

# **MY SEARCH FOR TRUTH**



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# 1

## EARLIEST IMPRESSIONS

I come of a deeply religious family. My father was the youngest son of the Rev. Joseph Hamblin, onetime Baptist minister at Foots Cray, Kent, who lies buried in the little churchyard in front of Foots Cray Chapel.

Father was the only one in his family who followed the religious life. Why his two brothers and sister did not do so, I cannot say. Yet my father, although religious, never followed in his father's footsteps by entering the ministry.

He was not without talent, and had he possessed more self-assurance he might have done as well as some ministers whom I have known. But Father was too gentle and timid to take a leading part in the church, so he never got beyond serving as a deacon.

Mother was of quite different calibre; she was capable of holding her own in any situation. She it was who ruled our home, but although she used a cane to some effect at times, hers was a reign of love. We children loved her more than we did Father, although he did not cane us and was terribly upset whenever we were punished. My earliest recollections carry me back to the time when I was being prompted by Mother as I stumbingly said the child's prayer 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child, pity my simplicity, suffer me to come to Thee'.

I also remember my father taking me for walks and shewing me various wild flowers, and telling me

how to recognize the songs of the different birds, for being a countryman he knew them all. He used to tell me about God and how that not a sparrow could fall to the ground without our Heavenly Father knowing about it. He told me stories about Jesus and what He did and said while on earth. He taught me, too, to sing the hymn: 'When mothers of Salem, their children brought to Jesus'. I used to think a lot about Jesus.

He was very real to me and I greatly wished that I could see Him, and be like the children of Salem whom He took in His arms and blessed. It would have been lovely, I thought.

I had one brother and one sister, both older than myself, and Father used to gather us children around him and teach us to sing various hymns, such as children could understand. On Sunday evenings we had family worship. Father read from the Bible, after which we all knelt down (I can still recall how hard the floor was !) while he prayed for us long and earnestly, each one individually by name.

I also remember being alone with Mother, sitting on a little stool beside her chair. She would hold my hand while she talked to me about Jesus, who was the friend of little boys like me.

She said that when I did things which were wrong I made Jesus very sad and unhappy. I could not understand how this could be, for Jesus was not there, having gone to Heaven to sit on a throne at God's right hand, but I was willing to take Mother's word for it.

Father spent a lot of time in prayer for us children. We could hear his moans and groans all over the house, although we could not distinguish his actual words. But once, when I was near the door of his room, I did hear enough to know that he was pleading with God to save us children from perishing before it was too late.

Of course we children went to Sunday-school. I, being the youngest, went in the Infants' Class and was taught by a melancholy man whose voice was cast in such mournful tones that he might have been the angel mentioned in Revelation 8 which flew through the midst of heaven, saying in a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth.' In appearance my teacher looked like a funeral mute, and when he spoke it was as though the much-dreaded end of the world had come and that the whole population was sliding downwards into the rake of fire and brimstone, while he shouted out 'Woe Woe', just as a parting shot. Those indeed were dreadful days as regards theology and doctrine.

However, as soon as I could read fairly well I was transferred to the big school and put in a class presided over by a very likeable young man. We grew quite fond of our teacher, for he did not cry 'Woe, Woe', but told us all sorts of interesting things which he illustrated by means of rough sketches which he made on pieces of paper. One day however the Superintendent came along and caught our teacher during one of his demonstrations and severely censured him for not using the stereotyped lessons which were issued by the Sunday-school Union. The young man refused to be regimented and thus turned into a mere pawn, so

he left.

In his place we had the son of a baking-powder manufacturer, one of the two well-to-do or comparatively rich men of our church.

He was however quite a different type of teacher and was evidently tarred with the same brush as was the Infants' Class leader, for he told us that evil was the reality.

He said that if you put a bad plum in with a basket of good plums, they will all be made bad; never would the good plums make the bad plum good.

No, the bad plum will always cause the good ones to rot. So he said that God demanded that a sacrifice should be made, a human sacrifice which would put everything right and appease His anger, thus preventing Him from punishing us for our sins which we had committed, owing to this principle of evil.

The teacher did not point out however that we could not possibly have been responsible, seeing that his so-called principle of evil existed long before we were born. There was a boy in the class named Thomas, and he and I together delighted in asking our teacher awkward questions.

For instance, we asked him how it was possible that plums still went bad, if what he said was true. That was a poser for him, and I cannot remember that he ever answered it.

On another occasion he spent a lot of time trying to explain the doctrine of the Trinity. Thomas, bluntly telling him that such a thing was impossible, demanded, 'How can one person be three

persons, and how can three persons be one person? The teacher could not answer the question; quite obviously, he did not know. Thomas was triumphant. Looking back on these and similar incidents, it seems incredible that an untrained Sunday-school teacher should have been entrusted with the responsible task of instructing little boys in such a difficult doctrine as that of the Trinity especially as he knew nothing about it himself. If the authorities considered it advisable to teach such abstruse theological tenets to children, one would have thought that they would have entrusted the work to well-trained theologians, not to raw, unlearned men who were quite ignorant of the subject. But perhaps there were not many boys of Thomas's calibre.

I do not, however, think that any of our ministers would have been capable of training the Sunday school teachers in the mystery of the Trinity, simply because they did not understand it themselves. I have never met anyone who did. Actually, of course, the real meaning is this: God Transcendent is God the Father; God Immanent is God the Son; God, the Holy Spirit is the Holy Breath. Without the Son (God within us) we can do nothing; through Him (God Immanent) we are able to approach the Father (God Transcendent), and we are sustained by the Holy Spirit, the breath of God. Another recollection. Our teacher called us together for a confidential talk. He told us that it was time that we were 'saved'. Jesus had died to save us from being eternally punished by the wrath of God who had demanded a sacrifice of appeasement, yet this did not take effect if we were not 'saved'. We were saved, and yet we were not saved: that was all we could make out of it.

He declared that because we were not 'saved' we might go to hell at any moment, where we would be tortured for ever. He added that we might die through being run over by a cart or through sudden illness; or we might even be struck dead in the midst of our sins by an angry God. We were reminded that one or two of the boys belonging to the Sunday-school had died recently, and our teacher advised us to make up our minds quickly before it was too late.

By this time I was thoroughly frightened and thought that the sooner I became 'saved' the better. But Thomas was not convinced; he argued that we were not responsible for being sinful, therefore why did God want to punish us? The teacher replied: 'Oh, but we are responsible! We are given free choice and if we choose evil we must be punished for it'. But Thomas produced a text which he said he had come across by accident and which ran as follows: 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.' 'Now', said Thomas, 'if that is the case, we are not responsible, therefore God has no right to punish us. Even an ordinary man would not do such a thing.' Again Thomas had got the better of the argument, and again the teacher was brought to a complete standstill.

About this time news came to us that our beloved late teacher had been killed in a big earthquake at San Francisco. As he ran out to escape from a large building, some masonry fell upon him which killed him instantly.

I expressed the fear to Thomas that perhaps our beloved ex-teacher had gone to hell, seeing that



he was so unorthodox that he had been forced to resign from the Sunday-school.

But Thomas would not agree. He said that if there was a hell it would be for the really wicked, and that there would be a Heaven of some sort for decent and good people, even if they were unorthodox. This comforted me not a little, in spite of the fact that it sounded like heresy to me.

I do not know what became of Thomas and I have often wondered how he turned out. He could never have become a canting hypocrite, that is certain. He was fair and just and wise, far beyond his years, and had a much better idea of God than any of our so-called teachers possessed.

Thomas was intellectually honest, which was not the case, I am afraid, with some of the theologians and teachers of doctrine of the time of which I write. However, although the teaching was muddle-headed, the people themselves were good and kind, for Victorian people had many virtues which are sadly lacking today.

I have mentioned these incidents in order that the reader may form some sort of picture of the religious background of my early years; and also that my younger readers may glean some idea of the dreadful ideas of God which prevailed in those far-off days some seventy years ago.

On the other hand, it may well be asked: 'Why do you give us this account of your early childhood for you could not possibly have been a seeker after Truth at such an early age?' That is

certainly true, so far as conscious seeking was concerned.

But I think that we are seekers the whole of our life through, although we may be quite unconscious of the fact. There is something within us which is always seeking satisfaction. We may seek it in worldly and fleshly things, or even in highly intellectual pursuits, for we are as it were driven forward by desire. We may imagine that we really can find satisfaction in having our hopes and desires realized, but of course we find that contentment is as far off as ever.

We do not know at the time that what we are really seeking is God, and that God alone can satisfy our longings. Thus, although we may be seeking satisfaction in the things of this life, yet actually we are seeking God - although we do not know at the time that we are doing so.

But when we have 'arrived', even though it be but to a small degree, we begin to realize that although we may seem to have been the seeker and that everything depended upon our searching, yet actually God has been seeking us, and drawing us to Himself by the cords of His love.

Looking back on my life it seems to me that it has been like a magnet attracting steel filings: God has been drawing me (as indeed He draws all His children) all the time, even from my earliest years. Without being aware of the fact my so-called seeking has really been my response to God's attracting power of love.

Therefore this drawing by God must have begun as

soon as my life on this earth began. Consequently it is necessary to recount these incidents of my early life in order to trace the way in which God has led and attracted me.

We all respond to this drawing process in different ways according to our individual makeup, circumstances, home life, and the early teaching which we receive.

It must not be thought however that because ours was a religious home, with Father following the religious life and Mother also doing the same only in a far less conspicuous way, that we children were a trio of saints. Far from it.

We were no better than we ought to have been, in fact often-times much worse. I can remember our little mother saying more than once that she wished she could run away and leave us, because we were so naughty. I can also remember her saying that we should be sorry some day when she was gone. As Mother was a woman of much spirit and strength of will, our misbehaviour must have been pretty bad to make her say such things !

As our parents were Baptists, we children were not baptized when we were infants, but had to wait for believers' baptism. When a boy or girl was old enough to know his or her own mind, and if he or she made a profession of faith and accepted a certain formula of doctrine, then baptism was granted and membership of the Church allowed. My brother, being the eldest, was the first to pass through this initiation. My sister followed but I, being very much younger, had to wait several years.

I am not quite sure of the actual sequence of events during this period of my life; but I think that it must have been before I was baptized and received into the Church that I passed through a very disturbing experience which happened when I was about sixteen years of age. For some months I had been suffering from extreme melancholy. I used to pace our little garden, and as it was near a church I often heard the organ being played. The strains of the music almost drove me to despair for they seemed charged with all the sadness and sorrow that this world and its people had ever known. This must have gone on for months, yet I do not know how I succeeded in evading going to Service on Sunday evenings. Instead, I paced the garden paths, listening to the melancholy organ and feeling like a lost soul.

But worse was to follow. Suddenly and without any warning I woke up, so to speak, and realized that my true identity was not this little finite personality known as H.T.H. Then I exclaimed: 'Who am I, and what am I doing here?'

During this distressing period I went to my parents as well as to our minister and asked them what it all meant, but they could not help me. I sometimes think that if at that time I could have received a little help from a competent teacher, I might have been saved from much suffering and sorrow; but alas, there was no one who could help me in the slightest degree. Also, it might have helped if I had met some wise person who could have explained to me that the personal ego was not my real Self, but merely a shadow on the screen of time. If I could have been shewn, as does Professor Mottram in his *The Physical basis of*

Personality, that the real 'I' or core of my being is a spark, an atom of the fundamental Reality in the Universe, it might have made a tremendous difference to me in my almost despairing perplexity.

However none could help me, and so the golden moment was lost. Yet gradually the great realization of my true identity died away and I became normal, as people called it.

In reality, however, this 'normality' pushed me back into my prison, and it was many a long year before I was able to realize the Truth again.

On thinking the matter over after a lapse of nearly sixty years, though, I must admit that there may have been another side to the question. It might have been the worst possible thing for me at that age to have pursued the matter of my true identity. It may have been a premature breaking out of the Eternal Self, and this might have proved too much for me and unhinged my mind.

Truth is undoubtedly withheld from us until we are ready for it, for it is so powerful that it would destroy us, in much the same way as if we gaze at the sun too long without protective glasses we may damage the retinae of the eyes. Therefore a premature realization of the inner Spiritual Man might have proved equally destructive to me.

The experience, however, did prove to me that it was possible to have a true Cosmic experience without knowing any doctrine, or creed, or theological theories. Those around me who were full to the brim with these things had no direct Cosmic experience nor knowledge of their true natures, whereas I who accepted none of these matters had the Cosmic experience.

Consequently I came to the conclusion that the Real Thing (which cannot be described) can be found only through experience, and quite apart from any doctrinal or theological theories.

What knowledge I have of God, and the way to find God and to realize Truth, I have found wholly apart from any doctrine or theory. This is not meant to imply that I attack these things indeed, I know that they are helpful to many.

But I have to put on record that they have never been helpful to me.

**DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE  
AND A CERTAIN MR. PLIABLE**

As I grew older I quite failed to understand my father's theology. It transpired that he was a Calvinist and therefore believed in the doctrine of predestination, consequently it was not easy to understand why he should pray for us children so earnestly and imploringly. If our destiny as to whether we were to be saved or lost – was settled before we were born, why should it be necessary for him to pray to God to save us ere it was too late? However, I thank God that our father did pray for us so earnestly and persistently, for we certainly needed it.

