

# THE TWO BROTHERS

By

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“All men are not theologians or philosophers, and the question to which the simple folk desire and answer is as simple as themselves – Do the dead exist I have read in the books of some theologians that a confirmation of the belief in a future life is undesirable. They are, I imagine, mistaken.”

W. MacNeile Dixon, in the Gifford Lectures, 1935 – 1937, *The Human Situation*.

“Facts constitute the ultimate court of appeal in all matters scientific or religious. Those who claim that survival after death can be proved by facts of immediate experience are the allies of all who are loyal to truth, and the allies of philosophy and of every religion in so far as these witness to Truth.”

Helen Alex Dallas, in *Human Survival and its Implications*.



**Paul Francis Webling**

A photograph taken in his seventeenth year

## Chapter 1

### “Loved Long Since, and Lost Awhile”

Through a wide wilderness of graves the cemetery foreman led me to the one I sought. A little cross marked the place where lay the body of a baby.

My thoughts went back nearly thirty-five years to the infancy of my twin sons. One of them was delicate and his stay in this world was destined to be brief. He would catch at my finger with feeble grasp when I touched his hand as though trying to hold on to the life that was slipping away.

He lived exactly a fortnight, yet in that short time he endeared himself to me and I shed tears when he died. The minute coffin which held his body was laid on a table. I put flowers by it and at its head (for in those days I was under Anglo-Catholic influences) a statuette of our Lady and the Holy Child.

As soon as possible the body was buried. I read in church the greater part of the service, including that prayer in which “we give hearty thanks that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world”. Assuming that earth experience has some value, it seems a little odd to have been called on for gratitude that this particular brother had been denied it. But such thoughts did not worry in those days.

Arrived at the cemetery, I remember, I strode along abstractedly so that when I turned on reaching the grave I found I had left the few mourners some distance behind. When we were together again, the remaining prayers were said and the body was committed to the ground “in sure and certain hope of eternal life”.

In the village church in Hampshire where I sit alone, writing this on an evening in May, I look up at a memorial of quite recent date which tells us that “In this churchyard lie, waiting the Resurrection, the bodies of . . .” Did I share that belief as I laid in the cold ground the body of my little son? I do not remember, but I suppose that, at least in a vague way, I acquiesced in it.

He was so very young when he died and I had known him for so short a time that, naturally, as the years passed he became not much more than a memory. And so, for some twenty years, when I thought of Philip, it was the picture of a dead baby that I had in mind.

At the end of that time, on the 14th of April, 1932 - after twenty years, eight months and nine days, to be exact - the living Philip came into my life again.

I was in the presence of one possessing remarkable psychic gifts. Normally, she knew nothing whatever about me, not even my name. Yet, having given me a message which was strikingly characteristic of my mother, she added: “The message is from Mother, and Philip is of the same opinion. She wants you to know that Philip is one with her. ‘Dearest Philip’, she calls him.”

Hardly knowing what to say, I asked : “What is he like?” The reply was: “I can only see that he is taller than your mother, and looks as if lit up with sunshine. A very fine face and the bluest of blue eyes. His hair right up from the forehead. He looks too bright to be described.”

Strange as it now seems to me, I was, at the moment, so completely unprepared to recognise in the tall young man my “dead baby” that I failed to connect the two. Even in the comment I wrote against the record two or three weeks later I had only got so far as to say : “All this might well fit my son who died in infancy twenty-one years ago.” The incident, therefore, appears unlikely to have been an instance of “wish-fulfilment”. It was indeed the totally unexpected beginning of a series of such happenings which have been continued now for sixteen years, of which the impact on my mind caused me to feel that I “knew” this boy more intimately than his brother who was still on earth.

I want to set down here a word of explanation. I have no axe to grind. My purpose is only to give some account of experiences which have been of outstanding interest to myself, and, since they deal with matters which are of concern to us all, I venture to hope that others may find in them something worth while.

I am not writing for experts, nor mainly for those acquainted with the subject, but for ordinary folk. To them, perhaps, a good deal of what I shall say deals with happenings outside their own personal knowledge and experience. For that reason I must try to make my meaning quite clear as I go along, even if it involves explanations which to some may appear elementary.

Let us start, then, with what was said of my son’s personal appearance in the incident I have described. To those who have not given much thought to the matter, it may seem strange that one whom they would think of as a “spirit” should appear with the outward attributes of an inhabitant of the earth. Such people vaguely picture the departed (if they still exist) as incorporeal, and may find it disconcerting to be told that they possess bodies and such features as eyes of a certain colour and even hair arranged in a particular way. But facts have been brought to my knowledge which have shown me that there is in each one of us what may be described as an etheric counterpart corresponding in form and feature to the body we know. It is this counterpart which survives death and which emerges from the discarded material covering. Blemishes or disfigurements of that body are either not carried over or in due course disappear. The aged, apparently, tend to revert to the appearance of their prime. My Mother on the other side once said to me: “Do not speak of me as your ‘dear old Mother’. I am your young Mother now.” On the other hand, those who pass over in infancy grow up in body as well as in spirit. This is the fact which accounts for all the descriptions given of my son being those appropriate to a fully developed young man.

Each of the following nine paragraphs, together with the description already given and one which will follow later, is a reference to Philip’s appearance, made, at



different times and in various places, during a period of about fifteen years, quite independently of one another by persons exercising their clairvoyant faculty, none of whom knew anything of my family-life and, in the normal state, were ignorant of Philip's existence. There are minor differences in the descriptions, such as varying estimates of his height or of his age, as reckoned by earth-time. This is inevitable when a number of people give an account of the same thing. Yet I think the reader will feel with me that (whatever may be the explanation of it) the measure of agreement between these independent descriptions is a fact which entitles them to consideration. If he is good enough to go through them, I hope he may find his labour cheered by the mild excitement of detecting the points of agreement.

"A young man, about twenty-six, with a very pleasing smooth face, a full forehead and a pale complexion. Hasn't he lovely shining eyes! His hair is brushed back from a very intelligent forehead."

"A very finely built boy in his teens. Straight as a die. His face almost like a woman's because of the beautiful mouth and well-rounded chin. An oval face, the nose not prominent but very finely shaped. Very expressive eyes, 'velvety', blue and hazel in colour. A wide brow and hair taken right back from the 'temples'."

"A pale face, the skin transparent, the eyes rather noticeable, they are blue and the pupils are large. He is above the average height, and his face is ever so kind and sweet."

"He is very tall. His hair is tossed back. It is brown with a golden glint. He has such a splendid head, a broad forehead, luminous eyes full of intelligence and wisdom; they are bluish grey - a sapphire blue. A lovely face, so unusual, there are no lines of earth trouble on it. A beautifully shaped nose. A very young skin. A rather long neck and he holds his head up well - straight up. A nicely shaped mouth and there is a tiny cleft in the chin. His appearance is dazzling. He is trying not to show me too much of it."

"Age about twenty-three or twenty-four. Fairly tall, well built, broad shoulders. Chin comes well forward, a fully formed underlip, a medium-sized nose. Very nice clear skin. He has blue-grey eyes with brown eyebrows and hair."

"He is very tall, with wide shoulders. He is slight and inclined to be fair. The eyebrows are level and very clearly marked. The eyes are not dark, but there are dark eyelashes. A long mouth and rather thin but not tight lips."

"A fine tall boy. You have been told how lovely he is, especially the eyes."

"He is five feet seven or eight inches or more. Rather pale, with a well-formed forehead. The eyes are the most expressive feature. They are burning into me. They seem to be grey-brown but I am not sure. There is a little darkness over the top lip, the bottom lip is rather full. A gentle - not assertive - type of face."

"He is very tall, slim and well built. His face is a little long - not round. He has good

features, the eyes clear and a beautiful blue. Very clear, fair skin. He is all fairish - not dark. Lightly brown hair, a bright colour not quite golden, but with a bit of gold in it. He has good and 'distinguished' features. A good-shaped nose - all is clearly shaped. Not a small mouth nor a full one. A very nicely curved and firm upper lip, which comes down a bit in the middle. Nice eyelashes, the eyebrows brown and a bit darker than the hair but not black. A very good forehead with the hair brushed back a little, and shows his temples very clearly. His ears are well-shaped and fairly flat - not flattened. Some day you are going to get a spirit-photo of him. That is why he is keen on a detailed description, as well as to corroborate what you have heard from others."

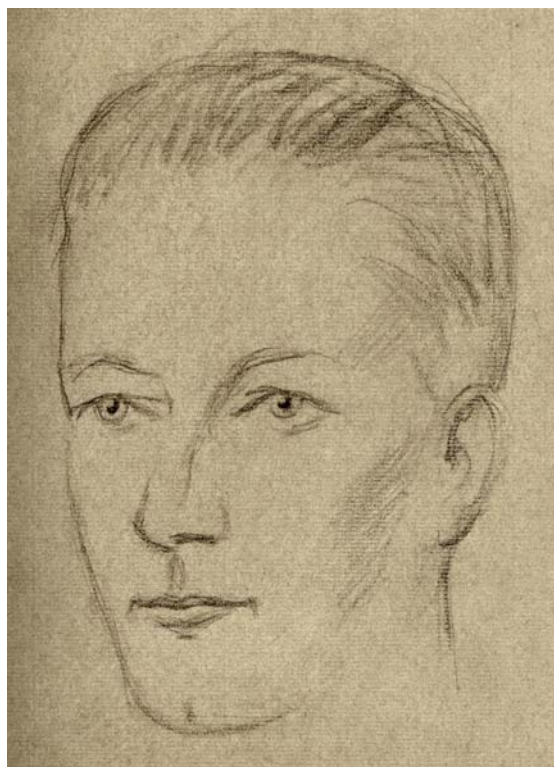
The prediction about a spirit-photo, or, rather, a spirit-picture, was fulfilled six months later when my daughter secured an appointment with a clairvoyant who is also a trained artist. He is thus able to portray he sees. My daughter was a complete stranger to and she gave no information whatever. In her presence he made the rough sketch reproduced facing page 16. He told her that he usually dashes off his sketches but now he could hardly hold his pencil because of the power present and his own excitement. the psychic light dazzled him. (The reader will notice that that agrees with what was said at Philip's first appearance and in the fourth description above.) He thought he had better, if she did not mind, leave the sketch unfinished, but he felt sure he could do a proper portrait from it and obtain further information about the subject of it. The sketch is therefore somewhat inadequate but I sent it to a lady I had met who had seen Philip clairvoyantly and had heard his name spoken before she knew of his existence. Her comment on the sketch was: "He has much finer and stronger features than the drawing gives but he is of that type."

Philip himself seems to have taken somewhat the view, for a year later, through a person gifted with psychic capacity who knew nothing of the matter, he said: "He didn't get me quite as I am. I was placing myself as I was asked, always taking on the human elements. It showed no light in my my eyes, and I always smiling; he didn't get that! I will tell you what he does: he gets contours and faces but he does not always get expression, so that which I have you do not see. We tried to help him but he only sees the outlines. I think he has to catch it quickly."

I showed the sketch to a distinguished portrait painter and was interested to find that from the artist's point of view he was in agreement with what Philip said of it.

Light is thrown on Philip's remark about "taking on the human elements" by a message given from the other side to a friend, in which the sketch was discussed. "This is how he would have looked in earthly conditions but he is much more beautiful in the realms of light."

Eighteen months after my daughter had her meeting with the clairvoyant artist, I obtained one. He was, and still remains, unaware of any connection between his former visitor and myself. It is hardly necessary to say that I gave him no information of any kind. As he worked on a sketch, I wrote down the remarks he made from time to time. He said: "I am just blocking in the head of a young man, twenty-two or twenty-three. I am told that the features are well marked. At the moment, I don't see them. He is quite clean-shaven, the hair being rather neatly arranged. The eyes are well defined, the tone of the thing is blue, the pupil very black and, more especially in the shade, it is very big. The eye-lashes are long. He has not a small mouth; there is a definite cleft beneath the nose. I feel I want to turn the corners of his mouth up. A little colour is coming into the face. The boy has no lines about his face. His hair is brown, the eyebrows distinctive and well marked." I then asked: "What is the most noticeable feature of the face from the artist's point of view?" He replied: "A strong character, and the eyes are the most distinctive feature: they are very definite and very frank eyes. There is a cleft in the chin. Someone has a picture of him - not a photographic picture."



**Philip Weblin – a rough sketch made on 8 Nov 1937**

It will be seen that this description of Philip's appearance by a qualified observer corroborates what I had previously been told. A reproduction of the sketch that he made on this occasion is shown facing page 33 (of the book).

Nearly a year later, Philip gave me his views on the second effort. He spoke of "a spirit picture of me that you tried to get a good while ago. He touched it up too much. I don't really feel satisfied." Philip went speak of an attempt that he had made to put more expression in the eyes when I looked at this second picture which hangs in my study. He continued: the expression does alter. You know it does. I like to



explain how it appears to alter. It has to be reflected on your brain, speaking physically. When I impress you to look at it, I alter on your brain the impression which you get through the eye. I influence it, when I can, but there is something artificial - a set Expression about it which has made it inclined to be more severe than the first picture. It is more impressive than the other sketch but more artificial. I am not quite sure what he put into it. I admit that some would say it is a fine portrait but I can't do what I want with it because it is not what I impressed at the time. I could manipulate a natural one. It is 'a good picture' - that's all it is. But I did try."

These details of Philip's appearance are naturally of enthralling interest to myself, and I hope the kind reader has not found them tedious. I think he will not have done so if he has had their significance in mind. For I am trying to show that all I shall tell him is based on certain facts. That seems to me an indispensable necessity for the adequate treatment of so vital a matter as survival of death and of the nature of the life that follows it. The concurrent testimony of eleven independent witnesses in substantial agreement as to what they claim actually to have seen of Philip is impressive. A possible explanation, not involving the supernormal, will naturally be sought by some. It may, for instance, be suggested that what was seen was simply a visionary picture of Philip derived from my mind. That would, I think, be merely conjecture, yet if it were true it would itself be an extraordinary instance of supernormal faculty. But in every description, what was perceived by clairvoyant vision was referred to as objective reality. A living personality is described, standing in a certain place, performing some particular action, such as laying his hand on my shoulder. Moreover, the theory of a picture somehow extracted from my mind fails to explain how the picture of Philip as a young man got into my mind in the first instance, since I had always visualised him as a baby.

The reader is invited to form his own conclusions. Meanwhile, having given some idea of what there are grounds for believing is Philip's outward appearance, I shall (after a little necessary explanation) go on to speak of the person behind it.

## Chapter II

### *An Interlude for Explanation*

When I once spoke to a dignitary of the Church of England on the subject of communication with the departed, he remarked, with some asperity: "You tell me that you said this, and your departed friends said that; but what do you mean? Do they shout to you out of the sky?" I tried to assure him that the facts are really not quite so startling.

In order to make things clear to the reader unfamiliar with the subject, I would explain that the person on the other side who purports to be giving messages I shall call (as is usually done) "the Communicator". The individual (also on the other side), qualified by knowledge and experience for taking charge of the arrangements

will be “the Operator”. The human instrument, (a person endowed with a peculiar sensitivity to other-world “vibrations”) whose physical and mental organism is used by the Operator for the transmission of the messages is “the Agent” and the recipient of the messages who, although he joins in the conversation when necessary, is present to hear rather than to speak, I shall call “the Listener”.

A desirable method of procedure for a level-headed, open-minded person already in possession of some of the subject derived from the literature of psychic research, who wishes to get into touch with the other side in this way, is to ask for an appointment with an Agent (I avoid the provocative term “medium”!) whose integrity is guaranteed, and whose qualifications have been thoroughly tested by one of the reputable societies which undertake these responsibilities.

At their first meeting, the Agent knows nothing whatever of the Listener, not even his name.

After a brief conversation, giving time to settle down, the Agent relaxes and falls quietly into a deep sleep. Shortly after, he (or she) sits up and begins to speak, but the tones of the voice and the manner of utterance appear to be those of another person.

The feeling one gets is that the Agent’s normal consciousness has been laid on one side and its place in his organism temporarily occupied by the Operator, who begins to describe Communicators alleged to be present and to give messages from them. The wise Listener is he who makes, on the spot, a verbatim record, for future reference, of all that is said. This has been my own invariable custom, as a dozen bulky volumes testify.

Whether the messages may be considered genuine or not is determined by various considerations, such as their appropriateness to what is known of the Communicator when on earth and whether they contain information which that particular person would be able to give. Especially valuable are messages affording information unknown at the time to the Listener but which he is able subsequently to verify.

Towards the close of the proceedings it is usual for the Operator to say that they must soon be brought to a conclusion since “the power is going”. This mysterious “power” (of which I shall have more to say later) suggests an analogy to what theologians mean when they speak of “grace”. For it is something “given” and, without it, human effort is unavailing.

The Agent then relaxes and awakes entirely unconscious of what has been said, so that complete privacy is assured.

This very brief account may be a sufficient indication of the kind of experience of which details will be given as we go on.

I am to speak of Philip, and as I wish to face up to any objection that may reasonably

be offered, I will myself suggest one that might be raised. Even granting that the person described by various clairvoyant observers was really seen by them, and that the individual of whose sayings and doings I am now to give an account is a definite entity on the other side, how do I know that he really is that Philip whose infant body has lain for thirty-six years in the grave?

I would reply that there are two kinds of evidence of "identity". First, that which may be called "scientific". It consists in the accumulation of so complete an amount of verified detail as to make the evidence of overwhelming cogency to any reasonable mind that the person to whom it refers is indeed he who claims to be recalling the memories of his earth-life.

It is obvious that no such evidence is available regarding one who had practically no earth life at all. The evidence here is the internal consistency of innumerable details of personality coming through a wide variety of entirely independent channels. The result of this in the present instance is to produce the impression of a strongly marked individuality and a character of unimpeachable integrity in the young man who calls me "Father". I cannot expect to convey to others the impression produced on my own mind by my intimate association with him over a period of sixteen years. But I shall have failed in one purpose for which this book is written if the reader does not become conscious of having made the acquaintance of a very real person who is indeed none other than Philip.

Assuming that to be so, it might be supposed that, in talking to his friends on earth he must have imparted a mass of information about his thirty-six years of experience of life on the other side. It may therefore be a slight shock to those who assert that alleged communications merely reflect the Listener's own ideas that that is precisely what we have not received.

One of Philip's main purposes seems to be to encourage and help those for whom he cares to make the best use of their lives here rather than to give a full account of how they will live hereafter. In fact, he has said that, while he can tell us quite a lot about some details of his life, the greater part of it is indescribable. So, what we get from him is not so much of the nature of philosophic disquisition or profound spiritual revelation as the unstudied confidences of a singularly attractive young man.

Yet, from what he says, much useful information may be gathered about that part of the universe in which so large a part of his life is lived. The impression produced by it on my mind corresponds to the view of Mr. G. N. M. Tyrrell, a former President of the Society for Psychical Research, when he says, "I think the general tendency of what purports to come from the other side would be to sweep away traditional conceptions of Heaven and Hell and to substitute (1) the idea of a graded system of worlds or states of existence, and (2) the view that these, at any rate in their lower stages, are 'natural' states or worlds. The sharp division between 'natural' and 'supernatural' would disappear and give place to a graded reality, in which the 'supernatural' would gradually appear in the higher grades."

Another of the purposes for which Philip has been allowed and encouraged to keep in touch with us is that he may “obtain vicariously”, as he once expressed it, at least some of the earth-experience of which his early passing deprived him. In what follows I shall give an instance of his close association with his brother on earth when they were both children. I have had a large amount of evidence that he is in constant touch with the family and is, indeed, acquainted with our most intimate affairs. His remarks at times give piquant glimpses of how earth-life appears as seen from the other side.

A competent author might essay with some measure of success to create a character which would be recognised as a convincing picture of the kind of person one would be who had lived practically all his life on the other side but had been brought into very close touch with this one. Certainly it would need great skill to integrate the almost childlike simplicity and curiosity in reference to the outer side of earth-life with the depth and wider knowledge of an inhabitant of another world. Yet this (and much more), which a skilled writer might achieve, has in fact been accomplished through the contributions made by a number of persons who normally know nothing whatever of the individual whose sayings and doings they are the means of making known to us. Moreover, no one of these Agents is aware of what the others have contributed to the total result, yet what each tells us is congruous with what is said by the rest. I think that the reader may be helped in appraising what follows if these facts are borne in mind.

For the next chapter I have been much concerned as to how best to present a record of Philip’s activities in general. Should I group together matters of a similar kind, giving the whole some sort of framework? That is what I believe is usually done. But I have come to the conclusion that that method would make too formal the record of what were just friendly meetings in which a young man poured out with complete naturalness to those dear to him the thoughts in his mind and the love in his heart.

It will be understood that the Operator is assumed to be in charge of the proceedings and hands on, either in the first or the third person, what is said by the Communicator, adding his own comments and explanations when necessary.

In the chapter which follows, the separate occasions on which the extracts recorded were given are indicated by spaces between them. The spaces do not necessarily imply a change in the Agent. The reader who wishes to do so may exercise his ingenuity in the attempt to allocate the extracts to the various channels through which they came. This should be an easy task for one who supposes material of this kind to have its origin solely in the subconscious minds of the Agents, for to the identification of these the idiosyncrasies characterising the several contributions would supply the necessary clues.

## Chapter III

### *Glimpses of Philip's Life*

Two months after Philip and I had renewed our acquaintance, I got in touch with him again and was told:

“After he had passed, you felt a great need to pray for him. He says he knows that the prayers helped him enormously. He is very busy now.” (“What does he do?”) “His time is full up with study, work, the evolution of his mind, and preparing himself to help you with certain things you would get in writing the book.” [I was engaged in writing a book at that time.] “Tell Father, I can’t exactly express what I am doing because here we arrive at a mental state through mental effort: you must create what you want.’ Now he is helping you too - through the writing.

“Philip says he has seen everything on the earth! ‘We go with others’.” (“Do you travel about the world, then?”) “You have to do that to get the universal idea. You are taken because otherwise you would get lost in the earth conditions.’

“When younger, did his brother on earth read stories of adventure? And didn’t he like books about balloons and airships? Philip was close to him when he was reading. ‘The things he thought he would like to do I was able to do. Twenty thousand leagues under the sea - what he read I could do’.”

[In reference to the second question, my daughter tells me that a favourite book of her brother’s when a little boy was *The Wonderbook of Aircraft*. And the mention of the title of one of Jules Verne’s books led me to ask the brother if he had read any books by that author when a boy. “Yes, two or three,” he replied. “Do you remember the names of any of them?” “Well, there was *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*.]

Nine months later. “If it were not for my family I should lead rather a vagabondish life. I am creating many places for you on this side but would feel unsettled if I didn’t have you. You stabilise me and give me an object for my existence.’

“He is anxious not to get away too far out of your conditions, so he leads a very pleasant life with study and understanding, and also with constructive thought. ‘Tell dear Father there is no feeling of superiority on this side. I would just love Father and Mother to say sometimes, “You are not to do this, or that.” Other people had to lick me into shape and I wanted you to do it.’

“He is with your mother a great deal. ‘She is young and beautiful and we call each other by our Christian names. You always know when I am near you because you suddenly feel peaceful, and that is my doing. I have much work to do: I am a messenger. I hold contacts and help many people. I help with you at nights, too.’ [A reference to my alleged other-world activities when asleep, of which more is said later.]

“You can be lazy or active here, but unless we are active, atrophy sets in. Tell my



dearest ones that there is here so much glory that I can't even speak of; and so much beauty of life. The relish and satisfaction of life for me comes with helping Father to do his earthwork."

What follows suggests that he also shares our pleasures. He is referring to a holiday at the seaside during the very hot summer which preceded the autumn day on which he was speaking.

"We had a lovely time this summer near the sea. A wonderful time but too hot, though I wasn't feeling the weather! I was there and enjoyed it with you. You sat on the rocks, didn't you? They were awfully hot: enough to scorch you. You are not much good at diving! Water isn't water to us, but a lot of vibrating atoms. It is like a feather-bed to fall into - a tonic to us. You have water because of your solid vibrations: I am in the midst of atoms."

"You will be interested to meet someone called Staveley later: he knows a lot about rays. Philip is very interested in rays. From Staveley B. you will learn about healing-rays." [Sometime later, I chanced to come across the name of Mr Staveley Bulford, of whom I had not known previously. I obtained his address and wrote asking if I might call. The request met with a friendly response and as I listened to this authority, I did indeed "learn about healing-rays".]

The next two messages came through different Agents who, like the two Listeners who received them, appear in this chapter for the first time. I think the reader will be interested in noticing that they corroborate each other and what is said elsewhere.

"Philip has no contemporary with him. He feels lonely sometimes. His education has gone on and he is used between the glowing universe beyond and you here. He is quite brilliant, understanding light-rays. A gentle boy, keen on exploration. He can make himself ready to go anywhere."

"He and a friend do exploring. They go to various cathedrals, picture-galleries and gardens. Our buildings are very much better than yours. They are built up through the ages by the good thoughts of good people - these are more substantial than bricks."

Here is an extract from a talk with his sister:

"My life is marvellous. I have not formed any deep attachment yet. There is someone for me - my 'other self' - I have had a glimpse and I aspire to be like her. But I don't want to get absorbed. I want to help Father and make him sure. Just that. I wish I could have grown up with you. I long for us all to be together. I don't want to 'talk down' to you, because I gain from these conversations. I'm just your brother though I do possess more knowledge. I have had to do with aeroplanes and boats and I help people on ships. Do you remember a dog we had - a dark dog? I've got him. I want to get some writing through Father. Father is marvellous - we are a wonderful family! I'd like to eat ice-cream - it looks so good, such a pretty food. I don't like ugly food."

The recording of this artless confidence of a young man talking familiarly with his sister may bring upon me a like fate to that of Sir Oliver Lodge when he had the courage to include in his book Raymond's strangely misunderstood reference to whisky and cigars. Do "the holy dead" indeed concern themselves with the appearance of ice-cream? I must leave the arguments to competent theologians. But Philip would dislike being called "holy" and he is certainly not "dead".

One aspect of his serious side is brought out in a message given to me through an Agent who was a complete stranger and whom I met but once at a place far from my usual haunts.

"He is very clever, and fully occupied. He says: 'I am often in your home and aware of many things that go on in the house.' Although he works on the other side he spends his leisure here. He often goes to hear you preach - rarely misses. He sits wrapt in attention. I am seeing him in a corner in about the third row from the front, on the same side as the pulpit."

Four months later, through another Agent, came this. "I make a point of coming to the church. I wouldn't miss it. Why should I miss?" "Because you must find it dull after your world," I replied. "But that is the secret of our life," he said. "We are always told not to dwell on the loveliness too much, but to make a contrast. You see, dear Father, we don't always tell you, but when you hold a service many people from the astral plane come. It lifts them up, just because earth conditions are what they are accustomed to. Sometimes I bring people who, if you saw them, would give you a shock. They call for help and I bring them and teach them to get on their knees and pray. Help only comes if sought. Flowers push up because they want to. If a man's mind won't push up towards God he won't find. I have so many things to say but I feel one never says anything of vital importance. I have been only moderately satisfied when with you this summer and I know it is because of your always having to live in what is to us a dark house and to be delving into the feelings of other people. On this side we are not dominated so much by people's feelings and ideas as you are. I sometimes feel like saying to you, If only you knew what was in store for you, you would never mind how long it took to get there. I, too, have to wait - I am waiting for you all to be happy.

"I sometimes think, Father, that you really tried to find out about me in opening out your mind to this subject. So I am very proud to be on this side to be the reason of it. I like Mother to think of me as young, not as grown-up. Of course you know that when we come to earth that stops us from showing the vivid state of our mind. We have to try to speak from your point of view, but I want to tell you, my dear one, just because you feel limited by everybody, that in that state where I am the sensation of life and living is amazing. That, it cannot be on earth. It could have, I believe, but education stops it. Don't you see, Father dear, how some children, if not repressed, can be wonderfully broad? Then comes the teacher's hand and they lose something joyous. That is how you all are on the earth - stopping spontaneity. Some brave souls

understand - like you, darling Father - and bring something fresh down to liberate others. And it is perfectly true to say that that is the 'child-state'. We dwell in the power of God here, taking it as children. We return to God and understanding just like a child. I feel sure children know things most.

"I have always been mindful of you all. I get with you the earth-experience which I missed. If I had stayed I might have taken up your calling, because I am used here as a speaker. It seems, perhaps, that I have some gift for it. It's like this - I have not the bother of memorising. When I speak to a group I am inspired and simply say what I feel impelled to say. That is my work in helping to liberate ignorant minds."

Quite naturally, he turns from grave to gay and continues: "From our world it looks as though you are all going crazy, from the funny clothes you wear. I like a good old Arab robe - nice and colourful. But that wouldn't do in England!

"Sometimes, on my robe, I wear a mark of distinction, or grade. I have a key-pattern on mine at present, the key symbolising Understanding - the Key of Life."

On another occasion, I said: "You were once described as wearing uniform." "Yes, because I had - and am having - a great deal to do with soldiers who are undeveloped. In order not to be detached we assume the appropriate clothes. I am afraid that wasn't my uniform!

"When I come to the earth-bound people I take on the conditions of earth. That old grey suit of yours, it wore out and then I was able to take elements from it and had one for myself to use when I come near earth. I preferred to be dressed as others. If one is going into crowds, one doesn't wish to startle them by working in things they don't understand. But in my own region I leave the coat behind.

"I like to wear what you have worn - I have had it a long time. You had it for a holiday. It had half the belt attached to the back and the coat came rather low down."

I once bought a grey "Norfolk jacket" to wear on holiday. I had forgotten all about it but remembered it after Philip had spoken of it. I think that what he said about "taking elements from it" corresponds to what Raymond Lodge once told his father. And Raymond's comment on the famous whisky and cigars incident is paralleled by this observation of Philip's: "I work a lot amongst people who always had pleasure.

If a man wants a thing here he is given it, and has so much that he gets sick of it. Or a man comes here and demands Heaven. They give it to him - and he is the only one there. You always think of me as little. I am taller than you, Father, but of course I am your 'little boy'."

Then the characteristic turn to more serious things. "Where I am we get messages through from Higher Spheres. I think I am a sort of Mercury. If I could only make our world real to you, you would say, 'How strange that I didn't know it'. Your world is almost the lowest." I said: "Our earth-troubles must seem nonsense to you."

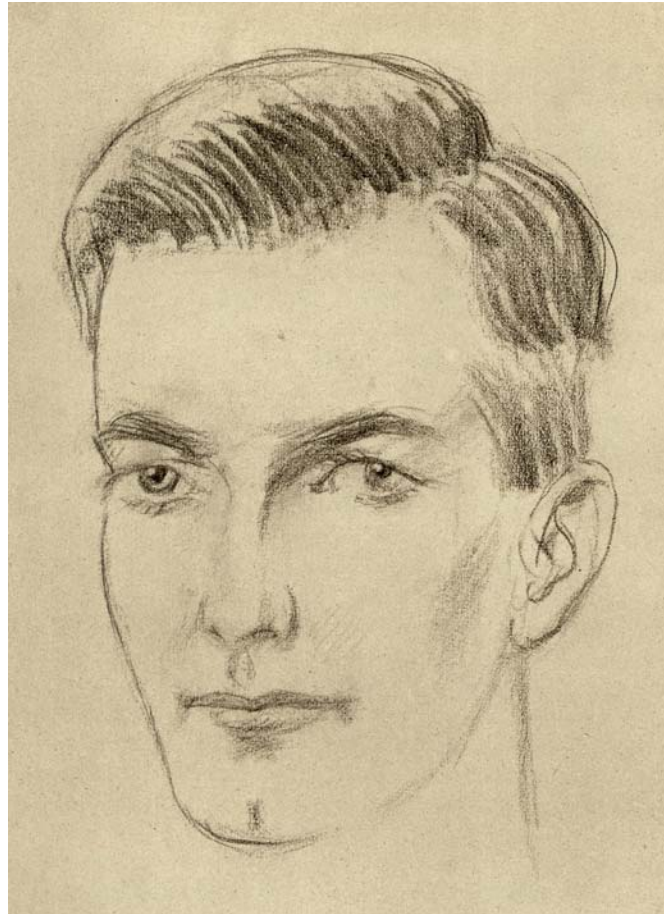
“Nonsense to me?” he replied. “Oh, Father, I am learning patience, understanding and endurance from you. Yes, I am.”

This seems to suggest that there are some attributes of character which have to be acquired through earth-experience, even if it is only by a sympathetic sharing of that of another. He expressed the same idea through a different Agent in a remark to which I have already referred: “I am allowed to be with you a good deal because I am getting a kind of vicarious education through you.”

