can: our view of the world becomes clearer, not because our intelligence has become greater than yours, but because we have lost the desire for things of great value to you on earth, and our judgments are no longer decided by love of possession, ambition, jealousy, envy and lust connected with things of your world, now become useless to us. We can, as it were, stand back in amazement at the falsity of our former state, whether we were happy and prosperous, or poor and miserable. We can form an unbiased and unclouded estimate.

I cannot make any of you take our view, however much you may desire it and are ready to abandon your own aims. Your ideas are too firmly fixed. You would seem mad if you ultimately arrived at our state of mind while you lived in the state of mind of earth; you would probably cease to live, owing to the abandonment of those ideas which are a spur to further existence.

How annoying it is to me to see you writing our words so industriously while I perceive that my ideas prompting them find expression only approximate to the accuracy with which I conceive them and can communicate them to those with the same ideas as myself, without the clumsy instrument which are words, even the golden words of a Chrysostom or a Shakespeare. If I converted you thoroughly to our ways, and taught you to express them, you would have a gift of tongues that would get you shut up as a madman.

There is so much of enormous difficulty in communication that it is marvellous how some kind of intercourse has really been set up and valuable truths communicated to a degree helpful to some of you who accept them; but that minority must always seem strange and abnormal, as indeed they are, to the bulk of mankind, until the very gradual adoption of new truth takes place. That is the way of progress, from the eccentric to the banal, and today's strange truths become commonplaces. Never heed criticism when you are convinced of a truth, and never expect that any idea new to the majority will not be "explained" and whittled away until the time comes when it is accepted as a matter of course and a platitude. You must stick to your guns, and you will find your best ammunition in laughter. Do not argue, laugh at your opponents; ridicule sticks in a mind as deeply as heated logic.

You talked of your buildings - you do not need furniture, I suppose?

Oh yes, we have furniture. Why not? It is only because you really have no apprehension of our state that you say that. Perhaps I am inclined to localise our condition; I speak of a sphere and sometimes of a plate, and so on. Let me tell you once for all that we have entered a certain state, and that state can reproduce all you feel, taste, touch and see in your state, and much more which I abandon the attempt to describe to you.

Make an effort to think this out, if you can. All that you and I had and saw in our fairly long lives we shall see (or in my case have seen) again, if we want to. We are in the next state to you. It makes no difference that your spirit is clothed in matter; you and I are of one kind, both ghosts, if you like, or spirits, which sounds more proper to you. Some people are inclined to smile at the word "spooks," but they are still spooks themselves all the same and should be proud of it. . . . Are you convinced, I wonder, of all I tell you, and do you feel that you are three parts spirit and one part matter? That is the way to understand our condition - to think in terms of spirit and, by pondering on what spirit means, to reach a vague understanding of our state through your feelings and intuition. Sometimes I have thought, what if one of your material bodies took form among us suddenly, should we shiver and shake, as some

do at a ghost on earth? That is a sufficiently absurd idea, but do you see the truth behind it?

It seems to me that, after all the solemnity of recent talks, I have been frivolous. Perhaps it is to prove to you that we laugh in "heaven." You used to ask me if we were humorous and said I gave you the impression of a dull dog, or at least you said that heaven seemed to you peopled with dullness in crowds. Do you still think so, or is my teaching bearing fruit?

GENERAL

"What the light of your mind, which is the direct inspiration of the Almighty, pronounces incredible, that, in God's name, leave uncredited."

Truth.

What you call truth is relative, nothing absolute and fixed, which a man can arrive at and then rest from his effort. A truth as a certain fixed goal, on arriving at which something is known to be established and settled for ever, does not exist either in your state or ours. In both it should be our perpetual aim to find truth, and to follow principles in our lives of which we feel certain, that is to say, for which we have so strong a feeling that nothing merely logical can shake it; nothing can alter it but a change in the deep feeling which we may call an intuition satisfying the intellect.

As I often tell you, for you and me nothing exists that is not in perpetual movement, nothing not subject to change. Even those ready to fight for their feeling of certainty find that in the course of their lives there has been a change in their sure belief, not an essential change perhaps but a difference of aspect as it were. Indeed no one honest with himself, and not a bigot, can look back on his most serious beliefs without perceiving this change. And it is right that he should perceive it; it shows that he is not lifeless, but progressing and ready to receive suggestions, which, in some cases, seem to him the action of his environment and his own understanding, yet actually are inspiration from us.