But my parents' loving zeal on my behalf was not confined to long and earnest prayer. I wished at the time that it had been. Their prayers for my conversion did not worry me very much. I was quite content that they should continue to pray for me as it seemed to please them and, as far as I could see, did me no harm.

But soon after our Sunday-school teacher had told us that we had better 'get saved and flee from the wrath to come', my dear little mother started a similar campaign. The onslaught by our Sunday school teacher was not too bad for, being frightened by what he said about going to hell if we should be run over in the street, we were only too glad to agree to what he said, and really mean it at the time. But the effects soon wore off and we were not worried about the subject again. But with Mother it was different. It was easy

enough to give way to her gentle pleadings and really want to be a good boy - but I was not allowed to forget her concern for me.

Again and again I was asked if I had given my heart to Jesus, yet when I stuck up for myself against my sister and brother, I was told that I was inconsistent. Naturally enough I got very weary of being worried, cajoled and harried in this way.

I had been very ill, I remember, when Mother first began this process of direct action, instead of relying on prayer. I was extremely weak at the time, not even convalescent. Mother said that I might easily have died, but God had spared me. He might not spare me another time, therefore in order to be safe I ought to be 'saved'. I gave in to her pleadings, but it made me very unhappy to think that God was of such a nature, that we had to be 'saved' in order to escape from His wrath. I remember, too, that Father began to deal with me in much the same way. He got me by myself and told me that he had something very serious to say to me. He said that it was time that I came to a decision. But Father was more reasonable than the others who seemed to think that I could be persuaded into being a Christian by argument and pressure. He apparently did not quite agree with that line of attack, but made me promise that I would become a 'seeker', and then nearly every night would ask me if I was still seeking.

I am afraid though that in order to escape his attentions and so avoid awkward questions, I often told him that I was. But of course I was not. All the badgering to which I was subjected merely tired me out, and did not make me a real seeker.



However, in course of time I followed in the footsteps of my brother and sister, by asking to be baptized by immersion according to the rites of the Baptist Church.

After the morning service my father took me into the vestry, and told the minister that I wanted to join the Church. I was very emotional at the time, so that when the minister began to question me I burst into tears. All that the dear old man asked me was: 'Well, my dear boy, do you love Jesus?' I had been expecting him to question me about doctrine which might have been difficult to answer, so that when he asked the simple question, I was reduced to sobs, as I confessed that I did indeed love Jesus.

I knew then that I always had done so, and that although I was a rebel against theology and doctrine, I should always love Him, even though I might follow Him but a very long way off. It was at a special Sunday evening service that I was baptized. I was just one of many candidates. I was conscious that the church was packed with people, especially in the gallery which permitted the best view.

The platform beneath the pulpit had been removed, revealing a large pool filled with water about three feet deep. The service was a very impressive one, yet what hymns were sung or what the sermon was about, I cannot recollect. I do remember though that the congregation was very interested and very quiet. At last the minister went down the steps into the water. Then he called the first candidate, and so the ceremony began. When my turn came I felt strangely elated, and

when I was actually immersed, was conscious of a great spiritual Presence. I know that I felt very happy, peaceful and carefree. For once, everything in my life seemed to be just right; I seemed to have found my true place and to be at the heart of an interior harmony which was the perfect expression of the Divine Idea.

Mine had not been a happy life. My disposition was not light-hearted, and my temperament was what is called difficult, consequently I cannot remember ever having been really carefree. Therefore when during my baptism I felt lifted up into a state which transcends happiness, and which can be likened only to bliss and indescribable joy, the experience was unforgettable.

When I was received into the Church and was allowed to take part in the Communion service, I was not conscious of the Presence at all. This deeply disappointed me. The joy and bliss which came to me at Baptism had continued with me for a time. Then the feeling of upliftment began to wane and finally died out, like a fire in the grate which goes out because of lack of attention. Perhaps that was why the love in my heart grew cold - through lack of attention.

Yet it is a fact that it does not seem possible to stay permanently on the mountain top of spiritual experience. For if there is anything in us which is unredeemed, or which needs sublimating, then we must needs go down into the valley again to meet our Apollyon.

I however had not got as far as that. I was more like Bunyan's shallow-hearted companion, who when

he fell into the Slough of Despond turned round and went back to the City of Destruction. I responded easily and quickly to the call to the Divine Life, but I easily tired and soon gave up in face of the difficulties of the way. Nevertheless, God had not forgotten me, although I had so quickly grown weary of Him. It was easy to feel happy and good at a prayer meeting and to enjoy 'the fellowship of saints'; but it was far from easy to keep my mind fixed on Divine things when I was at my daily work. There the atmosphere and the language were far from heavenly indeed, they savoured more of the Bottomless Pit. I used to wonder where all the filth and profanity came from, for such things could never find their origin in the human mind. The only explanation was that certain of my fellow-students were open channels to a belching up of evil from that plane which is like a cesspit of iniquity.

That such a plane exists we know from the fact that those who unfortunately become 'possessed' (although they have never in all their life heard such evil language ), will in their insanity pour out the most fearful obscenities and profanities. It is unlikely that the workshop in which I spent my working hours was either better or worse than any other similar place. Consequently, what I had to go through was typical of what every boy or young fellow, who tries to live a life according to Heavenly principles, has to face.

Some are strong enough to stand fast and to win through persecution and ridicule; but alas, I was not strong, but weak and yielding. My mother used to quote a text against me: 'Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel'. I used to start out with

high hopes and in a spirit of easy optimism, but before long I would be cast down and discouraged. Then, like Mr. Pliable, I would soon be back at the place from which I had started. Gradually I succumbed to the temptations of my workshop environment, and in consequence found myself living a dual life.

At home I would be the highly worthy Dr. Jekyll, while in the workshop I would be the highly reprehensible Mr. Hyde - a deplorable state of affairs which could not continue indefinitely. The highly respectable Dr. Jekyll side of me was merely a sham, a mere shell of pretence, and sooner or later the shell would crack, revealing the real state of affairs within.

It was not so difficult to keep up the deception while I lived with my family; indeed, it was comparatively easy to fit into the framework of home life. Here was a set pattern to which I had been accustomed all my life: we children were expected to act with propriety, to be well behaved, to attend public worship and so on. There were no smoking, drinking, dancing and going to theatres. To all this I fitted in quite easily, for I never found it difficult to mould myself to my immediate environment. It was a case -with me - of being all things to all men. It just depended upon my environment at any given moment whether I was pseudo-saint or rollicking worldling. Of course this sort of thing was very bad for me. It was baneful for my health owing to the inner conflict which was engendered; it was also detrimental to my spiritual life.

The time came however when it was deemed

advisable for me to leave home. Dr. Jekyll was sorry at the prospect, but Mr. Hyde was thrilled with the feeling that at last he was going to have the opportunity of really kicking over the traces and having a high old time. So it was with mixed feelings that I left the parental roof for the first time.

It was an exciting, or at any rate a thrilling, experience for it was to a small country town of some 2,000 inhabitants in Norfolk that I went in order to fill a very humble position.

The little town was not much more than a large village, but it had a market square, a town hall and magistrates' court - altogether it was tidy, clean and compact. There were also two public houses, an hotel, a church and a Congregational chapel. The glamour of it all comes back to me as I write, but alas I cannot express its magic!

After the artificialities and monotony of life in a London suburb, to be in a real country town was an inspiring change. I was thrilled; here indeed was life! I was near to the source of things, to the heart of nature. Who would ever live in a soulless suburb? I mused. The very thought gave me a feeling of suffocation ...

The Congregational people soon found me out. They had received a letter from the church secretary at home, asking them to look after me. I was invited to attend church services, to join their literary and debating societies, and to engage in various other activities. This I did, and for a time Dr. Jekyll was much to the fore - but alas, there were no spiritual life and power to support him, consequently it was not long before Mr. Hyde began to make his presence felt.

In fact, he took almost complete control of the situation.

Evil thoughts were allowed to dominate my mind. The old Adam nature came to the surface and I led a life which so far from giving me any happiness or satisfaction, brought me great unhappiness and dissatisfaction. How easily we are misled by desire. We think that if only we can have a certain thing that the gratification which it gives will bring us satisfaction. But instead we find that it yields us the misery of remorse, together with an increased sense of emptiness, dissatisfaction and frustration.

There might have been some excuse for my wild companions. They knew no better. But in my case there could be none, for had I not had glimpses of the Heavenly Vision? I seemed to be like the man, spoken of by Jesus, from whom an evil spirit departed. No good spirit took the place of the evil spirit, so that when the latter returned accompanied by seven other spirits, even more evil than itself, they were able to enter into the man and thus was his last state worse than his first. Mine was indeed a Jekyll-and-Hyde life. And like the little girl in the nursery rhyme who, when she was good was very very good, I also in my Dr. Jekyll state lived almost an austere life, one of impressive propriety. I was quiet, wellbehaved, having no love for anything worldly or unseemly; I was content to stay at home, or to attend lectures and concerts, or engage in debates, or write and read papers.

Yes, like the little girl, I was very very good, but-!

Yes, that was the trouble. The pendulum of my life would swing too far either way - first to the right, when all was good and orderly, then to the left, when all was evil and disorderly. Like the man in the parable, the evil spirit would leave me for a season, and my life would be all that could be desired; then after a time it would return, accompanied by a number of other evil spirits, so that my last state was worse then the first.

Looking back, I can now see that God was leading and guiding me even in those days. He was giving me enough rope to enable me to learn through bitter experience, sorrow and suffering, the great lesson that of ourselves we can do nothing.

Yet it did not seem much like Divine guidance then, rather it seemed that I was being impelled by a hundred devils. In my lucid moments I pondered deeply over the situation and it became obvious - not only to myself, but to everyone who knew me - that I was deteriorating. Also I was becoming careless in my work as well as in other things.

Friends said that if I left the town, thus breaking away from the wild set which they believed was the cause of my weakness, I might turn over a new leaf and settle down to a normal life. So that is what I did. I left the town and went to the Midlands where things were as different as they could be - the people, the way of living, my working conditions.

In a word, it was a complete change. I started off with renewed hopes for the future, and for a time did well; but before long the old story was repeated, and in each case 'the last state of that man was worse than the first'. So again I left for

another place in order to make a fresh start, yet again the same thing was repeated.

It was at this time that I began to suffer from bouts of terrible remorse and periods of black despair. A very fine young man did his best to reclaim me and pleaded with me to join in with him to live the religious life.

He was about to become an Anglo-Catholic priest and urged me to follow his example. He said that transubstantiation was the great secret, and that he had known men of grossly immoral characters who had become completely changed and master of themselves and their passions, simply through believing in and practicing transubstantiation. I was attracted, but not convinced. I was attracted more by this line of thought than I was by my father's hard and harsh doctrines, but I did not feel ready to live the religious life as this good man lived it. I was much affected by his love for me and his anxiety for my welfare, but I refused his outstretched hand.

And so we parted. What became of him I never knew.

He was a fine fellow, a true fisher of men, and I send him my love. (That is one of the lovely things about the Inner Life: we can send love to all men wherever in God's universe they may be. So now at this moment I send my friend my love and at this moment he receives it.)

So my solicitous friend, looking very troubled, left me while I continued my self-willed and devil-possessed way, feeling distinctly unhappy



and uneasy. But the feeling wore off after a time, and once again I was following too much the devices and desires of my own heart.

It was about this time that I suffered much from remorse and was filled with the anguish of the lost (i.e. those who have lost their way). My affairs too were in a desperate and unhappy condition. So I decided to return home, for I came to the conclusion that there I would be able to live the kind of life that would be expected of me. I felt that the discipline of my parents rather austere way of living would be beneficial and that I would be able to forget the past and thus make a fresh start in life.

At this point in my story it may be asked: 'But what about your search for Reality?' My reply is that I cannot remember making any conscious search for Ultimate Truth at all, so that my search - if such it could be called - was quite unconscious on my part. I was searching by not searching, so to speak.

Because I was seeking for satisfaction where it could not be found - in excesses, in sensation, in the things of this world and the flesh - it does not follow that I was not seeking God. There was something within me which responded to the drawing power of God who is Love, but the trouble was that I sought satisfaction in the wrong things - in the broken cisterns of the world and the flesh instead of in the Living Fountains which can never fail.

We may possess great powers and possibilities, yet if our lower nature is not redeemed or sublimated,

these powers and possibilities may find expression in unregenerated forms.

It would seem that in the case of some of us, these powers become awakened before we are ready for such a thing to happen. My good Anglo-Catholic friend said that he could see great possibilities in me, and that if only they could be harnessed to the right cause, or be sublimated, then my life would become a channel of considerable blessing. But how to bring about this change he did not know, neither did I.

It is I think a true saying that a great sinner, if thoroughly converted, can become a great saint. I have been a great sinner; indeed, at times I have confessed to God that I was the greatest of sinners (and I meant it), consequently I ought to by now to have become a great saint, but, alas, I see no signs. But I can say that I loathe the things which I once loved, and that my only ambition now is to follow Him who has blazed the trail and trodden the path that we all must tread. It gives me a thrill to think that we are all traveling along the same path - 'the path the saints have trod'.

We are all one brotherhood, one fellowship of saints, and this includes the weakest and humblest among us. We belong to that company among which none wants to be ministered to but only to minister, and to be looked upon as the least of all.