A scrap of dialogue reported on another occasion suggests that this education is not yet complete: “His grandmother says that the earth, with all its fears and troubles, is a very difficult place and you need a very brave spirit to live through it. But Philip says, ‘O, I shouldn’t mind it.’ Your mother explains that, not having gone through it, he doesn’t quite understand why people are so serious about it.”

Philip has been described as “loosely detached, a free agent. He does not seem to belong to a particular band.” This is borne out by what he has said of himself, and his liberty of action appears to have brought him into touch with a wide variety of persons on both sides.

When he once used the expression, “the ills to which the flesh is heir”, I said, “I see you have studied the poets”. “No! Talked with them”, he replied. “There is all the difference. And they tell us the real reasons that inspired them to say such things.”



**Philip Webbing – a rough sketch made on 9 May 1939**

On another occasion he told me of the acquaintance he had made with a person sufficiently distinguished to have a place in hagiology. "Isn't it wonderful for me to be in contact with such a soul?" he said. And that led to a little dissertation on next-world conditions and of dwellers therein who are at the other end of the scale in his extensive acquaintance.

Incidentally, he appears to object to the popular use of the term "spirits" – "the spirit people, as you insist on calling us!" he once said. "We have divine spirits within us, but we are arisen Souls, or awakened Souls. Father, I do want to say it while it is in my mind: We are the ones that are awake. The most awakened of you are partly asleep. It is the dream of life that you are in." (Perhaps he picked up that expression when Shelley was speaking at one of the celestial symposia to which he had already referred! It is curious that my mother had used the same expression a year previously when, through a different Agent, she spoke of my visiting her in sleep, and added, "When you are with us it is real and wonderful, and at parting I say, 'You are going back to your dream'".)

Philip continued: "We are awake - those of us on this plane." "Which plane is that?" I asked. And he replied: "Some would call it the Third Sphere. Roughly, it is the Third Sphere. Everyone gives these things different names, but in my mind it is that because, first, there is one very low sphere indeed into which all the worst and most unevolved and actually cruel and debased souls pass. Then the second, into which those go who don't think and don't intend to think, and they take up a lot of room: it is a well-populated sphere! The people in it are not good and they are not bad, because they are not definite in anything. They are of those whom you on your plane now call the herd-minded, and they follow the leader of the moment without thinking - certainly not with their thoughts, because they haven't got any, but with what happens to suit them and fit in with their instincts.

"I did explain to you once that people who don't think, or don't try to, are controlled so much by the subconscious or lower mind which they have inherited on the physical side only, and which has nothing of spiritual inspiration. It cannot originate; it is simply what has been handed down through physical generations of physical people - or the physical side of people. It is a physical heritage only and it limits them all their lives, if they let it. And there is always fear. Its main artery is fear." "As it is with me!" I interjected. "No," he replied, "we are all prone to it, but we don't live in it or succumb to it. You may be prone to it, but you are aware of it and don't become obsessed by it.

"But all these inhabitants of the Second Sphere have lived by it. We impress them with a new idea, and they think, 'It may be wrong: the evil you do know better than anything you don't know.' So they go on collecting together and imbuing each other with the same thoughts: 'Don't move. Don't think differently it may be wrong.' They come over here holding fast to the habit of thought they have set up. Yet, when they do come they are not controlled by the instinctive tendency but by the habit of



thought they themselves have set up. They are no longer under such a weight as they were: they can draw back at any time by an effort of the will. All these earth-bound people need not be so; they only need to break the habit of thought.

“We are always visiting them and trying to make them think. In the twinkling of an eye they could be released, but they only say, ‘That chap is a crank.’”

In a later chapter I give a very curious instance of this kind of mission-work with the earth-bound in which it was alleged that I myself was concerned. Meanwhile, I record what Philip said about another field of his efforts, the difficulties of which were immensely aggravated by the Second World War.

“Between your earth and any of our planes to which human beings go who pass under normal conditions there is a curious area, a sort of no-man’s-land, in the belt of the earth but not quite on your plane.

“Now, there have been some very complicated and extraordinary conditions in this War and people have come over here in very curious ways, all of them unexpected. Some, who have not really parted from their bodies and are still linked to them, come over at night or during unconsciousness because their bodies are in unhappy or lonely places and they release themselves in sleep or unconsciousness.

“Some whose bodies are ill in prisons and hospitals come over and mix with others who have left their bodies permanently and don’t know it. It is an ordinary pleasant sort of place, this no-man’s land, but it is difficult to help them in it. They will not listen to us. Those who have only come over temporarily won’t listen to us because they think there is something a little uncanny about us and they turn away.

“And those who have passed over and did not want to ‘die’, they turn away too. They feel bewildered and say, ‘Something is the matter that we don’t know about and we are waiting to return to normal things.’ We keep sending out thoughts to them and if their own people do the same I suggest that they should urge them to realise the truth, whatever it is.

“But their people on earth are not helping matters because they shrink from thinking of them as having passed, and all are hoping they may still be on earth and are therefore holding them in this ‘belt’ by subconscious hope.” I asked if this applied to any of the men from my village. “Yes,” he said, “underneath there is always the subconscious hope that it ‘may not be’. That subconscious hope helps to determine the thought. This goes on even for months with these men. They don’t want to realise it even if they have passed. It is not a bad, but an awkward, condition. It takes time, but in time we shall influence them, and they will begin to say, ‘Perhaps something has happened.’ Then someone here can help.”

(I wonder if Philip foresaw the fate of a young soldier connected with my village who was taken prisoner by the Japanese in February 1942 and died in May 1943. His wife continued to write to him although she had neither acknowledgment nor any news. After the War was over, a parcel of undelivered letters was returned to her with the

information that he had been dead for two-and-a-half years.)

Philip continued: "Although your feeling is 'Death links us to a happier plane and sudden death saves us from long illnesses', yet you are taught to pray against violent death. The reason is this - violent death sometimes puts people into the 'Belt' and it takes time for our thoughts to reach them and show them what has happened. A person who passes in the normal way very seldom stays in the 'Belt'. That is why you should do away with conditions causing violent death, not only those of War but those created by unnecessary speed, carelessness and lack of thought about the value of life. In War, of course, it is worse because it is collective and more difficult to help because of such a mass of people all together in this muddle."

In Philip we have to visualise a human being, the whole of whose conscious life has been lived under other-world conditions. These are familiar and natural: it is life in our world that seems so strange to him. This outlook is reflected in what he once said when giving me, in simple conversational style, an inkling of his philosophy of life, which was also a revelation of character.

"If only I could show you one glimpse of the power of the life I am in. O dear, your heavy world with people doing millions of needless things! One third of the things you do need not be done. It wouldn't be allowed in our world. I live happily and tranquilly in all I do. On earth, you can't. For one thing, if you did you would not be sympathetic. So you can't live all the time in that absolute state of happiness. In my condition you can give all sympathy - see all the horrors of earth - and yet be happy within.

"Here we all share knowledge: great souls always share what they get. It is not in the place but in the mind. I have got that now.

"Do I seem to be 'talking at' you? I object to that very much. I want to sit at your feet and be a child to you instead of telling you things. I could bear all your difficulties, I would. I only wish I could make you happy and make your soul see. I am very, very glad that on this side I had to work my way. I help because I love you all. That makes such a mighty polarity of help. If you love and serve people, you, as well as they, are aided. Those who are superior and arrogant lose so much. Love is the keynote: it is above wisdom. Universal love has all wisdom. If you have reached the love-stage you can dispense with some so-called wisdom. None of us can claim to know very much; the great thing is to realise love.

"I have heard you say that, above faith and hope, is love. The greatest of all the commandments is above the esoteric wisdom. Love enables you to get very wise and through love you can do anything. We never have to unlearn love and if we seek this law - love - wisdom will follow.

"In the world of science, a very clever man projects something. Next year it is eclipsed and all that is wasted. If he had loved . . . ? I may be wrong.

"You are living in a very low world, Father. If it were not for great spirits born on

earth the whole thing would collapse. There is so much to do. I feel what you suffer, but I suppose that, seeing the result of things, I am not despondent. In fact, I have come to a lovely philosophic standpoint and talk of 'you people on earth'!

"Coming over when I did, I have been saved a lot of muddle. I served very early under my mentors. They were so good to me and from them I have learned to have power over many things. If for one instant I had pride in that I should put myself back. I was told to learn from you all and in return to put on you the power I gain. And I want you to teach me.

"I think it is so good of you to take me into your confidence. You have to accept me in faith just as I am, because there was so little you could know of me when on earth that you can't make any comparisons."

## Chapter IV

### *Philip's Brother*

Whilst Philip, with his headquarters on the other side and his contacts with this one, obtained the education which, as he once reminded me, had put me to no expense, his twin-brother, Paul, grew up to manhood in this world.

When Paul was eighteen months and his sister three years old, the family left the city in which the children had been born and migrated to a village in West Suffolk.

It was a notable, even if unrealised, experience for them to exchange the small house and scrap of garden in a city-street for the old rambling parsonage with its extensive grounds, set on a hill from which one looked down over the village spread out below.

An ideal childhood followed except that Paul was not strong and needed all the care his mother lavished on him. As a baby, his delicate beauty and mass of brown curls with their golden glint would attract the notice of passers-by. Perhaps in him (had we known it) we ought to have seen a resemblance to his brother. At any rate, their respective appearances must have had a good deal in common as they grew up, since, when I once showed to a friend the sketch of Philip I have previously mentioned and asked, "Who is this?" the instant reply was, "Paul".

My memory (like the sundial) seems only to have registered the fine-weather days of the children's life in what must have been to them a succession of surprises and delights as the world of country sights and sounds opened to them.

There was the garden, in which flowers and vegetables were cultivated on the principle of combining business with pleasure. The children had a few square yards of flower garden as their personal property and this they stocked by the simple method of rooting up anything which struck their fancy in other parts and transferring it to their own. In this they were assiduous toilers, but, since success may not be commanded by mortals, it was only plants of outstanding hardihood and the will to live which survived the operation.

Their labours in the vegetable garden consisted largely in indurating their digestive powers by the extensive sampling of its produce consumed in the raw state and in all stages of growth.

Adjoining the garden were farm buildings no longer in use, a relic of the days when our parson farmed his own glebe. We learned later that a favourite diversion there was to scramble along the rafters of a great barn, the delights of the proceedings enhanced by the fact that a fall would precipitate them on to the stone floor many feet below.

They lived much in the open-air and at an early age discarded shoes and stockings in summer except on ceremonial occasions. One such was a Village Feast at which they suffered so greatly from the extended penance that they walked home with shoes and stockings in their hands.

For a considerable time the village was honoured by the presence of one of the most distinguished (and lovable) authors of our day. He used occasionally to accompany us on our rambles and a family legend records that once, when the children had gathered many wild flowers and had nothing with which to fasten them together, the great man generously gave them a portion of his braces for the purpose.

Our friend's conversation, so rich in thought and knowledge, had a peculiar fascination for both children and although most of what they heard must have been quite beyond their comprehension they would listen with absorbed attention. Since Wordsworth assures us that "we can feed these minds of ours in a wise passiveness" I fancy that the subconscious impression made by these contacts would account for some of the interest in the things of the mind which both, in different ways and in varying degrees, afterwards developed.

Their custom was to accompany me as far as the church when I went to take the daily morning service. They would come just inside and make a profound obeisance toward the high-altar and then depart. How often have I watched them go down the churchyard path chattering together in the glory of those summer mornings.

And in the evening, one on each knee, I would read from some established favourite. On these occasions, Paul had a curious habit from which he apparently derived much satisfaction. He would hold his left ear with his right hand and place the forefinger of the left hand in his mouth, only removing it to give a pathetic little laugh and an "O, daddy!" at some particularly outrageous conduct on the part of the incorrigible "Tommy" in *Masterman Ready* or a notable stratagem of "Brer Rabbit" in *Uncle Remus*.

Or, again while they perched on my knees, at the piano, I would play and try to sing to them some of the English folk-songs: "The Jolly Waggoner", "The cuckoo is a pretty bird", while my mind wandered into the long ago and far away - as it does now while I see again that little group all gold in the splendour of the westering sun. And these fond remembrances may escape the charge of utter irrelevancy if we

suppose that Philip was the unseen witness of our intimacies, as in later years we know he has been and is still.

And so Paul lived this carefree life whose only restriction was a couple of hours of kindly tuition by a friendly neighbour, and this, in summer, beneath the widespread boughs of an ancient apple tree where he could still take glances at the glittering world around. Thence he passed for a time to a tutor's and the little boy with his quaint ways was no more. The growing youth acquired some of the unpleasing characteristics of adolescence and assumed by turns the mannerisms of the other youths with whom he was living. All this, in due course, he outgrew and became himself again.

As a young man, he was quiet, thoughtful and rather reserved in manner, with a somewhat slow and deliberate way of thinking, speaking and moving. I do not remember him ever to have shown agitation and I recall his kindly admonition to myself when inclined to do so: "Now, don't get excited!" There was an affectionate side to his nature which came out in emergencies but which he did not at other times readily express. His quietly humorous observations were very characteristic. He was not a student, but he read a good deal. His bent of mind was scientific and practical rather than literary or artistic, his special interest being applied science, chiefly engineering and electrical. Yet he had a real appreciation of music and scenery and a rather touching respect for capacities in other members of the family which he lacked himself.

Later, he made choice of a career and launched out in business as a radio-engineer, with a workshop at the back, and, in front, a window in which his goods were displayed. Over the shop, in large letters, appeared his name, a circumstance which seems to have struck Philip as a subtle kind of joke.

Then there broke in on this quiet life, opening out in useful if undistinguished ways, the harsh clamour of war. Paul did not "wait to be conscripted before entering the Royal Air Force, and, after a period of training, was sent to Malta to join the ground-staff of the aerodrome at Ta-Kali, his childhood's interest in aircraft becoming actual experience.

In his new life he made friends, but, when possible, would go off by himself with a book, and though his body was in that much-enduring island in the Mediterranean his whole thought was at home.

Though he was often far from well and in the midst of constant alarms, he never complained and in almost the last letter he wrote to me from Malta he carried it all off in his quiet, humorous way. The kind reader will credit me with having a purpose in view if I quote from it. He must know something of the boy in order to understand what follows.

"Here is one of my few and far between for you. I would write more often if it did not wear me down so.



“The locals have just consecrated a new bishop, the last one having pegged out, or something. His job is ‘Bishop of Trelles and Auxiliary Bishop of Malta’. It does not make sense to me but perhaps it does to you.

According to the paper, the first bishop happened along about 1900 years ago, his name being St Publius. The locals spell it Pubblju, which shows what one is up against in this part of the world.

“Another thing that strikes me as rum is a street called after ‘the Friars Observant’. It sounds like a mixture of monk and watch-dog. Still, maybe that was what was required in the old days when the Turk or some other objectionable sort of bloke was liable to nip in and do the dirty on you as soon as your back was turned.

“If there wasn’t a war on and I could get a boat home any time I wanted (and that would be pretty quick) I should quite like being here. As it is, I wish our energetic empire-builders had left the darned place alone.

“When I do get home and this shooting-match is finished I intend to stay put, not going more than a few miles away for years and years.”

That was written in July 1942. At Christmas, in the same year, I had a line of greeting. Less than a month later, we received an intimation that he was ill and on the danger-list. On January 24th he passed away.

It was an experience all too common in the War to attract undue notice. People were very kind and said the right things. One even told us that we should rejoice in offering this sacrifice for our country. Our feeling was rather that of the bereaved Scottish mother who replied to the minister who came to console her, “All you say is very true but it will not give me back my bairn.”

But was there anything which could, in any sense, give him back to us, or, at least show us that we had not entirely lost him? That his activities had not been brought to a full-stop but only transferred to a sphere of greater opportunity? It was a testing-time indeed of all that we had come to regard as true. A storm was upon us, but the anchor held.

## Chapter V

### *Linking up with Paul*

To make clear what happened next I must now introduce a fresh character into my story.

From time to time, during a number of years, I have been helped by an Agent whom I have not yet mentioned. She had been a mistress in a well-known public school for girls; she was interested in her work and seemed to be launched on a successful career. But she discovered that she was psychically gifted and she sacrificed both her natural inclination and her bright prospects in order to cultivate and use her exceptional endowment, chiefly to bring consolation and help to the bereaved.

Her methods are, I think, somewhat unusual. She appears to be able to make direct contact with the Communicator from whom a message is desired, dispensing with the customary presence of both Listener and Operator, her secretary and friend taking notes of the proceedings.

Another feature of her particular endowment is that, whilst at times both seeing and hearing the Communicator, she gains much of her knowledge of him by “impressions”, often of a very subtle and delicate kind.

It may have been noticed that I have not recorded the names of any of the Agents through whom I have received communications. As they would mean nothing to the ordinary reader there seemed no point in giving them. But, for convenience sake, and as I shall often have to refer to her, I propose to speak of this lady as “the Impressionist”.

In a certain sense, most of what I have so far recorded about Philip has been descriptive of his external life - his activities and experiences. But the Impressionist, through her peculiar sensitivity, seems to possess a kind of awareness of his inner consciousness. She sees Philip beneath the surface, so to speak, but what she sees is the same person.

She lives a hundred miles from myself; and, in the earlier days of our acquaintance, her knowledge of my circumstances did not extend much further, if at all, beyond the fact that I had lost an infant son. Yet she seemed to know Philip intimately and correctly to envisage his relations with the rest of the family. The reader will gather some idea of this from extracts from communications received from her not long before Paul's passing, in which he will also easily recognise some interesting corroborations of what had previously come through other channels.

I have another reason for giving at this point the extracts which follow: Paul is to come back into our story as an inhabitant of another world and it is necessary that the reader should have as clear an idea as possible of the kind of world it is, and of its relation to this one, as seen through the eyes of that “old inhabitant”, his brother Philip. I think that what follows, together with that which has already been given, makes the picture, though necessarily inadequate, sufficient for my present purpose.

“I sense a great quality of character in Philip, coupled with unobtrusiveness; he is not ‘out’ to exhibit it, he does not obtrude it in any way. But, together that direct look of his, I see an immense illumination the eyes. The eyes are brilliantly lit up and from his body there is a strong aura, which you do not see in the less evolved; light pours from the fingers.

“He is immensely one with his father, in their common tastes and in pursuit of Truth. He has extraordinary sympathy for suffering and bereavement; he has the same sympathy and understanding along that line as his father. He goes out to meet suffering but is impervious to the wrong or ignorance which surrounds much of it, being armed with a disciplined character. With him, love is the key to everything

else, the stepping stone to every achievement. But he is a very well-balanced, common-sense man; there is nothing effeminate about him.

“He is full of enthusiasm, this boy, ever pressing onward with anticipation and hope. As such, he would be a tremendous help to his people. He would have been intellectually allied to his father, and would also keep close to humanity; that would be his philosophy. The field of human enterprise is vast - the exploration of humanity - the greater understanding of which the better would be the preparation for higher development in the future life. Personality is paramount; and all that there is to know and to learn goes to build that personality.

“He takes care of that dog of his father’s. I don’t that he would have the same feeling for it as his father has but he knows that animals have a marvellous understanding of people, and power of serving and companioning them; and therefore, much is due to them.

He says, ‘The text you are choosing on Sunday interests me particularly. That line of thought could be followed up by a second address: it would bear expanding into two. Anyway, that is my suggestion.’

“Much has been prepared, and is being prepared, for his people when they join him. A suitable reception-place made by care, love and thought. Not in the sense that we *confine* ourselves to houses or homes; it is more in the sense of atmosphere.

“Very many people on earth - to say nothing of those on the other side - whose vision is very restricted fail where vision of possibilities through imagination is concerned. Where imagination and vision combine, there are immense possibilities, whether in this life or another. His father has proved in his own life that endeavour can be carried through by imaginative vision.

“As a rule” [the Agent is here describing her own point of view], “I feel that I am trying to approach people who have passed through death to the other life; but with Philip I have to reverse the process, and approach this world from the homeland of that other world in which he has grown up. Although he reaches his family through thought, and knows very largely what they are doing, yet his general setting is not of this world. It is clarified of much that is unessential; there is a greater simplicity about it, the simplicity of the restraint of Art, or of perfect taste, which has an appeal for this ‘æsthetically minded’ soul. Life is freed from much of the grossness and impurities which surround us in our material world. Philip says, ‘Imagine what an immense difference those two things alone would make.’ The atmosphere is rarefied, so that you can see great distances, and sound carries very clearly; the slightest vibration is felt almost instantly. The whole bodily mechanism is a finer instrument, through which the personality manifests.

“The avenues to learning, and to all rich experience, are open before every soul that is ready and awakened. He is closely in touch with his father’s interests; he does not speak, as it were, from his life to his father’s, as if they were two separate things;

they are very much interwoven, yet with the difference of background between the two worlds. He says, 'I am never far away, where any of you is seriously concerned. Remember that.'"

Unless those closing words had a deeper meaning than appeared on the surface, it seems strange that Philip should have talked calmly of other matters, with not a hint in what he said that within a month his brother would have joined him. Strange, because I hope to give later a number of incidents illustrating his quite remarkable gift of precognition.

It was natural that in our dire need we should have turned for help to what we had become convinced was for us the appointed means to obtain it, and very soon after Paul's passing a friend had undertaken to try to get news of him from Philip through the kind offices of an Agent known to us both. But this arrangement could not be carried out for another fortnight.

Meanwhile, it occurred to me that the Impressionist, whose messages I have been quoting in this chapter, might also be able to help. We had had a great shock but we were not completely overwhelmed. Looking back now, I am inclined to marvel at what I may perhaps be forgiven for speaking of as the calmness and fortitude with which all concerned faced the situation, owing to the certainty we possessed concerning so-called death and what follows it. Our reason for the efforts we made to get news of Paul was chiefly the perfectly natural wish to know how he fared, but also to put our convictions to the test of experience.

I therefore wrote to the lady of whom I have been speaking. I must explain that by this time, through the correspondence arising out of the messages from Philip, she knew enough of our family affairs to be aware that Philip had a brother in the Royal Air Force. So I was careful to say nothing which would associate my request with him. I said that something of interest to us had recently occurred and we wondered if she could get anything about it. Her secretary replied that they had made the attempt in the evening of the day on which my letter reached them, and her friend thought that the result might be only a part of what was wanted, but was too tired to do more then, and hoped we would understand what came. With this note she enclosed the verbatim report, from which the following is taken.

"This morning, on reading your letter, we decided to try to-night, and there flashed into my mind instantaneously that there was 'still time' for Philip. It seems that we have to get in the saying of something before something else is heard, or something else comes, something in the way of news or information. Leave that for a moment. . . .

"I see something on a stretcher . . . they are adjusting the head of it . . . raising it. This may have nothing to do with what I had thought this morning; it is the first thing I see to-night. The man on the stretcher is in khaki. It doesn't look like an officer's uniform. I should say that Mr Webling will be called out of his usual

routine, called off his daily course because of his attention to something or somebody else. Whatever it is, I think it will make a difference to Mr Webling himself; it won't pass by, leaving no mark. There is whistling wind through the trees somewhere, at some particular spot. . . . This is not all new to Mr Webling. . . he already knows a good deal of what I am giving him from Philip. There may be a touch of uneasiness; or restiveness in Mr Webling, but he has trained himself not to react to it. My own mind may be impeding this message because it has suddenly flown off - whether rightly or wrongly - to that son of his abroad."

I think it will be obvious to even the most casual reader that, with no data of any sort to go upon, the Impressionist had unerringly sensed the main facts. The thought that had flashed through her mind – that it was Philip's wish that whatever results she obtained should be sent off before something else was heard - suggests that he wanted to anticipate what we should hear later through the other Agent.

The stretcher incident fitted the facts for Paul was taken to hospital suffering from infantile paralysis, a serious epidemic of which occurred in Malta at the time, news of it being suppressed by the authorities. I supposed that since Paul was in the Air Force the reference to khaki was a mistake until, in answer to my inquiry, a comrade of his wrote to me: "Paul did wear khaki, both battle-dress and the khaki drill shorts and shirt." As his rank was the modest one of corporal, it was also correct to say, "It doesn't look like an officer's uniform." The reference to "trees" in connection with "some particular spot" does not appear to have any evidential value, but a photograph of the grave sent to me later shows a mass of foliage in the background. It will be noticed that only at the very end did the Impressionist connect with Paul the impressions she had received.

On the whole, this appeared to be an encouraging beginning. If the reader thinks that the result of the effort was not as decisive as it might have been, I agree. But perhaps he will, at least, reflect on the astonishing fact that, out of the countless millions of people on the other side, it was possible at all for the Impressionist to make contact with the one person sought and to give any kind of intimation that she had done so.

Thirteen days later our friend kept the appointment she had made. However sympathetic, a person acting as proxy for others cannot supply quite the same "atmosphere" as the direct approach of those nearest and dearest to the Communicator. Also Philip's extreme anxiety to help on this occasion appears to have inhibited his customary force and directness in conveying his meaning to the Operator in charge, and compelled him, from time to time, to change the subject in order to relieve the tension. I think that, in establishing contact, our friends on the other side often have to surmount difficulties of which we know very little.

This is how the facts gradually emerged through an entirely independent channel.

"There is something not quite usual about a passing and a grave in which Philip's



father would feel more interested than in other recent passings.

“The man concerned was active and interested and doing things a short while before his passing, which was unexpected. Philip is trying to make me understand something - that this is not an ordinary passing but is linked up with his father. I keep getting a grave in connection with his father because the grave would be linked up in his mind. Some people who pass over are not much of a loss but Philip is impressing on me that this *is* a loss - a great loss. . . .

“Something important happened about this passing on a Tuesday.” [He was taken to the Hospital on Tuesday, January 19th.] “You do understand that it was unexpected? That is why it has been such a shock. Does it affect three people in the family and one outside?” [Correct.]

“Philip says, ‘I have to go off this matter now to relieve the tension. . . .’

A little later the subject was resumed.

“His father will know how Philip has been helping all round, on our side and yours. Did this man have a feeling of sinking before he passed? I get a feeling of unconsciousness. This happened not long ago. Philip says he is resting, and getting acclimatised while he is doing so. He would not have wished to pass, and he won’t be pleased about it for a while. He will be thinking of people on earth and wanting to come back, but after a while Philip is sure it will be all right. . . .

“A short time before he passed was he moving about? Philip says, ‘No, that is not quite what I mean. What I am trying to convey is that something had been thought of in connection with a move which he kept in mind, and, on reaching this side, he felt that the move he had in mind had taken place.’” [Presumably, that he was at home on the leave he was expecting.] “So, a certain amount of adjustment is needed to accustom him to the change that has come, and which he was not really prepared for. We should have liked to keep him on earth but it was taken out of our hands. It was one of those things that happen from time to time for which we don’t always know the reason.

“‘Say, I will help all I can but there are others here who are taking it all in hand and are doing their very best to bring comfort - on both sides.’ Philip doesn’t think he can get any more through now.” “Can he get the name of the person of whom he has been speaking?” asked the Listener. “No,” was the reply, “he has said all he can. Remember, this has been a proxy-sitting and also he has been over anxious.”

It is possible that the reader unacquainted with psychic matters will wonder why Paul’s name could not be given and why the subject of his passing had to be approached in an oblique way instead of in some clear direct statement. The matter is too technical to attempt to deal with in a book of this kind. I can only suggest that one should try to imagine the difficulties of bridging the gulf between persons living in utterly different orders of existence, and to marvel at the fine adjustments that must be made to produce results.

There is, however, a feature of this particular communication for which the presumed obstacles to persons on earth and in the Beyond getting into touch do not account. I refer to the apparent difficulty experienced by Philip in getting his message through to the Operator. These two, it may be objected, are not living under different conditions; they are both *ex hypothesi* inhabitants of the other world.

The explanation probably lies in the fact that they were on this occasion out of their natural element. This is indicated by what I have been told about the effect of earth-conditions on visitors from another sphere. As Philip said in a remark I have already quoted: "We have to slow down our vibrations", and as my Mother once told me, "we sometimes feel we have come into a thick mist". When "conditions" are good, the obstacles appear to be overcome with surprising ease, but when they are not, the effort of two such persons to communicate with one another is analogous to that of a couple of men in diving-suits trying to carry on a conversation by signs at the bottom of the sea! The wonder is that communication attempted under such difficulties, which were apparently increased by Philip's intense anxiety to help those he loves, achieved so much. For, the reader who has been good enough to follow my story with attention and has noted with care the account of the first two attempts to obtain news of Paul after his passing cannot fail to see that, without a word of prompting, the main facts of the situation had been envisaged by whomsoever the messages were given.

In the next chapter we follow Paul into his fresh environment, and, in order to help the reader to feel that he is on firm ground (so far as what is said is capable of verification), I shall also submit examples of statements alleged to emanate from the other side which were attested by evidence from this one.

I conclude the present chapter by extracting from the above records two typical instances of a message given through one Agent being quite independently corroborated by what was given through another.

(i) "He is resting and getting acclimatised while doing so. A certain amount of adjustment is needed to accustom him to the change that has come, which he was not really prepared for."

"At first, Philip saw his brother in a long quiet sleep and he did not disturb him. It seems to be necessary that he should be left to get used to what has happened. He could not adjust himself quite quickly."

(2) "I (Philip) will help him all I can but there are others here who are taking it all in hand."

"Philip reports that his brother is being treated. He is being cared for by those who understand."

## Chapter VI

### *Early Days in a New Life*

May I remind the reader that in trying to keep in touch with Paul I was influenced chiefly by two considerations. It had always been a joy to get news of him from Malta: it would be no less delightful to, hear what befell him where he was now. That was the chief motive and to me it seems a perfectly natural one. A secondary motive was to put to the test of further personal experience what I had come to believe about the nature and implications of survival and communication.

For instance, what would be the reaction to his new life of a young man whose aims and interests had been wrapped up in those earth-conditions from which he had been so suddenly and unexpectedly cut off?

I can guess what his feelings might have been if the next world were anything like that which so many vaguely suppose it to be. The farmer, all the week absorbed in his work; his landlord born to hunt and shoot; the young labourer, whose whole soul is set on finding a cottage and getting married; how often, in past days, have I heard such folk joining lustily in the singing of hymns whose theme is the joys of Heaven conceived of after the traditional pattern, and I have wondered what they would feel if they suddenly found themselves there.

So it would throw interesting light on that particular feature of the ordering of the Universe if one discovered that this young man found that to enter the next life was not to undergo a devastating change but was the beginning of a quite natural process of adapting his particular capacities to congenial effort in a wider sphere of usefulness and happiness.

I was also curious to see whether the differences between what I had been told of Philip and what I knew of Paul would be reflected in any messages that might come through.

Two months after Paul's passing, both the two matters mentioned above were referred to in the record of her "Impressions" sent to me by the lady who gets her information in that form.

"Philip and his brother are totally different personalities and temperaments. I gather that the other son is very intelligent, but not of a philosophical turn of mind, and not so easily adjusted to a non-material world. His mind was intensely concentrated on the practical things that he was doing, and doing well. His is an engineering type of mind. He himself is not speaking. Philip is reporting about him. My feeling is that the other son is leaving it to Philip; he himself can't, for many reasons, attempt anything in this way yet. He would not necessarily take to a non-material world as a fish to the water. That is perfectly natural, considering his abilities and general make-up. It has nothing to do with 'spiritual' and 'non-spiritual'. He is used to doing all sorts of things with his hands and brain; this would

need re-applying to things of the other world.

“He is quite calm outwardly but it is no use trying to get into intimate touch with him yet. Only through Philip at present. It is rather a puzzle to him, being shot out of earth-life into that one. He is the type of person who, if anything serious happened to him, could not speak of it to his parents; they must know that. There must be reticence, nothing said.

He is cared for and is constantly looking out and enjoying the scenery, which interests and fascinates him. He finds Nature soothing; that, to him, is quite natural; he feels at home in that. He is a strong character.

“Philip’s brother knows as yet nothing about travelling, but Philip can travel freely. The other one looks out on scenery, but has no idea he can get to it; not as yet. There is so much that Philip can do which is inconceivable to the brother. Neither could Philip explain it to him. Those things cannot be explained.

“The newly passed-over have no idea of the sources and resources that can be tapped everywhere. The experiences are quite impossible to tell of, but by raising the vibrations higher and higher, you can hear wonderful music, see wonderful sights and scenery, which are inconceivable when the inner eye is closed upon them. Into higher planes have passed the rarefied souls, and from them they diffuse an atmosphere. Philip knows something of those planes - a generating station for that kind of atmosphere which can permeate to some degree the people who are around them, but not with them. They are not living in a self-contained happiness.