I do not think that this idea of the changing nature of truth need give you any qualms, if you ponder on what you mean by truth. Is it not something which you are ready to act upon, something which guides you in your life? Have I not confirmed to you that "probability is the very guide of life"? When you speak of truth and hear others speak of it, perhaps writing the word with a capital letter, do not regard it as something apart from our ordinary thinking, something that has been found out and fixed by those who have gone before, however great and honoured their memory may be. Be assured that, had they continued living through your time, they would, being great minds still, have accepted growing thought and adapted their ideas to that expansion.

Need it give you any feeling of despair to believe that great probability is the highest that you can attain in your life? Is anything altered when you realise this? You will, I hope, continue to seek for truth on all questions that may arise, and act on the beliefs to which your truth-seeking leads you. All that I have made you see is, not that you have been wrong in the past by seeking something called Truth, but merely that you had a mistaken idea of what you were actually doing. Now you can continue in the old way, but your reverence for truth will no longer be idolatry, rather an open-eyed understanding of what should guide you and all other men, by whatever name called.

In reality truth, as you conceived it, and as some philosophers have taught, is the attribute of your God alone. He, indeed, is that truth which men have sought to capture in your state, and in seeking truth as they understood it, they were seeking the will of the Great Power, even as I would have you seek it now.

Pragmatism.

I have no objection to make to this philosophy, although I never had occasion to study it when on earth. As you say, it appears much what I have tried to make you accept during the long period in which we have worked in co-operation. It accords very well with my advice, to live in the actual, that is to say, to disregard your dead past and the doubtful future. I think you might well study the writers of this school which seems to be new to you; you have never asked my opinion on it before.

During my period of youth, as I well remember, the whole tendency was towards an excessive intellectualism. Reasoning was thought capable of solving all problems, and to call oneself a rationalist meant something extremely advanced. But with the lapse of your time the position has greatly changed. Many of the devotees of rationalism and despisers of natural intuition were forced, by advances made by science within their own territory, to modify their views. It appeared necessary to leave an opening for those troubled by the fact that theories, worked out with impeccable logic, did not prove true under the searchlight of greater knowledge and discovery, yet it was impossible to find any weakness in their logical chain of arguments that had produced what appeared a cast-iron result.

On the other hand theologians and students of biblical tradition came to abandon untenable positions and suffer the influence of pure philosophers, always too much neglected by their scientific opponents. In the days when Huxley, Darwin and Spencer were all-powerful in England, no voice was raised to suggest that something nearer to truth could be obtained by the philosophic way. Now the state of affairs is very different. The scientists have yielded up their dictatorship to those with a more reasonable, if less logical, point of view.

As I have always pointed out to you, there are two ways to be followed, one that of mathematics, forming the basis of all sciences, and the other that of man's daily experience, subject to influence from us. I need hardly say that the latter course is

the more valuable in the search for truth. After much difficulty you have accepted this, but you must now meditate still more deeply on the question, and if you can find an ally, apart from my teaching, you will do well to listen to him.

You must never yield to the temptation of regarding that convenient and useful assumption that any two and any two equal any four, as a basic truth about life as of mathematics, but remember that your guide is probability. You will never go far wrong if you refuse to regard any opinion as irrevocably established and not subject to change. Remember that real, not mathematical, certainty is a feeling of conviction.

Yoga.

I do not think you would get much benefit from the Yoga teachings, or the Indian sacred books generally. I found the whole matter disappointing. There is great promise of deep thought and ancient traditional secrets which will explain life, but there is little performance, and there is much that shocks our moral sense in the lives of experts or adepts in these doctrines. I do not think that Indian teaching can offer one whit more than you will find in the Bible if you read it with intuition. There is far more to be found in that collection of sacred writings than the interpretations of orthodox churches show. There is room for much explanation from the psychic point of view, and an earnest, well-educated man needs no other literature to teach him the theory and practice of spiritualism in its best sense. He will find indeed a spirituality which Indian teaching seldom gives and a psychic method which has never been surpassed.