When the disciples argued as to which should be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, they showed that they were not ready for the Kingdom. For

those who are heavenly-minded have no desire for preferment: they are content to take the lowest seat at the table.

Adopting for a moment the conventional idea of Heaven as a walled city with a gate in it, presided over by St. Peter, I love to imagine myself (if ever I get thus far) as slipping in unobserved while St. Peter is engaged in attending to some matter of importance and then hiding myself in a corner where no one would notice me, where I could join in the singing and praise, pouring out my heart in gratitude and love to my Lord.....

I decided therefore to wind up my affairs and to leave the town. This was a sad business, for I had some good friends who had stood by me through thick and thin. They knew that I was almost penniless yet one gave me a shilling- which was all he possessed; another had no money but insisted on my accepting a wonderful walking stick which he had made. This was his greatest pride and pleasure, so I accepted it because of the love which lay behind it.

And so it went on ... We were a small group - all victims of human frailties, but all good friends, always willing to share what we had and to trust the morrow to provide for its own necessities. Thus came to an end the first phase of my pilgrimage or, as some might prefer to term it, my career as a modern prodigal son. I was at this time less than twenty-three years old and had been away from home about four years, yet I had worked in no fewer than three different places.

So I had nothing about which to boast for I had achieved nothing. I was a complete failure, a ne'er-do-well or, as my brother described me, 'a messer'. However, God was leading me and He can teach us more through our failures than through our successes.

As I look back on those far-off days, my heart is filled with devout thankfulness and gratitude to God for exercising a restraining influence upon my life. I almost went to the devil - but not quite. It was the love of God which saved me from complete self-destruction. Although always on the brink, love kept me from falling over.

### 3 BROKEN CISTERNS

*For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out of cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.-Jeremiah 2:13.*

When I returned to my parents' house I did not go as did the prodigal son. I just returned home, neither expressing sorrow nor explaining my shabby appearance and penniless state. Yet I met with no reproaches: I was accepted and made welcome. How great indeed is the love of some parents !

It was in a chastened mood however, that I resumed my place in the family circle, but I doubt whether there was any real change of heart. That is to say, the atavistic and irresponsible elements in my make-up remained unsubdued - they were still there lying dormant, ready to come to the surface whenever opportunity offered. I desired as ardently as ever to live a blameless life, and I believe I also longed to follow the religious life; but my experience was like that of St. Paul: 'For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do'.

It was soon after I returned home that the Presence (which was with me at the time of my baptism) came to me again. Elsewhere I have described this experience as follows: 'One night I felt that I must pray, so I knelt down by the side of my bed. Immediately I became aware of the Divine Presence. I felt that God was near and that His Presence filled the room. This

Presence was real and tangible. It was warm and glowing; it was not merely a state of mind or consciousness. It was something more than that. It was as though the Lord Himself had come into the room and had come very close to me, and that I had entered into His aura, or whatever we may call the spiritual atmosphere which surrounds Him and which is emitted from Him.

It is not possible to describe such an experience. All care, anxiety and fear vanished, and I felt that I was cradled in Divine Love, and poised in it and in the Eternal, effortlessly, just as the Heavenly bodies are poised, effortlessly, in space. The deep peace of the Eternal flowed through me like a river; yet at the same time it was as though I was being carried along on a Stream of Divine Bliss, and that the Lord and I were unified and had become one in union for ever. There was I, cradled in Love, immersed in God's Inward Peace, and floating out on to the bosom of an Infinite Ocean of Infinite Bliss; yet, at the same time, His Peace and His Bliss flowed through me like a great river, and I was one with it, while, paradoxically, it seemed that I was the river itself.

But just as Peter and James and John were not allowed to remain on the mount of transfiguration, so it was with me. The night of blessed revealing came to an end; the blissful sense of the near Presence departed; the realization of union was lost - and the vivid experience faded into a memory.

Time passed, and I became so immersed in the material life that it took a series of sharp

shocks and considerable upheavals in order to reduce me to that dependent and receptive attitude without which it is impossible for any revealings to be made.

In times of great sorrow and loss, or in times of great strain and stress, crisis and difficulty, the Presence has come to me as He did in my early years. Also, at other times, when a great blessing has been approaching, I have become filled with a great peace and sense of Heavenly joy. In fact, that is the way in which one can be guided and forewarned. If what we call an evil experience is approaching, then a dark and chill cloud descends upon us, destroying all sense of God's Presence. If, on the other hand, what we call a good experience is approaching, then we become encompassed about with light and radiance, and filled with joy and bliss.

How wonderful is the Love of God, and how gracious the Lord is! To think that I should be favoured with such an experience after all my wildness and transgression! One would have thought that after such a gracious experience I would never have fallen away again. Yet its effect wore off after a time, and in spite of the veneer of the Dr. Jekyll appearance of piety, Mr. Hyde's propensities were as active as ever.

I lived at home for four or five years, and built up a business out of nothing and without any capital. Then I had a long and serious illness from which I did not recover entirely. So I turned the business over to my brother, and once more left home, to seek health and fortune elsewhere. Fate took me to the Eastern counties where at a

seaside resort I made many friends. It was during this period that I got married to the lady to whom I was engaged, and for a time we lived on the Norfolk coast, sharing a cottage with a farm worker and his wife - a most delightful couple. It was, however, before my marriage that an incident occurred which seemed to shew that God wanted to make use of me, in spite of my many lapses and irresponsibilities.

It happened in this way. One Saturday evening the assistant Congregational minister called on me and made a strange request. He asked me if I would deputise for him the following morning at their church about two miles away as the senior minister had been taken ill suddenly, so that the assistant would have to preach at the parent church. At last after much persuasion I consented, but on condition that my friend, the Y.M.C.A. Secretary, should go with me and give me his moral support as well as help to conduct the Service. By this time it was late evening and I had work to do, so I had no time in which to prepare a sermon.

Never had I felt more miserable and helpless than I did when going to Church the following morning. I had neither sermon, nor text, nor had I even a reading or hymn chosen.

I felt like a man must feel when going to his execution; indeed, while my friend opened the service by giving out a hymn, I would gladly have died if only I could have escaped the coming ordeal ! I wished devoutly that I could have sunk through the floor, never to be seen or heard of again. But it was not to be. Inexorably the service proceeded, each minute bringing me nearer



my doom.

In vain I looked through my Bible for a portion to read, but being in a state of panic my mind could not concentrate on anything.

Then all at once when I was in the deepest despair and feeling really desperate, I began to read - apparently quite by chance - part of John 2:15-17  
Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ...

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

At once, in the twinkling of an eye, the burden was lifted from me and with it the darkness and fear. For a time, at any rate, I entered into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God'. I was filled with joy and peace, for once again the Presence had visited me. The service proceeded, but I felt no more fear or dread. Even my friend's strained whisper, telling me not to forget the special prayer of thanksgiving, failed to upset me. I led the congregation in a prayer of thanksgiving quite extempore and as I prayed we all seemed to be lifted up into the bosom of God. This was a good preparation for the sermon, yet even now I did not know what I was going to say; but I felt intuitively that God had given me the right text and that He would also tell me what to say about it.

And so it proved. For as I read out the three verses, I entered into a larger consciousness, and saw all life and humanity spread out before me. I

saw men lusting and striving, grabbing and scrambling, clutching eagerly at the baubles of life yet failing to hold them, and then being caught in eddies which drew them down out of sight.

For a short time I seemed to have Cosmic Vision. I seemed to be standing on a mountain top looking down at a sea of faces, with a feeling of intense pity in my heart.

What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world (of worthless baubles), and lose his own soul?'

Everything was spread out before me; I seemed to see into the hearts of struggling men and women – their hopes and fears, their desires and frailties, the hopelessness of all their strivings.

*Love not the world ...for the world passeth away  
and the lust thereof.*

And as I spoke tears came to my eyes. The whole dreadful tragedy was so clear to me and, so it seemed, to the congregation also. And then came the positive promise contained in the text  
*But he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.*

Yes, that was all that we had to do - to do the will of our Father, God; not to believe in any doctrine which might affront our intelligence or sense of justice, but just to do the will of God! If we do so we abide for ever, for the will of God is the Divine Order which never changes or grows old.

When I had said all that the Presence wanted me to say, I left off, and the service soon after came to a close.

When I look back on this incident it seems to me that it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. For a brief space I was really in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and like the apostles I was given not only power, but prophetic insight. What is amazing and past all human understanding (or so it seems to me), is that God should have chosen one so frail and unworthy to be His channel. Yet it would seem that it pleases God to do this sort of thing.

Looking back over the years I see another thing very clearly. It was when I was at my extremity and in an agony of helplessness-when I realized that of myself I could do nothing-it was then, and not before, that the Spirit came to me and lifted the burden and set me free.

Perhaps this is the explanation of the mystery. It probably is in my particular case, for every great enlightenment which has come to me since that experience has come when I have been in a state of dire extremity. It is probable that I am one of those who can learn the deep truths of life only through bitter experience and frustration. When one has learnt one's lesson in this way, it is well learnt, so that one is inclined to think that there is no other way. I am quite content to have come the difficult way, but nevertheless I believe that God has a better way, for the way of the Spirit is harmony and peace. However, I can only describe the way that I myself have come, and tell of that which I have learnt through practical

experience.

Now it was after we were married that I became acquainted with a gentleman holding a high position in a nearby town, and who was very much respected. In appearance he looked particularly healthy. Although elderly, he had what is sometimes called 'a schoolgirl complexion', his eyes were bright and he possessed remarkable powers of endurance.

He used to rise at four o'clock every morning and in spring and summer would walk about eight miles before going to business. He lived on two meals a day, which at that time consisted of fruit and nuts. Later he added cereals, but not pulses. His drink was water.

Anyhow, this remarkable man aroused my interest, for I could do none of the things which he was able to do so easily, in spite of the fact that I was only half his age. For instance, if I had been able to walk eight miles before breakfast, I should have been tired out for the rest of the day. Yet this elderly man did it easily and without fatigue. Also he beat me easily at mental work requiring close concentration, and he accomplished it without fatigue.

If I attempted similar feats, I became exhausted. It was natural then that I should want to know how he did it. What was his secret? He explained that we could control ourselves and our lives entirely by diet: if we were ill we could cure ourselves by fasting; if we were too stout or too thin we could regulate our weight simply by being selective in our diet. Everything, he said, was in our own

hands.

My friend also lent me some books, one of which was Fasting and the No-breakfast plan. I read this with avidity, thinking that at last I had found the great secret of life.

Then I came across other books which made even more remarkable claims. These told me that I could become quite heavenly and godlike if only I would eat pure food. They assured me that if I would but do this, I should have pure blood and then because of the purity of the blood which flowed through the capillaries of my brain I should think pure thoughts, after which would follow pure actions - and so on to sainthood! They also declared that disease would cease, and that we should all live to a great age. 'Look at the elephant,' exhorted the pundits, 'and be wise. He eats only vegetable food and lives to be a hundred, whereas the dog who lives on flesh dies after a few years.'

I must have been very gullible, for I swallowed everything that the books stated - and really believed it. But more: I insisted upon everyone else believing in it also, and so I deluged my friends and relations with a stream of propagandist literature-booklets, magazines, pamphlets and leaflets, becoming a thoroughgoing crank and a general nuisance to everyone who knew me.

When I started telling everyone the glad new gospel, that everything on this earth was to be put right quite easily through a change of diet, I expected that they would accept it as eagerly as I had done. But I was doomed to disappointment, for not one of them did so. This not only disappointed

me, but filled me with anger. The weakness of my case lay in the fact that I did not look healthy, neither did I feel well.

I therefore decided that I must make myself fit - then perhaps they would listen to me. As usual, I went to extremes: I fasted and followed all the food fads that I knew of - but all in vain! About this time my wife and I left East Anglia and went back to London. There I carried on my propaganda, and with my fastings and freak diets. I was so enthusiastic that the minister of our church asked me to give a lecture. This gave me a new idea, and I could see a new channel of propaganda opening up before me, so I readily accepted the offer. The meeting was a great success - so much so that before long I found myself fulfilling many engagements ... In spite of all my efforts however I did not look well, whilst I suffered frequently from heavy colds.

It was about this time that I discovered in a little newsagent's window, a copy of MacFadden's Physical Culture Magazine. I bought a copy at once, and perused it eagerly.

What struck me most was the fact that MacFadden recommended two meals a day of fruit and nuts besides, of course, outlining all sorts of exercises. I used to get up early in order to do exercises, bathe, and also go for walks, but I tired myself out and became excessively thin. Still I persevered: I sought to become a picture of health, poised and cheerful - but alas, I was none of these. I was irritable, suffered from bad colds and my weight fell from about twelve stone to nine stone six pounds.

However, it was not my physical condition which was my principal disappointment. I found through bitter experience that all the assertions made about the eating of non-flesh foods automatically translating people into saints and gods was pure moonshine.

Believing what I had been told and what I had read, I had incorporated these assumptions into my lectures - consequently I passed on to others irresponsible and unsubstantiated advice. And because I misled people in these matters, it became necessary that I should learn and prove through bitter experience the absolute falsity of the statements I had made. There was not a single claim which I had made which was not to be demonstrated in my life and experience as completely false.