“Philip says, ‘It is not so much a question of people not being able to reach those places, but that they cannot imagine such harmony, happiness and beauty, since their vision is limited.’ Like a person knowing simple arithmetic, but knowing nothing of the Higher Mathematics. Or one who knows scales only, and has no notion of a symphony.

“People can be trained to these things; graded upwards, so to speak. It is not necessarily sin or ignorance that keeps them back. Education of those coming over is necessary, to open their eyes to what is around them in every direction.

“The brother’s gifts will be able to be adapted to work there that will be useful. Only, at present, he can’t see how he can apply himself to it. He certainly has an intense love of the beauty around him; it is one of the things that has struck him more than anything else. I see him with others in a building, walking to look out at the scenery; it doesn’t seem to him at all strange or unnatural. The strangeness is in having come out of his earth-body into another world. The sudden change is what he cannot adjust his mind to; it must come gradually or he would suffer from shock. They need to be very carefully guarded at first - those who go over suddenly in health. I think Philip has been trying to report about the brother to his parents.”

That last conjecture was, of course, correct since he had done so through another Agent a month previously.

Of the above “Impressions” purporting to be derived from Philip, I can but say that all that was capable of verification was correct; the references to Paul’s character and disposition would be recognised by anyone who knew him well, yet they were made through one who knew nothing about his personality and not even his name. I think that when what is capable of verification is found to be accurate, it is not unreasonable to give at least a provisional credence to other matter coming from the same source, especially when that commends itself by a kind of internal consistency and has about it the stamp of sincerity and truth.

The account of Paul’s early days on the other side will the more interest the reader if he bears in mind that what is here described may resemble his own experience hereafter. But in order not to be tedious, I will pass rapidly through the later stages of Paul’s convalescence, which was so lovingly and successfully tended, under the truly admirable arrangements prevailing over there, and take up the story again after he had become “acclimatised” to his new conditions.

On April 9th, 1943 (two-and-a-half months after his passing) I was told : “He is much more adapted to his surroundings and at home in them. Philip has visited him, and spoken with him, for short periods. The brother will be very glad when he can be active again. He feels it curious that he has to make the choice as to what he thinks it best to do. He may ask advice but the choice rests with him.”

In the note which accompanied the record from which the above is taken the Agent said : “I am sorry that I can only speak of your other son as ‘the brother’, for his name has not emerged.”

Eight months later this lady’s secretary wrote to me to say that Paul’s name, together with one fact about him, had just come to their knowledge through a normal channel and they wished me to know it. She added: “I was sorry this had been spoken of, for, as you are aware, we knew nothing of your son, Paul, except his passing.”

I mention this as an indication of their integrity.

Quite often I was able to verify what the Impressionist reported about Paul. For example, her record dated June 16th contained this: “When on earth he was quite friendly yet he was reserved: his inner life was his own though outer contacts were easily and pleasantly formed and he was a ‘good pal’.” After his passing, his officer wrote to us: “Although of a quiet and unassuming nature, he made many friends.”

The officer’s letter continued: “He carried out his duties in a keen and efficient manner and had been recommended for promotion.” This corroborated a message received by Paul’s sister: “After he passed, some very nice things were said about him - that he had done the best he could while he was here.”

The same Agent said that Paul was speaking of “Bunter” or “Buster”, referring apparently to someone he knew. I wrote again to the officer asking if this nickname fitted anyone my son had known in Malta. I confess to a thrill on receiving the

answer: "One of your son's friends was Corporal W. H. May, known as 'Buster'."

Though these in themselves are trifling matters, a thoughtful mind will perceive that they are important if they help to establish as fact the information super-normally acquired.

I venture to add two other instances from the talk mentioned above. The first concerns a very small matter. My daughter was told: "There was some money owing to him which he had not received. Two lots - his, ordinary pay and something else due to him when he passed."

I made inquiries and the official concerned replied: "There was a balance due to him - his ordinary pay plus allowances."

The second message referred to Paul's last illness and passing: "Towards the end he did not feel anything. There was no fear, no struggle, no difficulty. He couldn't understand how it came so easily: he just collapsed and became unconscious."

The Hospital Chaplain had reported: "On January 22<sup>nd</sup> the development of the complaint began: it was rapid. He passed away at 7.35 a.m. on Sunday the 24th. There was no pain, just weakness and steady deterioration of condition with a lapse of consciousness about 12 hours before death. I do not think he knew how dangerously ill he was."

Paul had begun to make progress, for it will have been noticed that now and again scraps of information given to my daughter almost exactly six months after his passing appeared to come from him personally. But he still needed help and then the Operator speaks for him: "He has been most interested in seeing relatives of his father, and they to see the latest member of the family to come over, and to hear what he could tell them because they can't all get in touch with the earth. He brings them a kind of personal newspaper; likes doing it. Some of these relatives go quite a good way back; he never knew them. He has met a lot of people who tell him such interesting things. He did not know such people were in the family. Charles talked a lot to him."

'Charles was the Christian name of my father, but his name and those of other relatives mentioned on this occasion are too common to be of evidential value. Yet there is significance in another name which was given three times (as though to stress its importance) and spoken in the Direct Voice: "Willie, Willie, Willie." For, by a process common in the bestowal of family nicknames, the reason for which it is beyond the wit of man to fathom, Paul's name had in familiar usage become metamorphosed into "Willie".

I said that this name was uttered in the Direct Voice. I will now give the reader the explanation of that and another term, which I have refrained from doing earlier because I did not wish to introduce him to too many unfamiliar expressions at one time. He is aware that the messages I have recorded purport to be given by the Operator on the other side, using the physical and mental organisation of the earthly

Agent, which he controls for that purpose.

Sometimes, however, he allows a communicator himself to use the Agent if he is qualified to do so. This is called Direct Control. But that is not the same as the Direct Voice, which is a psychic manifestation of a unique and particularly impressive kind which I have often witnessed in the presence of a lady whose outstanding gifts place her in the front rank of those whose services I have been privileged to use.

Most of what is said through her comes in the ordinary process of transmission from the Operator but, from time to time, this is interspersed with words, and whole sentences if the conditions are favourable, which appear to come from a point some three or four feet in front of her and to proceed from another source.

This gives a curiously impressive naturalness to the conversations, in which three distinct personalities take part. These are, first, the individual I call "the Listener" (who in this instance is myself); next, the Operator speaking through the Agent, and, lastly, the Communicator from time to time uttering his remarks independently, adding to, commenting on, or correcting what either of the other two have said. In passing, I may say that one of the most moving experiences of my life was that of hearing Philip's own voice for the first time addressing me as "Father".

As with ordinary speech, that in the Direct Voice is caused by vibrations set up in the air. But Mr Charles Drayton Thomas, a most careful observer, with twenty-eight years' experience of the phenomenon, suggests that these vocal sounds are secondary results due to primary vibrations of the etheric emanation surrounding the Agent. This impalpable emanation be set into such violent action by the Communicator's speech that it vibrates the air and so reproduces words. I have previously referred to the mysterious "power" without which no psychic activity is possible. In the Direct Voice this emanation appears to form an area of psychic force, a kind of magnetic field about the Agent which charges the atmosphere and is sufficiently akin to other-world substance to be used by the Communicator and sufficiently akin to our matter to affect it under certain conditions. The Communicator appears occasionally to catch a denser wave of the emanation which produces such vibration in air as is in vocal sound.

In what follows in this chapter, will the reader please understand that words printed in italics were spoken the Direct Voice.

We had a fair amount of it the first time the boys' mother and I talked with the two brothers, on August 13th, 1943, nearly seven months after Paul's passing, an affecting, but not in the least a melancholy, occasion. Indeed, the very reverse of this.

The Operator began: "God bless you. Philip is here and he has brought someone else who is very, very pleased to come, Philip had literally to hold him down! He is so glad to talk to you both. It is '*Willie*', and he says, 'We have a good deal to say.' 'First, I, Philip, want to say something for him. He is getting on very well. He may not say

that for himself so I say it for him. Now, you know, we didn't want him here, but *as it turns out*, he is going to do good work on this side. Probably he will get much more opportunity than when on earth, but he knows you miss him and is so sorry to have caused you all so much sorrow, though you have both been so good that it has made it easier for him. We do understand that you miss us, *that is to say*, our physical presence. You can't help missing that."

The Operator takes up the conversation here.

"Did you know that Philip and Willie have voices rather alike? I don't always know who is speaking. What does Willie want to say to his mother? 'Don't worry about me, dear; I'm all right. I've got a strong feeling that things are better this way. I can't *explain it*, but I do feel somehow that they are.' "

The Operator, either speaking for him in the first person, as though repeating, word for word, what he slowly dictates, or conveying his remarks in the third person and occasionally elucidating them by her own comments, continued: "He thinks, and Philip and others have confirmed it, that if he had managed to survive the illness he might not have been very strong. 'Life would not have been very easy, and you would have had to watch me going through difficulties.' Willie is there just a little in front of me and behind you. He is trying to put his hand on his mother's head. He has heard her speaking quietly to him at home. He wants you to know that. Many of the people he has met here had to introduce themselves, but when he met Philip he felt he knew him.

"He did not feel his passing; he was not properly conscious. '*As a matter of fact*, I felt I was unconscious, came round a bit and was unconscious again. I had a dizzy feeling in my head but no pain at all.'

The Operator here interjected "Don't help him, Philip; he can do it himself." And continued, "Willie had a good brain on earth, a clear mind. When he woke up on the other side feeling so suddenly well he thought something must be wrong! *That was one of the things* that made him think, and also seeing so many he had thought of as dead.

"Look here, I can scarcely believe even now that I have passed: I feel much the same only perfectly well. I used to feel out of sorts and tired. *They did muddle things* - no, I won't say that. They did their best to make a good job of me according to their lights *but they don't know much*. *Later on* we'll show them what can be done from our side with healing combined with natural diet and natural living." (It is of interest in this connection to note that when on earth "Willie" had favoured "Food Reform" diet.) The Operator explained: "Philip is giving Willie power and drawing some from his mother too, but he daren't take too much because he wants to help her, not to take from her."

I think that this remark throws a little light on Paul's comparative facility in communicating at this early stage and again suggests how much unknown to us goes



towards making a bridge between the two worlds.

The Operator, transmitting what she hears Paul saying, continued: "I really did not think I was going to leave you in this physical way. I must be frank – at first I was not pleased when I woke up and I didn't think you had expected me to be a shock and a *disappointment*. Even though I wasn't always well, I was going to do things on earth; I did not feel I had finished with life and had reason to suppose I was going quite well."

Next, the Operator takes up the story for him: "He has been with you so much, and *much* more lately. He is beginning to learn how to 'feel' you better. And he is so glad he had learned something about this subject when on earth. It opened up the possibilities. He can't say he had believed all he heard and did not go into it. 'But what I had heard explained a good deal to me when once I realised where I was.'"

I think it likely that anyone holding conventional ideas about "Paradise" or "Heaven", who has followed the story to this point, will have experienced a feeling of surprise and even bewilderment at finding his preconceptions somewhat shorn of celestial glories by the account given so far of my son's experience in the Beyond. Yet this "homely" aspect of conditions prevailing in that particular sphere of the vast universe which the two boys inhabit may suggest a welcome relief to others who are not particularly attracted by the thought of leaving this familiar earth for a place which they suppose to be utterly unlike it. The fact, of course, is that, whatever the next world may be like, we shall have to live in it when we get there. It seems well, therefore, to try to obtain some information beforehand about the kind of place to which we shall one day go. It will have been noticed that Paul, who, when on earth, always listened with interest to what I told him about the Beyond, found it of some use in enabling him to adapt himself to his new life.

But now I have to mention something said on the occasion I have been describing which may administer a slight shock. Here it is. "Philip says that there was one person whom Willie was very surprised to see here. I wonder if you can guess. (Willie says, 'I was flabbergasted.') St Columba! Willie was so surprised at meeting such a person face to face. Even now, he says, it seems extraordinary. He never expected to meet and shake hands! And St Margaret, he says he has seen her and was awfully pleased about that too. Philip met her first and now Willie has. And Willie says, 'Wonders will never cease - just think of meeting such interesting people. Truth is stranger than fiction. *I never could have believed it.*' All this has been a compensation to him - all these people, and things opening out."

Is it indeed incredible that "Saints" mingle on occasion with ordinary folk on the other side? People who believe them to be interested in those still on earth, and invoke their prayers and help, should not feel greatly surprised that they help those who have passed On.

Perhaps those whom the informality of Paul's encounter with Columba and

Margaret might offend (since they picture such exalted beings as inaccessible in their greatness and glory) may be mistaken, for I have been assured that the blessed ones conform to the apostolic injunction and are “clothed with humility”.

At any rate, it did not surprise me to learn that the boys had met these august personages since I myself appear to have been brought into contact with them supernormally many years previously.

Of Margaret of Scotland I had known but her name, and the Agent through whom the messages came was the kind of person who would be about as familiar with the lives of the less-well-known saints as she is with Hebrew. I doubt if she had ever heard of this one. Yet I was able to verify what was said through her, and the description given of Margaret’s appearance and manner corresponded to what is recorded by her biographers.

But that is another story upon which I cannot enter here though I shall refer to it later; my present purpose being merely to suggest that what Philip said was not without some support.

However, the two boys are not “exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations”, for thus the talk continued: “Willie is laughing. He says there is fun on the other side. He still likes to cheer people up and is so glad to find that those here are not always serious and full of ‘good works’. He wanted them to be able to forget ‘good works’. (*Not a very good way of putting it.*)

“He was so glad the first time he heard you laughing at something about him after his passing. ‘It lifted a weight, and I *really did say*, Thank God.’ And he meant it although what you had said was only a trifle connected with getting a meal ready. He would never have believed such a thing could make him happy. I wish you could see him standing behind you with his arm half way round your waist. ‘When you suddenly think of me it is because I have suddenly come in.’ It is not your thoughts that draw them but their presence that gives you what he calls a mental jog. In time, you will know when he is there. Look out for a slight charge of electricity down one side: that is a good way of beginning. ‘Be glad for me now because from now onwards I will come in that way while waiting to come direct.’ They send all their love.”

I want to say about this conversation, and to ask that it may be borne in mind when reading other records which follow, that the most convincing evidences of Paul’s identity were those I have been obliged to omit because of their extremely intimate nature. He mentioned, for example, a fact known only to himself and a very close friend still on earth which, upon enquiry, was ascertained to be correct and caused our astonished informant to say that it could have come from no one else but Paul. I want the reader to feel that, besides whatever veridical matter I give him, there is far more in the background.

Three months later, my daughter had a talk with her brothers. She asked how Paul

was getting on. The reply was, “‘Getting on splendidly’, Philip says. ‘Not too badly’, Willie says. ‘I’m fairly adaptable, you know. I wouldn’t choose any other life now, though I do grieve for those left behind. I can’t help thinking, there they are, they miss me; I miss them. I’m so glad I had Philip here. I knew him: it was extraordinary - a very great help. I hadn’t been with him more than a few minutes when I felt I had lived with him. He was quite familiar to me. He had been with us, and we with him, in sleep. We, here, have no night and day.’”

“What do you do for a rest?” he was asked. “We relax - it is conscious rest and is beautiful. On earth you have a minute or two of it before you fall asleep, then it goes. But we, here, lie consciously relaxed and feel, this is wonderful and most enjoyable. It doesn’t come very naturally at first, and it is a joy when we do learn how to do it. I’m just beginning to appreciate it now.”

Philip interposed with some further information about the illustrious individuals previously mentioned. “When Father comes over in sleep he meets St Columba and St Margaret - wonderful people. Willie was astonished when I first told him about them. Some of the saints when on earth were peculiar people, unbalanced, with odd habits and strange faults. But they were saints in spite of it. They are not unapproachable or altogether perfect. I said to Willie, look here, our family is connected with St Francis, but Mother wouldn’t have let St Francis when on earth help in the kitchen: he was so untidy and dirty. You see, she wouldn’t have liked it.

“All the saints are most approachable - great, loving beings, who sought God and wanted to draw man nearer to Him, too. I was listening to an address on our side telling us that, if on earth a person loved anyone, he would be loving God if he loved that person wisely. If you acted according to your best principles, you would be loving God through another human being.”

The Operator added: “Willie is very fond of his mother and does try to help her. Now, Philip also is fond of his mother but has great affinity with his father, and Willie with his mother. They both say, ‘Thank you so much for coming to talk to us. We love you to come.’ Tell his father, Philip is helping with his health - this is a reminder of his father’s old trouble. Willie is going to visit his mother but will see you back to London first.”

Eight days before this conversation the Impressionist had received, amongst other information, two items about the boys which were corroborated in the talk recorded above. I will give these together for comparison. To myself personally, it seems to make assurance doubly sure when, through independent channels, one receives similar information.

- A. “Philip is satisfied that the brother has come along very well - in usefulness and adaptation.”
- B. “Philip says his brother is getting on splendidly. And Willie says, ‘I am fairly adaptable.’”

A. "The two boys are good friends, but completely different. Philip is very closely linked with his father; the brother has very much thought for the mother."

B. "Philip has great affinity with his father, and Willie with his mother."

Two months later, January 24th, 1944, was the first anniversary of Paul's passing and it is of interest to note, in the talk that his sister had with him on that day, some further indications of the progress he had made during his first year on the other side.

He said: "I am practising to notice things for work when the War is over. That will come at the right time. I am learning to wait till 'the right time'. On earth, I wanted a thing to happen when I wished it. Now I see it can't happen in the wrong place: we are not given power till we can use it rightly, so that it is safer to do so. But it is a long trial and education. On earth, we form such stupid habits and come over badly equipped. Yet earth is the school of life and the testing-out time. I am beginning to know the ropes and not make mistakes. I am opening out the intuition which we have as a family.

"I am so thankful I have got the family to come to - whenever I get the time. You have no idea how happy I am because of you all and your attitude to me. People can make our visits to them much happier in proportion to the knowledge they have of our whereabouts. Philip brought me home and there wasn't that awful feeling of finality, frustration and hopelessness; only a natural feeling of loss, compensated by knowledge that all would be well with me, and that Philip would help. There was no barrier of senseless grief."

Philip commented on this: "Willie is very, very good because he explains in a definite way, choosing his words, but it is heavy-going sometimes - he speaks a bit slowly sometimes!" The Operator said, "Philip is teasing him. He, himself, is on a quicker and lighter vibration."

The reference here to Philip's admiration of his brother, combined with a little pleasant bantering about his careful deliberation (a characteristic feature carried over from his earth-life), corroborates what came by "impression" six days previously through the lady to whom I have so often referred. "Philip says his brother is a person who moves rather slowly in his ideas, but very thoroughly."

The above extracts from an intimate talk lasting nearly two hours suggest that the young man so suddenly and unexpectedly introduced to a new life had made considerable progress in adjusting himself to his unaccustomed surroundings. We could now think of him as "acclimatised".

## Chapter VII

### *Till the Turning of the Tide*

Philip, though almost a lifelong inhabitant of another sphere, has a keen interest in the concerns of this one, particularly as they affect those who are dear to him. Naturally, therefore, the shattering events of the past few years claimed his close and eager attention.

The Second World War opened on September 3rd, 1939. He appears to have sensed the danger nearly three years earlier when he said, on December 1st, 1936: "World conditions are leading up to a crisis in which people like you will be wanted - people who know what you know - not because it is you but because of what you know."

What he meant by the latter part of the sentence was suggested in a message he gave ten months later through another Agent: "The great masters of wisdom had hoped that a knowledge of survival with its implications would have become more widespread so as to prevent the holocaust of war."

Although it is generally admitted that, in the circumstances, war was inevitable, yet, looking back now on the appalling cost in human misery of a conflict on such a scale, one understands the anxiety of our friends on the other side to preserve mankind from this catastrophe at almost any cost. That, perhaps, explains what Philip said five months later: "Don't grieve about England, though we are not quite certain. If we can keep in the present Premier we are all right. You don't want war at once, do you?"

This was somewhat obscure but seemed to suggest that, if war could not be avoided, a respite would be something, and that, the Premier, if still in office, would obtain; a prediction which the events of the following eighteen months appear to have fulfilled.

At this time it seemed possible that a general conflict might arise over events in Spain. "I feel sorry for Spain", I had said. "Yes," he replied, "but there are two sides to that. It is not our war, is it? You don't get the truth from Spain, Father. If you could see, when it was all over, a better Spain, you would then know what it was all about. We have to look to the end."

The next day I talked with Philip again. It is interesting to notice the same outlook suggested as on the day before although this conversation was held at a place fifty miles off and through a different Agent.

"At the last two or three talks I warned you that certain war-conditions would not be over soon, but that I didn't think England was going into war. I repeat that, but I see England having to be a kind of police-force for the world. We on this side are working for peace, but a lot of the rest of the world will be at war for some time. It can't be helped. It's evolution - it's as far as they have got."

Germany and Italy were known to be helping Franco against the Spanish Government, despite their pledge of neutrality, and our merchant-ships entering Spanish waters were being bombed. Feeling in this country ran high, but war was avoided, just as another was, six months later, through the determined pacificism of the Prime Minister.

My next talk with Philip chanced to be on the morning of that fateful day, September 29th, 1938, at the height of the Munich crisis. On the preceding day, the Prime Minister had suddenly announced in the House of Commons that on the morrow he would fly again to Germany to see Hitler with Daladier and Mussolini, for further discussions. He arrived in Germany a few minutes before the talk with my son ended, so that what I was told towards its close was an anticipation of events which had not yet happened.

Philip said: "You have been wondering about peace. I told you before that I knew there would be trouble, but all on the other side are fighting to stop this country going into war because we want to keep it as a peace-centre. You can help the German leader mentally by counteracting some of the antagonistic thoughts being sent out to Germany. Those don't help us though they are excusable. Pray that they may open themselves to understanding what God wants, and then leave it. That doesn't arouse any mental opposition when it reaches them. But thoughts of 'must' on particular points do no good, for as soon as your thoughts reach them that raises subjective opposition. So will you pray and affirm 'peace'." "Peace with honour," I said. "Yes, you must affect them so that it may be peace with honour. We have obligations to fulfil but we want the leaders to come to reason, not to make war for us. We haven't behaved with honour about Abyssinia and China. We behave with honour when it suits us. We are not being consistent now. We should have taken these steps long ago. Now we are taking them at the worst possible time and have got to help in a position in which we should never have been placed. Had we acted earlier it would have been soon over; it would have taught them a lesson and saved thousands from suffering, torture and death."

This last sentence was spoken seven and a half years before Mr Churchill, addressing an audience in the United States, said: "There never was a war in all history easier to prevent by timely action than the one which has just desolated such great areas of the globe."

Philip continued: "You have done nothing about Abyssinia, Spain and China. It was far more necessary with them. But now we want the powers that be to do the right thing - not what some individual wants but what God wants, and that, whatever they do, will make peace with as little trouble as possible. I am not against arrangements in case of war, even though we get peace. You must pray the 'open' prayer. You may pray against storms but that doesn't prevent your taking a mackintosh! So this country must prepare." The Operator here interjected: "He has been with you ever since he was born and has acquired much knowledge and a very sensible outlook on

earth-affairs.”

Philip continued: “Be prepared, but think of and pray for peace. I wish I could stop people deciding exactly what God ought to do. We don’t leave things to Him sufficiently: we say ‘according to thy will’ but it is to be in our way, and that is why things go wrong. God’s plan and purpose must be worked out in His way and time.”

Having outlined his point of view in general, he came to particulars. “I don’t quite see things being settled to-day - good is being done - time is being gained - but we shall not be quite out of the wood to-day.” [The Munich Agreement was not signed till 1.30 a.m. next day.] “But it is to-day and to-morrow that I want your thoughts very badly, and on Monday. These three are all very critical times.” [The days respectively upon which agreement was reached, on which it was signed, and on which Parliament was to discuss the settlement, against which strong adverse feeling was anticipated. On any one of these crucial days the plan might have been wrecked.]

In the light of what we know now it is difficult to understand the remark which follows. One can only think that the speaker was, like the statesmen of Western Europe, concerned mainly with the immediate danger and carried away by his intense longing that war might be averted.

“I am very glad about to-day. There is a strange vibration - will you write this down carefully - I can’t quite get it, but something of importance is going to happen to one of these leaders at their meeting. It may change the course of events and turn them in the right direction just when you might think they are going wrong.”

Mussolini, who, in the past, had supported the Führer with a tireless flow of partisan rhetoric, appears completely to have changed his attitude at the Conference. Mr Chamberlain, speaking in the House of Commons on Monday, October 3rd, said: “With regard to Signor Mussolini, his contribution [to the Munich Agreement] was certainly notable and perhaps decisive. . . . I think that Europe and the World have reason to be grateful to the head of the Italian Government for his work in contributing to a peaceful solution.”

It all seems a sorry farce now but the columns of The Times during the week that followed bear witness that Mr Chamberlain’s well-meant efforts to save the world from a hideous catastrophe were almost universally acclaimed then. We were utterly unprepared for war and were given eleven months in which to do something. It is true that Hitler also was given the same period in which to complete his preparations, yet, had he at that time thrown everything he already had into an invasion, we certainly did not possess the means to withstand it. Nor is it without significance that, during the interval, a clear view had become possible of the Germans’ real intentions, so that, when war was declared, a year later, by the Prime Minister who had striven so earnestly to avoid it, he had at last, for this purpose, the whole nation behind him.

But these are great matters in which I do not exercise myself. My object is the more modest one of giving an account of world-affairs as they presented themselves to an intelligent onlooker from the other side, who, never at any time making absurd claims to infallibility, did accurately predict the course that events would take on that momentous day.

If it be objected that he was inconsistent in deprecating war and yet considered England at fault in not adopting a resolute attitude on behalf of China, Abyssinia and the Government of Spain, I would point out that to have done so did not necessarily mean war. In fact, it appears to be the view of so competent a judge as Mr Churchill that that was precisely the way to avoid it.

Talking with Philip again in the middle of April, 1939, it was evident that he still hoped that a conflict would be averted. Those on the other side were making a supreme effort. Their influence was great but they exercised no coercion, so that human folly was able to frustrate their endeavours. Yet, while a chance of peace remained, knowing the power of concentrated thought, he would not contemplate war.

This is what he said: "All are trying to prevent a great catastrophe from visiting this country. You must go on helping us with your prayers and thoughts, though I don't think there will be war. But we don't want to take any risks. There is a percentage of freewill that can be active on your plane, and that free-will wrongly used might bring war but I don't think it will. We want everyone to think against it."

It will be noticed that, apart from the accurate forecast of what would happen at the Munich Conference, there was a certain confusion in Philip's mind due to the conflict between what he feared and what he hoped the future might bring, which, amongst other things, hid from him, apparently, the true nature of the Munich Agreement.

But this confusion ceased as soon as the War started, and the predictions which followed were made with confidence, sound judgment and usually with remarkable accuracy. I shall not attempt, by italics and notes of exclamation, to bludgeon the reader into noticing the salient points in the narrative, relying on his attention and sagacity to appreciate the details which establish the correspondence between the events and their prediction.

Our next talk was exactly five months after that recorded above. The dreaded War had come and had been in progress for a fortnight. Philip did not seem in the least disturbed by the frustration of his hopes but began at once to speak of future possibilities and fresh endeavours.

"What we are trying to do is to bring about a condition which will make what you want, dear, an honourable peace. It is not simply an army or a system that we are up against but Man's will-power used in an evil and destructive way. So there are many things that have to be skillfully maneuvered. If we can get co-operation on the right



lines from you people on earth this won't last long. It will collapse and a degree of safety will be given to the world such as it has not had for a long time. You can help and get others to help on these lines but please, Father, tell them not to define the way in which peace shall come. And if only these stupid Spiritualists would stop their dogmatic prophecies and be content to let the truth of their movement stand on proving that we survive and that we can help but not interfere with freewill!

"Of course, I have spent so much of my life in the Spirit-World that perhaps I am not prejudiced by earthly considerations as some communicators have been. I do know, Father, that those who have lived a good part of their lives close to certain people, when they pass over and communicate with them, are more likely to wish to think on certain lines, and, when communicating, they become a little too positive that what they are hoping and working for 'must' be.

"I was working to help prevent this catastrophe: but we could not stop it by force - that would be interference, trespass. But I say to you now that we are trying to bring it to an end in such a way that it won't break out again. There has to be a halt called to this man. At the same time, we must not send out feelings of hatred or get into our minds (as many do) that something terrible will happen to him. We should send out thoughts that the right thing will happen to him. And it will, Father.

"I particularly want to tell you this: this war is not to be finished in the ordinary way, as previous wars have finished, a fight till one side is vanquished. It won't be that: it will be a collapse. We have been trying to impress that on you and you have got it. And you have also got the idea that the reason for the collapse will not be in the air or on the battlefield itself. There will be internal combustion: 'A house divided against itself.' Look, Father! It is really divided now. You have a proverb on earth: 'It's an ill-wind that blows no one any good.' We want to use what appears to be an 'ill-wind' to bring people back to God, earnestly and wholeheartedly, and that won't happen if they think the course of the War is to be taken out of their hands and all done nicely and easily for them. So it is best not to say much about this, but you have heard me - it will be internal combustion - the house divided. That is already happening: it is beginning now.

"I am not going to say that the War *will* - but it *can* - finish in what you would consider a shortish time, if only people will do what we ask. This man must see that he has overstepped the mark. Things must make it impossible for him to continue on his present lines. And that will happen. Isn't it a pity, Father, that man could have been an empire-builder on peaceful lines. You remember a year ago I told you he re-acted to good and evil influences, and that his evil promptings are for temporal power, he is in his way like a greedy child, but that will be stopped by what is happening now. So go on firmly with this in your mind."

It is curious that Philip seems to discern possibilities of good in a man who has been described by Mr Trevor-Roper as "the most bloodthirsty tyrant in modern history". Yet the same writer tells how, before the War, in the Alpine summer retreat at

Obersalzberg, "he would behave as a hospitable Austrian paterfamilias, good-natured and jocular, friendly and affable with all". And, in another place, "Hitler would forgive almost anything to those he loved". So perhaps Philip, with his celestial charity, had some reasons for thinking as he did.

The reader will have noticed that the predictions made at our meeting in the middle of September, 1939, at the very beginning of a war which was to last nearly six years, confidently assert the frustration of Hitler's designs and the ultimate collapse of Germany. Moreover, what has since come to light concerning the various anti-Nazi organisations during the War appear to confirm the statement about "internal combustion - a house divided. It is beginning now".

Writing after the War was over, and the facts had become public, Mr Trevor-Roper confirms what Philip said at its commencement: "The structure of German politics and administration was a confusion of private empires, private armies and private intelligence-services over which Hitler rode to the end above the chaos he had created and concealed its true nature."

From the first, the German High Command was doubtful of ultimate success; and when the initial victories were followed by the costly failure of the Russian campaign, dissatisfaction with Hitler's strategy and leadership led to the multiplication of plots to assassinate him. Conservatively minded generals were found in alliance with former democratic leaders, Churchmen, ex-diplomats, dissident party-members, Communists and even many leading members of the Gestapo. So influential a combination ranged against the Government suggests "a house divided".

That the struggle would not be fought to a finish but would end in collapse was an accurate statement of the fact that the end came by a gradual process of disintegration rather than by a formal and inclusive act of surrender. After the War was over, German generals and leading Nazis expressed their conviction that it was the demoralisation of the German people that had fatal consequences.

In our next talk, on April 22nd, 1940, Philip made predictions both as to the near future and to a later time. I will take the latter first, the interest of which is in his forecast of the trend of events after the long War, which was then only in its earliest stages, was over.

"All that is happening now is paving the way for a different kind of life for people later on - a different set of values. Also, what we do know is that the economic side will lead to extraordinary changes in social life. A lot will go which we shall be glad to see go - some not. I feel the conflict will end in such a way that we shall be sick of perpetrating the criminal act of war ever again, and that we shall set up a kind of body of states which will settle things just as is done in a court of law. You don't fight out personal grievances in the street, and laws will be made so that no nation shall. We haven't learned the lesson yet but are going to learn it because people will get

very sick of things and will say: 'We will not let ourselves be put into this again.' This should have been done after the last War, but now you will be able to do things you could not do before." He perhaps meant that the World was not then ready to accept the ideal embodied in the League of Nations.