Then again it must not be overlooked that centuries of study by our ancestors, and traditional views handed down to us and become part of our lives must count for much in our examination and acceptance of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. The appeal of the Indian sages will always seem foreign to us, and their writings will be studied as we study any foreign literature. But the Bible you cannot regard as a foreign book; it is bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh. It has inspired the history of England and the ideals of our great men, and will continue to do so for ages to come. Do not imagine that the hold of these books is weakening. What is yielding to public opinion is the set of doctrines and dogmas at the base of the churches, which will in the end, after a long fight, have to give way to natural interpretation by the ordinary man of the very documents which they claim as their justification and charter. There is room for much more common sense to permeate the prevailing dogmas, though they are already softening and losing their rigid outlines. Criticism of Churches becomes bolder and bolder and destruction of religion less and less. The atheist has not the success he once had, and is becoming less sure in his attacks, which in our youth seemed to threaten every form of spirituality. The defenders were laughable in their reconcilings of the impossible, their appeals to tradition and their weak attempts at the repulse of science, which then was almost unanimous in scorn of ecclesiastics, and indeed of anything

implying spirit released from matter. In those days it was perhaps natural that there should be a turning to the East for aid, and at the end of the last century Indian doctrines were common subjects of discussion in London, even with Indian teachers in person. We heard of miracles in society drawing-rooms and handsome young Hindus were centres of attraction. Yet the whole matter was shrouded in a mystery repugnant to our ways, and some of the teachers showed a weakness little in accord with their ascetic preaching. It seems to me that the theory of the theosophists, who are the main exponents of these doctrines, is too alien in character ever to find wide acceptance in England. As I inferred at the commencement, it is far more likely that a new interpretation of the Bible books will leave little place for the wisdom of the Mahatmas and Tibetans. I was never able myself, though I made serious efforts, to come in contact with some Indian teacher who could impress me with a higher doctrine than that of Jesus. Yet from time to time Indians in high place brought me those whom they regarded with the utmost reverence, men who had hitherto shown the greatest repugnance to any attempt on the part of Englishmen to make contact with them. Even were I to agree that you should study Yoga I cannot recommend it until what I have told you is your mission in life has come to an end. Concentrate on this writing as your speciality; you must not imagine that any psychic practices of another nature will advance you in any way. As you yourself have observed, there has been a complete absence of certain experiences which you met with a few months ago, and that is not without a purpose. But do not think that you lose by this concentration; much is taking place in the silence.

Emotion.

There is a neglect of the feelings in your state that has proved especially injurious to Englishmen. For several generations they have been taught that it is admirable to suppress outward indications of natural feeling, whether of fear, admiration, or even love. In our eyes this is so far from being an advantage that we should be glad if communications from us could bring you to understand the folly of hampering one of the greatest gifts of the Great Power to the human race. It is extraordinary what an amount of pleasure an Englishman is ready to sacrifice through this neglect. He mutilates a vast aid to the formation and development of estimable qualities which, apart from the increased pleasure to himself; would make social life so much easier, if only by the evident demonstration of feelings often misunderstood through conjecture, or believed to be entirely absent. As we have experienced in your next state that secrecy of all kinds can be abolished to our great gain, so it appears to us that this particular form of concealment by you is the source of many misunderstandings, suspicions of hypocrisy and unjust judgments.

This was not always so with great Englishmen; in some of the most excellent periods of our history men seem to have been as ready as women to show their natural feelings, and the characters then produced were famous the world over. One was the first blossoming time of our race and gave us Shakespeare. We shall recover no such

characters as him and his contemporaries so long as we remain half-developed, boasting the concealment of feeling as “self-control” and a cause for glory. It is nothing of the kind. True self-control is invaluable for suppressing instincts and passions which harm us or our fellows, but it is a caricature of self-control which refrains from weeping with those who weep and rejoicing outwardly with him who rejoices. It is this misplaced self-control which arouses the hostility of other races, as evidence of cold pride and national selfishness, and no just judge can deny that this reputation has been truly earned. I do not accuse my countrymen of being hard-hearted, for we are not; but we have in these latter ages fallen to a fashion of cloaking deep feelings in our peculiar manner, and now we seem to fear contemporary scorn for giving to them honest expression.

And then there is the deeper aspect of feeling, the form of it which constitutes the real man himself; urging him to acts of which he is justly proud, but cannot justify by cold reason alone, the feeling necessary in the search for truth and right living, the feeling which laughs at syllogisms and goes its way, knowing that unaided reasoning cannot tell a man how to live, and which, against all reason, produces self-sacrifice, kindness and charity, creates a man’s true happiness and draws him nearer the Great Power, who desires the happiness of all. Yet, though many philosophers and religious teachers have urged the exercise of this natural gift as a means of happiness, you continue your stolid ways, proud of your defect. Cultivate your feelings, I beg of you, and fear nothing from them.