I remember now that I was warned by a wise and good man about this very thing. At his invitation I lectured at his Baptist Church. The lecture was well attended and passed off successfully. A few days afterwards the minister called and stayed to tea. In the course of conversation he told me, apropos my lecture, that he felt that I was putting the cart before the horse, and that what I was teaching was an inversion of truth. He further remarked that if he had been giving the lecture he would have emphasized the fact that first of all we must change our thoughts, after which right action and the adoption of a right diet would follow.

Of course I could not agree with him, and when he left he may have thought that he had failed in his argument- yet his visit was not in vain.

Everything that the minister said was to be proved true in my own life, and I remember him with deep affection....

Time passed, and my enthusiasm both for extreme dieting, fasting and physical culture began to wane. For one thing, I could not demonstrate any good results in my own life and affairs, and I also found that there were others who, following the same cults, were as unfruitful as myself.

As I look back, I am appalled at my denseness, but evidently it was a necessary phase through which I had to pass before commencing the next stage. I had to learn to put first things first, and not to attempt to improve the soul through the body, but rather the body through the soul. We come to this plane in order to learn certain lessons, as well as to accomplish some special work or act of service. What few things my life's experiences have taught have had to be learned through blood and tears, but they will never have to be learned again. What I have learned has been woven into the very texture of my being and can never be obliterated.

All that I have been through seems to have been necessary, and looking back - even upon my greatest losses and sorrows - I would not now have had it otherwise.

With regard to a non-flesh diet, I continued with this for eight years; then when I became successful in business in 1909 I abandoned it. I kept to a mixed dietary until after the first world war, and in 1919 again took to a non-flesh diet, and have continued with it ever since.



I am not spiritually-minded because I am a vegetarian, but I am a vegetarian because I strive to be spiritually-minded. As one advances in spiritual understanding, flesh eating becomes repugnant and one is happier without it - at least, that has been my experience.

As to physical culture and body worship: at the time of writing this I am nearly eighty years of age and obviously have no ambitions in that direction. I do no physical exercises but ride my old bicycle still, and lead an active life.

This is sufficient, I think, for a septuagenarian. But let the young follow physical culture if it is attractive to them, yet let them not overdo it. And let them remember to put soul and spirit first.

## 4 NEW IDEAS

It was round about the year 1904 that I came in contact with what is generally known as New Thought. This was a great revelation at the time and although the few books which came my way were diffuse and rather vague, they contained much information which was quite new to me.

I learned for the first time something about the nature and power of thought -- Of the evil effects of negative thinking, and the beneficial effects of positive thinking. I also read of the destructive effects of evil emotions, such as anger, lust, envy, resentment, hatred, and so on. All this came as a great shock to me, for I realized that I had been in the habit of wallowing in a sea of wrong and even evil thoughts. What a fool I had been! No wonder I had met with so much trouble and difficulty!

But my reading also brought me a glimmer of light. Instead of hoping that in some distant future - as a result of abstaining from flesh foods - I might become capable of thinking pure thoughts, I began to see dimly that it might be possible for me to train my mind to think good thoughts to the exclusion of evil ones ...

I therefore determined to become a right thinker, which sounded simple enough. Also I could see that prayer was an attempt at right thinking, and it was obvious to me that in order to pray one had to concentrate one's thoughts upon God. As God is the very quintessence of Goodness and Truth, then prayer, if it succeeds in staying the mind upon

God, must be the highest form of right thinking. All my life I had been puzzled by the various doctrines and theological theories propounded by the various churches, but now I was led to see that all such speculations had only one purpose: to focus one's thoughts upon God. It all seemed as simple as that, but little did I know what lay before me ! However, God always leads us a step at a time. We do not know where we are going, nor how we are being led; but God does, for His ways are perfect and His dealings with us past all human understanding....

And so I determined to become a right thinker. But was it easy, as well as simple? Indeed, it was not for I found that I had very little power of concentration. My thoughts persisted in wandering all over the universe and into past and future, instead of remaining one-pointed on the idea or subject upon which I wished to fix my mind. I also found myself thinking wrong thoughts almost always, so that it was only by a special effort that I could break away from my accustomed habit of mind; yet after a minute or two I was indulging in my usual practice of thinking thoughts of a wrong kind. With me it was not a case of thinking rightly as a general rule, only occasionally lapsing into wrong thinking and suffering for it accordingly.

No, it was just the opposite of this: I discovered that I was an habitual wrong-thinker, that I had been one all my life and that I lived in a veritable sea of wrong thoughts. It was only occasionally and by great effort that I could brace myself up sufficiently to think a few positive and constructive thoughts.

Another great drawback was that I possessed no substratum of Truth; it therefore seemed to me that everything depended upon my right thinking, and that if I wanted good to appear in my life then I must create it by my own efforts.

I was seeking and chasing after good, but in spite of all my efforts it always eluded me. Little did I realize that the truth of the matter was the exact opposite: that actually good wanted me and was seeking me, striving to help me and fill my life with all manner of harmony. I did not know then that what was needed was not to create good, but rather to remove my inhibitions, thus allowing the ever-present good to enter and manifest itself.

I also fell into the error of thinking that I had to avoid all unpleasant thoughts and think only pleasant ones. The result of this was disastrous, for my natural weakness of being unable to make a decision was greatly increased. Now a man of indecision is one who will not face up to facts. If in addition he will not face up to his thoughts, avoiding all unpleasant ones, his case is then indeed a serious one.

What I was trying to practice was not right thinking, but really a form of wrong thinking; for as soon as an unpleasant thought came into my mind (such as, let us say, a picture of limitation of some kind), I would dismiss it and think of something pleasant. This is correct enough if the thought is one of temptation to do evil, but it is wrong to dismiss it if it is a thought of some unpleasant duty to be performed, or some crisis which has to be met.

Such a practice is the equivalent of day-dreaming -- One of the most destructive of all mental habits. It is tantamount to the action of a man who is in debt and whose business does not pay, going out for the evening and getting drunk in order to forget his worries! By such an action he reduces his own efficiency and wastes valuable capital, whilst after it is over he has to face the same old troubles, less equipped than ever to do so.

My fundamental and most serious mistake was in demanding money, power and worldly success from the Infinite, for this was done with the idea of getting something for nothing - which of course is impossible. We can only get something for something, notwithstanding all popular ideas to the contrary; we have to pay the price for everything that we demand from life.

But being galled by the respectable poverty in which I had been brought up, I greatly desired to get out of the rut and join the ranks of what are termed the privileged classes. Consequently when I read about the power of mind and thought, and how one could alter one's circumstances by making demands upon the Infinite, I jumped at the idea. I was greatly in need of money at the time, having several businesses, but without sufficient capital to work them properly. So every night after dark I went into the garden and, standing by a clothesline post, I made vehement demands upon the Infinite that a certain large sum should be taken weekly at each business. I continued this for some weeks, perhaps months, but as there seemed to be no answer to my demands, I gave up the practice. To-day, I know two things which I did not know

then.

The first is that if we make strong demands on the Invisible, Something (which may not necessarily be the All-Good) will answer. In our selfish demands for worldly wealth and fame we may be addressing ourselves not to God, but to the prince of this world.

If we are to become united with God then we must be pure and unselfish in motive and, instead of demanding that our will should be done and our desires satisfied, we should seek that the Will of the All-Wise, All-Loving and All-Good should be done instead.

The second thing which I did not know was that it takes time for matters to work out; and that if our demands are big, then there may have to be big upheavals so as to make way for the new order of things.

As I have said, I made my demands over a period of time and then forgot all about them, becoming engrossed in material things. But the Invisible Powers which I had set in motion did not forget. Indeed, I found myself thrown and tossed about by circumstances and involved in almost cataclysmic upheavals for some three years and then, in 1910, I found myself established in a very profitable business in the West End of London.

More than once during the times of change and upheaval through which I had to pass, I seemed to be brought to the brink of ruin; but when all seemed lost, a fresh opportunity would open up in quite a miraculous way. My friends talked much

about my astounding luck. 'No matter what you do or what happens', they said, 'you always fall on your feet'.

This was very true: I always fell on my feet. My competitors were also amazed at my good fortune. There seemed to be a Power behind me, pushing me forward; there seemed to be an Influence at work which made many people go out of their way to bring me still more business.

Influential people took me up for no reason that I could see. As my competitors said, my luck was phenomenal.

To-day I can only attribute the rapid change for the better in my circumstances to the strong demands that I had previously made upon the Invisible.

True, it took about three years to manifest, but I did not realize that before they could be met I should have to be transplanted from a thrifty neighbourhood to a well-to-do district - a process which was extremely painful because I regarded the upheavals as evil, instead of recognizing them as necessary if my demands were to be met.

Something which happened about this time must be recorded. This is how I have described the experience elsewhere: It was at the end of a fairly successful day. I was rather weary and leaned back in my revolving office chair and looked at a large window facing westwards. I had just had the window partly covered with leaded stained glass, of a chlorophyll colour. It was still September and the setting sun shone full

on my window and, of course, through the chlorophyll glass, on to me.

Light, when filtered through chlorophyll glass is always restful to me, but on this occasion something really happened - something which could not be attributed to chlorophyll filters.

It seemed that I was leaning back not on a swing chair, but on the Sustaining Infinite. At last, after years of wandering and struggle, I seemed perfectly comfortable, perfectly fitted into my environment, perfectly at one with the pattern of life and with the all-pervading Essence which upholds the whole universe in a state of order and perfection.

For a brief space, I knew myself to be a true child of the Eternal, and one with the Changeless One. There was no emotion, no rapture, no ecstasy, but only a sense of great comfort and certainty. There was an entire absence of fear. I was in my right place in the Cosmic Whole, and I knew that I always had been and always would be.

This experience lasted only a minute or two, or perhaps five at the utmost, but it made a great impression on me. I interpreted it to mean that good fortune was coming to me and if phenomenal business success can be termed good fortune, then I was correct in my interpretation.

Looking back over forty years to the time when this glimpse of Reality was vouchsafed to me, I marvel at my density and lack of discernment. To interpret a spiritual experience, such as many of the saints might have envied, as being merely a sign of good fortune was surely the very acme of



obtuseness. I must have been so obsessed at the time with the idea of making a success of my business venture, that I could interpret nothing in terms of Heavenly wisdom, but only in terms of material gain.

I had forgotten the wise words of Jesus: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.' Either I did not know or else I had forgotten that the most precious of all was to know God, really and truly, and to enter into peace, and for His peace to flow through me like river.

But what had brought about my extraordinary change of fortune? Some said it was through Black Magic, but I would rather term what I practiced as prayer wrongly applied. In the parable of the importunate widow Jesus seems to have given his sanction to prayer which consisted of asking for a thing until one obtained it, no matter how often one were refused. This of course is the lowest type of prayer; but Jesus seemed to have thought it legitimate and my demands upon the Infinite were prayers of this nature.

The great mistake which I made was in demanding the wrong things: instead of seeking the best things, I demanded the things of this world - material success, money and fame.

Some Power answered my prayer - whether it was God or some astral power, I do not know. But answered it was.

And because I had demanded the wrong things I became successful - but at the price of health and

happiness.

Aldous Huxley in his book, *The Perennial Philosophy*, says that one-pointed concentration 'may become a dangerous form of idolatry', and mentions that in a letter to Booker, Darwin wrote: 'it is a cursed evil to any man to become so absorbed in any subject as I am in mine.' Aldous Huxley adds: 'It is an evil because such one-pointedness may result in the more or less atrophy of all but one side of the mind.'

I too found it to be a cursed evil, for other sides of my mind atrophied so that I could no longer find enjoyment in the simple things of Nature. My finer sensibilities were numbed and blunted. I had gained much - but the price I had to pay was indeed a heavy one.

Of course, I was not happy; it was impossible that I should have been happy, seeing that I had made an entirely false start. I had chosen the wrong path, so that the more advanced the farther I departed from the Divine pattern of my life. I admit that there are thousands of people who, rising from humble beginnings, become successful in life and enjoy being amongst what to-day are called the privileged classes. They make good use of their money and apparently have no misgivings; indeed, they fill their new positions with dignity and earn the respect of their fellows. But in their case they have simply followed the pattern of their life: some are born to fame and fortune and if they follow the pattern of their life, nothing more is asked of them.

But I was not one of these, for the Divine pattern

of my life was quite different. Therefore when I found myself at the head of a large business, with the ball of life at my feet, I was unhappy and dissatisfied ...

When I had won the kind of success for which many would give their very soul to achieve, I was of all men the most unhappy. I who at one time had found consolation in Nature, and who loved Nature's ways, now found myself unable to enjoy them when I had the opportunity. Also I had lost all sense of God's presence. I was shut off from Nature and from God.

Of course, everything has been overruled for good in the infinite wisdom and love of God. But how much needless suffering would have been avoided if only I had made a right choice! At least, that is how it seems to me now.

What I marvel at is the wonderful way in which God brought me back in spite of all my wrongdoing. Having worked against the Divine pattern of my life for so long, it seemed at the time that I was completely estranged from God and hopelessly lost. God however brought me back; but this could be accomplished only through suffering. Of course, God did not want me to suffer; it was I through my wrong mode of life who was the sole cause of it. There is one other matter which must be mentioned before I close this chapter. It has been described elsewhere as follows: When I was in full swing, building up my business, with my mind fully given to the task, with never a thought at that time for higher things, I had a series of night experiences which finally drove me out of business altogether. In the middle of the night I would be awakened by

a feeling of actual hell. I do not use this word as a figure of speech, but in its literal sense. I felt that I was in the place of the damned. It seemed that I looked back over a past which covered all the history of man, and contained all the hopeless despair of the damned of all ages. And the lamentations of all the damned and their hopeless despair seemed to be concentrated in my own soul. I shuddered as I looked over the past. I shuddered as I looked to the future. All the sorrow, the despair, the hopelessness of a lost humanity seemed to be included in me. I felt indeed that I was in the Bottomless Pit.