The short-term prediction made on April 22nd was fulfilled by the crucial events which fell within the exact period foretold. "There will be a critical stage in the War between now and early summer." Exactly a week after this was said, Hitler launched his next long-prepared aggression, and fell simultaneously on Norway and Denmark. On May 10th he attacked Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium. On May 28th the Belgian Army capitulated, and the other encircled armies (the British and French) withdrew to a bridgehead round Dunkirk. On June 14th the Germans entered Paris.

Hitler prepared for the invasion of this country by a series of daylight air-attacks which began on August 8th, 1940. On September 7th the British chiefs of staff learned that German preparations for the invasion by sea were so advanced that it could be attempted at any time and the signal "Invasion imminent" was actually issued. The Battle of Britain, which altered the whole situation, was a turning-point of the War, and perhaps of history.

At our meeting on August 29th Philip predicted when that series of attacks would end and what their result would be. He also gave some information about one of the means by which he obtained his knowledge of future events.

"Though things may in some ways be more uncomfortable for people, the position is better because you are all 'under one roof' - you are all in the same country. You can't - and no one can - see it just yet, but had you remained in France your power would have been very much decreased. For the enemy had it all his own way there - on land. But now it is more difficult for him. His reserves are huge - huge. They still are and it's no use blinking our eyes to it, but they are not inexhaustible.

"Listen, Father - I will get this off my spiritual chest while I can. I just want to say that we - all who know anything - know that the hand of God will move at the right moment and the tide will turn for us in an extraordinary way. But you may go through some very difficult times first. It is a case of holding out under what I call our own roof.

"Russia is going to complicate things. She is not going to let Germany and Italy have all their own way."

The interest of the reference to Russia's future part in the War lies in the fact that, at the time it was made, a pact of non-aggression between the Soviet Union and Germany was in existence. Yet, ten months later Russia was brought into the conflict by a German invasion. Philip continued: "God sometimes uses peculiar instruments. Didn't Christ use very peculiar people? Now, God may use any other means: He may use Russia."

“I notice you use the word ‘may’,” I said.

“Because I think He will,” he replied. “I told you two years ago that we can’t always see what free-will may do. We can’t interfere beyond a certain point. And, though we have a programme, this matter of free-will may alter it. So I have sometimes to say, ‘I think’ or ‘it may’. That is the programme but Man can alter, delay or distort it. He can’t stop it altogether but he can make unnecessary delay. God will move in other ways as well as through Russia.” [The United States entered the War sixteen months later.] “That is not only my opinion. We have conferences here and that is the opinion of many of us,’ especially those who are communicating in a serious way with the earth. They confer and come to their own conclusions so as to help their own people - as I you.

“In spite of all your troubles, Father, I have been giving you a feeling of peace, putting you all into God’s hands and leaving you there.” I asked if there would be danger for the family in the air-raids. He replied: “There is danger everywhere for the next couple of months, but I do not feel any special danger where your house is. Don’t be dismayed if they do happen to come near and do anything. I have the feeling it will be all right.”

After this comfortable assurance about our personal safety (justified by the fact that, though bombs were on more than one occasion dropped on the village, no one was hurt), he concluded by an accurate prediction of the general situation during the next two months and after.

“I feel that by the end of October things will have happened, or be happening, which will break the back of the enemy to such an extent that even if the attacks do not finish then, you will be able to get through the few months of winter darkness because you will have more hope to help you to go through. I can safely say that.

“So, get through the next few weeks without being dismayed or pessimistic through what happens during them. Then there will be something happening, and, though you may not say on the last day of October, ‘it has happened’, you will look back and say, ‘it did happen. It was breaking up then’.”

The night-bombing which began on September 7th continued for nine months, but the daylight attacks in preparation for the Invasion were defeated in two months; by the last day of October the deadly peril was removed, Hitler had received his first great check, the Battle of Britain was won, the tide had begun to turn.

I trust the reader does not grow weary of this account of fulfilled predictions? If he will ponder for a moment their tremendous implication - that the future can, in certain instances, be foreseen and foretold through non-inferential precognition - he will realise their importance. But, unless this claim is supported by a sufficient amount of evidence which cannot be set aside, it is of little use making it. So I want to drive my point well home. Also I hope that what I have already set down will have helped others to think with me of Philip as more than the “little dead baby” I used to

picture.

His thoughts were with us during the long years of strain, not merely interested in the fluctuations of the conflict, but looking to what he hoped would follow it, as is evidenced by something he said to me when three more years of fighting were still before us. The kind reader will make allowance for the simple, other-world outlook that associated my obscure self with the great work.

“You remember how, four years ago, I told you we were working to preserve Britain as a peace-spot in which we could build up a new era wherein men could progress and manifest the true Christian life, and wipe away so much of the prejudices, narrowness of outlook and the petty resentments, which are really seeds as dangerous in their way as those other seeds planted in Germany in the minds of the rulers there, the seeds of envy and possessiveness and lust for power. I think your work will be to demonstrate the true and broad Christian life.”

## Chapter VIII

### *After the Tide Turned*

Difficulties arising out of the War hindered my meetings with Philip and it was just over two years after our previous talk, namely, on August 26th, 1942, that we met in this way again. He began by recalling what he had said two years previously about Russia and added a further prediction.

“Do you remember, Father, that at our last talk I said that strange things would happen, and that I spoke about God’s using strange instruments? They are being used, and to good effect. And I want to tell you this: it doesn’t matter in the end how much ground the Germans take, for the more they take the more sorry they will be. Remember that, Father. They may penetrate farther yet but it won’t be any good to them.”

My friend, Mr Drayton Thomas, has pointed out the accuracy of this forecast. He says, “By November 1942 [three months after the prediction had been made] the Germans had penetrated far into the Central Caueasus, but by the end of the month they had failed in their objective and were beginning to withdraw. Their long struggle before Stalingrad was failing and from there also they were soon to begin the retreat which never ended until they were back at the spot from which they had started three years before when first invading Russia. Truly, the further they had penetrated the worse it had become for them and this proved true for the campaign in Africa also.”

I might mention here that, realising Philip’s predictions to be of some evidential value, with the meeting recorded above I started posting to Mr Drayton Thomas, well before the event occurred, the various forecasts made, and he deposited them at the headquarters of the Society for Psychical Research, of the Council of which he is a member. I did not think people would doubt my bona-fides but it is well to make

assurance as complete as possible.

The scene then changes to that part of the worldwide battlefield mentioned at the end of the above note, where things had been going badly for us and the Germans confidently expected soon to be in Alexandria.

It was at this time that Philip predicted an event which did not then seem in the least likely to happen, and which he dated with remarkable accuracy.

He said: "Father, as I told you, I don't always know about future events, especially those that affect us personally, but in my mind recently a date keeps coming up. I ought to say, two dates next to each other, something about October 28 and 29. It is something to do with the War, and, I feel, a turning point of a very vital kind. Very outstanding; I seldom get anything like that - it was as if a little door opens and something pops out; almost as if it were thrown out, saying 'take that'. And that is how it was with this date, and my own mind has to interpret its meaning. And I interpret it as having a grave bearing on the War, which would prove to our advantage.

"Father, *I felt relieved*. I would like you to underline those words."

Nine weeks later, this prediction was strikingly fulfilled. Our offensive at El Alamein began on October 23rd; it mounted in intensity up to October 28th and 29th when it reached its climax, and by the 30th the German Army was in retreat, and ultimately driven out of Africa.

Our talk on this occasion continued by my saying: "You once told me that the War would end through 'internal combustion' in Germany."

He replied: "I don't think Germany will be able to fight to a finish. Father, there will be such strange things happen: not ordinary warfare but things outside our scope so that we shall just say, 'what an extraordinary thing to happen'."

Mr Drayton Thomas's comment on this is: "These references to the end of the War were fully justified by those closing events two years and nine months later, which included Hitler's disappearance and the surrender by his highest officers of all the German forces on land and sea and in the air. The expected guerrilla warfare, lingering on month after month and costing heavily in lives, just did not take place. Germany surrendered like a lamb, to the whole world's astonishment."

On February 29th, 1943 a friend had a talk with Philip who sent me two messages. The first concerned Russia. "All is going quite well with the War and Father is not to be discouraged if the Russians seem to get rather a set-back. It won't really be one; just when the Germans think they are holding them back they will come forward again with a rush. But for a short period it may look as if things are not going too well. After that they will come forward again, stronger than ever."

Less than two weeks after this prediction was made, the Germans launched an offensive in Russia. For a while the Russians retreated, but before long they

recovered the lost ground. Within four months this process was repeated, the Russians recovered all the ground they had lost and continued their advance.

Passing then to the campaign in Africa, Philip said: "Something will turn round and will be important in a good way in three weeks."

Three weeks later, the Eighth Army began its attack on the Mareth Line and, following up its initial success, by the middle of May the War in North Africa ended.

It will be remembered that a fortnight after the War started Philip predicted how it would finish. Nearly four years later, on August 13th, 1943, he renewed the assurances he had given. "We shan't fight our way yard by yard into Germany; it would take too long. There will be what I told you right from the start - a series of collapses, and I am expecting something terribly important by the end of October. I feel it is either the end of the War or what will bring it about."

That Autumn was marked by a Russian breakthrough which military critics held to be the most definite step to victory yet achieved in that campaign. On October 29th Paul Winterton, writing in the *News Chronicle*, said: "To-day the German Army in South Russia is in full retreat."

Of Italy Philip said: "Do you remember I told you that if she came into the War she would be very sorry? And she is. It will not be long before the Italians are able to give in. They will do more than give in. They daren't do it at present. The Germans are standing over them, but they don't do more than they can help."

We are going to be able to do just what we want with Italy, and they will help us as soon as the Germans are sufficiently driven back. The War is going well - as wars go. There will be something in about three weeks' time - some steps forward will be taken, a new kind of attack, something very important. Remember, 'about three weeks' - a new beginning, giving us fresh openings."

A particularly striking feature of this prediction was made clear in a speech of Mr Churchill's on September 23rd in that year. In answer to criticism he said that most strenuous efforts had been made by all concerned to speed up the invasion of Italy. The date which had originally been fixed for this was August 15th, but unavoidable delays had caused its postponement. A telegram from Mr Churchill sent to General Alexander on the 18th, to which he replied on the 20th, shows that neither was able even at that time to say precisely when operations would begin. Yet General Montgomery, at the head of the 8th Army and with the Canadians, opened up that campaign on the mainland of Europe by landing at various points in Italy on September 3rd, precisely at the end of the period of three weeks foretold by Philip on August 13th.

Hitler repeatedly asserted that the War would be fought to a finish but, on November 16th, 1943, Philip said: "Although Germany still has many more men it doesn't want them all wiped out, and so the War will not go on to the bitter end. We shall not have to fight our way into Berlin; we can just go in." If "we" refers to the

British, in accordance with Philip's customary use of that word in connection with the War, the forecast was correct since, while the Russians fought their way in, we stood ready to walk in at the agreed time.

"There will be something very important in March, with its aftermath or sequel in May, connected with peace. Note the steps to be taken in March and May." The powerful offensive launched by the Russians in the first week of March was followed by a succession of victories enabling them to enter Roumania on the last day of that month. This effort had its effect on our landing in Normandy since it drew off the German troops needed to reinforce the Russian front. The landing was to have been in May but bad weather caused its postponement until June 6th.

It was now May 12th, 1944, and the opening day of the long-planned expedition was drawing near when Philip gave me this message: "Remember what I said before about the spring and early summer, how the War will turn on it, and, I feel, be broken up on what is happening. The time has come for it and it won't be very long now." The invasion of France on D-Day, less than a month later, combined with the great and successful advances of the Russians in the same month, completely vindicated (as we are now in a position to know) the accuracy of this forecast.

On November 28th, 1944, two predictions of special interest were made. The War still had over five months more to run, and what exactly would bring it to an end of course no one on earth at that time knew. Philip's first prediction gave the information.

"It may seem possible for the War to drag on for a considerable time, and then it will collapse suddenly, as I have always said. I feel that the end will be unexpected yet perfectly natural. Remember what I said before about God moving in a mysterious way and using strange instruments. And that will happen again, in order to bring about the end of the War.

"A handful of the most unlikely people will be used. They will be influenced and affected at the right time and they will respond. They will, as I say, apparently be the last people in the world who would respond to divine promptings. But it has happened before, and it will happen again and it will bring about a turn of events that will shorten the War and bring it to a quick finish.

"This little group of people, I ought to add, are of course in the enemy country. I need not say enemy *countries* now! I am just referring to *the* enemy country, Germany. We have still got Japan to reckon with, I know, but for present purposes I am considering the War here, the War that affects us, the War so near an end, the War in Germany.

"There will be five people affected in the manner of which I have spoken; two very directly, the others more indirectly, but all five will play their parts in an outstanding manner."

Although Germany had strong forces in the field who were resisting stubbornly in



defence of the Fatherland, the two most powerful men in Germany were made to feel that the game was up and, contrary to all expectation, collapsed ignominiously, and first Hitler, and next Himmler, committed suicide.

The two most powerful leaders having sealed Germany's doom, the other three, Grand-Admiral Doenitz, of the Navy and Hitler's successor (despite his expressed intention to fight on), together with Keitel, Chief of the Combined General Staff, and Jodl, Chief of the Operational Staff, signed the act of surrender.

Thus, five men were used to shorten the War and bring it to a quick finish.

The second prediction included a veiled but, I think, unmistakable indication of the use of the atomic bomb on Japan, a country which Philip had just previously said we had still to reckon with. His reference to "powers that are harnessed under normal conditions", "magnetic disturbances", "something extraordinary" and, particularly, "conditions that will, in some curious way, play their part in the history of the world about the time the War is ending as well as after" are certainly applicable to the release of atomic energy and its effect (for good or evil) on human affairs not only in the War but in years to come. I will give the whole passage, which the reader is invited to study carefully and then to judge for himself.

"There is also something of which I should like to make mention now, so that it can be, as I know it will be, carefully recorded. It is something about which I cannot give details, but which will be extraordinary, about the elements. I feel that, about the time the War is ending, there will be some extraordinary - let us call it weather, atmospheric conditions, magnetic disturbances - and that they will in some curious way play their part in the history of the world, either just before or about the same time, as well as after."

It will be noticed that Philip, endeavouring to find words to hint at the mysterious phenomenon, tentatively uses the term "extraordinary weather, atmospheric conditions". Curiously enough, about the time the War ended, the weather here was "extraordinary", even for England. Amongst the headlines in the newspapers at that time I noticed, "worst storm for 20 years rocks Britain", "100 m.p.h. gale lifts roofs". On May 4th, three days before the War ended, there was snow in the morning and a thunderstorm in the evening. For the second time within three weeks, an extra or "mock" sun was seen in the Straits of Dover. These are usually portents of bad weather, but this time there followed the one spell of fine weather experienced that spring. Sailors said that the weather was altogether "funny" of late. When the barometer rose for "dry", or "less wind", gales followed; when it fell, the weather was good. Spots and haloes on and round the moon, usually infallible weather guides, now played them false.

I make the suggestion that Philip, foreseeing this, associated it with the phenomena he either did not fully understand or might not explain, or that he used it to hint at what he called "something more strange".

He continued: "I think I have told you before that you cannot have a great physical upheaval and great mental and emotional upheaval, such as this War, without disturbing other great undercurrents of power and, one might call it, loosening them, powers that are harnessed under normal conditions. I know you will be interested in this. You like to know what I can tell you about these matters, and I feel that later you will look back and say: "Yes, Philip was right. There have been extraordinary conditions in this particular way - electric currents, magnetic currents, causing great disturbances." To a certain extent, it was so after the last War, but I feel that the end of this War will yield such things more quickly than last time.

"When I speak of 'last time' I am referring to the great earthquakes in the few years immediately following the last War. But I think there will be something more strange - more phenomenal, let us call it - than ordinary earthquakes, ordinary disturbances. Just as this has been a phenomenal War, so elementary powers are marching side by side with the destructive and evil powers set up by Man himself.

"Now I will leave that," he said, and the talk concluded on a confident note. "I will just observe, as I know you will wish to hear, that everything is going the right way (as I told you it would eventually) to victory. It is certain, and will not be long now.

"I think I have told you before, and I know that other communicators have told those they speak to on earth, that the spring and summer are always important to England. It is peculiar that the spring and early summer should always affect England. There is some connection, some reason for that, and one day I hope to look into it and tell you what it means. May and June this year were very important as I indicated they would be. They have been important in each year of this War, and I feel that again they will be most important even if the War finishes before then. It may do so, but I don't think it will."

If the above has the honour of being read by any student of English history, he may care to investigate this curious assertion that spring and early summer is a period in which events (presumably both good and bad) affecting England have occurred above the average. I am not competent to pronounce on this, nor on the statement that that period was important to us in each year of the War, though everyone is aware that in June, 1940, there was the miraculous evacuation of Dunkirk, "D-Day" was in June, 1944, and the War ended in May, 1945.

The last prediction Philip made during the War was given a month before it ended. It was a forecast which one hopes may share the success of others he has given. "The clouds are parting and there are signs of more creative and better days dawning above all the murky state of things after the War. A new life is about to be born and has to be incorporated into our inward life and thinking."

## Chapter IX

### *Adventures by Night*

The reader may remember that, when speaking of the etheric body which Philip possesses on the other side, I said that there was good evidence that we own two bodies while on earth. One is that which we can both touch and see and for the existence of which no further demonstration is required. And there is another; for when St Paul wrote "there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body" he appears, by a flash of insight, to have anticipated what modern psychical research is at least in process of establishing as verified fact. This it has done largely through the study of what is called bi-location, in which the physical body is in one place and the etheric body temporarily in another, previously to their final separation at death.

Odd as this assertion may seem to those unacquainted with the subject, it receives support in the ample literature of what is called Astral Projection, in which, either involuntarily or of set purpose, a person leaves his physical body behind and goes forth in his spirit-body, retaining connection with the former by means of a tenuous etheric thread capable, apparently, of indefinite extension.

That these alleged happenings are not illusions seems to be established by the careful accounts given of them, fully documented with the evidence of those by whom the appearances of the etheric form have been witnessed. It is not possible to enter more fully here into the general consideration of the subject. Those interested can study for themselves the evidence of which the distinguished authority Professor Bozzano says: "The phenomenon of bi-location demonstrates that within the physical body there exists an indwelling etheric body." And Mr Prevost Battersby, a careful and competent writer, in his book *Man Outside Himself*, states his conviction that "the phenomenon of dissociation between a man and his body, the absolute certainty of his being able to live in another dimension, is the only obvious truth that I can claim as being without the least doubt."

I only mention these things as an introduction to a number of messages given to me suggesting that I myself have had experiences analogous to those to which I have referred. That is to say that in sleep I sometimes leave my physical body behind while, in my etheric body only, I pass over for a while to the other side, and live there a far fuller and, in many respects, more pleasant life than I lead on earth.

I cannot offer the kind of evidence for this which is available in the experience of others since, in these strange excursions, so far as I am aware, I have never been seen or recognised by anyone on earth, with one possible exception. And in order to make that intelligible I will quote something Philip said on October 18th, 1937, "Maybe, 'you', with a physical body on earth, are not really there, you are functioning outside it. We can see all round what your soul does in that collective state. You only see a very small part on earth. If you saw your collective - and not merely this - existence, you would say, 'I am perfecting a circle. Only a little of me is

functioning in this body.' The spirit 'you' needs an immensity to function in. In slumber, the little part goes to sleep imprisoned, and the real part functions. Instead of analysing, say, 'it will all work out in my mind in time - this great truth'. I wish I could make your soul see."

These are deep waters; I think of Wordsworth's "We are greater than we know." Put baldly, Philip seems to suggest that that which we know is only a small part of what we really are and that the powers our soul possesses are far beyond the bounds of our earth imagination.

The reader may consider this too weighty an introduction to the trifle I am about to relate. But was it really a trifle if perchance it was in some sort factual?

A friend of mine was receiving messages through a psychically gifted person (whom I myself had met twice, in her professional capacity only) and this was given: "There is a clergyman here. He is laughing because I can't remember his name although, he says, he has been to this house. He is interested in the surroundings (Iona) to which you are going. He says, 'Yes, I should go there too if I were not tied.' Can you place him?" "No", replied my friend. "Can it be Vale Owen?" "It is not. This is a clergyman still living on earth and who is much interested in psychic matters and in the surroundings I spoke of. He has written several books." Being asked to describe him, she said, "He is tall and thin, with thin hands and long fingers. He is about seventy, or more. He is on earth, but he laughs and says, 'I spend as much time in the Spirit-World as I do on earth'." To this she added a few personal details with which I will not trouble the reader, but only say that they were quite true, and that normally she knew nothing about them.

Of course, I do not claim this incident as evidential, only as of interest in its bearing on Philip's remarks given above. I may add my correspondent's comment: "This the first time I have had experience of an incarnate friend coming along."

The incident has one feature in common with what I have been told about my nocturnal activities, that, if some other and unknown part of myself indeed indulges in these astral jaunts, my physical brain carries over no recollection of them to my normal consciousness.

The reader will please bear in mind that I do not regard what I am now to lay before him as evidential since it is incapable of verification. If one accepts at all as veridical it is because of the mutually corroborative nature of what has come through so many independent channels. I, personally, would throw into the scale the confidence I have in some of those from whom the messages have come since, whenever what they say can be tested, I have so often been able to prove it to be reliable.

On the very first occasion of my receiving messages through psychic means I was told: "You seem to live in two worlds. Sometimes you are half in each world."

The following nine paragraphs are short typical extracts from what has been told me on the subject, each through a different Agent.

**“Your spirit can leave the body even when you not asleep.”**

**“Two or three nights ago, didn’t you remember going out in sleep?” “Do I go out?” “Yes, you do.” “To any particular person?” “You have contacted a friend and you both go voyaging. You did meet even if you are not certain about it. It is difficult for you to be so because you are psychic in so many ways and it is an unstabilised power as yet. Philip asks if you remember about three nights ago when you came to him and travelled with him and had a conversation on these matters.”**

**“I have seen you before - in the Spirit World. You come over in sleep.”**

**“You have been taken out of your body so that there should be planted in your spirit a knowledge of the spheres concerning which you will write. It is not in the normal state that you remember, but only under power. You go often to the other side in sleep. You don’t remember because the limitations of your earthly body shut it off from your consciousness, but it is all there, and when the power to do so comes, your soul will be able to unshackle itself from the fetters that bind it.”**

**“You are not to think that you are, to any extent, not doing all you might do, for you are being used out of the body as well as in it. Now, out of the body you take on yourself some of your strongest and best characteristics in former lives. On such occasions, you would not always be recognised by your ordinary physical relations if they saw you in your etheric body. But you know yourself very well and feel more yourself than at this moment.” Philip here took up the theme: “Father, you sometimes have a strange sense of unreality and an impersonal feeling towards certain things and people. Of course! Because they don’t ‘belong’ - they are only present contacts. But when you get out of these coverings you are your old self plus all that you have developed in this life. You help with work we are trying to do, so never think you are standing still. At the back of all that has been written about ‘standing’ and ‘waiting’ yet ‘serving’ while you do it is a reality. You can’t always see how, but of course you are doing it - out of the body. What you do and think and develop in this body enables you to work all the better out of it. Thus, you see the benefit of standing and waiting - you enable the soul-body to be both self-conscious, self-expressive and independent.”**

**“You are taken into the Spirit World in sleep. Your mother thinks it would help you so much if you could remember even a glimpse of it, because, she says, you are living on a terribly hard material plane at the present time.”**

**The following suggests that the oblivion may not be without a purpose: “Your soul goes into the Spirit World at times, but seldom can you remember. It would not do, since Man has as much as he can think of already.”**

**“When his father passes over he will find himself so very much linked with Philip. He has experienced so much with him in sleep that Philip has been educating him in that other life. He says, ‘It is of great value to you to come over at night, to share the life, as you do. It is a very great delight to me to have you coming over. One day, you**

will realise what it has meant, and never will you regret for a moment that I passed over as I did, without earth-experience. It was for the benefit of us both.’ “

All that follows was given to me through yet another Agent, who also contributed certain details (recorded in the next chapter), the sequel to which was of a definitely evidential kind.

“In sleep you meet some still on earth who are dear to you. Your souls blend and by a natural law your work is necessarily together.” I spoke of having no recollection of these experiences beyond vague dreams. The reply was: “Muddled dreams are due to your coming back through the astral-plane of everybody’s thoughts: that causes the confusion.”

Philip: “There is the other ‘you’ floating about here in sleep. If conditions are clear you would travel far and come where we are, but if not, you would stay nearer the earth. Your real life is here.”

William Stainton Moses (to whom I shall refer later): “You come over at night. We take you to a certain region and there is given to you, as you know, a work on earth which will be done, but it comes with a new spirit of truth which is over mankind. We are endeavouring that you should write your version of truth in your own way. I myself have gone on to indescribable regions but we come back to those able to link on to us.”

George Vale Owen: “You are a bit of a ‘doubting Thomas’ and when we meet you on this side you complain of your inability to get through what your spirit-self knows. It knows a whole lot more than you think. The difficulty is in carrying it through. It is ‘seeing through a glass darkly’ on earth, but in this world you see things ‘face to face’. Your work is far above this ordinary mediumship and noise of clustering spirits. Like wandering in a calm, cool cloister out of the heat of modernity - that is where your mind really lives.”

Philip: “I look round upon your earth-surroundings, especially in the early morning when you are back in your body. For you to remember what you have done I have to wait till night-time falls again. It is like a separate memory to you.”

Concerning the departed wife of a clerical neighbour I was told: “You have been so kind to her you met her over here. You always radiate a friendly power and are happy when you come over. Earth is a very contrary place. If you knew how much you live out of it you wouldn’t worry a bit. As you desire on earth so you live in the next world. You may go far or only a little way, but that does not alter ‘you’. When you get out of the body you feel that a great weight has left you, but still think in a logical, reasonable manner. On the next plane you help more people than on earth: here you are supremely joyous, you radiate joy all round you.”

It is of interest to compare this description with a quotation from the author, Mr Prevost Battersby, whom I have previously mentioned: “A point on which all accomplished projectors are agreed is that nothing in one’s physical existence can be

compared with the inexpressible sense of well-being, joyous competence and mental clarity which makes the etheric double seem such a spiritual certainty.”

The question will naturally form itself in the reader’s mind, “Supposing there is any truth in what you have been told, of what use is it if you remember nothing about it?” The answer, I suppose, would be that, though it is not transmitted to my earth consciousness through the material brain, it is stored up in the superconscious mind and its effects are to a certain extent felt in this life, but their full value is realised when one returns to the sphere in which they originated. If to the sceptical reader that all seems a bit up in the clouds let him go on to the next chapter, in which one part of it appears to be linked to solid earthly fact.

## Chapter X

### *How a Book was Written*

What I have called “a solid, earth fact” is the existence of a book (now in its sixth edition) entitles *The Last Abbot*, a story of the closing years of the great Abbey at Bury Saint Edmunds erected as a shrine for the body of the martyred King Edmund, the site of which is some four miles from my home in Suffolk.

The book appears to have been foreseen by my friends on the other side long before the thought of writing it had entered my own mind. They apparently took a great interest in it and co-operated with me in its composition.

Since the idea of the book originated with people whom I am alleged to have met in my nocturnal wanderings, some account of it may appropriately follow the preceding chapter.

It began in this way. I did not know George Vale Owen during his earth-life, but in April, 1932, I was told that he was interested in me and that by becoming passive, and receptive to spirit-ministry, I should be enabled to do work which would take the form of writing inspirationally.

In May of the same year, “the Impressionist” sent me an account of an effort she had been making on my behalf. She said that she had been in touch with Mr Vale Owen and had been told that he and others had been looking for someone to give a certain kind of spiritual teaching and had “spotted A.F.W. who was to put down his ideas and G.V.O. would help. A.F.W. could write a delightful thing by withdrawing inwardly. It is for some years hence, 1938. He will remember that year, I think.” (The year of the Munich Crisis, six years later.)

Mrs de Morgan, in her remarkable book, *From Matter to Spirit*, published eighty years ago, says that her experience was that the best communicators were invariably correct in the predictions they made except in the matter of time. It was so with the forecast recorded above. I did write a book which, at that time, I had no thought of, but the writing was completed a year earlier than the date given. It is only fair to add that the subsequent revision of the first draft occupied at least a year, so that the

total work required took the time stated.

At an interview I had with a third Agent eleven months later, Mr Vale Owen purported to be present and said what the reader may think it would be more becoming in me to have suppressed. I can only say that no one could have been more astonished than I was at being credited with having done what was described. If the account is correct, then Philip is right and during sleep I am certainly a very different person from the quite ordinary individual I know myself to be in my waking hours on earth. Whatever be the explanation of it, I feel that what was said (and what followed later) is so unaccountable in any normal way that it may be thought worth recording. This, then, is what I was told. "You are living near a very old place - there is a very ancient religious spirit there, to do with monasteries. The place is historic. You have helped a lot of earth-bound people connected with it. They try to give you evidence through the writing. There is a bishop here who lived centuries ago near where your church is. There are ruins there: there was a monastery. Beneath what are now ruins, two sects of religions were warring - Catholic and Protestant. These people were very earth-bound and you helped and liberated them. Now they purport to help you. This venture of writing will get more powerful: you will receive evidence from unknown people and feel that you get it. And this bishop - Thomas - would like one day to speak to you of the ruins. You may get writing from a group of brothers regarding the structure and history of the place, which you will be able to verify. The bishop bows to you and says, 'Brother, we are all one in the Faith and you have helped us by your psychic light'." Here I naturally expressed astonishment. "You don't understand. Your aura is so bright that it disturbs the astral conditions. You have helped a great many. Mr Owen and the bishop explain that earth-bound spirits will not change their thoughts. The dragon 'fear' keeps them round the church in a condition generally hostile. It takes them a long time to understand. Now, in a psychic way, you have convinced them of a higher altitude of mind. They are gradually getting integrated into higher forces. They would never listen to anyone over here telling them about a different condition, but you yourself - your psychic light - disturbed them." I asked what the light was like. "Like the bluish light from a diamond - elusive, indescribable, iridescent."

I have a fellow-feeling for anyone who, upon a first reading of the foregoing, sets it down as fantastic rubbish. But further reflection introduces doubts. I am, in the first place, convinced that none of it was picked up from my own mind. For, in the light of subsequent events, I find it difficult to realise that up to this time, although I had lived for seven years only four miles from the site of the Abbey, I had little knowledge of its past and only the slightest interest in what remained of it.

Then, was this all a concoction of the Agent's subconscious mind? From carefully guarded talks I have had with her, I have the impression that such ideas are quite foreign to her particular mentality. I doubt, for instance, if she even knew so much



as that Bury once possessed an Abbey, and certainly historical details would be beyond her. Nevertheless, if this incident stood alone, some sort of normal explanation of it might plausibly be suggested. But it does not stand alone. It will be noticed, first, that it fits in with, and further elucidates, the prediction made through the other two Agents, that I should later on be doing a particular kind of impressional writing. And what I now propose to lay before the reader shows how this “theme” was time after time commented upon, and that the book, which a competent critic generously described as “showing real scholarship”, was actually written by one who had hardly any previous acquaintance with the subject. Taken together, all the alleged facts dovetail into at least a consistent account of what at first sight may appear in, the highest degree improbable.

Some light upon the particular way in which the book would be written was first given me by Mr Stainton Moses, who, when on earth, possessed outstanding psychic gifts. He purported to be present at one of my earliest appointments for communication and has frequently been so since then. I have a deep affection for this notable man who has been so good to me. In October, 1933 (two and a half years before I commenced my book), he said: “The next book you write will be started suddenly and written quickly.” This proved true, since the impulse to commence writing was sudden and the book was written in eight months, which, for me, was “quickly”, especially in work of that particular kind, carried on, too, amid many interruptions and distractions. He added: “The neophyte cannot receive unless he has actually himself the power to obtain. You are a receiver, and also a giver of what you yourself feel.” This seems to me an accurate description of the way in which *The Last Abbot* was written. It was not a matter of simple automatism in which the writer is a passive instrument. A later message, referring to Stainton Moses, said: “He turns a power on you which enriches your imagination and, on the psychic plane, gives you the stimuli to produce.” Thus, in composing a historical narrative, I was not spared the labour of consulting authorities and collecting facts.

Looking back, I see how I appear to have been guided to the right sources for much of my material. Perhaps I may be allowed to give two small instances. I wished to obtain Dr Montague James’s indispensable book on the Abbey, issued many years ago. Upon inquiring at the firm in Cambridge which had published it I was told it was out of print and copies were unobtainable. By the first post next morning I got what I wanted, with a letter explaining that, after I had gone, an assistant had the impulse to go up to an attic and had found a solitary copy which they had not known was there.