December 11th, 1936.

Yes, I know what happened. There are a number of us who observe matters proceeding in the British Empire and take an interest in all of importance. But you must not suppose that these matters interest us to the same degree as they do you, who are in the thick of it with your thoughts continually occupied with the material aspect of such happenings. Our interest is to observe the working of great plans all over your world and to try to divine their further development and the reasons for them. This latter, of course, we are only able to do in a very imperfect fashion, but it is good exercise for our own development to watch the ups and downs of material things and contrast them with their real equivalents. In every case, as you may have gathered from your long acquaintance with me, it is the order and the untroubled execution of all that holds my interest. Our government is far less our work than yours is, and by so much the less interesting to those with whom administration was the chief occupation in your world.

It is not given to me to discuss the details of this event which affects you so profoundly. As you are aware, that class of work is not mine for the present, consequently what I say must be of general import only. It must have struck some thoughtful people with you that this remarkable change, so unexpected in a sober and rather phlegmatic race like ours must have had the deepest cause. Undoubtedly this was a warning and reminder to all your sophisticated races, in which realities

are hidden beneath an increasingly complicated civilisation, that the great facts of nature never yield an inch, although they may seem lost and submerged, or amended out of their pristine form. The great primeval force of love has taken its place by its twin of hunger, which, in the form of economic stress, is setting the world by the ears. You cannot leave neglected something which so greatly affects your purses and comfort, your millions which fear starvation or are actually living in a half-starved state. Your troubles have been those with their source in hunger, and now, almost as if in jealousy and roused by your neglect and attempts, especially in England, to thwart and stifle its power, sex has challenged you from the most conspicuous position, not only of the Empire but of the world, and has shown that when it speaks any nation can be thrown into a turmoil. That, I think, is the lesson of this event, and, if it be the intention of the Great Power, for unsearchable reasons, to call the world's attention to the fact, you may be sure that it is for your good.

Your thinking on this subject is so immature. It seems that generations must pass before you take the reasonable and straightforward view of the greatest but one of natural forces, to deflect which all attempts produce untold ills, while to exaggerate and make this instinct an object of worship or pleasure brings still greater. If I could broadcast a useful message to my fellow countrymen, I might choose this subject, in the belief that it is an evil in Anglo-Saxon civilisation that it spends so little time in thinking out the all-important question of the relations between the sexes. You condemn where you should praise, you hide where you should expose. How can a world run smoothly when the sources of its motive force, Hunger and Love, are treated in so blind and unreasonable a fashion?

Ancestry.

It is true that I am ready and willing to treat all whom I meet as equals, and when I reached this state I was nobody in rank more than John Smith who died o'Monday. It is quite right that this should be so. Precedence among us is calculated on a different and more worthy basis. This you have learnt from me before now, but it is also true that many people, and perhaps to some slight extent myself; cannot relinquish entirely a set of ideas which served us well in your state, often proving a support in times of trial and defeat.

You must analyse the reasons for this attitude; they are not without all value for your world. You must consider that the fact of descending in a long line from worthy and valiant people does give a ground for refusing to accept baser standards than those which were held up to us in our youth. There are certain acts and thoughts which we cannot bring ourselves to approve, although many of our contemporaries, quite as honest and well-meaning as ourselves, regard them as normal and something about which no question arises.

Often, also, such ideas spur us to action in cases where no personal and material gain can be expected. We do not readily accept the spectacle of oppression and injustice towards the poor whom many rate very low because they are poor and have

had no opportunity to adopt the ways and manners of what are regarded as upper and middle classes. Now I always found that persons of birth and breeding will avoid on all occasions making profit from these people, or injuring their feelings. All men in some part of their make-up have something on which they pride themselves, and it is unworthy of one whom birth has placed in a more favourable position to ride rough-shod over their self-respect. The family-thought is far more likely to cause a man to avoid such conduct than any other prompting. It is instinctive in the well bred to show themselves above contempt or exploitation of persons less fortunate, and this kind of instinct the man who is merely wealthy, or the child of a wealthy family, does not possess and rarely succeeds in acquiring during his life.

So you see that if you felt sure I should condemn what you regard as a prejudice you were wrong.