I find it quite impossible to describe these experiences, for I have no words or gift of speech with which to describe them. I can only say that they were indescribably awful.

After an experience was ended I would go to sleep again, and, when the morning came, try to forget it.

Each experience shook me, but I still went on, becoming even more immersed in business. Business (that is, starting with practically nothing and working upwards against almost overwhelming difficulties) was such an engrossing sport that it was possible to forget even these solemn warnings. So that before very long I was as bad as ever, all my thoughts being set on business and material things, with never a thought for better things. These warnings persisted until I decided to get out of business. Then they ceased. I had not been going God's way, so the warnings were sent to make me turn round and live an entirely different kind of life. How blind I was. How slow I was to wake

up to the fact that God's purpose was that I should engage in my present work. Alas, due entirely to my self-will and obtuseness, I was to wander for another six years in the far country before I returned to my Father's home.

## I RETIRE FROM BUSINESS

Early in 1914 I retired from business and we went to live in the country. I felt that if I could only get away from my business associates and from all the exactions of business and live amongst flowers and birds, then I would be happy.

It was a relief to get away from London, but while my unhappiness was lessened, I still could not say that I was at peace. No one can be made really happy through a change of environment - happiness, as we all know, can come only from within. All the same, I must confess that I would not live in a town for a king's ransom. Yet although I can feel at home only in the country and beside the sea, these of themselves can never give real happiness. But when I escaped from London it was probably more of a relief than it would have been to most people, for I had grown psychologically ill through becoming successful in a career for which I was not intended. The Spirit wanted me to go one way, whereas I had been lured by ambition to go another: therefore there was a constant state of conflict, an inner warfare which was prejudicial to health. Also when I decided to give up my business career, the night terrors ceased, thus proving that they had been warnings of great evils to come if I persisted in following a worldly career.

Consequently, although I could not say that I was happy, yet I experienced considerable relief as a result of my retirement.

It was in May 1914 that we settled into our

country home.

Then in August the first world war broke out and in due course the countryside became denuded of its men and finally in 1916, I myself went off to the war. Joining up as a private in the Mechanical Transport, I finished up as Officer-in-Charge of a Technical Branch of the Royal Air Force. This experience, although possessing some interest to me, has little to do with the story of my pilgrimage, so I will say nothing about it.

Yet I must mention one incident which happened during this period, for it was a deep and searching experience and had much to do with my retirement from the world altogether in order to devote all my energies to my present work. My wife and I were very devoted to our second son, who was about ten years of age and away at a public school. He was taken ill and we were sent for. Everything possible was done for him but, to our great grief, he passed away on the anniversary of our wedding day, 27th March 1918.

This was a heavy blow to us both and it seemed to me as though the bottom of my life had fallen away. But the loss inspired in me a great sympathy for all who were bereaved and in trouble, and made me desire to do something to help mankind. I felt that I wanted to take part in some altruistic work and to engage no more in business and moneymaking.

So after the war was over I bought an army hut, erected it in the garden, engaged a secretary and began to write, for I felt bursting to express myself. Thus, after many vicissitudes Within You

is the Power was produced.

When I started I had no idea of writing such a book.

Apparently I wrote haphazardly, putting down just whatever came into my head at the time. I planned nothing; yet in spite of this, I think that I must have been guided in my writing, for this little book has been translated into several languages and, at a rough estimate, probably something like two hundred thousand copies have been sold. I did not know then that I was simply reviving the teaching of Jesus who, when He began to preach said- according to modern translators - 'Change your minds (and consequently your thinking), for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'. Then later on He said that the Kingdom of God is not here or there, but is within us (or as some translate it, 'inside us'). Of course my writing was not automatic; it was ordinary conscious writing. First the idea would come into my mind, then the words with which to clothe the idea.

Although at the time I commenced writing I was not conscious of being led by the Spirit yet - upon looking back over more than a quarter of a century - I can see very clearly now that it was Divine guidance which led me to write such books as Within You is the Power, and Look Within. (How wonderfully I was led to choose, in my ignorance, such titles for my books !)

Yes, it is indeed wonderful the way we are led by a Higher Wisdom to do just the right thing, and to make a right choice, in spite of the fact that at the time we are ignorant of the deeper



implications which lie behind what we do, or say, or write!

About this same time, too, I wrote a series of articles for an American magazine. These I republished in book form under the title, *The Message of a Flower*. I also contributed another series of articles entitled *The Art of Living* to the same magazine and these were also afterwards reproduced in book form. Another book of mine about this time was *The Power of Thought*. Although only an amateur writer and quite ignorant of publishing, I managed to sell my books, and have continued to do so ever since, but it is not a course of action which I would recommend to everyone. This literary excursion of mine was a help to me in my own search for Truth. We are told that the best way to learn is to teach and this I found to be true, for trying to express oneself in writing helps to clarify one's thoughts and ideas. It was in April 1920 that I began the work which is known as 'Science of Thought'. In 1921 I decided to publish a monthly magazine - the first number appearing in October. It was an immediate success. Yet needless to say I had many difficulties to overcome, as well as innumerable struggles, but there is no need to tell of them here.

Suffice it to say that my new work was a success and, judging by the letters I received, was helpful to many. Again I was on top of things, just as I had been in business.

But fortunately God did not allow me to stay there, for the position I was in was similar to that of a popular preacher: thousands of people

hung upon my every word - and we all know what a dangerous position that is for anyone to be in. God is too wise and too kind to allow that sort of thing to continue. Indeed, how true it is that He putteth down the mighty from their seats, and exalteth them of low degree! I too had to go through the humbling process - hut of this, more anon ...

Going back a little in my story, it was before I began writing that I got mixed up with the 'I am' and 'I am It' affirmation-type of teaching. I obtained some books on what is called Mental Science (not Divine Science, which is a different teaching). These told me to deny evil, poverty, disease, sickness and even sin and death. As I am always willing to try anything once I repeated these denials in deadly earnest, but the result was far from satisfactory, for I soon began to feel really ill ...

And so I continued to follow many lines of thought, but they all ended in failure. However, I gained a certain amount of understanding through such experiments, but fortunately I did not try any tricks with my breathing, otherwise I might not have escaped so lightly.

In course of time I began to understand what I really wanted. What I was seeking was not anything of this world, but only to know God and experience His peace. What I yearned to do was to be able to get clear of all human strain, anxiety and the pressure of circumstance so that I could enjoy true liberation. I wanted to 'enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God',

consequently I could never be satisfied with the various teachings which I sampled, for they seemed to aim only at human good.

Nobody seemed to be interested in the Path of Liberation; those whom I met wanted what they called 'demonstrations', they wanted tangible results and had no desire to get away from the self, or the things which bind one to earth. They did not realize that attachment to things implied attachment to earth and that all indulgence in sensation could bring only suffering in its train. In those days, I used to pace to and fro beneath the stars, repeating a text or poem which 'spoke to my condition', as the Quakers would say.

Something disturbing might happen which would draw down upon me an avalanche of fears which threatened to sweep me off my feet, so I would try to overcome them and to reach a certain measure of peace before retiring to rest. Each time that I overcame in this way made it easier for me to overcome the next time I was assailed.

And so through experience I found out how to overcome waves of fear, apprehension and strain. I discovered, again through experience, that if I concentrated upon a text, or poem, or psalm, and kept on repeating it perseveringly, the fear would be overcome and the strain relieved. This was a valuable discovery.

Previously I thought that to say a few prayers would be sufficient, but experience taught me that in my case, to do so was useless. What I found to be needed was intense concentration, combined with perseverance, and for this to be persisted with

until the mind became calmed and a sense of Divine peace enjoyed.

To keep on repeating a text or statement of truth about the Absolute is not a vain repetition as some critics declare. It entails concentration through perseverance, and a persistent reaching towards the Eternal, the result of which is that after a time the mind begins to pay attention and becomes conformed to the Truth which we so perseveringly utter. As has been said so often, the mind can contain only one kind of thought at one time, so that if we succeed in filling it with those of Truth, then thoughts of fear and other harmful suggestions are shut out, so that the mind can abide quietly in the Truth which makes men free.

It was soon after The Science of Thought Review had been established that I became acquainted with the late Princess Karadja, founder of The White Cross Union and also well known as a seer.

Princess Karadja wrote several books in which she displayed a profound knowledge of esoteric and occult matters which was quite beyond me. She also wrote some articles for The Science of Thought Review, but these were so abstruse as to be quite beyond our readers' and my understanding, so I stopped publishing them.

Once when in London and having an hour to spare, I visited Princess Karadja. She told me many interesting and extraordinary things, the most of which I have long forgotten but I do remember that she touched upon the mysteries of the Great Pyramid, and held some interesting theories about the axis of the earth which, she declared, was in process of being changed. She also told me that,

to her, my eyes appeared luminous, like electric lamps set in alabaster.

I did not pay much attention to this at the time, but I have since been told the same thing by others. Also sometimes when I have been speaking at a small meeting where we were all of one mind, in one place, people have remarked afterwards that they had difficulty in looking at me because I appeared to emit rays of brilliant white light. (I have since been told that this is by no means unusual and that the same phenomenon has been observed in certain preachers.)

I dismissed all this from my mind, looking upon it as so much imagination; but I had to change my mind sometime later.

A lady called on me - I think she came from India - whose eyes were distinctly luminous, 'like electric lamps set in alabaster'. Indeed the whole of the upper part of her head appeared indistinct to me because of the luminosity which enveloped it.

As I am not psychic or clairvoyant, I had to admit that there might be something in what Princess Karadja and other people had told me. But this luminosity in my visitor was not the rather hard and glittering light seen in certain portraits and drawings supposedly illustrating psychic subjects. Instead, it was a soft and heavenly kind of radiance which is only visible to those who are living in a higher consciousness.

My visitor was a very spiritually-minded woman. Consequently after this incident I began to look

more closely at people and I noticed that the majority of people, being unawakened, had a dead, putty-like appearance; but here and there I would find one whose face was full of light.

In those cases where I got to know people who had the light upon their faces, I found that they were praying people - that is, they had daily intercourse with God. So that explained the whole subject. The dull, putty-like faces belonged to unawakened people who had no intercourse with God, while those who had the light shining through their faces were those who walked and talked with God.

God is Light, God within us is the only reality about us, and God is Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

I have found however that a person's religious views have little or nothing to do with the matter. Indeed, I knew a man of limited views who belonged to an extremely narrow and exclusive sect yet who had the light on his face and wore a heavenly expression. His doctrinal beliefs were to me wholly unacceptable, yet he had the light upon his face because he was a praying man.

When I was young, one of my friends was a Baptist minister, a very good man but very denominational and exclusive in his views. He - like all his fellow-ministers - had one pet aversion: 'High Church', but in spite of their exclusiveness they tolerated 'Low Church'.

After a few years we lost touch with one another, and it was nearly forty years before life brought us together again. I found that my ministerial

friend had broadened considerably in his outlook. One of the things which gave him seriously to think was an incident which once happened in the course of his ministerial duties.

The Free Church ministers held a meeting once a month, and to it the Anglican Church sent a delegate in the person of a curate. What the Free Church ministers would have liked would have been a Low Church curate whose doctrinal views were similar to their own. But to their chagrin they were informed that a very High Church curate had been appointed, so they hoped for the best and prepared for the worst.

But when the curate arrived, my friend had the shock of his life. The newcomer was so possessed of the Holy Spirit, so obviously a child of the Light and so full of Divine power, that all those present noticed a difference when he came into the room. The spiritual temperature became raised directly he arrived. The light and power remained as long as he was in the meeting, but when he left they departed with him, leaving the gathering empty and cold.

It was obvious, my friend said, that the curate possessed something which they did not, and this made him think – especially as later on the High Church curate left the town, and his place was taken by a Low Church curate whose doctrinal views were all that the ministers could have desired, but who possessed neither the light nor the power. My friend came to the conclusion that doctrinal views and beliefs are not everything.

The reason why the first curate had the Light and

the Power was that he was a praying man. He had intercourse with God for hours every day, and never allowed anything to prevent it. There are some who say that the Light is not in every man; that it is only given to a few. When I was young, fierce controversies raged over what was called Calvinism whose adherents contended that only a favoured few were predestined to be Children of the Light; while on the other hand members of the opposing camp, called Arminians, averred that this was a dreadful mistake, and that anyone could become a Child of the Light just whenever he chose.

To-day the same question arises in a new form: is the Light in every man, or is it in only a few? Those who say that it is have the support of John who said that the Light lighteth every man coming into the world. Those who say that the Light is only in a certain few can however quote the parable of the wheat and the tares: the wheat typifying the Children of the Light, while the tares represent those who have not the Light. Also they can quote Jesus as saying that Truth was kept from some in case they might hear and understand and be converted. And so the controversy continues ...