On another occasion I was attracted by the title of a book on a second-hand stall: *The Oxford Reformers*. Thinking vaguely that the subject was “The Oxford Movement” in which I was interested, I opened it and found that it was an account of the Tudor “Reformers”, Erasmus, More, Colet and others, and that it contained information of great use for my purpose. There were too many instances of this kind

to permit me to think of them as due merely to chance.

Having been led in various ways to discover the relevant historical background, I was, I believe, helped further in making use of it - in creating the appropriate "atmosphere". I have thought since that one humbling criticism the book received - that it was "too consciously archaic" - might perhaps be a testimony to its accuracy in that respect. As a matter of fact, I never made the slightest conscious attempt to impart historical verisimilitude to my narrative by the use of archaic forms of speech. The sentences "formed themselves", or, rather, they perhaps flowed naturally under the inspiration of those who themselves had been accustomed to speak in that way.

But I have been anticipating a little. The actual writing of the book was still over two years ahead when the way in which it would be written was first hinted at. Meanwhile, further information came through from the other side.

In August, 1935, my daughter was told that I had a story begun or planned, and in November of the same year, Stainton Moses, through another Agent said to me: 'I will help you with the foundation of the book. It will be concerned with the interpreting of souls who are imposed upon by blatant people who crush them, and will show the unfolding of the soul and its freedom.' It was only after the book was completed that I realised that this was a true account of the way I had interpreted the meaning of Abbot John Reeve's life. Three months later, through the same Agent, he threw further light on the nature of this kind of writing: "When you write, do you not live with the characters you describe? So with the next book: they exist, they live. You visualise, but many things come into your mind which never thought of - they are given to you psychically. This is a greater power than waiting for the pencil to move" (i.e., in Automatic Writing).

In February, 1936, I had my first meeting with a lady of outstanding psychic gifts who passed on to me a message from Stainton Moses, who was described as present. As with others, so now, what was said on the subject was entirely spontaneous. I was told that Mr Moses spoke of a new book: "He tries to work with you - impressing you. You two are what he calls collaborators; your mind and his in close touch. You have got the framework for the book, and suddenly you will get an impetus to write. Not just yet: wait till a little bit later." This prediction was correct, for I see by my notes that I started writing seven weeks later.

In the following month a further message was given: "This book is about ancient people, the actual people come to you. Mentally, you get their ways very well. Write at six in the evening: they come to you at dusk, and in time you will begin to feel you know them. What you write is historical and extremely real. You will get tired of it in the middle - about July - leave it for a while. They wait to pour more power into you. In September all will come back. Then it will come quickly and you will finish up well. You don't really want to write this book? It is not the theme or subject that appeals to you, but you will be pleased about it afterwards. Some purpose is running

right through it. I am told to tell you that because a group is trying to help you.'

All that was verifiable in this communication was quite correct. Being very much in need of rest and a holiday, I did cease work from July onward for a time, but completed the book (as I have said) in just over eight months after it was begun, so that, in view of the amount of research needed, it may be considered to have come "quickly".

On this occasion Vale Owen showed a curiously intimate knowledge of the work I had in hand. "You are omitting their coarseness," he said, "making them too refined! They ate and drank too much. You are going back a long way, to some inter-religious struggles. A king is concerned, and monks. Some atmosphere is getting round you which was an actuality. A monastery is in a troubled state and the monks hide things. It comes with a change of religion. The book is about the life of one man: he was not very happy by the look of him. The actual people have impressed you - they lived not far from where you are. You are bringing to life a very well-known man buried there. He founded much by his influence. The subject will interest many. You seem to feel that man's nature. His influence will come upon you later. You know who I am talking about - a king.

Ask for his help and it will come: you will get into his atmosphere." (The reader with Catholic sympathies may be interested in this advocacy of the Invocation of Saints!)

"Do you remember telling me about the monks?" I asked, referring to what he had said to me over three years previously. "The earth-bound monks!" he at once replied. "That was a marvellous piece of work because you have been able to get a change of ideas into their minds, and to repay you they are trying to help you in return. It is difficult to explain, but you have released them. And now they - they are very gentle souls - come to you. These layers of thought-matter are most extraordinary - if people go on increasing thought round them, it is difficult to get beyond it. They depended upon a God to save them but did not depend on their own God-given powers to liberate themselves. Truth makes free - freedom through an idea. They worshipped *at* the idea and did not develop it within. They know not time. In the next world time is long or short according to the way you think of it. Thus, when they come back, they forget your earth-time. Now can you see what time means to the earth-bound? These men thought they had not been here long. You broke through their spell. In sleep you went there and thought about them. One possessing your knowledge breaks through that spell, and you made them understand. You lend the power of Truth in you. As in a fairy-tale, you appeared to them as a bright spirit and brought them knowledge. It is all a question of mind, not of place. They looked upon you as a leader because you liberated them. They come about dusk - after Compline."

(In connection with their "coming" it is interesting that a clairvoyant, while on a visit to my house, said: "Attached to this place is the spirit-form of a man in a monk's habit.") Mr Vale Owen continued: "A man lives with his ideas. That is the context of

your book and now you know why you are working it out. A brother, Anselm" [one of the abbots of Bury was so named] "comes to you. Do you know? And Brother P" [Is this "Peter, the sub-sacrist" of the book?] "and one great one, Edmund, and another, Sigismunde - an old name. He is inviting the others to go on pilgrimage, and you are to lead them in some kind of mental pilgrimage. They are most grateful to you. Don't force the book. The power comes back when the days draw in, and it will come clearly. You are getting the writing in this interesting way, and you will see that it did not come out of your own mind."

In the middle of September of that year it seems that the renewed inspiration promised for that month had not come, for Philip gave this message to his sister: "Father is slow with his new book on those ancient characters; he has got stuck a bit. There is a difficulty in getting spoken language through. About five of them come to help him - an abbot, who is very beautiful, a couple of Brothers and a kingly figure. They walk often to where he is because they are used to the place - the originals exist in the psychic or astral atmosphere. There was, a healing-well there, disused now, and there were pilgrimages to it." [I wonder if this was the "fair spring of water" which William of Worcester describes as being in the crypt of the Abbey Church, beneath the shrine of St Edmund.]

Three weeks later, through the same Agent, further information was given, this time to myself. The Operator appeared to be shown mental pictures of persons and events connected with the Abbey, in which the identity of the "kingly figure" referred to on the previous occasion is indicated. His being spoken of as "young" is interesting, since Edmund was twenty-nine when he was killed by the Danes. The Operator seems to have had only a vague idea of what she was talking about, thus giving the impression that she was recording, and not inventing, what she described.

She said: "Can you visualise a monastery or abbey with which a young king had something to do? When you are writing they try to bring the atmosphere so that you should sense it: you are getting even the details. If you wait a little they are sure to come, several of them, and they are vastly interested. Was someone murdered there? I saw a picture of a man being killed. . . . I think he was a martyr - he has dark hair, a rather longish nose and is clean-shaven now." [The "now" is curious since Edmund is usually depicted with a beard.] "He had such 'divine grace', he calls it. He has a wonderful face. When on earth he was very ascetic; there was much mental strain, but the force in him drew people. What does 'E' mean? He says, 'I am that one of whom you write', but he begged you to know that he was inspired for what he did by faith and grace. He has been used in his country; he speaks of 'pilgrimage to me'. His body was buried near where you are. You will see later why you have been drawn to live near there, because there is great power in that place. After your book has been read there will be pilgrimage there. You will make that live which has been covered up. His power is so great that it makes me shiver. 'ED' is in his name. He was pioneer and brought precious seed to England. He describes himself as grim

and saturnine, but inspired almost fanatically with his purpose. The force which was left behind you are going to reopen or revive. There are things coming out which have been closed down so long.

“Again comes a period when you yourself will be enabled to say, ‘I received this from the man himself; he inspired me.’ He used to pray a lot and he founded an order.” [This appears to be incorrect. It may be a misinterpretation of the fact that for some 30 years after his death his body was guarded by a small community founded for that purpose. What follows seems to refer to the Abbey which came afterwards.] “You would be surprised at the power of grace, so that many left the life of the world. But after, they were disorganised and dispersed for a while. Was he a Catholic? That is why that force was destroyed and the place desecrated. ‘Had we been able to continue our holy work we could have changed much of the world.’ Force was against them. He felt that another crusade of feeling would arise later and spiritualise that part. Do get the spirit of it and understand.”

I asked who came with him. “Some in costumes and some in robes. There are one or two lay brothers: they seem very amusing. They speak such queer English and a lot of Latin. A younger man came. He said he helped you a lot because you are depicting a younger man. They have gone on. A great light is round this one. For your sake we are re-living the past. We wanted to do for you what has been done for Glastonbury” - most interesting information – “so this group round that place will arouse the ancient interest.’

“Have you been there on a moonlight night? You might sense something. It has some walls standing. Crusaders walk through the ruins. They have crosses on their breastplates. There is a kind of stone land-mark - almost like a milestone - outside in the road, which was put up as a sign of what the place was. A kind of broken cross; very old. The crusader said that had a special meaning where they were concerned.” [Crosses seem to have been erected on the roads leading to the town at the boundaries. The base of one of those crosses is still on the original spot.] “The vision was brought me for a little while. I hear they have interested many in our world who were connected with it. These men in armour would know, the place. There were forests all round. It was placed there on account of its position. Was there a river there?” [A little river, now not much more than a stream, flows through the Abbey grounds.] “Why do you mix up with all these things? I have the force on me. Your son is very pleased because you can’t place where you got the idea of the book originally. It is all as though built up in you. You have been writing on conditions in that place which you did not understand, and they want to give you a little reward for it.”

As an instance of the spontaneous manner in which references to the book were made, I quote the following: “A book not quite finished” [I finished two months later]. “It is different from your other books - on different lines, a new departure. Have you jumped back for something? I am taken back to the past - a long time -

centuries ago.” “With what building is it connected?” I asked. “One connected with power and religion: a lot of the book centres round people connected with it. A real building of which something exists now. Is part of it down - a ruin - either fallen or taken down?” [An accurate description, since the Abbey and its buildings were partly suffered to decay and, for the sake of building material, partly destroyed. Some was even blown up with gunpowder!] “A town beginning with a B. Wait! This place has links older than four hundred years.” [The period of which I was writing.] “The place, not the book, has to do with them. The book takes it up from the later period.”

The writing of *The Last Abbot* was completed on January 28th, 1937. Three days later, a friend of mine was given this message: “Your brother tried to help bring the old atmosphere to the gentleman in his book. The manuscript is really made by these ancient people, monks and others, impinging themselves on his mind. You are going to be his amanuensis.” This prediction may be thought to have been fulfilled by my friend’s kindly undertaking the typing of the book a year later, when I had completed the work of revision.

It would seem that she, as well as myself, had attracted the notice of some of the people who appear in *The Last Abbot*, for, three months after the first draft had been completed, she had two experiences which she described as follows:

“My hostess, another visitor and I were sitting before the fire, when my fellow-visitor clairvoyantly described someone dressed in curious clothes (as she expressed it), which I recognised as a cardinal’s hat and scarlet robe. She, obviously, knew nothing about that; being a nice but quite uneducated woman. This man was said to have been helping me and also someone I knew, in something to do with monks.”

Two or three days later, my friend asked through another Agent: “Who was the cardinal described on Saturday?” “He was a guide. You know guides are around you for the work. I say ‘guides’ because it covers all the ground. You can have other people, not exactly guides, but who assist you. They are generally qualified in some way to help.” “Then the cardinal was not the one I thought?” “Yes, it was that one. He was a well-known man who has passed over. You know he has modified his views a lot since he passed; he has become more spiritual. Now he is making up for the things he did on earth. Don’t you know he has a link with Philip’s father? It is the same one. The monks are all are linked up. The cardinal is not only helping but is being helped by contact with you and Philip’s father. People think that men who were known all over the world, as this man was, are in a high position over here, but he has a lot to work out. It wasn’t always right things that did. Philip’s father is being helped by the group on our side, but is helping them too. You help them by allowing them to help, and they love helping. It cuts both ways. You are important and they are important, wheels within wheels, links within links.”

Another spirit-visitant was then described.

"I am getting someone else - not the cardinal. A rather important person, linked up with you too. And I am getting a 'G', I don't know why: it isn't this one's name. Is it someone who would have been closely connected with him on earth?" "I don't know." [It is just possible that George Cavendis may have been referred to: he was Wolsey's faithful servant, and, in writing the book, I was impressed to describe him as a valued friend of John Reeve's.]

The Operator continued the description of the "rather important person", which certainly fits Abbot Reeve, "I don't feel that this one has passed recently: he is rather advanced and an 'old soul'. You have had some contact with him lately. Had he an unhappy life - rather hard and difficult? He was in touch with earth in a difficult, rather peculiar, time. Why do I get a place away from here? Rather a long journey away, linked up with him?" [The interview was held over a hundred miles from Bury.] "I feel he was linked with people who wore robes and with ceremonial and processions - he had been much connected with that kind of thing when he was on earth. He was looked up to by a lot of people. Did he have a sudden passing? There was an abrupt ending: not lately, a long time ago. He was living in another world: another 'atmosphere' altogether."

Even after I had finished the writing, and presumably my unseen friends had completed their task, they still gave evidence of their interest in it. A rather remarkable instance of this occurred in May, 1937, when a clairvoyant asked me: "Was a crucifix or cross given or left to you? Square, dark-coloured, a not over-good one. Not of a stereotyped shape, but thus." She moved her hands indicating the shape of a Maltese cross. The Prior of the Benedictine Abbey of Buckfast, in answer to my inquiry, said: "The shape of the cross shown is very Benedictine and has been used here on the gables of the church over doorways." It will be remembered that Bury Abbey was a monastery of the Benedictine Order.

The clairvoyant continued: "The man who shows the crucifix is a monk with a row of beads and the cross on the end. The letter 'P' came with him: 'Prior'. Are you mentioning a prior in something are doing? He has a tonsured head - a very old man towards the end. The letter 'B' comes." [Bury?] "He says, 'I am - or was - the prior of the period of which you are writing.'" He went on to give me a message referring to the Abbey which I shall include amongst others of a similar kind in the next chapter.

Five months afterwards, the same Agent said: Mr Stainton Moses praised this book. Apart from being a record, there is sound philosophy running through it, but the people in the book were surprised that you made them out to be so wonderful, because they were not! They now think they were very primitive. Do you mention an old bell used for some purpose, continually tolled? This question refers to a passage printed on another page of the book: "At times, in my earlier years, the monotonous nature of our life was well nigh unbearable; the remorseless summons of the bell beating on my brain till I could have cried out in agony." The reference indicates supernormal knowledge of the contents of book. But, should the suggestion be made

that the Agent had read the story and remembered the passage, even though it seems a pity to spoil the effect of so satisfactory an explanation, I am obliged to state that the matter was mentioned seven years before the book was published.

For it is one thing to write a book and quite another to see it in print, so, although *The Last Abbot* was completed on January 28th, 1937, it was not published until October, 1944. During this long time, my unseen friends frequently assured me that it would certainly be published. In March, 1938, its many rejections were accounted for in this way: "It is a lot to do with the publishers' readers. Manuscripts very seldom get to the chief. We are waiting for you to get into touch with a head, in a personal interview." Almost exactly six years later, the head of the publishing house, which subsequently issued the book, to whom with very little hope I had sent the much-travelled typescript, most unexpectedly invited me, to meet him. This was Mr Edmund Ward, whose surname is of interest in connection with another prediction made at a time when I had begun to lose hope. I had asked: "Is anyone going to publish the book?" The answer was: "Yes, someone whose name begins with 'W'." This forecast made (as was the previous one) in October, 1937, was fulfilled in October, 1944, when the book was published, seven years later.

I have given a straightforward account of the circumstances which preceded, accompanied and followed the writing of *The Last Abbot*. Whatever be the explanation of the experiences I have recorded, the experiences themselves are facts and, as such, may appear worth consideration.

## Chapter XI

### *Hidden Treasure*

In the previous chapter I said that in 1933 I was told that I might get writing from a group of monks about the structure and history of Bury Abbey, which I should be able to verify. This would also provide information about things "underground". Three years later, reference was made to the same matter and this message purported to come from one of my unseen friends: "For your sake we are re-living the past. We wanted to do for you what has been done for Glastonbury."

The reference is to the psychological experiment made by Mr Frederick Bligh Bond and his friend which resulted in the discovery of the Edgar Chapel at Glastonbury, all trace of which had disappeared. The information they received was alleged to be derived from the memories of the monks who had once lived there. The inference of my message seemed to be that a group of the monks of Bury wished to do something of the same kind for their old home.

They certainly had a remarkable field provided for their endeavours, for I have it on the authority of one of our leading experts that the site of the Abbey Church is the most promising sphere for exploration of any in England, since no excavations have yet been made adequate to the importance of one of the most illustrious and sacred spots on English soil. It seems likely that before long work may begin under expert



guidance, and it will be of immense interest to me to know how far what is discovered verifies the information that has been given me from time to time during the past ten years. Apart from the hopes expressed and the information alleged to come from the monks themselves, I should think it unlikely that movable objects of value will be found. For, either they were so skilfully hidden as to defy discovery or, if the secret of their whereabouts became known to ill-disposed persons, the hiding-places may have been rifled. The chances are better that some of the architectural details given may be verified.

However, on May 22th, 1944, I received this message: "Philip has a feeling that some of the things they have told you about, over a considerable time - and you will know what they mean if they say 'some of the things below ground' - will be brought to light, later on, not just yet. 'There will be discoveries made and I think they will come in such a way that my father will never have dreamed of. They will be of interest and will verify some things, if not all, that I have told him at these meetings. It will be interesting to see how they work out.'"

If the proposed excavations are undertaken fairly soon, as is hoped, one anticipation, at any rate, in the message given in 1944 will be fulfilled: "The things below ground will be brought to light, later on, not just yet." And, since the greater part of what may be underground has lain there undisturbed for four hundred years, if they should be brought to light at last and before long, the forecast may be considered a remarkable one.

I propose now to give some account of what I have been told. A rash thing to do, for the prudent course would be to wait and see what happens before committing myself. But to be of evidential value, the messages must be put on record before anything is discovered. And this I have done, for I am prepared to take the risk since I am entirely convinced of the bona-fides of my informants. I can only hope that they will be so obliging as to impress the investigators with the most speedy and effective method of making the required discoveries. For, unlike Mr Bligh Bond, a competent architect and archaeologist, my knowledge of both these subjects is rudimentary, so that I was unable to put the kind of questions which he asked with such good effect. That has, at least, this advantage, that nothing I was told can reasonably be supposed to have been due to a tapping of my own knowledge. And, lest it might be supposed that what I had read of Mr Bligh Bond's work suggested to me the idea of trying to do something of the same kind, I affirm most strongly that in this matter, as in all else purporting to come from the Bury monks, I was taken completely by surprise. From the nature of the case it is obvious that nothing I have been told about what is said to lie beneath the ruins can have come through the ordinary channels of information. It was given to me through two Agents, working entirely independently of each other, but both, apparently, in touch with supernormal sources of knowledge. I shall designate them by the letters "A" and "B". All that had been told me of my acquaintance with the monks and of what they

proposed to do came through the Agent "A". But the first attempt to give details about what was underground and to provide clues to its whereabouts came through "B". It was she through whom, on December 1st, 1936, I received what now follows. I must explain that at that time I was working on my book, *The Last Abbot*, which I finished just under two months later. This is what is referred to in the opening sentence of the message. "The book is not finished. Why is Philip raising his arm and pointing the way - in the book? This book is very important. It stands out from your other writings; it is on different lines, a new departure. Have you journeyed back for something? I am taken back to the past - a long time, centuries ago. Then, I feel another country is brought in - a cross-current of thought about another country, not a short way off. You come to it by ship, across the sea. The action is connected with that country, going back to early days. Another race has come to England, an invasion. The women of that period are in flowing draperies, with flowing head-dresses and hanging sleeves."

I conjecture that the Operator is here getting glimpses of the incursions of the Danes, by whom Edmund was murdered. I asked if what she had been saying had any connection with a building. She replied: "Yes, a large building connected with power and religion, and a lot of your book centres round people concerned with it. A real building of which something exists now. It is in the country, a long way from here." [We were more than a hundred miles from Bury at that time.] "Is part of it down - a ruin, either fallen or taken down? A town beginning with B is not far from it. Wait! this place has got links older than 400 years." [The period of which I was writing.] "I am getting back much further. The place - not the book - has to do with them. The book takes it up from the later period. Burials - important burials - near there. Why do I get a 'J', 'JO', connected with that place? Why do I see a place with steps leading down deep? And I feel that what is deep down there is connected with the book. I am going down to try and find something." "What?" I asked. "Something hidden there - put there. There are two sorts of conditions down there. A grave and a sort of safe for putting things in. Wait! 'Something was put there 'for safety'. Is it metal - and something rolled up? A roll and metal are connected: vases, or something like it. A vessel or a vase. Oh, I see plainly now. Men, and a man putting things so safely in a sideways hole. That is where I get 'safe' from. This was down steps in the ground, but" [i.e., at that time] "it was not a hole in the ground but in the side of something. A man was standing and puts things carefully in it. A man wearing a brown dressing gown."

Philip corrected this, in the Direct Voice, with the word, "Habit". The Operator continued: "I thought it was a dressing gown, because there was a rope round the waist. Not a young man, a bit bald. He stoops forward and pushes things in very slowly And right to the back. Something is making a little light - a lamp - because it is very dark, and the lamp is to see where he puts the things. A kind of roll of paper."

"Was it put with anything?"

“Yes. Put inside the hole. He fixes it inside something.”

“Is it still there?”

“It has never been taken away.”

“Are we to find it?”

“There is that idea in mind. Something is linked with it. Is it a church? You know the part of the church that the altar is near: like an archway opening. I am up there - the top end of the church. I have the feeling I have gone down below from somewhere at that point but a bit to one side.” [Possibly an entrance to the crypt.] “I’m sure that’s right. And it was through an opening that I went down the steps, and when I got down the steps, I have to turn round to the right, because nothing that faces me matters somehow in connection with this. I have got to give you this: it is even blacker when I turn to the right, and now I see something like an arch, a hole or an opening, not very high. I see it so plainly. I see that the arch is made of old stonework, broken away, and it has formed a rough, awkward sort of doorway. The stone is not quite straight - it is curved, and at some time one stone seemed to have had markings. This was already old at the time I am speaking of. This part was older still. I am in a part once used a lot, and it was once above ground. On the pieces of stone forming this opening it is a bit ornamental - some kind of design - not what they would put in cellars. I have to go through that to get to the hole in the wall. Now, there was a room there into which light used to come again, and there was another way up, because I see a light coming down through the opposite end of that room which is neither round nor square. Light comes from high up in the corner. I know what you are trying to say, Philip! People used this room a lot at one time, and about 400 years ago it was still used, but not as it once had been. It is rather deep down now. Do you think there were passages down there, now blocked up? The only one I can get into is down these steps, turn to the right, through an opening, then I come to the doorway where I reach the passage. I only step across it to the other room.”

“Why all this?”

“Because in the hole in the wall something very important is hidden. The man in brown puts things away. These things are connected with much longer ago, centuries further. Oh! oh! going back to the Holy Land? Going back to the Bible or the Holy Land. A lot of gold with precious stones in, too. Do they come from the East? They are there now.”

“How can we locate them?”

“They are in more than one place, but we have got one to start with.”

“But how locate?”

“That is very difficult.”

“What about the stairs we were told of?” [Stairs of which my daughter and I had

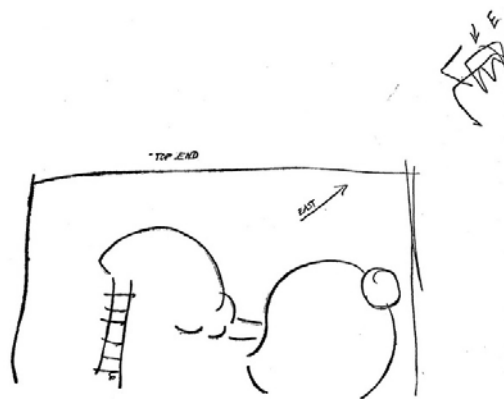
been told by the Abbey Gardens' official - they are outside the North Transept.]

"That might be one. But the second lot where light came in would not be known. A different part of the building. You know, if you take those stairs you know about and went down, you turn to the right. Then, don't keep right round all the time, but you bear a bit right. Before you have got to the other stairs, you have turned slightly left. But you haven't got back left."

"Are they near the Chapter House?"

"He (Philip) can't get it that way, but by the direction. Cross something to go through the door-way for the other room. He is convinced that some of the people connected are still interested and - this is so difficult to explain - to get in touch with them over the earthly things we must come back to such earthly conditions. You can imagine that a good deal of the old attitude of mind comes back if they identify themselves sufficiently with those conditions to be of any use in the matter. They have to identify themselves with their past limitations and inhibitions. Then they close up against you but we can get a certain amount from them by a kind of psychometry and make our deductions."

She asked for my pencil and writing pad and drew this rough sketch of the rooms and stairs. I asked: "Which is East?" and she marked it.



"What did they do with the Martyr's body?"

"It was buried near there, not an ordinary grave. But a body put away there. Has there ever been a fire in this district?" [A most disastrous fire took place in the Abbey Church in 1465.] , "I feel a *fire*. He (Philip) has the feeling - you may find an opportunity to go further if you keep the matter 'warm'. Talk about it to people in ordinary ways. Go and see it when you can. And you will find that from some ordinary channel something will open out to help you about it. Saint . . ." [she could not get the name]. "There is a woman connected, a holy woman."

"Name?"

"A holy woman of the Church wearing trailing robes. But a man is the important one. Knives - was someone hurt or killed with one? - or a sword, or something of steel?"

“Was this the Martyr?”

“Is ‘E’ to do with him?”

“Have you got anything to say about John Reeve?”

“I think that was the one he was trying to get before, ‘J’, ‘JO’. He is all mixed up with it though he is not the man who puts the things in the place, but linked with it. More than one are concerned in putting things away, a community. The burying of the man and the putting things away are connected. The things were being hidden. I feel that they were putting the things away because the man was killed” [or “because of the man who was killed”?]. “There is a link between them.”

This seemed a good start, directions being carefully given as to what one must do after descending the subterranean staircase. The difficulty was to find this, for, in spite of their newly conceived desire to impart knowledge, as soon as they returned to their old associations, the monks instinctively reverted to their former anxiety to keep secret what they had hidden and the only way of getting information was by a kind of telepathic reading of what was in their minds. This explanation given by Philip seems likely to be of interest to psychic students.

Five months later, April Both, 1937, the other Agent, “A”, takes up the tale.

“Several of the monks impinge their minds on you. They have attached themselves to you through that old place and they are very interested in your book. It links up something very big in that period. The place still exists: only the material walls are pulled down. On the spirit-plane it is not destroyed. The book might bring people to that place, because - wasn’t a great man murdered there?”

“Is there any treasure there?”

“There was some, but there was a muddle about it - a very hurried departure. I feel that it did not leave much. They sprang a surprise on them, and there was something like a gold cup that they did not take.”

“Is there a body left there?”

“Yes. In the precincts near.”

“Where?”

“Is there a part of an old wall? One with a plaque and a cross on it nearby to mark the spot?”

“Is that still there?”

“O no! Where is the holy well there to which people made pilgrimages, and an old wall? It is a very great puzzle because his body was taken away secretly by his followers to a rightful place belonging to him. Was he royal? I saw men with shaven heads and cowls go down into a kind of crypt under that pillar, gather the bones reverently, place them in a lead thing and carry them to another place. This happened sometime after. It was buried in the ground near there. They did it to

baffle those who might violate the grave. That pillar is near a wall. The body was taken from the original place and put in another not far away. It is still there. It was noised about that he was not there - for a reason. People went to that place because of him, and it wasn't liked. It was a very valuable grave with a sarcophagus raised over it. The body was taken out and placed in this spot unknown to the public. It was not found when looked for."

"Was this done after the buildings were destroyed?"

"In 1541. It was a very valuable tomb and people gave much to the Church because of it. The monks knew they were going to rifle the tomb, so they removed the body and put it in a place, not in the Church but just near it, by the wall. The whole fabric went after that because the monks were driven out and nothing went right. And also curses were put on things that had been taken, causing everything to go wrong. And there is something about the body being put in 'the north part' - towards the north - the transept. A sad wind comes up and I hear the word 'Edmund', and there is sadness over the ruin that came, and spilt blood. I think he was one of the first to bring Christianity here. A holy man and a friend of the Church. Was he stabbed through the heart? He was killed. Arrows! They came in all directions from an ambush. It is very sad."

It will be seen that this account gives further particulars, including an alleged burial of the body near but outside the Abbey Church.

On the next occasion this was corrected. The date given, 1541, is, I think, almost certainly two years out, and the reference to "the north - the transept" is puzzling unless it means the northern end of the south transept which is referred to more than once later on. The account also suggests a much smaller amount of treasure than that spoken of in the previous message. But certain other details are correct; for example, the costly sarcophagus, King Edmund's name and the manner of his death. The "holy well" referred to we know was in the crypt, beneath the Shrine. By the word "pillar", I believe a pier or column to support an arch is meant. On the whole, I think this contribution to the subject is of some interest and not without value.

The Prior, whose kind interest in the book I had been writing I mentioned in the last chapter, gave us some help on our inquiry. To make intelligible what I have recorded above and the additional information given by him, I must remind the reader that the Abbey of St Edmundsbury was founded chiefly to be the resting-place of the body of the young martyred king for whom the English people through many centuries had an ardent devotion.

The body was contained in a magnificent sarcophagus adorned with the costly offerings of many generations. Pilgrims thronged to the Shrine from all parts of England and from beyond the seas. When the monastery was dissolved by Henry the Eighth in 1539 all the precious ornaments still there were removed and the silver-

gilt plates attached to the Shrine torn off. These things we know from contemporary records, but nothing whatever is said of what had been considered the greatest treasure of all, the uncorrupt body of the holy Martyr.

What became of the body of St Edmund? Hitherto there has been no satisfactory answer to that baffling question. Other similarly treasured relics had been ignominiously dragged from their resting places and treated with insults, St Cuthbert's at Durham, St Thomas à Becket's at Canterbury. It is strange indeed that nothing at all is known of the disposal of this other body although the particulars of the desecration of the Shrine in which it lay were common property. A baffling problem indeed. Let us see if the Prior and others can give us the answer, or even a clue to it.

It will be remembered that on June 21st, 1937, he was reported to have announced his presence by Saying, through the Agent "A", "I am - or was - the Prior of the period of which you are writing." The Operator in charge, having introduced him in his own words, went on to explain the purpose for which he had come: "He is trying to lead you to understand about a disturbed tomb. There is a kind of wall: ruins you know which show signs of arch-ways. The body was in a sarcophagus at first, then placed under one of those pillars: it was changed over quite suddenly. They feared some riot. They took it out and put it in another place, not away from that ground. The story went that it had been stolen or was missing; it was not. It had been some time under the pillar before people knew about its disappearance. The Prior speaks as though there is an archway or signs of pillars remaining. Grass grows over it now. It (the body) used to be right up in the front part of the Church."

[By "the front part", the east end is intended; the Shrine stood behind the High Altar, "right up" to the apsidal termination of the Choir.]

"And then it was moved to the right-hand side as you go in, about the middle, under the floor. Other bodies are buried there too."

"Inside or out?" I inquired.

"Inside the Church. There had been traces left of a Norman arch or pillars. If dug up, skeletons would be found underneath. 'You think the body was taken away. I come again to say, No!' He was particularly interested in what you were doing." [Writing my book.] "There was a spring of water, or a well, considered miraculous - the spring is still there - and pilgrims would take water away. There was a big place outside where pilgrims used to stay, and they gave money and jewels. This well was blessed by someone and it proved to be healing. It was a very busy place; lots of people used to come to it. It was almost second to Canterbury. Was it *before* Canterbury?" (in importance).

The account continued: "The Abbey was situated on rather low ground, a hollow. That is why it was chosen - because it was sheltered. A beautiful picture of that period is shown to me. It is a larger place than you thought: there are outhouses and

stables and a farm at the back.”

It is of interest to note that in 1028 King Canute granted a farm at Bury to be for ever in the possession of the monks.

“In the time of Henry a lot of nonsense came.”

The Operator, who is speaking for the Prior, evidently sympathised with his views on the contemporary innovations in the sphere of religion!

“Henry coveted the monastery lands, and afterwards things decayed - a curse they put on it. Sometimes you walk there. I don’t think you will find the well. It is not much good digging. I think the archaeologists leave it alone. But the Prior says they will work on it later on.”