And again, do you not think that a feeling of shame will cause well-bred persons to abstain in many cases from actual ill-doing? Is it not disgraceful that a man of good birth should be false to his heredity and descend to the company of evildoers, who perhaps do not know and care less who were their grandparents? It has been a fashion in recent times for your part of the world to scoff at inherited rank and good pedigree, but very often it is not a sincere effort at disparagement. In the heart of detractors there is a doubt whether they are admirable in following the mode. You must yourself decide how far your acquiescence is approved by your innermost being.

A depressing novel suggests to me the question, what is the object of life?

That is indeed a wide question, which it would take volumes to answer. Yet I think that in the course of these talks I have pretty well given you the lines of the answer. That part of your life which you now lead on earth is a time of trial and training and upon it will depend your course of life for ages hereafter. Your soul is learning lessons in many directions, sometimes painful, but often more pleasant than not.

Even the very poor, and those who have not what you term the advantages of life, are very much happier than the highly educated people who write romances about them care to depict. There is convention among novelists, as much in modern times as in any other. They cannot get beyond their own experiences, or, when a man of the lower classes educates himself and attempts to tell the real story, his education obtained among the stereotyped writers hems him in and sets barriers between what he has become and what was once his kind.

There is a vast amount of happiness in the world and as much laughter as tears and sobbing. Why does no one write learned treatises on the reason of happiness? You take it for granted and never seek its source. If you want to be popular, you complain to all the world of the miseries of human life, and make photographic descriptions of every foul street and den, and then cry "look what a ghastly world!" But all the time there is something within you which talks reality and needs to be stifled.

Your minds are a wonderful mixture, like your judgments and your varying moralities. You seem to want to exercise them all the time, to be doing things with them, criticising, arguing, swaggering about your wits and the wonderful progress of thought in whatever age you happen to be born. You have pity for your fathers and grandfathers who were such simple fools, and your sons and daughters will express just as loudly their pity for your present benighted times. Yet never forget that all this hurly-burly is sound at heart and moving to a great purpose, far beyond its understanding or dreams. You yourself will help it along, if all happens as I hope and believe, and I shall have my hand in helping on new views. This is not said to encourage you, because I have ceased to think you want it. It is my hope, not yours that I express. . . . Now have you racked your poor brain for any other subject for talk?

I think a great stumbling-block in the way of belief in your world is the notion that tangibility or solidity constitute reality.

Well, we know the difficulty of this, but I must first assure you that all you now see appears neither more nor less “real” than what you will see when you first become conscious of your new condition. You imagine to yourself now, from behind the veil of your senses, that all about you is fixed, solid and therefore, as you would say, quite “real” in its fixity - but is it?

If you will meditate for a little time and recollect what Science has taught, you must make great allowances for the infirmities, if I may be permitted to use this term, of these senses. Science says that nothing is fixed, nothing is permanent of what you look at and touch; all is in violent motion and perpetual change, even as your body itself and the pencil you now wield, this paper on which you are writing and the table beneath. In contrast let me say that our surroundings are not deceptive as yours are, and we must put in a claim for them to be considered “real” and natural to us as they will appear to you. Certainly you will feel at home when you are first introduced to us, and you will not get the impression of a great difference, in spite of the fact that this last (or first) change is the greatest you have experienced, more than any journey to a foreign country.

Try to picture to yourself a state of things animated and busy, where familiar forms you once knew and for a time thought lost greet you pleasantly and make you feel at home in the way in which you felt at home a few hours before. Do not expect anything eerie, like ghosts flitting noiselessly about in awesome postures, wailing, gibbering, or whatever term you wish to use from your habits of the past. It is simply a new world like your old one, but furbished up and re-coloured, in a manner which cannot fail to arouse your admiration and delight. Nothing will make you self-conscious or shy, and gradually a feeling of wonder will fill your mind, a feeling of relief, a coming home after a troublesome journey, a sudden refreshment, and perhaps a little excitement. If you had been suffering before your change, you will notice with relief and joy that your pains have left you. You will feel light and ready

to continue your journey without fatigue, and surely you will want to explore, to taste new pleasures and marvel at new sights.

I do not think I can say more about your first impressions, but I assure you that a want of sense of solidity, which you have apprehended, will not be among your feelings.

And now may I add that I have every hope that I shall be there to meet you, and that at last all your regrets at my invisibility (if, of course, I shall have remained invisible to the last) will be a thing of the past. We shall talk of many of our conversations and I will instruct you far more accurately than I am now able to do, admitting you to the first direct taste of the arcana and much which till then had seemed incomprehensible and we shall converse without words and pencil and paper and both be overjoyed.

Good night. Thank you.

THE END