(\*note by Margareth Lee: why would one want to know that? The whole discussion seems to be just like the one of the apostles regarding a hierarchy in heaven. They thus demonstrated they had no understanding of life in heaven. We should see the Spirit of God in everyone and everything, then that will be all we experience)

This has caused me much thought. While it is true



that if we look into the faces and eyes of some people it does not seem possible that there can be any inward Light within them at all (oftentimes they seem to be bereft even of soul), yet I believe that the Light is actually there, though covered by so many wrappings of self as to be undiscernible.

It is true of course that the vast majority of people never, from the cradle to the grave, show any signs of spiritual awakening. They are born into irreligious homes, never receive any devotional instruction and also seem to have no spiritual faculty at all. Anything of a religious matter seems to be entirely beyond their comprehension. Yet in spite of this I still believe that the Light lighteth every man that cometh into the world, even as John said. It is true also that John records Jesus as saying: 'No man can come to Me, except the Father draw him.'

But this need not be read to mean that God draws a favoured few and not the remainder, or that some are so constituted as to be incapable of responding. We can interpret it as meaning exactly what it says, viz. that we cannot reach the Light by our own efforts.

What happens is that we respond to the softening and drawing power of God's love. 'We love Him because He first loved us'; but we cannot do that even of ourselves, for there is nothing in the natural man that can respond to the Divine influence. It is because God's Spirit is in us that we are able to respond.

In fact, it is the Spirit in us which responds; and when in course of time we enter into full realization and know God, whom to know is life eternal, it is the Spirit in us who knows, for 'only God can know God'.

But if this is so, it may be asked how is it that the majority of people remain unawakened and pass from the cradle to the grave without manifesting any signs of the Light that is in them?

My answer is that everyone is not at the same stage of unfoldment. Some are very much in the beginner's stage; others are a little more advanced; while yet others are still more advanced. And so we proceed right up the scale to the fully-awakened and illumined soul who becomes merged into union with God.

According to the teaching of Jesus, we live eternally with the Father and make a journey into a far country; and then, having gained knowledge through experience, we return to the home from which we departed.

Owing, I suppose, to the teaching of the parable of the prodigal son, the Church allows belief in the pre-existence of the soul. Some of us know that interiorly we are eternal beings and that this existence here is but an incident in an endless life.

Some believe, like Princess Karadjia, that we come here many times to gain experience, but I am not prepared to accept this. God is infinite, and His ways are infinite, and there may be many other worlds to conquer. 'In My Father's house are many

mansions' said Jesus. I think that it is wiser to leave the matter with Him.

Jesus describes it very picturesquely as keeping our lamp under a bushel, or bowl, or corn-measure. He says that we should not do that but instead should bring it out of its covering and place on a lampstand, so that all who are in the house can see it. Now my experience has been that it takes a long time to remove the wrappings from the lamp within.

But each battle of the soul, each victory won and every grief and sorrow faithfully borne tend to remove something from that which keeps the Light hidden. Gradually but surely however the wrappings become less until at last we become conscious of the Light within - 'that true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' ...

Another thing which Princess Karadja told me was that Love rays which were beating upon this planet would increase in intensity, and that as they did so the inhabitants of the earth who were not attuned to them would become increasingly violent and rebellious. She explained that the Love which brings joy and bliss to one who is attuned to it, has an agonizing effect upon those who are unattuned. This she told me in 1923 and subsequent events have tended to support her view. After I left the Princess I felt lifted up for days, but I did not feel that her kind of teaching was for me, so shortly afterwards we parted.

It is strange that I should have to go to an occultist in order to learn as never before that God is Love, and cannot anything else but Love.

And in due course I came to realize that we are not punished for our sins, but by our sins. The father of the prodigal son did not punish the boy but only loved him; the son was however, punished severely by his sins. In other words, he punished himself by departing from his father's home. It was in this way that I came to a realization that God is Love, and that He never has been anything else but Love.

How lovely it is to come to this liberating realization. But what a long time we take to come to this great truth, how reluctant we are to trust our best Friend!

#### Postscript

Since writing the above I have been privileged to have another lady visitor whose face shone with the light of Heaven. She seemed to be enveloped in the Light, but it was when she spoke of the things of God that it became most evident. Then the Light seemed to well up from within and to me her face became less distinct owing to the glory which shone from it. I can quite understand that Moses had to put a veil over his face after being so long with the LORD.

There was an interesting sequel. My visitor and her husband kindly sent me a photograph of themselves, taken together. In it the faces of both are bright with Heavenly joy, but behind the wife can be discerned a blaze of light. It is an interesting fact that a photograph will record that which would be invisible to the ordinary onlooker, and those who are spiritually unawakened would see nothing exceptional if they

were to meet my visitor.

## 6 ON FEELING

On looking back over my life, and especially during the last thirty or forty years, one thing is very clear to me, namely, that feeling is a greater power than thought. This may seem to be a strange statement to make in view of my many writings on the power of thought.

For instance I can see that when, about the year 1906, I started making demands upon the Infinite, it was not so much the thoughts expressed or the words used which produced such a startling change in my circumstances, as the intense feeling which I put into the words, which turned my life literally upside down.

Therefore my statement neither weakens nor contradicts anything that I have ever said as to the necessity of right thought -for this is of the utmost importance. But it is necessary that we should feel what we think, otherwise the thought has but little power.

This was brought home to me once when one of our readers explained in a letter that although she had been left a widow without means, she had never had any difficulty about money, and this she attributed to the fact that she always felt rich. If we feel rich then we find that our modest needs are supplied, and in addition we have something to give away. But if we feel poor, then everything seems to run away from us. It is the same with regard to health. If in spite of our ill health we can feel well, in an

inward way, then it is not long before we find that we are well. Many will ask how can one feel well when one is ill? The answer is that if one is really ill or suffering from complete breakdown, then the only thing to be done is to rest and allow others to minister to us. But if it is only ill health from which we are suffering, then to feel well is a great aid to being well.

The fact that so many people do not respond to metaphysical and spiritual healing is due very largely, I believe, to their knowing and thinking too much. The best patients, so the late Mr. Hickson found, were those who are generally called 'natives', that is, those who have not been spoilt by civilization. The people who know or think they know everything about healing, and who can give us all the answers are, generally speaking, those who are never healed.

It is one thing to know with the head, and quite another thing to know with the heart. Head knowledge is a hindrance; that is why in order really to know God we have to lay aside all that we have learned about God. We continue to do this until at last we have cast away the last thread of our so-called knowledge; then when we have reached 'nothing' we find that we have found everything. The way of attempted understanding through head knowledge becomes more and yet more complicated the farther we advance. On the other hand, the way of understanding through the heart becomes simpler and yet simpler the more we advance. We have to get beyond thought in order to enter into

Ultimate Truth.

When we have cast aside all our acquired knowledge, we come to that which has always been. When we cease our thinking, we glide out on to the ocean of God's peace -we become aware of and feel the bliss of Divine union.

So long as we struggle and strain to find God, through thinking and understanding with the head, we clamp down a sort of iron lid on our intuitive faculty which most effectively prevents us from entering into the liberty and freedom of direct knowing. St.Paul speaks of a veil which is between us and God; but he says that 'when it (the heart) turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away'. He does not say that through much mental seeking we can get through the veil, but that when we turn our heart (the feeling part of us) to the Lord, then the veil is taken away.

This I have found to be true in my own experience. All intellectual attempts on my part have proved themselves to be but broken cisterns. It is only through feeling and intuition that I have found the 'well of water' within my own being, 'springing up into everlasting life'. All the while the terrible iron lid presses down upon us, we live a life that is separate and alone; and no matter how much we may strive to remove it, we completely fail. It cannot be got rid of by resisting it, but only by acceptance and surrender,. This is indeed a paradox: the very thing which is pressing us down now, is the very thing which will later raise us up and set us free.



In my own case I have had to make many surrenders, each one of which at the time was thought by me to be complete and final. Each one in turn however proved to have been only partial, so yet another had to be made -until at last I could go no lower and could do no more, but simply cast myself into the Abyss. One of our readers once wrote a poem about this very thing. In it she described a very definite and authentic spiritual experience in which she found herself hanging at the end of a rope which she was clutching with all her strength, in order to save herself from dropping into a bottomless pit. She seemed to hear a voice, saying: 'Let go of the rope !' but she was afraid to do so, for apparently that would have meant the annihilation of her soul.

That is what we all have to face at some time or other - actual death, or so it seems. We know that although our body may die, yet we do not die; but in this terrific experience, annihilation of our soul or real individuality is what faces us. It really seems that if we leave off fighting to retain our life, and let go of the rope, so to speak, that that will really be the end of us.

At last however she let go - and immediately found herself caught in the arms of God! She had solved the great mystery! She knew the inner meaning of the words of Jesus: she had lost (given up) her life, and in so doing had found it (the real life of the Eternal).

The iron lid of self separates us (in consciousness) from God, pressing down upon us so that we cannot

breathe freely. But directly we let go, the oppression ceases and we are able to breathe freely, down to the deepest depths and right up to the highest heights, without let or hindrance. It is like an elephant - to us a clumsy metaphor - being transformed into a bird on the wing! I am imagining of course that an elephant must feel very earthbound, whereas a bird must feel delightfully airborne-anyway, that is how we feel when we gather up the courage to let go. We are reminded of the words in Isaiah: 'They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles'.

At last we have discovered our true place in the Whole. Like the heavenly bodies, we find ourselves perfectly poised and balanced, moving along our appointed orbit without effort. Ours is an effortless life, in which everything takes place at the right time and in a divinely orderly way. We are perfectly at home in God; we can lean back on 'the Sustaining Infinite', and be at rest. Or, we can float out on to the ocean of God's Peace. At the same time, paradoxically enough, we feel God's Inward Peace flowing through us like a river. We realize with joy the reality of the Divine order, and that it is everywhere present and that we are really never separated from it. In it everything comes to pass at the right time.

I cannot describe how perfectly at home I feel in God - 'feel' is the right word, for it is a feeling of bliss infinite.

It is beyond thought, therefore we have to cease our thinking in order to experience it. Thought

can bring us only to the foot of the mountain of Truth, after which we have to proceed by intuition and feeling. No one can know the bliss of Divine union, of being completely at home in God, through thinking about it or trying to understand or know it intellectually: it can only be experienced and felt. How can we reach this stage? Is there no open sesame, no secret formula available to us? I do not know of any such secret and easy way. The way I have come has been one of seeking, seeking, seeking, ever seeking and trying this and trying that, in an effort to find some secret and magical war of attainment, but all such efforts have been in vain.

As I look back, I can see that life has been the great initiator in my own case through the ordinary experiences of life - experiences such as are common to all of us - these are the great initiator. When once we have surrendered to the will of the Whole and have dedicated our life to the Quest, each experience which comes to us is perfectly designed by Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love to advance us towards Divine union. That is, of course, if we meet each experience in the right way, in a spirit of cooperation instead of resentment or self-pity.

It makes such a difference when we realize that we are being guided by Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love, and that each experience is designed for our good, and that if we meet it with acceptance and deal with it in love, it will be found to be a blessing, raising us to higher and better things.

If we meet an experience with resentment or self-pity, then it is turned into what looks almost like a curse. On the other hand, if we meet it with acceptance and co-operation we find that all things work together and fit together in a most wonderful way, and that each experience brings us nearer to the heart of God. It was a great day for me when the realization came to me that Love is behind all life's experiences, and that the secret of life is simply Love. Directly I realized this I could see that Love had been at work in my affairs all the way through, and that the disorders of my life were due to my working against Love instead of co-operating with it.

Gradually my outlook became more cosmic. I could see the unfoldment of God's plan and purposes, both in the great and the small things of life. I could see that the Divine order is everywhere present and is not something that will come to pass in the future. The Kingdom or realm of God is with us NOW and always. 'Now is the accepted (or acceptable) time; behold NOW is the day of salvation'. The whole of God's Infinitude is available at any given point, NOW. An infinitude of joy; an infinitude of peace; an infinitude of wholeness, could we but realize it.

It was also a great day when I realized that whereas I had been seeking God all my life, apparently in vain, yet the actual truth of the matter was that God had been seeking me and trying to bring every possible blessing into my life.

Again, it was a great day in my experience when

the understanding came to me that God is at work in the life of each one of us, as much in the life of one as in that of another.

The way in which Love has blessed us and followed us all our days is both wonderful and glorious, but we are not the favourites of Divine mercy. Everyone is being dealt with by the Spirit in a perfect way, according to Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love, but we are all at different stages of unfoldment.

The majority of people are not even spiritually awakened, while amongst those who are awakened many are at quite an elementary stage. But they are all in the love and care of God, and each one is in his right place at the time. A tadpole is not a frog, but he is a good tadpole, that is all that matters.

In the Divine order, everything comes to pass at the right time, and each one of us is in his right place, at the right time, and doing his right work.

Many years were to pass before, after countless experiences, I was privileged to be given the inner understanding or revelation that God has a place and a use for each one of us. He has a place for the heroic pioneer who dares all and climbs the heights. He also has a place for those who keep to the lowlands and who remain with the herd. Each is equally dear to the heart of God. Each is of equal importance. Each has his place in the family of God.