I must not yield to the temptation to go through this account in detail, lest the reader who is unfamiliar with such matters should find it tedious. He will perhaps take my word for it that much of what was said I know to be correct and the rest was quite probably accurate. Certainly, there was nothing demonstrably wrong. This, coming through a person normally unacquainted with the subject-matter, suggests a *prima-facie* case for further investigation. And it is that aspect of the matter which I think will appeal to the ordinary reader. We are engaged in a treasure-hunt, and (as he will find) for more than a missing body!

A fortnight after I had been given the information purporting to come from the monk who was Prior of the Abbey at the time of its Dissolution, the friend who was typing my book had a talk through the same Agent and was told that an abbot was present who was appearing in a book. My friend asked: “Could they tell me anything about hiding St Edmund’s body?”

“Good gracious!” was the reply, “I will ask them. He (the Abbot) says it was taken out of the sarcophagus but not removed from the neighbourhood, only placed in another part of the building, of which nothing much remains. It was on a spot in the right-hand transept as you face the High Altar, by a pillar. It was placed under there. It was said that it was taken away, but that was not so. They feared the sacrilege of others taking the body, so they removed it from the sarcophagus and placed it reverently beneath the right-hand transept.”

“Was it moved again?”

“No, it was not.”

“Is it still there?”

“Yea, verily, but very deep, and many stones are placed over, that defilement cometh not to him.’ He feared that other people’s bones had been placed near and it might be difficult to find the right ones. It is hard to understand their archaic English - but they say that, owing to the desecration they expected, they moved it to this place. ‘The pillar standeth no more, neither is there an inscription, but the place was given secretly by word of mouth.’”



## Chapter XII

### *Bury and Iona*

Three months later, on October 19th, 1937, the story was carried a stage further through the Agent "B". I was told:

"Someone who has been gone a long time is trying get me the link with an important man on the other side, a saint who is connected with old conditions and great big important buildings. He was of importance on the earth and is now a leader. This concerns holy conditions. The man who is trying get me the link knows it and so does Philip."

What follows suggests that John Reeve, the last Abbot of Bury, may have been the man endeavouring to make a link between his patron, St Edmund, and the Listener present.

"You were thinking of someone else connected with temples. He lived a long way off. It would take a journey to find him." [Bury is over a hundred miles from the town in which this conversation was held.]

"He was connected with important times and happenings on the earth. A good way back - centuries. He was connected with an important change in people's outlook. He must have helped to make people better. Did he attend to altars and holy places - shrines?" I then handed to the Agent a piece of stone from the wall of the ruined refectory of Bury Abbey and asked if it had any connection with what she had said.

She replied: "It *is* to do with the stone. This is a link. It comes from a holy place. This stone is very old and is part of a very old place which is not there now. I am getting a part of a ruin, and you would have to look for the stone there."

She then appeared to be witnessing a visionary reproduction of something that had happened, centuries before, connected with the place from which I had taken the piece of stone. Eventually, the story works round to the disposal of the body of St Edmund, but at first it appears to be concerned with events many centuries earlier and having some connection with the saint whom my son Paul had been so surprised to meet. For I shall presently deal with the link which is alleged to have existed between Bury Abbey and the far-off and famous Isle of Iona - a connection, so far as I am aware, unknown to history. Anyhow, it is an amazing story and I think the reader will be interested in seeing how its separate features are neatly pieced together as we go on. Here we rejoin the Operator as she goes back through the centuries. She sees herself near the place from which I had taken the stone and asks herself:

"Are there any steps down somewhere? Now I am going down."

"What do you find there?" I asked.

"A kind of cave, a cell or a room. A hidden place and it was once in use, a long time ago. They could put things there to be safe."

“What things?”

“More than one person went down there. Did they hide holy things? These things would be proofs: they are there, and would be proofs that something had happened, and would almost help in proving Christianity! Someone called ‘B’ is linked up. The important one is ‘J’. Was there fighting, war, or battles round this? There is enmity round it. A mixture of priests or monks and soldiers and tribes. A tribe setting off from one country to another, and bringing things with them. A little company with a leader, and a little raft coming over the water. And not so much water then as now. They brought something over the water to hide it in safety. Was it a basin or cup? It was a vessel and was important. It should be there now. It was put there and other things.”

“What other things?”

“A parchment and vessels, records.”

“Anything else?”

“I am getting ‘B’ again.”

“Is that the place?”

“A name beginning with ‘B’. And there were wrappings, white linen, folds of material, thick and yet thin, rolls and folds of white linen.”

“Was anything inside it?”

“It was wrapped round something. Was anyone buried in it? Was it a shroud?”

“Was there a coffin?” I asked.

“I only see linen; no coffins. That linen was used for a holy purpose and to hide something.”

“Was that 400 years ago?” [The time of the disappearance of St Edmund’s body.]

“It was some centuries ago - I can’t tell how many. Is the letter ‘B’ to do with a locality? Isn’t there a saint mixed with it - a martyr, too? All linked with the stone. A terrible and yet a holy place. They were never taken away - the body, wrappings, cup and basin. Was there anything with the cup like a little rod or stick with an ornamental head on it? The stick may not be complete.”

“Where is all this?” I said.

“Very close to the ruin. It - ” [the body?] “was not taken far. I may get a clue to the place gradually.” [It would appear that this Operator did not know about the south transept spoken of by the other.] “I have got to get something else which is linked up with it, though it may not seem to be. This all happened in a changing time in religion which was making trouble but leading to good. Was this place near the sea? Because someone came from the sea at that time who had some bearing on this, because I keep feeling a boat in which someone came, and they helped in something

to do with this hiding or concealing. Not 2,000 years ago, but half way through a thousand years.” [Approximately 400 years, the time of the Dissolution of the Monastery?] “Later on, you will find someone came in a boat and all was very secret.”

This account appears to link the hiding of certain things at the time of the dissolution of the Abbey in the sixteenth century with matter, at present unverified, connected possibly with Iona. The description of St Edmund’s body enclosed within “rolls and folds of white linen” corresponds to what was discovered by Abbot Samson and eighteen other monks on November 26th, 1198. For Jocelyn of Brakelond, who was himself present, tells us in his famous *Chronicle* that the coffin was found wrapped in three linen sheets, and the body in two, one described as “of wondrous whiteness”.

It is, by the way, curious that the only feature of Edmund’s face commented on by Jocelyn on this occasion was the nose, which he describes as “prominent”. And the account of St Edmund’s appearance given to me in September, 1936, as recorded in the previous chapter, mentions “a rather longish nose”. The judicious reader will not consider these trifles negligible since such correspondence between accounts coming through different channels and occurring casually, so to speak, possess a certain impressiveness for minds alert to the finer points of evidence.

It is perhaps permissible to say that one fact about this body which helps to account for the extraordinary devotion with which it was regarded was that it apparently did not see corruption. Edmund was killed A.D. 870. His body was exhumed seventy-five years later by Bishop Theodred of Elmham and found to be “whole and incorrupt”. So it apparently was 253 years later when nineteen monks viewed it, including the chronicler Jocelyn himself. And it will have been noticed that it was not the bones but the body of St Edmund which are spoken of in the above description given to me of what happened in the sixteenth century. It was the same at the meeting I record next.

This was on March 29th, 1938, and the following as given through “B”: “I get the feeling of processions going down steps to a place underneath.” [This is supported by the fourteenth-century “Rituale” in the Harleian Collection comprising the directory of services at the Abbey from Advent to May, which shows that processions on certain festivals passed through the Crypt.] “A slab, very heavy to lift. They put something under it for safety, a body. And there were some things with the body and some separate, a casket and a goblet. You know what you call ‘water divining’; I have a sort of capacity for metal divining. I have a feeling of night-time and excitement and disturbances and bringing things there and taking them down those steps very carefully. There are things still there, one is a crucifix. It might not be right to find them but they are there.”

At this point came a curious interlude from Philip: “Edward is linked up with the beginnings of this place. And there is a link to do with Rufus. You have a book about

this at home. I will make you find the book and you will see the link: Edward, the book, a jump to Rufus, and this place.”

I took “Rufus” to mean the King so named and, failing to find any reference connecting him with the Abbey in the books I consulted, I gave up the quest. It was nearly nine years later that, glancing through Sir Ernest Clarke’s edition of Jocelyn’s *Chronicle* I discovered that this was apparently the “book” I was to find, since my eye chanced to light on a reference to the visit and benefactions to the Abbey of Edward the Confessor, which, since the visit was paid when the first stone church was still in existence and only twenty-four years after the appointment of the first abbot, certainly “links him with the beginnings of this place”. And a few moments later, turning over to the opening words of the second chapter of the *Chronicle*, the names of the two monks who were sent to that King to inform him of the death of Abbot Hugh were given, and one of them was, “Rufus”.

The message continued with a reference that links it with what was said previously about the route of the processions and indicates apparently another entrance to the Crypt: “The Abbey - at the left-hand corner of the upper end an altar and an entrance leading down below. I am sure I have got that right. There are one or two rooms with stone and wood ceilings. Great thick beams of wood, some of which are still there.”

On April 15th, 1939, those (to us) oddly assorted companions, Philip, accompanied by no less a person than Columba, came to throw a little more light on our mystery, “B” being the Agent. “Columba”, I was told, “is interested in those old things under the ground near where you live. He did not live there but there is something there linked up with him.”

“What is it?” I asked.

“Philip says, a good many things put there long ago: goblets - more than one, though one might be much more important than, and different from, others. He is interested in that. And did you also get that there were documents down there, very old? Philip is sure of that. He is also interested in inscriptions on tablets. There is a lot underground but it is difficult to locate because there is no human link there to use. But he knows there are steps and passages and rooms of a kind. I see archways underneath as if you could still walk about down there. It is such a pity something can’t be done. He will try to help so that something could be done. He thinks it would be most interesting.”

Next came an attempt to indicate landmarks: “Big, flat stones, not grave-stones, near a ruin some of which I think is visible. It consists of parts of a wall higher at one end than the other. There is rather like a gap in the wall, and near that is important.

These are particularly old ruins. It is the place under the ruins he is thinking of.”

No less than three churches have stood on this site: the first, a wooden building; next, one of stone, commenced in 1020; and last, the magnificent church

consecrated in 1095. Thus, “particularly old buildings” may refer to remains of the earlier stone church now lying beneath the foundations of the Norman Abbey.

What follows again appears to link Bury with the Abbey of Iona, which would account for St Columba’s interest in the matter.

“There is another ruin linked up, a long way off, another place altogether. There is a link between the two of old associations and history. The other is not in England - outside it. People brought things from one to the other for safety. Columba is interested in it. This happened a long time ago. Did they have to bring things over water and land?” [They would of course have done so if Iona is meant, since it is an island.] “These things were looked upon as holy: ‘We must keep them safe.’ Some time they will be found. We get a strange feeling that, some time, something will happen unexpectedly and excavations will commence: he has that strong feeling. He does not think just yet, but it will be done in your time and you will know all about it. And everyone will be saying ‘Oh! oh! oh!’ as you stand around.”

I must admit that the alleged connection between the monastery off the West Coast of Scotland and that in East Anglia seemed to me a fantastic idea, though there is some sort of link in the fact that the monk, Columba, sailed from Ireland, A.D. 564, to found a community at Iona, and sixty-nine years later, another Irish monk, St Fursey, came southward as far as Suffolk and settled at Burgh Castle, within forty-five miles of Bury, and is believed to have built his monastery of clay and wattle, beehive shaped cells arranged in a circle after the plan followed at Iona. But the messages speak of far closer ties and of another kind between Bury Abbey and the island sanctuary.

At this point perhaps I may be permitted to express my sympathy with the reader’s possible bewilderment at the appearance of the Celtic saint at all in this narrative. I really cannot account for it except by supposing that there may be some ground of fact in the otherwise highly improbable idea of the alleged connection between the two foundations. Unless this is so, I cannot conceive why Columba’s name was given at all, for so little did the Operator know of him that she spoke of him as Columbus, although immediately correcting the mistake, apparently on hearing the right name more distinctly given. And, until these communications roused my interest in Columba, he was little more than a name to me. It may be of interest if I record the messages, with the dates on which they were received, which indicate the way in which the connection was gradually revealed.

March 29th, 1938. “St Columba is waiting to work with you. There is a linking up there which is very important. You will find it work out more so later, when a great deal will be revealed. This is a time of preparation.”

April 15th, 1939. “St Columba is linked up with you and is a very strong protective influence. The saints are very important indeed. Each has a number of souls on earth under his or her protection. The more literally this is taken the better. The

saints who are connected with you are very interested in the building underneath the ground, especially St Columba.” [In case the reader should suppose this reference to the saints might be a reflection of the theological presuppositions of the Agent through whom it was given, I may mention that she has no leanings whatever in that direction.]

April 2nd, 1940. “You know Columba: he is here. I should know he were here and mattered even if I did not see him. He is to do with Iona and somewhere near you. He is interested in ruins and old buildings in both places. They seem different but are linked in his mind. Philip says, ‘Isn’t it wonderful for me to be in contact with such a soul?’”

August 29th, 1940. “You can’t do much about excavations at present, but St Columba and Philip are still interested and are going to help another time.”

August 26th, 1942. “Columba is still linked up with you.” “I can’t think why,” I said. “Yet it is so,” was the answer. “But you can’t do very much more with the underground matters just at present. Leave that.”

May 12th, 1944. Philip said: “Columba sends greetings to Father and knew that he was thinking of him - it is a little difficult to get the time - probably between five and seven days ago. As him if he was touching or looking at a slab of anything or a stone and that reminded him of St Columba.”

It is true that the saint is now often in my mind and probably was so during the week before this message was given, when I was showing a friend over the Abbey ruins. Unfortunately, I cannot definitely remember thinking of him then.

The implications of the above messages are indeed startling but what was said was given quietly and naturally as statements of fact, with no tendentious embellishment. There are certain points of similarity between the circumstances of both monasteries in the ruins of which Columba is said still to be interested which, with other connections at present unknown, may possibly account for the statement made at the previous meeting: “There is a link between the two of old association and history.” Both suffered at the hands of the Danish pirates. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Celtic monks of Iona were replaced by Benedictines just as the clerks of Edmund’s shrine were in A.D. 1020. The layout of both the mediaeval abbeys was the same: the cloister had the nave of the church on the south side, the refectory on the north, and on the east it opened into the Chapter house. Both foundations owed the veneration they received through the centuries to the man associated with their origin and, as with Edmund, so the grave of Columba was opened and his remains taken out and placed in a shrine ornamented with rich metal-work displayed for the veneration of pilgrims. Both monasteries were dissolved by Act of Parliament, that in England in 1539, and in Scotland in 1561, the latter ordering the buildings to be demolished. The dispersed monks of Iona are said to have carried precious manuscripts and books to Ratisbon, Douai and Rome but

none of these relics has been identified and the good library which the Abbey, like Bury, seemed to have possessed, probably perished at the hands of the mob.

I suppose that, since the monks of both the mediaeval monasteries belonged to the Benedictine Order, there is the bare possibility of some sort of intercourse between them. But that that was certainly so can only be established if any evidence of it should be obtained as a result of the proposed excavations at Bury.

At my next talk, almost exactly a year later, on April 2nd, 1940, the same Operator "B" said, "What does St Columba want? Do you know of something which has been happening in which he is interested? Something leading to discoveries - not at Iona but nearer you. I am sure he wants them to dig because he is leading me down under the earth. He showed me steps before. They have got to be found. They are steps that will be found. Big, solid stones put there. The steps he is showing me to-day are rather narrow. I see so clearly - as in a picture - a flight of narrow stone steps. There is a wall on the right-hand side close to them. The steps are not in the centre of an opening but close to the wall. The other side is distinctly open - not the side near the wall. I will just follow him. I have come through a floor or the ground, and the opening through which I have come is not big now. There is not one opening or room - one might open into the other - they are a sort of passage opening into each other. Something metal down there - silver or gold. Heavy pieces made by a craftsman that have been used. They would be very solid and rather beautiful."

"Have they anything to do with St Columba personally?" I asked.

"He is making as though to walk round with them as if he had used them, had them in his hands. They are like a small tray and a bowl." [A paten and chalice?] "And he looks as though he had to be very careful with them because they are valuable. And there is a thing like a short rod. It has mouldings on it, knobs going round it." [Might this be part a crozier?] "He also shows me something, part metal and part not, but a kind of thick, heavy stuff, brocade, embroidery. The top part is held by a sort of metal frame. It is terribly old but probably still exists. It is like a banner: there is red in it and a faded colour like straw - or it might once have been gold - a fringe and rags hanging from it. And some thing embroidered on it like a shield."

More than six years after this banner was described, I chanced to read in an article on the island of Cyprus that the banner of Isaac, Emperor of Cyprus, had been deposited in the Abbey of St Edmund in the twelfth century. In the Chronicle of Roger of Hoveden, included in the Rolls Series, is the following: "But the Emperor, with a few of his followers, escaping armed, left behind him his treasures, his steeds, his arms, his beautiful tents and his imperial banner all inwrought with gold. This the King of England" [Richard Coeur de Lion] "despatched at once to Edmund, the glorious king and martyr." An expert tells me that "this would appear to have been the first piece of Byzantine embroidered work introduced into this country." It would have been one of the Abbey's most treasured possessions. Was this the banner that had been described to me?

The conversation continued: "Has anything been found having a link with St Columba? He thinks so. And more has not been found."

"Where is it?"

"West of where they have got a kind of indication. There is something rather high up, like a doorway or arch, very near there, and one day it will prove important. The ground is not very even just there. I want to go where the ground slopes down into a little bit of a hollow. There is a difference of colour in the ground - brown and green - uneven in colouring as well as its surface."

The attempt to give some indication of the exact locality where digging might begin was continued in what follows. I feel that it would be worth while if a persevering effort were made to puzzle it out since what is described conforms in a number of details to what one sees on or quite near the site of the Abbey Church. Indeed, a remarkably correct account of the general "lie of the land" is given. "There is a kind of path near this spot, not a very wide one. By the side of it is a distinct drop, in one part the earth has shrunk from it. On one side only, as the staircase was. This part is very important. Where we are now I can see pillars standing up, and at quite a distance, more stones. This is a special part for investigation and I am sure he (Columba) can help you there. Are there some bramble or other prickly bushes near that part? It is not quite a wilderness: there are houses near, also an open space, kind of common. I feel, if I turn off to the right there is a kind of countryfied-looking road, but if I go back one way I go back to a town. I am not far out from it from this spot, but if I go the opposite way I should go out into the country. I could turn off a road I have been on, and, instead of looking for this place, I should see a rather large house which used to be occupied and kept in good condition, but now has been recently emptied. It is a pity that such a fine, well-built house has not got a family in it." [The house referred to appears to be the early-eighteenth-century mansion in the Abbey Churchyard. It was not empty at the actual time of the conversation but was vacated nine days later and remained unoccupied for four months. Philip has told me that he sometimes picks up an intention in someone's mind to do something which he misinterprets as already done.] "I am sure they are showing me all this because they feel something will be discovered which has not been lost, but put away through fear; actually through fear - a sort of hurrying and scurrying, and 'take it up later', but nobody did. They are taking me to something happening about two hundred years ago and something several hundred years ago. Something of the same kind happening at two different periods and Columba is interested in both."

From what has been said previously perhaps it can be assumed that "about two hundred years ago" is this Operator's rough computation for the period of the Dissolution. And my guess is that "several hundred years ago" refers to Iona, in which Columba would certainly be interested.

Yet the question may quite reasonably be asked why a great saint who passed on centuries ago, and may be presumed now to be otherwise occupied, Should still feel



so keen an interest in earthly places and things. The answer may perhaps lie in what I was once told in a message from the other side. "It" [the site of Bury Abbey] "is one of the most powerful spots of English earth. A spiritual force was placed there. You came to renew the spiritual force on two planes." And Philip said: "Columba is interested though it is not all to do with him; it is to do with important conditions in the spirit-world. Tell Father that it is not imagination and not far-fetched at all to think that there are certain people, interesting people on our side, who are actually connected with him."

This I believe to mean simply that I have been allowed to take a very small share indeed in an effort from the Beyond not only to restore to Bury the powerful spiritual influence it once exercised, but also to set in motion a corresponding work of co-operation on the part of those who have passed on and still retain a deep love for this hallowed spot and an intense desire to renew its former triumphs.

The other matters, the discovery of the Martyr's body and of objects associated with the past life of the Abbey, are subsidiary to the great spiritual purpose they have in mind. Should discoveries of any evidential value and importance be made, considerable interest in the Abbey will be aroused. And if these discoveries authenticate to any extent the information given through psychic channels beforehand they will provide that solid basis of indisputable fact which the modern mind quite rightly demands. It was for this purpose that my informants had been willing, as they said, to "re-live the past".

As, at times, I wander about this sacred ground where a few pathetic ruins proclaim its former greatness and its total eclipse, here and there I see curious mounds of earth grass-grown. They cover masses masonry that have toppled to destruction. Old folk rest and children play beneath the shade of ancient trees in this fair garden, with no thought the mighty tide of spiritual power that once flowed from Edmund's Shrine. How strange to think of the secrets that lie buried beneath the "brambles", the "path", "the ground with its uneven colouring" - secrets undreamed of by most of those who pass this way.

But the facts live in the memories of some who understand their significance, and far-reaching plans have been made. Voices that were still (or perhaps only unheeded) are heard foretelling the days when this hallowed spot will again become a focus of spiritual power, a place of pilgrimage, and the latter house even exceed the former in glory.

## Chapter XIII

### *Previous Lives*

A message given by Philip in May, 1944, links, the subject of the previous chapter to that of which I propose to write in this one. He said: "I have mentioned to Father before that there is a link between Iona and where he is now. It is a very extraordinary link, and the links in his life have also been extraordinary. Nothing is chance. He has picked up again the threads of the past, and the pattern will reveal itself at the right time and under the right conditions."

The last sentence in the message summarises what Philip and others have told me, in considerable detail and during many years, on a subject which I think I can best introduce by a quotation from Profess. Macneile Dixon's brilliant Gifford Lectures, *The Human Situation*. "What explanations have the theologians to offer for the existence of evil in the world Some say God has placed evils here for our training: some say He has sent them to punish men for there sins. I have only found one explanation that appealed equally to my sensibility and to my imagination. This is the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. This assumes that life does not begin at birth or end in death, but is a link in an indefinite series of lives each one of which is determined by the acts done in previous existences. It would be less difficult to bear the evils of one's own life if one could think they were but the necessary outcome of one's errors in a previous existence, and the effort to do better would be less difficult too when there was the hope that in another existence a greater happiness would reward one. If Karma were true one could look upon the woes of others with pity, but with fortitude. Revulsion would be out of place and life would be robbed of the meaningless of pain which is pessimism's unanswered argument."

One's admiration for the sincerity of a lecturer who, in addressing an academic audience, places in so favourable a light the theory of Reincarnation, and follows it by an enumeration of the names of many of the world's greatest thinkers who have accepted the theory, is enhanced when the speaker feels compelled to add, "I can only regret that I find the doctrine impossible to believe."

All my friends on the other side who mention the subject appear to accept the Plurality of Lives as axiomatic - not as a "doctrine" but as a fact. In order to carry out their kind and far-seeing intention to help one who possesses the type of mind which would feel itself lost in abstract disquisition, they have avoided generalisations on the philosophical issues and have confined themselves to those aspects of the subject which are of personal concern to myself and those most dear to me.

I must admit that in the past the very small knowledge I had of the matter prejudiced me against it, so that nothing that has come to me from the other side in its favour is likely to have been in the nature of wish-fulfilment. I suppose that, as with others, I found particularly uncongenial the idea of losing one's identity and

“becoming someone else”. I am now aware that the theory does not involve the loss of one’s individuality as a spirit, soul, ego, entity, or whatever inadequate word one uses to refer to the essential being which enriches itself by a series of experiences under a wide variety of conditions, times, places, and personalities.

I myself am helped to realise this possibility as reasonable when I reflect on the different stages through which I have passed during the life I am at present living. I have in my possession the photograph of a stout child of some two years of age, seated in a large wooden-wheeled perambulator. One curl of hair (owing something to art as well as nature) has been arranged to reveal itself beneath a bonnet which I have learned from the loving artificer, my mother, was fashioned of sky-blue silk.

In half-a-dozen years the rotund infant has become a spindle-legged little boy. Later still, he appears in a family group, holding a walking-stick delicately between thumb and forefinger in a fashion which, after the lapse of some sixty years, he remembers with shame that he considered rather impressive. In yet another group - a Sunday-school class surrounding the teacher - he has become a plain youth in a tweed suit and stiff collar. Still later, arrayed in cassock and biretta, the young curate appears, with the air of preternatural gravity appropriate to one who is conscious of possessing the key to all the moral and spiritual problems that vex humanity.

The grey-haired ancient who thus summons up remembrance of things past finds it hard to believe that any of those strange creatures was himself. Yet he knows that there is something which links them all with his present being. For the same individual has been the core of all these successive outward manifestations. Thinking of these things, I do not find it impossible to visualise an essential “me” at the heart of all the changes and chances of other lives than that in which “I” now function.

I am acquainted with the objection that there can be no useful purpose served by any incarnation if all memory of it vanishes before the next is entered upon. But how much do I remember of my past years in this life? Of my infancy, nothing. Of early childhood, a few insignificant details. Later, I remember more, yet the merest fraction of all that I once thought, said, did and experienced. Was that therefore wasted? I know it was not, for all, whether remembered or forgotten, was material out of which the character (such as it is) which I now possess has, by some mysterious alchemy, been compacted.

But it is said (though I am ignorant of the evidence upon which such a sweeping generalisation is made) that actually we forget nothing of what we have experienced through life, all is stored in our subconsciousness. According to Philip, we retain the memory of former lives, though it is not usually available to normal consciousness. He once said: “It is the soul that carries on from one incarnation to another. I have an answer to those who ask, ‘What is the good of the experience if it is forgotten?’ It is only the new brain that does not know, but the super-mind does know. And if only people will tune up to, and live by, that, they will get impressions and inspirations

from their own higher mind which will explain. The superconscious is the part of your mind which you never lose but carry on through spirit-realms from one incarnation to another. You inherit the physical body from others. That belongs to the dust and goes back to the dust. But the etheric body which occupied the physical body when on earth contains the superconsciousness. When you pass over and that body becomes separate, then the subconscious (which is only an inherited accumulation of fears, either racial or just your own particular store of fears, or a mixture of both), if still present, refuses to function. It just dies away with the purely physical body. If you can learn to live in conscious touch with the superconscious you will be much happier than if influenced by the lower mind.”

Philip said this on one of the few occasions on which he spoke of Reincarnation in general. There is a vast number of questions I could have wished him to answer, but I felt that, on the whole, I was likely to get better results by letting him say what he had come prepared to tell me (he always thinks out most carefully beforehand what he intends to say when we meet) than to break the easy flow of his thought by untimely interruptions. His purpose is to give practical help to certain persons whom he loves rather than to survey the whole field of enquiry. Therefore, most of what I have been told concerns myself and a few others, and, in writing about it, I am visited by some qualms in saying so much about myself personally. On the other hand, if the reader, shares my preference for an account of concrete experience to a treatise written impersonally he will perhaps forgive me for writing as I propose to do. And I think that what I have been told, although it does bear mainly on what concerns a certain small group, has a wider significance than that of a merely personal experience which is of no value to anyone but the individual who records it. For if there is any truth in what I have been told, it concerns everyone who would welcome a little light on the mystery of human destiny.

Take, for example, this message from Philip dealing with the reincarnation, in groups, of people who were linked with each other in former lives: “You see, there is so much in your life that cannot be accounted for by what you have done in the actual years of this existence. So much of this happened before with you, and it all has to come into line with the present and the people connected with it, who have to come into line too. Those who belonged to you before are still linked up with you. There are some who belong to us, who are what I would call in our close circle. You will see that you have people on both sides linked with you - I am one of them - but you have such widely different ones belonging to you and it takes time for all to get in their right places.”

“It’s rather a puzzle!” I said.

“It shouldn’t be,” he replied, “but we make it so, because free will allows us to make less satisfactory contacts and then we have to see them through. If we wait and don’t spoil things everyone will fall into his proper place - everyone. So often we act precipitately and throw something out of place just when it is fitting in.

“You must allow things to germinate. This is the great thing in your life - the past wanting to be lived again. Certain parts of the past have to be relived: certain people we must never lose. We can’t - they are part of ourselves and we know it. True liberty is a glorious thing and enables you to pick up links with the past in safety. And, you see, they have been continuous - not only through one life but through many. There are many varied experiences to pass through. I don’t know all of your past lives yet, but I know some, especially the recent ones, and you have had far greater worldly power than in this life but you did not manage it very well. That is why you have come back learning to be without certain worldly assets. You came back voluntarily - this one is not a compulsory incarnation and you are all brought together again to work things out in spite of limitations and difficulties. That is what is meant by running with patience the race that is set before you. You chose it over here, knowing it was best for yourselves. You ‘set’ it, therefore you must use patience to ‘run’.”

What appears to be suggested is that the peculiar circumstances of our present existence, and the particular people with whom we find ourselves linked, are due neither to an arbitrary fiat nor to meaningless chance, but are the natural working out of consequences inherited from a past in which the exercise of freewill has had ample scope, not always used to the best advantage.

This explanation strikes me as at least acceptable to common sense and does not involve belief in some rigid pattern imposed from without, as some theories of reincarnation seem to do. However, Philip does not appear anxious to propound doctrines but to deal with facts. And he has always some practical end in view in what he says. Thus, having suggested the reason why certain people find themselves in close contact, he goes on to point out how the situation should be met. The Operator, on this occasion speaking for him, said: “‘You have met people before and that is what has created the tie.’ (Philip knows what he is talking about.) ‘Otherwise those things would not be understandable. Sometimes you yourself are puzzled and think: “I wonder why things are arranged as they are and why we have met.” It is no use trying to work that out with the limited vision of the moment. You have to look back to regard it in its right perspective. It is to do with more than one past life and when you meet people again in this way you have to make the best of it. That is your test. That is the “fiery trial which you are not to think strange to have come upon you”, simply because you can’t remember all that caused it. But do the best with it mentally, spiritually, physically. React to it in this way. You have to rise to it, not fall to it, is the gist of what I want to say. How many people meet their circumstances and just drop down to them, helping neither themselves nor anyone else. “Darling, have you ever thought what is meant by stepping forward over ‘the ashes of our dead selves’? My interpretation is that past incarnations are our ‘dead selves’. You have got to step forward and up from them, not to go down into their ashes. That is past.” He will tell you about the past as he is able to do so. One incarnation was in France, and then he takes me to the south-east to where there were temples. This was long

before the French one - many centuries ago. You have had many former lives, and all have been very, very different. You won't be coming back again. When you arrive at a certain stage of consciousness and understand these things you don't come back to earth. You go on on the other side. If you did come back it would be more as an influence. One can work for the earth not in an ordinary incarnation. Am I not doing that now? And you will do that. I have lived with you for years and grown up with you in other incarnations just as I am doing now."

The Operator explained: "He had to come in some sort of way to make a link - to be born so that now you have a personal feeling for him." And two years later Philip himself said: "I came to you to be connected with you."

In going through my records I was profoundly interested to find that similar information had come independently through two other agents. Through the Impressionist he had said: "I came to earth to contact you - that was the object - and for you to contact me." And through another, whom I had never met before and who knew nothing of me: "This young man passed over almost as a baby. He was not meant to live on earth but just to touch the earth for another incarnation. He is a very 'old soul' and one of his father's best helpers. A wonderful 'old soul' - no stranger, this. In lives past it was ordained that he should be reincarnated to be a guide to his father, a guardian to his sister and a help to his mother. He was a guide before he came to earth. He knew you all before and had to meet you again. Years ago, his mother served him - she is a younger soul than her own boy - and he, in turn, serves her."

Thus, the "untimely" death of a baby was not the wasteful and unaccountable thing it had appeared to be.

We now return from these parentheses to the conversation I was recording. "Your French incarnation was not so very long ago. Philip doesn't know of all your incarnations or all parts of any one of them, but they are revealed to him piece by piece, to help you. Do you remember about there being bad times in France - strife and persecution? That is why you are again in the midst of such things. In those days there was fighting and beheading. Have you ever had the feeling of having very sudden deaths before? You may, yet you happen to have passed tranquilly in France."

I add here the other references to this alleged incarnation. "It was a little more than a century ago." [On another occasion 150 years was suggested. Communicators admit that they are often somewhat vague about time and I imagine that here the period of the French Revolution may be intended.]

"The French incarnation was a very peculiar one and counts for a great deal. It was the bridge between this one and the other."

"The other" referred to is said to have been in England and to have covered the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth. As I have a good

deal to record about that, before doing so I will mention the remaining two of which I have been told.

“You and your daughter had an incarnation in Italy nearly 2,000 years ago, in very early Christian times.”

“Philip’s father was one of the very early Church who stood up for Christ.”

Then, an earlier one still: “You and your daughter have a link with ancient Greece. You have had experiences of very varied kinds before, with material power in some and religious authority in others.

You were a kind of soldier in the Greek days, I think, for besides races and chariots I sense soldiering. I see you and your daughter in the dress of the time - tunics and draperies, and I can just see you holding a shield with big stripes on it.”

According to these accounts of my past experiences, whatever be the drawbacks of a plurality of lives, one would not reckon an insipid monotony amongst them. It is curious that each is alleged to have occurred in periods of upheaval and strife. The present one certainly is; so, apparently, was that in France. The Tudor period also can scarcely be considered peaceful, vexed by “the changes and chances of this mortal life” of which the compilers of the Book of Common Prayer speak so feelingly, doubtless from personal experience. Thence, back to the days of the persecution of the early Christian Church. And even in ancient Greece this peace-loving individual is connected with soldiering.

The story of whatever trials he underwent in those other experiences which had not yet come to Philip’s knowledge must be left in the vast abyss of years without record here. However, that which I have set down so far of what I have been told all seems picturesque and interesting enough, but the accounts are sketchy in the extreme and, of course, possess no evidential value. That is not to say that they are entirely valueless to myself personally, owing to my well-grounded confidence in the veracity of Philip and those associated with him. Indeed, I am inclined to believe that my earthly experience has not been confined within the narrow limits of my present existence: certain music, pictures, books, perfumes, landscapes, peculiar features in each of the four seasons of the year, all at times bring momentary flashes of consciousness of other scenes and bygone days associated with a sense of past experiences other than those in my normal recollection. I cannot otherwise account for such things as the recurring “feel” of a late autumn evening, and a park, with its mansion, in the mist, and the consciousness of some impending disaster. I refrain from adding other such momentary glimpses for I perceive that the words I used cannot evoke the reality. Only those who have had similar experience can guess at what I have failed to express.

In the next chapter I propose to submit a picture of one alleged incarnation which is more than the mere sketch given of the others, and the particulars of which were offered to me as being capable of some sort of verification.

## Chapter XIV

### *The Problem Posed*

It may be remembered that in a brief reference to this one of my alleged former lives, I proposed its more adequate treatment later.

In dealing with what is said to lie beneath the ruins of Bury Abbey I asked the reader to picture the matter as a hunt for hidden treasure. I invite him to approach the subject of this chapter with the keen scent for hidden clues of a detective bent on solving a mystery. I, who believe myself now to have the key to it, will lay the problem before him, asking him to proceed with a lively faith that all I record is relevant to its solution.

I start with what was given through a stranger whom I met on one occasion only. She said: "I am looking now at long-past lives. I am going back nearly 500 years. At one time you have been in a monastery. Your daughter has been with you before; she was a nun - I see the robes."

This is of interest because on a different occasion another Agent had suddenly said, "What connection has your daughter with nuns? You also have been connected with monastic life. You both still love religion but you kick against some aspects of it. Philip says that while you had your soul-journey in the spirit-world after that incarnation, you learn to free yourself from the fetters of the vocation you loved. You chose to come back into religion but you don't like the petty routine often connected with it. You had to come back to help people. These present times are a sort of recurrence of the time you and your daughter were in together before. It is a modern representation of what happened long ago. That was a turning-point time, a getting away from a sort of savagery to culture. You were a real priest then, not just a minister as you are now."

That last remark raises a debatable point! The Operator is not an expert in matters of theological controversy: she is endeavouring to make it clear that, at that time at any rate, my priesthood was the genuine thing.

We have thus got so far in our quest as to understand that my daughter and I were together something less than 500 years ago, at a time of change and upheaval; that she was a nun and I a priest, having some connection with monastic life.

For the sake of accuracy, I want to point out that it is not strictly correct to speak of "I" or "she", if by those pronouns our present personality is intended. For that appeared in this life for the first time. It is the pre-existent soul, the core of this personality, which, *ex hypothesi*, has functioned through various personalities in its agelong journey. Thus, should our quest lead us to someone vastly superior to the writer in worldly position, intellectual gifts and moral and spiritual worth, that would not mean that he claims kinship with such a one, far less to being that person himself, but only that the soul who once functioned through that personality may, in his inscrutable wisdom, have chosen to come down in the world (in both senses)



when he made his appearance this time. It will be seen later that that is precisely what is said to have happened.

The theory is, that the soul, the ego, is given its successive earth-lives for the overcoming of defects and the fuller unfolding of its latent powers, through widely varied experiences. It is obvious that it must be affected by its experiences and its reactions to them, so, when reincarnating, one would expect that, on again entering earth-conditions, the next personality in which it functions would bear traces of the previous' one. Its failures would reappear as defects of character, the fresh opportunity for overcoming which it had been given or had taken upon itself voluntarily, whilst its past achievements would be evidenced in a correspondingly heightened capacity for further progress.

This would make it possible for a comparison between the two successive personalities to have some sort of evidential value if it established a number of links between them whereby the later incarnation gave a key to the understanding of the former and suggested that they were connected episodes in the life of the soul indwelling both.

But to continue our quest.

"You were connected with churches, then as now. You lived through a time of persecution and great trouble. There were martyrs, and you were rather on the side that made the martyrs. The element of difficulty to be overcome has been in several of your lives."

We are being led, it seems, to the Tudor period of the Reformation, in which "I" was on the traditionalist side "which made the martyrs", for, "In that incarnation you lived somewhere in England right away altogether, near the coast or water, perhaps a big river. It was in another part of the country, rather hilly.

"A building - a big old stone castle or palace, not a church. You had a link with the place - a right to be there. You had some secular power there over people. You could say, 'You have *got* to do this.' It is a place of historic interest and significance. You have been connected with historical events. You have had some exciting times! And now, this time, you have been put down in rather quiet conditions with superconscious memory of adventure, of belonging to big, terrible and tragic but romantic things. I see that you passed rather suddenly."

Summing up: we are told here of one who lived in a castle or palace in a hilly part, perhaps by a big river, and who possessed secular, in addition to ecclesiastical, authority. The place is historic and the man was connected with historical events. He passed on rather suddenly.

Almost all of what I have recorded so far came through the Agent "B" who, if will be remembered, contributed so much about the Abbey at Bury. I now come to what the other Agent, "A", has to tell us about the person who (though she was not aware of the fact) had been described by "B".

“When you came to earth a long while ago you came with common sense. (You don’t quite know who you are.) You were told you were coming into a larger world in this incarnation. (Your boy, Philip, is not idle: he lives in the magnificent world of understanding, and he works with you.) You were a great power on earth a long while back; people here, in some way, seem to know you very well.”

“I wonder who I was!”

“I get you near a king’s court, in some kind of power but very humorous and gentle about it all, and so you did not get into much trouble. You were very much loved and managed to keep out of intrigues. It was all a muddle - round Henry’s time. You kept your head and looked on them as a batch of children. You knew the business was mainly political. You always waited and did not worry. You lived to a great age. It comes to me that you did not live in a monastery but rather more round the Court. There was trouble about Wolsey. Are you interested in him? You kept rather quiet and were wise not to be very much in evidence, but you were Catholic always.”

“Was I connected with the Church?”

“Yes, you were not secular. You belonged to a wealthy family. You could retire out of the way when anything happened. I saw you going into the Tower a lot to perform offices. (Have they a church there?) Then back in some palace, in the private chapel of the King. First there was one in power, then another. You always kept your place and did not voice any opinion. After Henry’s time you left and went somewhere else. There was a flare-up. You were always great friends with a very powerful man with a beard. But you had some great enemy, Warwick, Earl Warwick.

“You brought back the same character you had then, and you wished in this life also to help put the word of Truth on earth - and you will. You were born then in circumstances which would give you understanding - you were wealthy before. You had to have this present experience and you wished to see if you could go through great struggle, to justify yourself. You said, ‘I can prove I could struggle through apart from high position.’

“I see you dressed in violet-purple, and a hat with a brim, worn in travelling, with a skull-cap underneath. You were liked because you were lenient with people. They liked to ‘confess’ to you! You had plenty of homes offered you when in trouble. There was a great fuss after Wolsey died. It was after the divorce. You were safely in someone’s house in London. There was some reason for that. You were not the chief councillor or arbitrator. You, were very philosophical and said, ‘O, well, it blows hot and cold, and he that meddles not with what concerns him not is also not meddled with.’ You went to live in a house near the river in London.

After Henry’s time I think you went into retirement.

“In those days one came into these things through education, one was caught in very young to the priesthood; young men were trapped, whether they had an aptitude for it or not. If one became a philosopher he managed very well. You were born wealthy

and your family-life brought you into power. You didn't trouble about position: upstarts gained by that. Your character is the same still.

"I am being shown an extraordinary pageant of life in those days. It is dazzling me. You are being linked on to your honourable past, and this should give you a different feeling about yourself. Philip says, 'It was marvellous what we were shown: it brought back the past to us and was also a glimpse for your mind. When you get despondent remember that vivid past. I expect I was there too.'"

I should much like to have shared with Philip a sight of that panorama of Tudor England in which lived the mysterious personage we are trying to identify. For the reader's benefit, it may be mentioned that a vital clue in our search has already been given.

Two months later, the story was continued.

"After Elizabeth came to the throne you went into the background. You had money and property - so you did not worry and could retire. Therefore in this life you are not suffered to retire though you want to. You go on. You were not put to death but you were a great ecclesiastic." [A significant comment on the disadvantages of high position in Tudor times!] "You seem to go on through three reigns. You came into power more after Henry died. You seem to be round Mary and advised her. Did she want to marry a Spaniard? You may have been connected with that. I feel you were more on Mary's side. After Mary's time you again lived in retirement.

"You were very kind and helpful in certain ways but excessively wedded to your dogma, yet very tolerant. You did not see the sense of changing your ideas because of some whim. You and others felt horror at what Henry destroyed. You thought all would be restored and you were going to bring it all back through allegiance to Mary. Now you are working for the Church Triumphant and the universal Spirit of Truth. You would enter into a new phase of Church History. Elizabeth's reign was a very vital period. She brought a great force with her, so minds were stimulated, and it was a time of changing thought during a number of years. It is difficult to understand, and most interesting, that certain planetary forces came into power then. They are usually centred in one or two beings who bring the power."

If there is anything in this excursus on astrological speculation, those responsible for the preface to the Authorised Version of the Bible were happy in the choice of its reference to Queen Elizabeth as "that bright occidental star".

It would seem that my good friend, William Stainton Moses, was interested in these communications, for on November 3rd, 1938, taking Direct Control of the Agent, he said, "They are stirring a part in you which has been used before in Tudor times. You did not lose your head then - in more senses than one! That was wisdom. You gracefully retired into a quieter aspect. With these temperamental sovereigns, what was a man to do? You desired to be quiet and you wished other people to be so too. One need not become a martyr. You saw it would do no good, and your mind was

above the people you were dealing with.”

“Will you give me this man’s name?” I asked.

“I think the Operator will get that through to you,” he replied. “We give you clues and you work it out. You would say, ‘I understand that fellow.’ You are much the same now, and you would say so if you knew his mind then - he knew when to come forward and when to withdraw. It is good to agree with thine adversary when in the way. But you pulled a lot of strings underneath. I fear I talk rather cryptically.”

I conclude these records with an extract from what was said by Mr Stainton Moses, again in Direct Control, on April 4th, 1939.

“Believe in yourself and this power of love and sympathy in you. That is the heritage or reward of the past. You have an extraordinary way of seeing two sides of a question. In the past, you saw by some inner wisdom. Your humbleness was so great that it did not occur to you that you were a power. You were a classical scholar and liked the peace of the monastery. They all loved you. Then you return again to London. It was a dangerous thing to expose one’s self too much.”

By this time, as I shall explain later, having been given by a friend the clue to the identity of the man described, I asked Mr Stainton Moses if this was correct. “That’s right,” he replied. “Now can you understand your own character!”

The odd thing about that answer is, that if I have any virtues, as I certainly have many failings, both (to compare great things with small) are curiously akin to those recorded of the person referred to.

I apologise for the disconnected character of these extracts. In two or three instances I have joined together sentences which obviously belonged to each other, and have also tried to make intelligible occasional obscurities in the Agent’s particular idiom. But the rest is given as I received it. It has not the clarity and sequence of a carefully constructed narrative. I, personally, should be suspicious if it had. It consists of information just as it reaches the Operators from the available sources, in various forms - auditory, visual, or by some other mode of psychic perception - which they hand on as accurately as they are able. A sufficient number of clues having been given in this way, it appeared to be left to the Listener to use his wits to discover to whom they refer.

## Chapter XV

### *The Problem Solved*

I might be sorry that I myself failed to discover the identity of this mysterious personage (whom I propose to refer to as "X") were it not for the fact that my inability to solve the problem seems to show that its solution was not provided by anything within my knowledge.

The credit of discovering to whom these fragmentary details pointed belongs to a friend who had given a fair amount of study to Tudor history, to whom I had forwarded a copy of some of my records. In reply, she sent me (on August 26th, 1937) an extract from Hume's *History of England* with a letter in which she said, "I wanted you to have the enclosed at once since I was so thrilled at Bishop [X's] likeness to the description you got from Mrs A. His name is not given in the index of *Green's Short History of the English People*, so I went to the bookshelf for Macaulay but, coming across Hume first, I took it out instead to look up 'Warwick', and, in doing so, got [X] almost at once. Had you called Warwick 'Northumberland' I should instantly have recognised him."

The reference here is to a sentence in one of the records quoted in the previous chapter, which I had sent to my friend: "You had some great enemy, Warwick, Earl Warwick." Now, John Dudley, Viscount Lisle, Earl of Warwick, later became Duke of Northumberland. It was by that last title that my friend knew of him and so had missed the point of the reference to X's bitter enemy. The extract from Hume which she sent me was an account of the enmity and its effect on the Bishop's fortunes.

X was a notable person in his day yet very little of his life and work is common knowledge. To myself, as I suppose to most people who have not made a special study of Tudor History, he was not much more than a name. To our youth, nourished on Professor Meiklejohn's *New History of England*, he would not even be that, for while the author dilates on the more spectacular ecclesiastics of the period, Wolsey, Pole, Ridley, Latimer, and others, X is not mentioned.

It was not until a present-day historian, working on a wealth of unpublished material, produced an authoritative biography that the deficiency was made good. This book was published on October 10th, 1938, and, just as my friend had by chance lighted on the information she wanted by coming across Hume's *History*, so I, scanning a shelf of "latest publications" in a famous bookshop, unexpectedly discovered the book, through which I have been able to verify so much of what had been given to me by psychic means.

I might mention here that a very few references to X were made in this way after I had come across the book. This lessens their evidential value. But almost all the verifiable details of his life had been given to me before I had obtained any knowledge of him through normal channels. It will be remembered that the information that my friend derived from Hume about the Bishop's relations with

Warwick only confirmed what I had already been told.

Since the average reader is likely to know as little about the Bishop as I formerly did, I propose to give a very brief sketch of his life taken mainly from the biography I have mentioned, adding for comparison those details I received through psychic channels which the historical facts appear to support. May I repeat the caution that, when the pronoun "you" is employed, the reader must understand that the reference is to the entity functioning in an important part on the world's stage in Tudor times who is alleged to have chosen to appear again in these days as a unit in the crowd.

X was the son of a Lancashire magnate, Squire of the body to Richard the Third, his mother being a daughter of a knight living in North Yorkshire. When he was about seventeen he went up to Oxford, then later to Cambridge, and thence to the famous university of Padua for six years. His parents belonged to the upper ranks of society (a contemporary describes him as "splendido loco natus") and appear to have been able to meet his expenses at various universities for fourteen years. His biographer writes: "The cost of his stay abroad was almost certainly defrayed by his own family." This gives colour to the assertion: "You belonged to a 'wealthy family.'"

He returned to England towards the end of 1505, and within a year, though still a layman, was presented to a benefice through a family connection, and within a few months after his ordination as sub-deacon three other livings were bestowed on him although there is no evidence that he ever resided at any of them. This hardly suggests a vocation for the priesthood, but rather that he had influence behind him which could launch him on a prosperous career, by taking advantage of the prevailing laxity in such matters to obtain for him valuable ecclesiastical preferment. ("Young men were trapped into the priesthood, whether they had any aptitude for it or not. You were born wealthy and your family-life brought you into power.")

He rose rapidly. About the time that Henry the Eighth, then a youth of eighteen, came to the throne, X was appointed Chancellor to Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury. Six years later he appears in a new role. He made the official acknowledgment at the presentation in St Paul's Cathedral of a gift from the Pope to the King. "This," says the biographer, "is the first on record of many such occasions, and may be regarded as marking his entrance into the royal service." He afterwards became Henry's trusted adviser. ("I get you in a king's court in some kind of power.")

About this time, if not earlier, he must have come prominently to the notice of Wolsey who, a year later, decided to make use of his talents in the diplomatic field and in 1515 sent him on his first embassy. This was followed by others, sometimes in Wolsey's company, on which occasions he frequently acted as deputy for the Cardinal when he was incapacitated by illness or unwilling to appear in person. ("You were a satellite of Wolsey's.")

Eleven years after his ordination to the priesthood, X, the diplomat and now also

Master of the Rolls, was made a bishop, Warham, Wolsey and Fisher officiating at his consecration. Just before this, he published a treatise on Arithmetic which established for him a reputation to which a reference in Rabelais' *Gargantua* bears witness.

His successes in so many mundane spheres hardly prepare one to expect the piety and devotion to the cause of religion for which he was afterwards distinguished.

So far, his work as a cleric had occupied little of his time and attention, but henceforth he resolved to devote himself primarily to his religious duties though the demands of his sovereigns for his services in other fields interfered seriously with the realization of his determination.

In 1529, Wolsey fell and was deprived of most of his offices. These included a rich bishopric to which X was appointed to succeed him. He left London for the North in July, 1530, a time of the year in which (despite the vagaries of the English climate) he might expect to see his new home under the most favourable conditions.

And what a home! It has been described thus: "It is difficult to conceive a finer site than that on which this Cathedral stands; on a steep hill washed by the river on three sides, with the great Norman castle of the Prince Bishops standing just close enough to set off its magnificent proportions." (The reader may remember the message: "In that incarnation you lived somewhere in England right away altogether; near the coast or water, perhaps a big river. It was in another part of the country, rather hilly. A building - a big, old stone castle or palace. You had a link with the place - a right to be there.")

It will be noticed that the writer speaks of "The Prince Bishops". He refers to what has been described as the extraordinary powers that surrounded the episcopal throne of this diocese. When X entered upon his northern episcopate it was still in full enjoyment of its princely status which was summed up in the old maxim, "Whatsoever powers the King possesses outside the Bishopric, these the Bishop possesses within it." He administered justice even in capital cases. Crimes were breaches of the Bishop's peace - not of the King's, whose judges held no assizes there. In a word, X possessed semi-regal power in the county. As President of the Council of the North, he was granted by Henry the right to raise armed forces, and in Mary's reign he was repeatedly bidden to be ready at short notice to send the Bishopric's forces to defend the Border.

Assuming the identification, the above facts fit the message: "You had some secular power there over people. You could say, 'You have got to do this.'"

In view of the Bishop's extraordinarily varied experiences and many troubles, including the forays of the turbulent Scots across the Border which it was his duty to repel, what follows seems appropriate: "You have had some exciting times! And now, this time, you have been put down in rather quiet conditions with superconscious memory of adventure, of belonging to big, terrible and tragic but

romantic things.”

One imagines that the peaceful and scholarly Bishop would welcome refreshment in the society of his neighbours in the monastery adjoining his palace, against whom, before the dissolution of the Abbey, no charges had been made by the King's Commissioners, a fact which, judging from their usual procedure, must be regarded as testifying to almost supernatural virtue in the monks. As Bishop, he was titular abbot of the house, though its real head was the prior. I am inclined to think that this connection is what underlies the references made to monasteries in the messages. (“You have been connected with monastic life. . . . You liked the peace of the monastery: they all loved you. . . . Then you would return again to London. It comes to me that you did not *live* in a monastery, but rather more round the Court.” Compare his biographer's: “Towards the end of June 1538 the King directed [X] to return to London. He reached the court early in July, and Henry then decided to keep him there as he required and valued his advice.” These journeys to London were frequently repeated right up till the end of his life.) ,

The town house belonging to the see, a magnificent mansion near Charing Cross, was never occupied by X, for on the fall of Wolsey it passed into the hands of Anne Boleyn's father, who held it until - his daughter's execution, and that event took place only a few weeks before the Bishop was compelled to surrender it to the King, who was displeased at what he had considered X's lukewarmness in advocating the Royal Supremacy. Henry granted him in return an ancient riverside residence in Thames Street, called Coldharbour. (So the message, “You went to live in a house near the river in London” was correct. But the Bishop did not gain possession of this house until 1538 and the message seems to connect it with the troubles that followed the divorce of Queen Katherine in 1533. The message further suggests that the Bishop felt relieved that he was not called on to arbitrate in matters concerned with that “temperamental sovereign”, King Henry, and what I fancy is a characteristic reflection is attributed to him: “O well, it blows hot and it blows cold. And he that meddleth not with what concerns him not is also not meddled with.” So when the divorce was pronounced he accepted the *chose jugée* and attended the new queen's coronation.)

Certain incidental statements in the records referring to X appear to be corroborated by the known facts. I give some of them here. “You were much loved.” (Lord Acton speaks of “the love and admiration for [X] of his greatest contemporaries”.) “You managed to keep out of intrigues.” (Surtees says: “He lived amid the intrigues of a stormy Court, a singular exception to the factious violence of the age.”) Or again, “It is good to agree with thine adversary when in the way. But you pulled a lot of strings underneath.” (This certainly appears to have been the opinion of those who were opposed to the Bishop's views. For example, in attacking what he considered the retrograde Act of the Six Articles, the Protestant controversialist, George Constantin, said, “There is no man that hath done so much



hurt in this matter as Bishop [X], for he by his stillness, soberness and subtlety worketh more than ten such as the great rhetorician, Gardiner.” The Bishop’s biographer speaks of the humorous touches in his writings (compare, “You were very humorous”). “Your mind was above the people you were dealing with.” (The biographer: “With his wide reading he appreciated more fully than many of his contemporaries the complex history of some of the questions in dispute.”) “You need not become a martyr. It would do no good. You saw that, in those days.” (Such appears to have been the Bishop’s view and, apparently, it was endorsed by Sir Thomas More who, though himself in the Tower prior to his execution, said of him, “If he live he may do more good than to die with us.”)

Henry VIII died in 1547 and was succeeded by the boy King, Edward VI. At first, the change of monarchs made little obvious difference to X. He was one of the sixteen executors appointed by Henry’s Will as a Council to rule during his son’s minority. But in reality the Bishop’s position was profoundly changed. The conservative reaction against innovation during the latter part of Henry’s reign came to a sudden stop. X was no longer in favour at Court and spent far more time in his northern diocese. (This gives some colour to the message: “After Henry’s time I think you went into retirement.”)

The Duke of Somerset, a convinced Protestant, had become Protector of the realm, and between his theology and X’s there could be no real accord, yet mutual respect and the moderation of both men prevented any breach between them. (“You were always great friends with a very powerful man with a beard”, say the Records; a fairly good description of the Bishop’s relations with the Protector, an oil painting of whom in the National Portrait Gallery shows him with a straggling beard.)

Thus, the general regard paid to the Bishop protected him from any severe treatment during Somerset’s administration. It was not until 1550, when the daring and profligate Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, rose to absolute power on the ruins of his milder rival, Somerset, that X’s position was affected.

This sequence of events is reflected with considerable accuracy in the messages I received. After speaking of the Bishop’s long continued court favour, while various favourites rose to power and fell, but he, by a prudent reserve, kept his place, the messages continued: “After Henry’s time you left and went somewhere else.” (His close connection with the Court ended and he returned to his diocese.)

“There was a flare-up.” (A recrudescence of yet more startling innovation under Edward VI.)

“You had some great enemy, Warwick, Earl Warwick.”

John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, succeeded Somerset as Protector. That he was indeed X’s great enemy is only too true. For he conceived the idea that the ample landed endowment of the bishopric would be a convenient support for his new title of Duke of Northumberland, as well as procuring an impregnable position for himself on the

Border. That was probably the real reason which impelled him to hurry on the ruin of the mild and unoffending Bishop who had incurred his enmity both by his friendship with Somerset and his efforts to check the Duke's persecution of those who favoured the old order in religion.

On May 15th, 1551, in his seventy-seventh year, X was summoned to London and confined to his house in Thames Street, where he used his enforced leisure to write a defence of the traditionalist doctrine of the Eucharist.

He was examined with the object of incriminating Somerset and, a trumped-up charge being preferred against him, he was removed to the Tower. A bill of attainder was introduced in the House of Lords and only one layman and (to his great honour) Cranmer, who had always had a sincere friendship for the Bishop, opposed it. The House of Commons acted in a spirit unusual in those days and rejected the bill. Parliament was, therefore, dissolved and a carefully packed assembly took its place which answered Northumberland's expectations. X was tried at Whitefriar's on Tower Hill and deprived of his bishopric.

On Queen Mary's accession he was released and restored. The messages have something to say about this period of his life. "You seem to be round Mary and to have advised her." (The Bishop was appointed a member of her Council and is described by the Spanish Ambassador, Renard, as "one of the six men that govern the Council".) "Did she want to marry a Spaniard? You may have been connected with that." (He was at first opposed to the marriage but later, according to his custom, gave in when it seemed advisable to do so.) "I feel you were more on Mary's side. You and others felt horror at what Henry destroyed. You thought all would be restored and you were going to bring it all back through allegiance to Mary." That seems to have been so, but not by Mary's methods, for the Bishop refrained as far as he possibly could from persecuting Protestants and condemned none of them to death. On the contrary, he did his utmost, by argument and gentle persuasion, to convert various prisoners in the Tower condemned to death for heresy. ("I saw you going into the Tower a lot to perform offices.")

A writer on the period tells us that during the heat of the Marian persecution not a single victim bled within the limits of X's diocese, a statement that corroborates the message, "You were very tolerant."

The accession of Elizabeth again deprived X of his influence at Court and he was bidden to remain in his diocese, of which for a time he still enjoyed the revenues. ("After Elizabeth came to the throne you went into the background. You had money and property.") But, later, events produced another kaleidoscopic change in the affairs of the aged bishop. Again he was deprived of his bishopric, this time for refusing to consecrate Matthew Parker as Archbishop of Canterbury and to take the Supremacy Oath, for by now he had finished with compromise. Yet all along he had held firmly to his deepest convictions and when, previous to his deprivation, he was advised in the Council to change his religion, he replied, "Do you think that for me,

who have taught the Faith for more than forty years, it would be right, on the very brink of the grave, to accept a rule of faith from laymen my juniors?"

Thus, the message that said "You were very tolerant" was right in giving the other side of the picture also: "You were excessively wedded to your dogma. . . . You did not see the sense of changing your ideas for some whim."

The sentence of deprivation was pronounced on September 28th and it is conjectured that, with unspeakable meanness, the date was chosen to prevent his receiving his rents for that quarter.

The Bishop was handed over to Parker's lenient custody in Lambeth Palace. ("After Mary's time you lived in retirement. . . . After Elizabeth came to the throne you went into the background.") The Archbishop did his best to render the detention as agreeable as circumstances would permit, for, like Cranmer before him, he probably felt respect for a venerable and lovable man.

The imprisonment was a brief one. On November 8th, 1559, less than eight weeks after his arrival at Lambeth, the Bishop passed on at the age of 85, "loyal to the Church he had ever loved", says his biographer, who adds: "His end was sudden. Parker speaks of his 'sudden departure'." (All this appears to be reflected in the messages: "You were a Catholic always. . . . You lived to a great age. . . . I see that you passed rather suddenly.")

I am convinced that these and other details which I have been able to verify were not obtained from the ordinary sources of information by those through whom they came. They were given to me by persons whose interests and occupations are far removed from the lesser-known details of Tudor history and who would have been incapable of the research necessary to obtain the information I received. But even to suggest the possibility of their making the attempt in order to deceive me would be an insult to those whose integrity is beyond suspicion and of whose supernormal gifts I have had overwhelming evidence.

To sum up. I think that the problem of identifying the man referred to has been solved. To the further question set by the context in which the information was conveyed I do not attempt an answer here.

## Chapter XVI

### *A Family Gathering*

The last seven chapters were made up largely of extracts from conversations with my friends on the other side through a number of years, selected for their bearing on the various topics under discussion. This chapter will be different for it deals with one conversation only and consists, not of extracts, but of practically all that was said. I wanted to give the reader to whom such matters are unfamiliar some idea of what actually happens on these occasions, when all concerned are competent, in their several degrees, to contribute the necessary conditions and where a

harmonious atmosphere prevails.

One of the most striking features of these talks is their complete naturalness. At the time, one quite forgets that they are being carried on by super-normal means. The Operator repeats (through the Agent) what she hears the Communicators say, or expresses it in her own words, and quite often the voices of the Communicators themselves are audible to the Listeners. It will be noticed how frequently, in what follows, words and sentences appear in italics, signifying that they were spoken in the Direct Voice, elucidating, supplementing or correcting what the Operator says, sometimes even taking the words out of her mouth by anticipating what she is about to say. A talk of this kind consists of matter appropriate to a reunion of intimate friends, the Communicators taking the greater share since they appear to be already acquainted with what we have been doing and it is to know of their experiences that we have come. They speak, as a rule, of that part only of the illimitable universe with which they are personally best acquainted, and what they say is spoken with no oracular solemnity but simply and naturally and with characteristic touches of quiet humour.

I think that if this record is read through to the end before judgment is passed on any particular feature of it, the impact of the whole will be better appreciated. It may not conform to all the presuppositions many people bring to the idea of “communion with the holy dead”, but it is not that; rather it is perfectly natural converse between the living. Only - and in this lies the wonder of it - some who participate in it are on this side of the grave and some on the other.

This meeting between the two boys and their parents was held on September 19th, 1947. It was the most recent one we have had and so it gives the latest news of them. Paul had by then been more than four and a half years on the other side and it will be seen how much he has developed since he underwent the shock of so sudden a transition from this world to the next. Philip, with his customary courtesy, puts his brother forward as the principal speaker. For the reader's guidance I will give here what was actually said towards the end of the talk. I had asked, “Has all this come entirely from ‘Willie’ or with the help of others?” He replied: “We talked it over beforehand and I am voicing Philip's opinions as well as my own. And I have given Philip's experience and my own as well. I have packed in a lot since I passed over.”

The Operator (speaking through the Agent): “Philip and Willie are here and send their love. They have been helping in health matters. They have eliminated some of their mother's annoyances. Those conditions have been *stabilised* and they hope to get them in order. They say they have also helped Father's digestive trouble from the waist all through to where he sits down.” [“Willie” commented: “A *very polite way of putting it.*”] “When either of you pass, they want you to come easily and quickly without illnesses. Philip says that people who are in close touch with us and live on right lines should be able to pass like that except for accidents. It should be a passing, not a death, and with no gradual decay, but a *transition* just as you make in

ordinary life. Did his father know that he had been impressing this on him in one of those mental conversations you have with him, his thoughts impinging on your mind? His father has got a lot more work to do, making bridges. He has the comprehension that links up people with people *or with conditions which otherwise* would not be linked up. Have I got that right?" ("More or less.") "And what you have been writing lately is connected with this, and it will have a different result from anything that you could at present expect." [He was referring to the book now in the reader's hands.]

"Sometimes," continued the Operator, "I am giving messages in words, at others I get his thoughts - something straight from his mind. But now, because it is rather involved, I am getting his words. But first, aren't people like you called 'Reverend' and 'Canon' and 'Prebendary'? You are going to change your title. 'But there is a time-element that baffles us. Sometimes we can put things on the spot; at others, we tell you of something we expect to happen soon but it may not till long after, when you have almost forgotten it. You must allow us great latitude about time. We can give you the fact but not the time - there is a change coming which affects your condition.'" [They refer to the appointment to an honorary canonry which was made one month later. As a matter of fact, they had already predicted the attainment of that dizzy eminence in the previous March.]