Some have been perturbed because their loved

ones have passed on without shewing any evidence of having been spiritually awakened; but all this passes away when it is revealed to us that God has a place for everyone, each at his respective stage. The reason why so many people are unhappy about their loved ones who do not follow the religious life, and who may have passed on without shewing signs of soul awakening is due to the old idea that God is a God of wrath and punishment, and not as He really is, infinite wisdom, love and compassion.

There was once a little French priest whose duties included ministering to the dying, many of whom were hard cases and passed over still unrepentant. This made the little priest most unhappy and he was very miserable over the fate of those who died in their sins. He continued to be very unhappy and, indeed, became increasingly so until one day he had a revelation of the Love of God, and that God is Love and can never be anything different from Love. Our little priest became a changed man: he was full of joy and peace, and love and compassion. He gladly ministered to the dying, no matter how sinful they had been, for did he not know that God was Love? The realization that God is Love was a revelation to me; so also was the fact that soul-awakening comes to a man only at the right time, and that it cannot come at any other time.

God is at work in our life, all the time, even when we may be following strange gods and relying upon broken cisterns. The French priest knew that all was well with those who died outside his Church, because he knew that God was and is Love, and has never been anything else.

As I have stated elsewhere, what is termed the 'wrath of God' is not wrath at all, but the love and order of God from which man has departed. The greater the love, the more painful it is for the one who is out of correspondence with it. The story of the prodigal son is a perfect example of what happens to one who departs from his father's home. He is not punished by his Father, but he punishes himself by placing himself outside the order and harmony of his true home. The farther he wanders away, the more acute his sufferings become.

In the Revelation of St. John we read of the great ones of the earth hiding in caves and crying to the mountains and rocks: 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' What this means is that the Love Rays being poured out upon this planet are to be intensified. This will bring increasing joy to those who are attuned to Divine love, and increasing discomfort to those who are out of tune.

Love would appear as wrath to those who are not attuned to it. The more unlike Love they are, the greater will the wrath appear to be. But, of course, there is no wrath, but only Love. It would be the same with one given to impurity. If such a one were confronted by absolute purity, he would indeed want to cry to the rocks and mountains to fall on him and hide him. Of course it is of the utmost importance that those who die should at the time of passing have their attention directed to God and Christ, and

that they should be in a state of forgiveness towards those who have wronged them. Those who minister to the dying always try to get the one who is dying to forgive those whom he feels he simply cannot forgive, and also to look to God, or "to Jesus Christ. This is all most helpful to the soul of the dying, but if it cannot be accomplished then we have the satisfaction of being able to fall back on the joyous fact that God is Love, and that He can never be anything less than Love, and that He is Love to all eternity .

Now I began this chapter by writing of feeling. I do not know Truth through the intellect; I know God who is Love through love. I cannot know Him through my mind, but only through my heart; in other words, my heart responds to Love, so that I feel God. And thus it is through feeling that I know, and not through reasoning. Because God is Love, it is necessary that in order to know God, we too must become Love, for only God (Love) can know God (Love). It follows, therefore, that we can really know God only through feeling.

We feel this power of love in the region of the solar plexus, or what in the Bible very probably is termed the heart. This is the part of our body where we experience an 'all gone' feeling when we are dominated by a great fear. One poor man said to me, when he was in great trouble and stricken with fear, that he felt as though he had 'no inside'.

Yet when he regained his sense of realization of the presence of God, that was the very place



where he felt full to bursting with power. In this connection I am reminded of a verse in Hosea: ' And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God'. Yes, in the very place where we felt lost and all gone, in that very place we feel the power of the sons of the Living God. In order to become filled with Divine power, it is necessary that we should cultivate feeling, as distinct from knowing by the head.

The more advanced we grow, the simpler Truth becomes. In order to know God, we have to discard all our knowledge about God until there is nothing left. Then when we have come to nothing, we find that we have found everything. We have to lose our life in order to find it. All the complicated teachings which we may have studied can now be put aside -doctrines, theories, esoteric mysteries can all be discarded, for having served their purposes they can now be consigned to the limbo of forgotten things.

Now that I know God, I want to know nothing about God. All that is necessary for me now is for me to be still and know God. All that I need now is to know God's inward peace, to immerse myself in the deep river of God's peace, and at the same time to feel it flowing through me. Thus the great mystery of the ages is solved: we in God, and God in us. Not as a theory or doctrine but as an actual, factual experience.

Daily we can sit quietly, knowing God. We do not

try to define God, for God is beyond all definition; we simply become still and know. We feel the One Life, deep within our being, and find that our own life has infinite extensions, beyond time and space. No longer do we seek God with our head -we know Him with our heart. Deep down within us we find God's inward peace. We 'breathe the sweet ether, blowing of the breath of God', as Edward Carpenter has it. We feel within our soul the pulsations of the one Infinite Life. And not only so, for as we sit in the Great Stillness, we realize that the Presence of God is all around us: that we live and move and have our being in the One Universal Spirit.

As we sit quietly -being still, and knowing, or feeling God- the rays of the Divine Life beat upon us and flow through us like wireless waves passing through the walls of a building. Then it seems as though our physical body dissolves, so that we become wholly Spirit. This indeed is the object of all religions: to get behind the material to find the spiritual; to pass from the temporal to the eternal.

I find now that it is no longer necessary to follow any set system of meditation and contemplation -but only to know God and to feel immersed in His peace, and to feel His peace flowing through me like a river ...

**ON TRYING TO LIVE A LIFE OF FAITH**

There may be said to be three stages in the life of man. The first ranges from childhood to about twenty- three years of age; the second, from about twenty- three to about forty-five years and the third, from about forty-five years to old age. In the first stage we sow seed, and do very little reaping; in the second, we reap some of the fruits which we have sown in the first stage, at the same time sowing more seed which will be reaped in the next stage.

In the third and last stage we reap the fruits of what we have sown in our two former stages; we also consolidate what we have learned through life's experience, and build something enduring which will live after us.

In the first stage of my own life I seemed to have but one compelling idea, and that was to get out of the rut of circumstance and thus escape from irksome poverty. In the second, this desire to overcome poverty was intensified. At last I achieved my ambition; but strange to say, when I found myself out of the rut and 'with the ball at my feet'- with nothing to prevent me from becoming as rich as I liked -I developed a strong dislike for the kind of life which the rich and well-to-do live. The consequence was that instead of wanting to go forward to greater success, I longed with all the strength of my soul to be able to get out of it and retire to a simpler way of life.

This, of course, was even more difficult than climbing out of the rut in which I was born. All my life I had been striving to get on in life and this had produced a momentum towards worldly success and outward achievement. It would have been easy to have continued that kind of life; there would have been no obstacles to overcome, for they had already been mastered. The whole current of my life flowed in one direction, and it was easy to follow. But when it came to getting out of this current, it was indeed a different story.

Before going on to consider my third stage, it may not be out of place to emphasize that success in life is really an attitude of mind. If I had been told this in my young and struggling days I should have found it hard to believe, yet nobody did tell me and I had to find it out for myself.

After tremendous struggles (mostly unnecessary) we at last manage to get our life flowing in an upward direction, and when once this has been achieved, material success is almost as easy as falling off a log. To continue being successful is then simply following the line of least resistance. To try to change one's life at that point is indeed one of the greatest and most difficult tasks possible.

Many of us do not understand the law of momentum. We do not understand that if we keep our mind fixed upon the achievement of a certain aim, we build up a sort of Frankenstein monster which becomes our slave-master. That was what I began to discover, but fortunately I was able to

escape before it was too late. I found that, whereas in the early stages success appeared to be under my control, in its later stages success threatened to control both me and my life, and also to dictate to me as to what I should do or what I should not do ...

How to get out of my bonds was indeed a problem! To the reader it may seem strange that there should be so many difficulties, but they were as numerous as the devils which afflicted the man who dwelt in the tombs and whose name was legion. There were wheels within wheels, problems connected with the business and problems connected with my family. Also there were the inner and invisible forces - the most powerful opposition of all. The conflict was so intense that at last I fell ill. There was nothing organically wrong with me; my illness was purely psychological, due to the conflict between my strong desire to live a different life and the chains which held me to the business which was fast becoming my taskmaster. Ultimately (as the reader already knows) I did escape -but only just in time. I feel quite sure now that if I had not acted promptly, I should have been lost as others have been lost. Thus it was that I entered the third and last stage of my life.

Having resigned from my business activities, I began writing and publishing -as described in a previous chapter.

About this time I wrote two courses of lessons and for these I charged very modest fees -yet this made me uneasy, very uneasy. How could I,

though, carry on without any income? George Muller, I recalled, refused to take a salary and also abolished collections, but he put up boxes in which the congregation were expected to place their contributions. He also taught his people the duty of giving, and told them in his sermons of the blessings which come to those who give to the Lord willingly, joyfully and systematically. In the metaphysical world, however, it was quite a different story.

Those who wanted help had to pay for it. One good man advertised that he was willing to pray (give treatments) for anyone at five shillings (a dollar) a time, or a guinea a week (5 dollars), whilst a large organization charged two guineas (10 dollars) per week and had a number of salaried practitioners who faithfully attended to the various cases which were passed on to them each week. Each practitioner had about twenty cases on his or her list, and to deal with them all twice daily was as much as he or she could manage.

I have known several of these people, both those who were paid by an organization and those who were freelances, and have found them to be charming. They were poor, self-sacrificing, devoted and most conscientious; but they said that they had to live and that was why charges were made.

If they did not charge for their services they would starve, so they said; they worked just as hard as any doctor or psychiatrist and, like them, they had to live.

In my case, however, it was even more difficult. I did not do any healing it is true, but anyone who wrote to me received an answer. Most did not even enclose a stamp, but each letter we sent out cost about two shillings (fifty cents) for office expenses, postage and so on, excluding my services which were given free. Further, preparing and issuing courses of lessons was an expensive matter. It was easy to sink five hundred or a thousand pounds in one course alone, then after that the necessary students had to be enrolled, wages of helpers paid and postal expenses met. Therefore as the magazine was issued at a substantial loss, and it cost more to print and circulate our books than what we received for them, it followed that my courses of lessons were our only source of income.

If I gave up charging fees, I should from all appearances soon be forced to discontinue issuing lessons. There was also another point - an important one, so it seemed to me - which was that people always think more highly of a thing if they have to pay for it, while on the other hand they regard it lightly if it is given to them free. I was in very truth on the horns of a dilemma. ..

What actually happened was that I ceased charging fees, relying upon free-will offerings. And at this juncture I was helped by the fact that readers of our magazine began sending of their own free will what they termed 'love gifts' to help me with my work. I had thrown out no hints whatsoever, and what they did then - and have done ever since - was undoubtedly due

to the influence of the Spirit, or to the working of an immutable law of the universe. What life was trying to teach me was that I was to live the life of faith. I had to learn that I was to cease entirely from trying to get, and that all I need worry about was to give to the uttermost, thus emptying the channel for the Divine blessing to flow in. Until we do empty the channel by giving ourselves and all that we have, the Divine blessing cannot flow freely. And so I found that the more I gave, not thinking of any reward, the more I received. Also life became more harmonious and peaceful. 'The way of the Spirit is harmony and peace.' At first, however, it was not easy; far from it. My training was wholly against the 'faith and giving' idea, and all my life my principal idea had been to get as much as possible from life, and give as little as possible to life. And because of this I had suffered much owing to the fact that I had been working against the pattern of my life, consequently I found it extremely difficult to switch over from getting to giving.

Sometimes I made things so difficult through some fresh venture of faith, that I became filled with fears and reduced almost to a state of panic. Indeed, I suffered so much that at times my burden seemed almost too grievous for me to bear. Yet each time I was delivered and brought victoriously through, in spite of my weakness and fears. I do not mean that I simply dismissed the fears which were troubling me from my mind, refusing either to face my problems or to think about them. No, I faced them and endeavoured to overcome them by a realization of Absolute Truth, I found that all that I had to



do was to overcome my fears and find inward release and peace for if I did that then the threatened disaster would begin to fade away. The difficulty was to find inward peace, but until I succeeded in doing so I suffered very much.

I mention all this in order to encourage those who may be faced with similar difficulties, and who may be discouraged by certain books which make everything appear so very easy. There can be nothing more discouraging than to read of people achieving most wonderful results without any trouble at all, simply by using some magic formula. My experience has been that anything worth having in the spiritual field can be won only through searching experience. I continue to make my life more difficult from time to time and feel impelled to do this, because I am only really happy when facing great difficulties. Indeed, as soon as life becomes easy and methodical I become bored, and begin to long for fresh fields to conquer. Thus I embark on fresh ventures of faith. Sometimes I think that I have overdone it, and that I have assumed a burden greater than I can bear but on the other hand, I should not be happy if I were not faced with a task that tested me to the utmost. I have found that the great secret of a truly successful life is always to go forward, to be greatly daring, never to play for safety, never to follow the easy path of least resistance, but to grapple with life's difficulties and seize its opportunities in a spirit of high adventure and with courageous faith. Life yields its highest prizes to the courageous soul who claims them and always goes forward, burning his boats

behind him.

In other words, we are called upon to live a life of faith in which we dare all, again and again, and in which we may seem to lose all, but never actually do. True success attends those who do and dare, but failure dogs the path of those who count the cost and who try to make life easy and comfortable.