"Philip is the mouthpiece for guides and friends of long ago, but Willie is a practical helper of the present. Sometimes he even stops his mother from knocking things over. He did that a little while ago. 'It would have been such a nuisance if she had lost it.' But she did not lose all by making that abrupt movement. He controlled it. He says, 'In a peculiar way I can partly control you automatically.' He can impress you what, and what not, to eat. He has often done that because he is in close touch with material things."

[I am aware that I shall incur comment ranging from genial banter to utter disgust when I explain that the incident referred to above, which "Willie's" mother clearly recollected, concerned a frying-pan which she knocked against but instantly caught, and saved the precious contents. But have we not perhaps got our scale of values wrong if an act of kindness which saved another from annoyance is considered absurd when attributed to a boy whose love kept him in close touch with his mother even though now he be reckoned among "the holy dead"?]

The Operator continued: "There is a very strong link between Willie and his mother and between Philip and his father. His mother's is not quite so strong a link with Philip as she has with Willie. When he was very young he was like a little sweetheart and so near to her. 'Now, without being sentimental, I want you to feel I go back to that. I never lost it but circumstances and conditions obscured it. On this side, where things that obscure and obstruct no longer exist, I have returned to my natural position towards you - more than you can understand now. *When you come over* deep things will be revealed to you about yourself and myself. I am told that

they will not be known to me till you come over - the cycle is not yet complete. We are both not complete without each other. You are not thinking now about the Willie who grew up and went away but of the Willie who belonged to you so completely. I do now. It is not just the case of a mother going back to the childhood of one *she is fond of*. It is something much deeper, for a reason which lies in the roots of our other lives lived together. I do not know all yet, but when you come over we shall both get it because we shall both be ready for it. I shall be more ready when you come. I have been trying to impress our closeness on you very much lately. I want you to get it and take it into yourself - our closeness. Not to feel a great need for me but to feel something very solid that you are part of. *I have been waiting for the opportunity to tell you this.*

“ ‘Everything is complete and I want you both to know that there is no such thing as a lone soul - all have their counterpart and when you understand all that has gone before there is *a very great satisfaction* and happiness.’ He is waiting for his mother but he can wait patiently and now he does not grudge passing over. ‘Now,’ he says, ‘I’m glad I’m here first, learning so much that I shall be asked about.’ ” “Wouldn’t Philip have done for that?” said the Operator. “*No he wouldn’t!*” was the prompt reply in Willie’s own voice.

“Willie had to be there,” said the Operator, addressing his mother, “to make your real spirit-link, to link you up again with all the love and understanding. He will be there to welcome you and you will be complete. Not just yet - no, not just yet. Something has to be worked out first but he will be helping you all the time. ‘I wanted to tell you about our going back over the years.’ ”

His mother asked: “Does he ever try to show himself to me?” “Of course,” was the reply, “and more than once, but he does not know when you see him. Was it when you were in bed? ‘Well, just keep an open mind, ready but not anxious - just receptive. I think I shall do it in time.’ But do you know he has been trying hard to make you wake up and remember you have seen him. ‘When you are *with me* in sleep you constantly say, I’m sure I shall remember. *But you don’t.* And yet there is something there in your mind which has been caused by our meeting and makes you a little happier and you don’t know why.’ One morning he thinks you will wake and say, ‘I saw him. It wasn’t a dream. I *saw* him.’ He doesn’t look tired or worried now. ‘I was not quite like a young man: I felt tired and worried wondering how things were going to turn out.’ That has all gone and he looks as he did when he was, he says, more carefree, more responsibility-free. His muscles are tightened up and smoothed out round his mouth. A calm, cheerful face, and yet a thoughtful, kind, serious face Willie’s could be. That is how he has gone on.”

“What has he been doing lately?” I asked.

“He was going to tell you something about that. But first, he wants to know if you can remember that he had a little mark on his body where it would be hidden. It was slightly angular, if any shape at all, and was as though some sticking plaster had

been put there and then taken off leaving the rest of the skin darker round it. That has gone. The thought just struck him and the reason he mentioned it was that something reminded him of this patch.” (His mother says that he had on the lower part of his neck the mark described.)

“Now you want to know what I have been doing. Philip and I work together part of the time but in the other part I am working rather differently, *having left the earth more recently*. I share in the work of trying to build up that future for the earth which Philip outlined to you some years ago - to help the building up of *new* and better conditions on earth.”

Here came a little interlude of the kind that gives such an extraordinary vivid feeling of reality on these occasions. The Operator said: “You can’t kiss your mother now, Willie. (He is trying to kiss you.) I saw what you did, Willie. (He kissed you and put his cheek against yours in between the kisses as he used to do when he was small).”

She continued: “He says, ‘Philip told you years ago that you would see great changes on the earth. Before the War, he told you that there will be a building up of spiritual knowledge and power on the earth in those new condition, and I am joined to the work of helping to prepare those conditions.

“But before this happens you will see a great many less people in this country. They may bring in foreigners for a time, but there will be less people later and a clearer condition. You will see this work out even in the next few years: a gradual clearing out. There will be less people than before for very many years. It will be better so. It will give us a better chance of getting through direct to you and working with you - not through you - because I have *discovered* we sometimes work better with you than through you.” [If the plans made for Empire Settlement are carried out the above prediction is likely to be verified.]

“Can you tell me,” I said, “something of the lighter side of your life, your recreations and so on?”

“We can have *fun* here. This is not sufficiently known. We are *encouraged* to get on to a lighter vibration. Those only are not encouraged to do this who have lived frivolous lives; they have to come down to brass tacks. Those who had *a sense of responsibility* have all the happiness they want.’ He can play games if he likes. He does sometimes, partly for the sake of young people who have *recently passed* and want a *little relaxation* in the midst of their studies. He joins in *sometimes*. But what he often does is to go out in a small boat. Philip loves a boat and often asks Willie to come with him, not just for *the act of rowing or sculling* but for the wonderful motion on the surface of the most wonderful water you have ever seen. ‘*That is spiritual refreshment* amid lovely scenery, for there are greater facilities here for real enjoyment - feasts for eye and ear and mind. It is effortless enjoyment, as when you move, say, in a train, but that is nothing to what we do. The colours and outlines are so beautiful - indeed, indescribable - that is one of the things. And the music

here is wonderful: it is something you can't compare with anything on the earth. There is not only what I would call music made by instruments, but you can go to certain places where music is made by the surroundings - the trees, the water, the flowers, and that has a rhythm of its own which contains healing, blessing and spiritual inspiration. You would say, on earth, it is Nature's music, created by the conditions. But also there is the conventional music made by those who made it on earth or who could have done if they had had the opportunity. O, you will enjoy that. When you pass over you will meet some who have to do with music - some you have never known and you will enjoy being with them - the composers. You have music on earth and would have more if you had more time. And not only that, but the conditions for indulging those sides of your creative powers that you know exist. You are encouraged here to develop these. You will thoroughly enjoy this kind of life.

“About games: I only said what I did to show you how normal our life is. There is also colour and painting but music is more important here than any other art. Music can speak to the blind and those who don't understand what they hear. It is the highest of the arts on this side. When I go up with Philip to some of the other planes there is music all the way but it changes in character as we proceed – “upward”, as you would say, but we say “outward”. The “higher” we go the more the character of the music changes. On the planes below ours it changes till I consider it is *no longer music, but just sound on the astral*, and some is very much out of harmony. That kind of music tires you because everything that helps *the etheric body must be in harmony*. Disease comes to the physical body mostly when not in harmony with the etheric body. That is why you have to get a healer to put you right again. Your own etheric body can't do it by itself but someone else may. But disease is due to the physical and etheric not being in harmony. *Depression* also means the same thing. You *could* be depressed but you don't let it depress you, since it is not “you” out of harmony but the surrounding vibrations. So sometimes - indeed often - we have lifted that from you.

“But to come back to games. If anyone comes over here who wanted to play rough games he could do so, because it is a habit, but they don't do it for long. For habits are not constructive; they don't last except on the two very low planes where people even get pleasure out of cruelty and don't think it wrong - that is habit. But even if they are sorry for what they have done they have to work it out. .

“The pleasure in a crude game might last a little while but *I can assure you our lives* are as normal here as on earth. More normal, for yours are often abnormal because they are not what you choose and so cause strain. But our lives, as we care to follow them naturally - as we usually do - are perfectly normal. We can walk if we like, but if we wanted to do something in a way which you would call quickly we do not walk. We walk for pleasure, there is no heaviness. It is as though there were elastic in your limbs - a slight pull from the waist keeping you just slightly above the ground, but not quite floating. It is a lovely feeling because you have the pleasure of movement



without effort.

“In the physical body the muscles get old and weaken, especially those of the legs, and they are conscious of the weight of the body they support. On our side, our bodies lift; they don’t have to be supported. It is like the power of wings to the body (though we have no wings here!) and as soon as you know you want to move you move at will with great pleasure. People who on earth were old and tired feel a great pleasure just in movement. That is why they don’t want cars. There are people who *demand* cars and feel they could not begin without one. But that doesn’t last longer than the games. Normal people enjoy the pleasant feeling of walking - that is better than moving in a car, aeroplane or train - moving *yourselves* and enjoying it.

“People must be shown that they have not got to prepare for a new and impossible change, because that gives them the excuse not to prepare. They say of what they have been told: “O, it all sounds so different, we must leave it till we get there - it is beyond us.” We don’t want it to be beyond them and to leave it all and to do as they like, just muddling along in the earth-conditions. *We want them to have a good idea of what is* so that they *can* prepare, and make themselves ready for the new life. It is not an abrupt and unnatural change. The rose that blooms another season blooms again a rose, not a daffodil or a cherry tree! It goes on according to its own nature, and so will you. Some don’t want music - but dancing - at first, but not later. The change is natural, like childhood to youth, and youth to man. Death is the same, I change, but a natural one to *an environment which gives you every chance of adjusting yourself to it*. Let people know that they have no excuse for ignoring the facts. Their lives will be as now except that they can’t hurt anyone but themselves, not even with their thoughts.

“There is only one exception to that - if a person on earth *wilfully* tuned in to low astral conditions he could contact them. That might happen to a person who was very *self-indulgent* who knew that he was addicted to alcohol and who wilfully over-indulged in it - such a person might put himself in touch with astral-conditions and could injure some astral-being. This is only said to impress people to overcome self-indulgence because they might attract astral-people temporarily which would be rather destructive than harmful.

“On the other hand, supposing one was addicted to drink and he resisted saying, “I have given way in the past but will do so no more because I might hurt someone else”, he would help the astral-being because he would have sent out a good thought to him.

“Your thoughts on the earth are felt by us, especially during the earlier part of our lives here; we are very open to your thoughts then - more so than later. I know that by experience because, thinking of you (his mother) so much, I became very sensitive to your thoughts. But where there is terrible and selfish grief - where there is that - it doesn’t help us. And after a time we are not encouraged by our guides to get into touch. *On the other hand*, if a grief were deep, sincere and unselfish and the

feeling is, "I must think of the one I love - what can I think or do to help?" we are helped by our guides to be drawn to one who thinks on those lines.

"It all comes back to unselfishness and service. Communication is good for us, if it is on the right lines. I love communicating with you, but there are people we should not be encouraged to get into touch with.' But he always has been with regard to you. Philip says, 'You (Paul) grew up with me. You have grown with me since my passing. That was a rather wonderful experience for me because I was conscious of my own growth to young manhood, which was more rapid than it would have been on earth. I quickly came to maturity because mine was a mature spirit in the first place.' "

The Operator comments: "They belonged to you before in other relationships, as you will learn when you are together. He is waiting for you before learning all of it, and to know what your respective conditions were. If they had got to come back to earth again they would then revert to the highest, closest, happiest and most important relationship. Almost imperceptibly they would go back to the closest relationship they had before. The perfect relationship reached eventually is a combination of all they have been to each other through their lives. He says he doesn't think any of us will have to return because we know enough to go on. Not all can, and the more whom you can teach the fewer will have to come back. You have to become conscious of a Spirit World and what it means and many don't want to contemplate it, so they will have to return automatically."

Then, after discussing a private family-matter, "'We send our love.' They feel it."

That concluded a conversation which had lasted two hours and had been recorded verbatim by myself. At that point the boys retired - for the time being. And it is at that point too that they may bid the friendly reader farewell.

## Chapter XVII

### *What Does it all Mean?*

That is a question I am unable to answer. I can only say what it means to me.

In this book I have not been attempting to champion some new doctrine, whether of the theological or philosophical kind, but to recount quite simply certain personal experiences which others may find helpful, or at least of interest. I have written for ordinary folk, with whom I have so much in common, being myself an ordinary person.

This concluding chapter is not intended to point the moral of what has been written but only to help to a fuller understanding of what I have described.

There are those to whom a great deal of what is here recorded would be so foreign to their way of thinking that it would be almost impossible for them to accept it as fact. What they would consider its antecedent improbability is a barrier they would be unable to surmount. But it is a self-imposed barrier which does not exist for the

open-minded. I must leave the unconvinced, not without some sympathy, and certainly with no hard thoughts at failing to win their approval. I should make a poor propagandist, since I am usually handicapped by a lively sense of what can be said against any cause I might advocate. Perhaps I may say that, so far from being a credulous person, I think I have been a sceptic from early days. I recall my more orthodox brother expressing astonishment and grief at my youthful doubts and hesitations.

I am suspicious of beliefs sustained by arguments based on assumptions. I have often listened to debates of this kind with delight at the intellectual acuteness and dialectical agility of well-equipped controversialists, but I perceived that the logomachy might go on for ever, since it consisted of words, words, words which led nowhere, victory in the argument depending more on the skill of the advocate than the strength of his cause.

I have been led to see that persons of a mystical temperament can reach conclusions through experiences which are beyond me. Mine is a pedestrian habit of thought incapable of reaching those starry altitudes. Others, again, have a capacity for pure faith which enables them to dispense with all props. They can, it seems, leave the solid earth and, launching out into the void, find themselves encircled by the Everlasting Arms.

But these are the choice spirits who, I suppose, have never been numerous. We, lesser folk, must feel our way through our experience of what seem to be facts - facts pregnant with meaning.

Thus, there are those who, in face of bereavement, are upheld by mystical certainty or an unconquerable religious faith. God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world. These are of the very elect, but since the considerations that inspire them depend on a belief in God, they can have no weight for those who do not possess that belief, as it is with many in these days. Indeed, it has fallen to my lot to conduct burial-services some hundreds of times surrounded by professing Christians, and at the greater part of them profound grief has been the prevailing atmosphere. Death is looked upon, not as an incident in the life of the spirit, but as a major calamity. The physical presence has been withdrawn, the body which had been its expression is senseless clay. The spirit - the real self - if its existence is believed in at all, is so intangible and incomprehensible a thing. And where is it?

In our days people do not usually suffer the agonizing doubts that those of bygone times have felt lest the departed soul had failed to reach the standard required for admission to Heaven. Those who are fortified by the assurance of the Book of Common Prayer, that the souls of the faithful after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity, assume that the departed has qualified for such joy and felicity as he is able to derive from the opportunity for unending worship in a static and unfamiliar Heaven.

It is in no critical and unsympathetic spirit that these words are written. Quite the reverse, and how often have I wished that I could convey to those in need that kind of assurance which I have but which with most would be so alien to their habitual thought that there is little I could say which would obtain a lodgment. One can only speak of faith and resignation.

It has been at the back of my mind in writing this book that some may find in what I have recorded a fresh outlook in respect to what is so often regarded as unredeemed disaster. For I have for many years enjoyed communion and fellowship with departed friends, not in some vague subjective sense but with the meaning attached to those words in ordinary life. I understand at least something of what is meant by a sense of mystical contact inspired by faith and leading sometimes to the development of great nobility of character. But to myself that consciousness would always be haunted by the suspicion that it might be purely subjective. As Dr F. R. Tennant says, "A belief is not necessarily true as to which a believer entertains certitude; it is true only if it accords with fact and reality." Even that a belief has been long and widely entertained is no guarantee of its truth. Through countless centuries all the world believed the sun to travel round the earth.

To ordinary folk like myself, truth is a modest affair: it is, in essence, a bare statement of the facts. And from the facts of experience we try to form some idea as to the value of life, how we should live and what meaning we can ascribe to the universe. It will be said that the answers to the questions arising from such considerations are given by religion, and the Christian Religion in particular. Naturally, I should agree, but the fact remains that to many in these days those answers are not convincing. That may be due to the form in which they are given and which even yet is not sufficiently adapted to the changes in outlook which the passing of the years has inevitably brought about.

That this is so is illustrated by the prevalent vagueness of thought even in orthodox circles concerning the next world. There appear to be few generally accepted beliefs about it beyond that there is another world, that it consists of Heaven and Hell with possibly Purgatory or Paradise as an intermediate condition, and that one's status on the other side is partly determined by one's life in this world and partly by belief in certain doctrines and the performance of prescribed religious duties. Most of the grosser ideas about Hell have been abandoned, but Heaven is still pictured symbolically in hymns and prayers as chiefly the sphere of unending worship.

No general agreement appears to have been reached as to what actually happens to one who passes over. Not so very long ago the prevailing idea was that he remained in a state of suspended animation, or at least existed in an incorporeal condition until the Last Day, when he would again possess a body, composed, it was thought, of the resuscitated particles of the earth-body, which would then rise from the grave. In our time the extreme crudity of that conception has been toned down by the idea that the bodiless ghost would, at the General Resurrection, be given some sort of

outward form.

In these days, in which the critical and scientific approach has won victories so notable, it is hardly to be wondered at that ideas resting on such insecure foundations and having little verifiable contact with reality should have ceased to exercise an influence on thought, still less to be a determining factor in the conduct of life. Even in the Church the other world and what concerns it seem to have lost much of their former interest. It is certainly difficult to speak with conviction on a subject presenting so many difficulties, at a time when the old ideas have lost most of the meaning they once had and no efficient substitute has been found. Humanitarianism is a stop-gap, an invaluable one, but something is lacking in a religion the interest of which is confined largely to this world. "What do you think my husband is doing now?" a widow eagerly asked her clergyman when he paid his first call after her bereavement. "We must be practical," he replied. "Tell me, did he leave a will?"

It would seem that those best qualified to enlighten us about the transition from this world to the next, and what kind of world that is, are those who could speak from personal experience. To many, and perhaps to the majority of people, the possibility of this being done is an idea so preposterous as to be unworthy of a moment's consideration. And what information they may have derived from hearsay, or perhaps the extravagant assurances of some acquaintance whose intellectual qualifications do not inspire respect, fails to arouse any interest in the subject. Yet its careful investigation, often through many years, has led a great number of persons in all walks of life, whose judgment is universally respected, to the conviction, won despite profound initial scepticism, that Man survives his body's death and that, under the right conditions, those in the next world can get in touch with us in this.

Facts of experience afford ample evidence that certain people possess the capacity to pick up and transmit what, for want of a better word, may be called vibrations from the other side, by means of which its inhabitants can convey their thoughts to us and through which they manifest a personality complete with memory, will, affection and characteristic traits which produce conviction.

The subject is indeed perfectly respectable even if the ill-informed connect it mainly with delusion, fraud and diabolism. I refer the reader to the extensive literature dealing with it in which he will discover at least food for thought. I make this brief reference to general considerations only to assure him that what he has found in this book is not necessarily the aberration of a solitary eccentric. What I have written must be considered against the background of the results of nearly a century's careful investigation all over the civilised world. Important as these have been, Psychic Research is concerned with so vast a field of enquiry that we are doubtless still only on the outskirts of the territory yet to be conquered. But we seem to have found the key which unlocks a door opening upon endless vistas.

Leaving these great matters and coming back to my own modest experiences, what light do these throw on the mystery of human destiny? I have been able to record in this book only a comparatively small part of what has resulted from my own investigations. These have convinced me personally that my two sons and many other friends who have passed on have not passed away. They exist as completely, but in a far more developed condition, as when on earth. They have given me evidence of identity of a kind which may even be called scientific in that it is established by facts which do not seem capable of being accounted for on any other hypothesis than that of survival. If, for example, a young man on the other side, whom I had never met and of whom I knew practically nothing, gives a message that in a locked drawer of a cabinet which had belonged to him is a certain "card which was so important to him", and the message is subsequently verified, though no one on earth knew what the drawer contained, I venture to look upon the incident as a reasonable demonstration of his survival with the capacity to remember and the will to give evidence of it.

For if, in ordinary life, a piece of information is said to come from one who happens to be the only person in possession of it, and the information is subsequently verified, no one would hesitate to accept it as coming from him. It is only when the informant chances to be on the other side that attempts are made, often by purely fanciful conjectures, to attribute it to some other source.

On the occasion referred to above, in order to assure the young man's father that I had really been in contact with his son, I asked the Communicator to give me some more information unknown to myself which I could hand on. His response to this request filled a half-dozen pages of my record. His father kindly analysed these, with the result that, out of 13 descriptions given, he marked 3 as "poor", 1 "uncertain", 2 "fair", and 7 "good", a proportion utterly beyond chance or coincidence, and not one of the matters described was within the knowledge of either the Agent or myself.

In the kind of world in which we live the utmost that can reasonably be expected is a high degree of probability. Apart from Mathematics, what conclusion can be reached which is beyond question? "Probability is the guide of life." But there are degrees of probability and I think that when an enormous number, not of arguments, but of carefully observed facts, all point the same way we may assume that they are leading us in the right direction.

That is what has happened to myself in reference to what I have been told of my two sons. The cumulative effect of a large number of verified statements has been impressive. But that which is most impressive of all is the clear but intangible and incommunicable evidence of personality, for, unfortunately, only the recipient of such evidence is able to appreciate its full force. Yet, I hardly think that what I have set down in this book can have failed to give the reader a sense of having been introduced to two persons who cannot easily be dismissed as figments of the imagination even when the story carries us out of this world into the next.

I must now make an attempt to meet what to some readers will have been a very real difficulty: what of the kind of world in which the two young men are said to live? We are brought here, of course, up against an almost impenetrable barrier of preconceptions. It seems well-nigh impossible for most people to overcome the difficulty of entertaining the idea that their experience of life on the other side may not turn out to be quite what they have been led to expect.

The same difficulty appears to beset them even on the other side, in their early acquaintance with it. A well-known revivalist preacher who had recently passed over purported to speak through a psychically-gifted friend of mine. He appeared to be in a condition of great perplexity at finding the next world so different from what he had anticipated. Especially, it seems, he had expected, upon his passing to behold the Saviour, but this had not yet happened.

The communication was entirely unexpected and appeared to be a genuine one. If it was so, it gives point to what it may be remembered my sons told me of the importance of having ideas corresponding to the facts in reference to other-world conditions. I do not propose to enter on a general consideration of this matter but rather to confine myself to the experience of the two boys. It would be an absurd mistake to argue from the particular to the general in this matter and to assume that their experience must be that of all. Since no two people are exactly alike in character and outlook, and each one's experience of life on the other side is conditioned by his personal idiosyncrasies, their experiences will differ enormously.

But one determining factor appears to be common to all, that, whatever initial difficulties newcomers may encounter, they do ultimately gravitate to the conditions appropriate to the sum-total of their respective capacities. The degraded sink to their own level, the aspiring rise, those who are neither the one nor the other inhabit that intermediate "belt" which Philip described as "a well-populated sphere" !

The point of all this, as it affects the two young men of whom we have been thinking, is that when they passed over they found themselves, not in a baffling and incomprehensible situation, though an unfamiliar one. Philip, of course, was an infant and, as such (but possessing great latent capacity), he seems to have been most carefully reared through childhood to youth and manhood. He speaks of all he owes to those whom he describes as his "mentors".

Paul passed as a young man and, as was natural, his interests had been confined mainly to the concerns of his earth-life and his congenial occupations. It was strange indeed, and, at first, disconcerting to be snatched away from all this to another world altogether. But we have seen that there were alleviations. He was carefully tended through a period of what may be thought of as convalescence, and, not being entirely ignorant of the subject, he did not find his surroundings utterly strange and unnatural. And Philip's affection and experience were at his service in adjusting himself to the manifold opportunities now open to him.

Paul, though an excellent fellow, was not religious in the conventional sense, and it is not difficult to picture what would have been his dismay had his new home and his future occupations been of the kind adumbrated in popular conceptions. The boys have not given a detailed account of their life on the other side, so much of which, as Philip has said, could not be conveyed in terms we are capable of comprehending. The rather more superficial instances of their activities are mentioned occasionally and casually. The atmosphere is emphatically not that of an ecclesiastical Heaven but certainly that which we think of as Christian, for, as they said of the principles which govern what they do, "It all comes back to unselfishness and service."

From what he has said from time to time I feel that Philip's thought of God is best expressed in St Paul's words: "In Him we live and move and have our being." Philip's own words are: "We dwell in the power of God here, taking it as children." That childlike consciousness of God seems to need no elaboration in words. Yet it will, I think, be a real difficulty to some that in none of the records given in this book is there any specific reference to certain important articles of orthodox Christian belief. Incidentally, that may be considered to support the idea that the message are genuine since, if the Agents concerned had wished, consciously or subconsciously, to give me what they would suppose that a clergyman might expect they would certainly have supplied the appropriate observations.

I suppose that the boys' omission to speak on such matters may be due to a variety of causes. They may not have been relevant to the kind of things they wished particularly to say at the time, or it may of course be that they are not interested in formal theology. Though this may be true of them it does not follow that those with special interests in what are customarily thought of as specifically "religious" concerns when on earth cease so to feel after passing over. Whatever of such ideas was of permanent value would now possess an even greater significance.

My mother, for example, was a deeply religious woman with a simple, whole-hearted faith of an Evangelical description. She is the same kind of person now, although her ideas have broadened. When once I said to her, "You would not have thought that in the old days," she replied instantly, "I have been over here a long time: don't you suppose I have grown?"

But she is essentially her old self, retaining much of her accustomed interests. One of these was her love of hymns, which she would sing or say to me when a child. In a conversation I had with her some years after her passing she repeated part of a hymn beginning with the words, "Jesus bids us shine with a clear, bright light", which, if I had ever heard from her when on earth, I had quite forgotten. But my sister remembered my mother teaching the hymn to her own little daughter. On the same occasion, speaking of my love of Nature, she quoted the first line of Keble's hymn on the sacramental aspect of natural objects, "There is a book, who runs may read." The Operator was puzzled at this and said, "That must be wrong; you can't



read a book when you are running.” Than which remark, by the way, I cannot conceive of more convincing testimony that the Operator was repeating something she really heard but did not herself understand.

These trifling details are set down merely to suggest to the orthodox reader that all that is of intrinsic worth in the particular form in which religious ideas present themselves on earth remain an abiding possession on the other side. In the Father’s House are many mansions.

I think that the references in the previous chapter to games and to the boys occasionally diverting themselves with a boat will have been disconcerting to some. They have been nurtured in the belief that the life of an incorporeal spirit in a non-material world is utterly unlike anything we can imagine, but would at any rate have no resemblance to earth-experience. So it may be in those exalted spheres that lie far ahead, but can anyone imagine most of those who pass over being able, in the twinkling of an eye, to undergo the complete transformation of character and outlook which would enable them to live in so rarefied an atmosphere?

The transition appears to be much more gradual, the first stage of existence in the next world having features which give it a homely aspect. We are told of rivers, lakes and streams, hills and dales, trees and flowers and even of some bird and animal life. But do not these presuppose a material world? I think the answer would be that it is a world which has, at any rate, all the signs of solid reality.

The world in which we live at present gives us the same impression. Yet, as Sir Arthur Eddington has pointed out, the table which feels solid and substantial and continuous is really a multitude of whirling electrons with great spaces between them. But for the ordinary purposes of life we interpret it in a more customary way. “This faculty of interpretation”, says Sir Oliver Lodge, “has become part of ourselves, and so we carry it with us, so that wherever we find ourselves, we are liable to interpret our surroundings in an ordinary human way: thus there is no great shock or violent transition in passing over, and we can continue to preserve our feeling of identity. Whatever element of illusion there is about our perception of objects on earth, that same kind of illusion persists into the next state, so long as it may be necessary.”

A boat in our earth-world has all the appearance of one and is able to convey folk across the water even though it is actually made up of a mass of invisible electrons, and it seems that a boat in the next world is much the same, of whatever substance it may, in a final analysis, be composed.

The boys insist that their life is not of a nature entirely inconceivable by us. They speak of it as a “normal” existence. What they have been able to tell us pictures a very full life and one adapted to their capacity and need. We know less of Paul’s experience, of which he has not yet had a great deal, but he seems happy in it, and has already made considerable progress. Philip appears to have led an exceedingly

full life during thirty-five years on the other side. In addition to the wide variety of earthly concerns in which he is interested, as evidenced by what has been set forth in this book, we gather that he is engaged in work of various kinds and that he enjoys the privilege of occasional meetings with such interesting persons as poets, composers (I have had to omit the references to his interest in music) and even of an occasional saintly visitor to the sphere he inhabits. But he has also kept in close touch with this world, gaining in his connection with the rest of the family that earth-experience of which his early passing deprived him. Especially close, perhaps, is his connection with myself, and to his deep and generous interest in my life and work I owe an immense debt of gratitude.

Perhaps I may be permitted to give an instance of this kindly solicitude which, though it might appear trifling to some, has often afforded me immense pleasure and help. Years ago he promised that he would occasionally try to signify his presence by percussive sounds. He has become quite an adept at this, even giving me a technical account of how he produces the sounds, which range from gentle taps to vigorous raps. Especially interesting to me is the evidence he gives thereby of his knowledge of my unspoken thoughts. Scores of times, when thinking, and mentally expressing my thoughts in the form of words, his signal has come exactly on the conclusion of a sentence. In the early morning before I arise is a favourite time. My latest experience of this kind occurred only the day before this is being written. I chanced to be thinking of the title of a book and repeated it mentally: "The dead have never died." Exactly on the last word the deep stillness of the early morning in this quiet place was broken by an emphatic rap.

There is one more matter which I must mention before I conclude my story. It concerns what is known as Rebirth or Reincarnation.

I must admit to having felt considerable hesitation in bringing that subject into my book. I knew that there would be those who might even go some way with me in the matter of survival and communication but who would be alienated by my bringing forward this yet more provocative topic. But in the end I decided to take courage and go on. My chief reason, perhaps, was that, as I have said, all my friends on the other side who mention the matter unhesitatingly accept the theory of the Plurality of Lives in regard to ourselves personally.

I shall keep to the course I have followed hitherto in not discussing the subject in general but confining myself to the references made to it in the conversations I have had and to such aspects of it as concern my friends and myself.

Approaching the idea, in the first instance, with the antipathy begotten of ignorance and prejudice, I was hostile towards it. But that feeling has gone, and now I feel at home in it. If it be true that the essential "I" really has lived anything like the kind of lives of which I have been told, I think that the conception is of interest and importance. It makes existence such an immeasurably greater and more wonderful thing. How wide a range of experience must be stored up in the superconscious

mind ready to be revealed at the right time but even now having served to make the “me” which functions in this present lowly sphere what “I” really am.

However, I am not yet convinced that such evidence as I have had is sufficient to enable me to feel that the truth of the theory is established in my own case. I might have been more ready to claim as in some sort evidential what was said of the alleged Tudor incarnation were it not for a natural shrinking from the presumption of seeming to pretend to any kind of link with a personality so immeasurably superior to that in which I now appear. (A feeling which compelled me to inflict upon the reader a tiresome symbol - of course a transparent disguise - for the name of the person concerned.) I look upon the idea of the Plurality of Lives in my own case as a possibility - and perhaps more than that. It is a hypothesis which I think likely to be correct but which at present I do not feel to be sufficiently warranted by evidence to claim as representing a fact.

And now to sum up. Perhaps the chief impression produced upon my mind by the experiences I have enjoyed through psychic means during the past sixteen years is that of having had my mental and spiritual horizon enormously extended. Against this background the miracle of existence has an ever deeper significance, and is even now apparelled in celestial light.

We appear to stand on a lowly rung of the ladder when we pass into the next stage of existence but the top of it reaches to Heaven. My two sons are content for a time to keep in close touch with the earth; Philip, as he has told me, has gladly waited before going forward until we join him and all can go on together. That has not in any way impeded his progress, which has indeed been advanced by his devotion to the service of those on earth whom he loves. With our feet planted, as I believe, on the solid ground of fact, we can lift our eyes, with a sense of calm security, to the illimitable possibilities that lie before us.

Our destiny, our being's heart and home,  
Is with infinitude, and only there;  
With hope it is, hope that can never die,  
Effort, and expectation, and desire,  
And something ever more about to be.