At first, my faith must have been very small and feeble, and it was through having my faith tested that it began to grow. I noticed that whenever I held back and played for safety, the result was always disastrous: the easier I tried to make my life, the more difficult it became. Whereas if I went forward, greatly daring, choosing the difficult task, it invariably turned out to be the easier path in the end. I also noticed that if I did not discipline myself, then life would do it for me. I found that many of my difficulties were due to the fact that I did not go forward enough; it became quite plain to me that I must order my life in such a way that it would compel me to work hard and live progressively.

Consequently whenever I found that I had overcome one set of difficulties, I would set about creating another lot- a practice which I still follow. But what God has done, God can do. As an old hymn has it: His love in times past, forbids me to think He'll leave me at last, in trouble to sink.

Recalling God's goodness to us in the past, and His deliverances from pressing troubles and

threatened dangers, is of the greatest possible help to us when facing apparent disasters. I have found that the searching experiences which came to me as a result of my ventures of faith not only increased my faith, but also advanced me in the spiritual life. The object of our life here is that we should find God and know Him. In other words, to find what Jesus called the Kingdom which really means a state of God-consciousness. Yet such experiences were really terrifying to me at the time. As the dreaded day advanced nearer I became almost worn out with the strain of it all. The thoughts would come to me: 'Why did I burn my boats behind me?' How I longed for a bolt-hole of escape! But there could be no retreating; having ventured all, I must go on.

How I prayed and affirmed, even wrestling with God, just as Jacob did, but still there was no response -no sign of deliverance. And so the experience would hasten on, every day finding me prostrate before God -for it was only God, the one Omnipresent Spirit who could deliver me. Then fear would raise her voice. 'Suppose, after all, you have been mistaken and there is none to deliver? Other people whom you know but who follow worldly methods and never think about God are prosperous and apparently happy, while your position becomes more precarious every day. What is the use of praying -for nothing ever happens, nobody cares, you have thrown away your substance and are too old ever to regain what you have lost. Why continue to attempt a life of faith? It is all foolishness and so much moonshine and self-deception.' And so the thing would continue, the position becoming worse

every day. Would the tide never turn? Was the Tempter right, after all? Was there God who could or would answer prayer? Down, down, down I went until there seemed to be nothing left of 'the self', and my only desire was that God should deal with me and my affairs in His own way and at His own time. I could do no more. I had done my best and apparently failed, therefore God alone could extricate me from the alarming position in which I had brought myself. Then at the last minute of the eleventh hour deliverance would come - and then what joy was mine, such as no pen or tongue can describe! At such times waves of joy flowed through me, all fear and strain departed, and I felt perfectly at home in God. For a time, at any rate, I knew that 'all was well, a thousand times well, both now and a million years hence'.

Every experience of this kind, after it had been passed through, found me nearer to God, enjoying a more intimate fellowship than ever I had known before. O, how I praised and thanked God from the depths of my heart! Now I know that such experiences, through the very anguish which they entail, break down - or wear away - the hard shell which encases the ego (or false self) and separates it from God our true Centre and Source. Consequently I did well to make my life difficult, for each experience, although at the time almost too grievous to be borne, brought me nearer to God and more deeply into His peace. Things are not what they seem, for what appears at the time to be our greatest hindrance, turns out later to be our greatest aid and advancement. All difficulties if met in the right way are turned into stepping-stones to higher things. And so we go from

strength to strength and from victory to victory.

There is another side to this matter of making life difficult in order to attain. It was only in this way that I could become capable of helping others, for it is only those who have been taught by experience who can help others who have to pass through similar experiences. We all travel 'the way the saints have trod'; indeed, we all have to make the journey of Jesus and must be willing to pass through experiences similar to those through which He passed, but in a minor degree, of course. We are all tested and tried, but never beyond our strength. We may be bent and strained, but God never breaks us: relief always comes -just at the right time! This is true of all of us. But those who would help others, and perhaps be looked upon as a teacher (even though it be in but a very humble way), must be prepared for much more searching experiences. The law of sacrifice operates always, and at every level. We can help others only to the extent that we are willing to suffer ourselves. Therefore we have the satisfaction of knowing, when passing through a trying experience, that others will be helped and blessed indirectly through what we are enduring at the time.

It is impossible to help others by means of book learning, for passing on what we have read from books carries no conviction whatsoever. But what we have learnt through experience may come like a message from heaven itself to those who are ready for it. We speak with conviction only when we have lived through the thing of which we speak. Yes, the law of sacrifice runs through

life at all its levels. We cannot raise others up except by stooping down and giving them the helping hand of encouragement, so that they can make the great effort needed to bring them round the corner. We cannot of course truly help others by making things easier for them. Doing things for people instead of helping them to help themselves, through the exercise of faith, does but weaken them for they at once begin to lean on us, instead of upon God. One concluding word about giving instead of getting.

This applies not only to money and substance, but also to such precious things as love, friendship, encouragement and so on. If we truly love our fellows, then we find that love comes back to us from many different quarters. If we become a universal friend and brother, then we find that our world is filled with friends and brothers.

Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.-Luke 6: 38.

## 8

### I CONTINUE MY STORY

God does not permit us to remain on a pedestal of self-satisfaction for long. Whilst in my own case I cannot remember ever being self-satisfied (I knew my weaknesses too well), I think that I must have been satisfied with my own work and the way it was succeeding. I remember the late Miss Bridgeman, who founded The Rally, calling upon me -her second visit. But the first time she came I was in the process of building up the work when it looked as though it would be 'touch and go' as to whether I should win through or not. She had come in order to find out what sort of individual I was; for owing to the fact that I buried myself in the country and never appeared in public, some strange tales were spread about me.

People could not understand why I shunned publicity: the fact that I did not want to bask in the sunshine of public favour was, to say the least, suspicious. Some said that I was deformed, others that I was a freak -all thought that I had something to hide! Consequently several people came to see me so that they could find out for themselves, and they declared that they were relieved to find that I was a normal sort of chap! Miss Bridgeman was one of these. She said that she would go back to London and put an end to all the foolish stories which were being bandied about.

The second time she came she seemed to be somewhat disappointed. She said I was too much

the successful business man and that I exuded an atmosphere of success and prosperity. I do not remember what I replied, but I probably said that it was necessary to make a success of anything which we might undertake, and as my work was to help people, the more successful I was the greater the number of people who would be helped. Anyway, although I was not selfsatisfied, I was very grateful that my work was being blessed and prospered. But life was not going to leave me in that position of fancied security and satisfaction for long. I was being brought to a place of 'naughting', as the old mystics term it.

Up to this point I had evolved a system which was successful in my own case and also in those of thousands of others. It helped people to face up to life's difficulties, overcome fear and worry, put their faith in God, become more efficient and healthier and happier, to serve instead of trying to get. This surely was laudable enough teaching, so what could be wrong in being satisfied with it? There was really nothing wrong about it, save that I was putting my trust in a system, instead of surrendering to God and allowing an inner, hidden Wisdom to take charge of my life. I had to come to that point where everything which I could do myself, and everything in which I had put my trust, failed me. Hitherto I had made use of God in order to attain my own ends; now I was to learn the difficult lesson of becoming dead unto self and alive unto God, so that His ends might be achieved through me. Having reduced prayer to an exact science which could be used successfully to clear up any situation, I was now to pass



through that time of apparent failure and frustration, when God seems to have removed Himself from us and even our prayers are found to be vain and fruitless.

I was approaching a great crisis in my life ...at the naughting place where we have to lose our life in order to find it. First of all, a great personal trouble began to develop. I felt that I was dealing with a powerful and menacing presence. All my well-proved systems of prayer proved to be of no avail whatever, and so the evil thing developed steadily and rapidly. Everything which had hitherto been so successful now failed me, and I was reduced to a condition bordering on despair .

One evening as I was sitting feeling burdened with trouble and overwhelmed by a black cloud which threatened to destroy me, God suddenly spoke to me in a verse from an old hymn greatly beloved of my father. Of course I heard no voice, but the Spirit recalled this verse to my memory, and illumined it in such a way as to bring a message to my soul:

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread,  
Are big with mercy, and will break  
In blessing on your head.

There may seem to be nothing particularly remarkable about these words, but to me at that moment they meant everything and in a flash I passed from a state of crushing despair to one of comparative peace. Let me try to explain the matter.

Ever since the trouble started I had been resisting it; I had looked upon it as an evil thing to be fought against and destroyed. Nothing but evil could come out of it - so I believed - therefore if God did not take the trouble away it would be the end of everything, and nothing would remain but abject despair. But it was too big a thing for me to master. It was one of those things which we have to allow to develop and unfold in its own way. I had got to learn the great lesson of agreeing with my adversary, even as Jesus taught.

Then God revealed to me through the simple words of the verse that the cloud which I feared so much, and which I looked upon as an evil thing, was actually full of mercy and that the trouble itself would descend upon me in the form of a most gracious blessing. This great experience would probably be termed by modern psychologists as a 'reorganization of the personality' - but which I prefer to call total surrender of ourselves to God and His will concerning us. Sooner or later we discover that life is divine; that is, that God is in every experience and that the divine activity is in every happening. What is needed is that we should submit to the divine guidance, for life is divine (or good) and what is needed is that we shall agree with it and come into correspondence with it. But as I mentioned in the last chapter, the act of surrender has to be repeated many times - this it will be remembered I have found to be true in my own life. At the time that this great experience came to me, I believed wholeheartedly that I really and truly surrendered everything to God: every sinful desire, every weakness, all

pride and self-sufficiency - every atom of self. I gave myself utterly and completely and dedicated my life wholly and unreservedly to God, so that I had not a desire of my own at all. As far as I knew at the time, my surrender was genuine, sincere, and absolutely wholehearted.

But as time went on, another crisis gradually developed and again I was brought to the naughting place. I found that in spite of the sincerity and apparent completeness of my first surrender, there were still certain areas of my personality which were unredeemed, parts of me into which I would not admit my best Friend. Then again I surrendered whole-heartedly and fully, genuinely thinking that it was complete. But after a time another and yet another crisis would come into my life. Verily, the self takes a long time to die! One of the crises was due to a recrudescence of all the old passions and weaknesses of the flesh. Everything came back with redoubled power and I could in truth then sympathize with St. Paul when his oft-quoted words were wrung from his agonized and tormented soul: 'The good that I would do, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do'. Now the Adversary said to me: 'What is the good of it all? What is the use of your trying any more? Here you are, back again! You cannot escape me! All this holiness business is futile; you cannot keep it up. The revelations from God which you think you had were only hallucinations' ...It was the same old story (but on an infinitely humbler plane) of 'He saved others: himself he cannot save'. 'Where now is thy God?' I have been told that those who try to teach

along the lines of the Gospel have to pass through desperate experiences and tests; that is, if their teaching is true. If their teaching is nefarious, or a mixture of the true and nefarious, then they will be left alone. But directly they begin to teach the real thing they are marked down as a special target: from every possible angle and at every possible point is an assault made. Also I am told that those who try to teach spiritual truths in order to help others are liable to take upon themselves the trials, troubles, tests and even diseases of those to whom they minister.

Again, whatever he may teach, upon that very thing will the teacher be tested. This was first brought to my notice by a lady who had been a contributor to a now-defunct metaphysical magazine. She confessed that everything about which she wrote brought to her a severe testing on the very thing about which she had been writing. The reason is not difficult to see, for it was through meeting such a testing experience that the writer was advanced to that stage of attainment about which she wrote. Most writers on these subjects generally write beyond their present stage of attainment - after which comes the experience which - if it is properly grappled with - will advance them to that stage about which they have written.

It is much the same with those who use affirmations. They generally affirm something that is at present beyond them.

Then they may be surprised to find that an experience comes to them which gives them the

opportunity of proving the truth of that which they have affirmed. They may not like the experience at the time, but when they have passed through it, they realize that they now really know, whereas formerly they only believed. We can only know as the result of experience. It is only when we have passed through an experience and been delivered by God, that we know God as our deliverer; similarly we can only really know God as our Healer by being healed, as our Source of supply only by trusting God to the last ditch, so to speak. One correspondent once wrote to me that she was trusting God to the last lump of coal ...

Temptation comes always to try us on our weakest point: there must be something in us which responds to the temptation, otherwise it would not be any temptation to us. But the object of the test is not to drive us down into hell, but rather to bring us to that state of surrender in which we let God in, so completely and utterly, that He can unite us with Himself and make us like unto Himself, so that our weakest point becomes our strongest.

'But' it may be asked, 'is there no royal road to attainment? Must progress always be made through terrific cataclysmic experiences in which the soul is brought to the very brink of extinction?' The answer is that it depends upon the individual. Some are getting near the end of their immense journey, and are willing to make a steep and direct ascent to God, and to go through anything in order to enter into Divine union. Such invite tremendous experiences and are quite satisfied to meet them, for each obstacle is a stepping-stone to higher things.

Others, on the other hand, may not be willing to make the steep and sharp direct ascent to Divine union, preferring to go more slowly by an easier and less direct route. These are less heroic and daring than the pioneer type; they prefer to follow rather than to lead and are not prepared to suffer, or run risks. Such individuals are what might be called the rank and file - they wait for pioneers to blaze the trail, or even to make a good road for them. They are not prepared to go on alone, neither do they want to scale the heights.

Rather, they prefer to follow a winding path up the mountain, a path not so steep or dangerous but which, although it is far longer, yet at last leads to the summit. God has His place and uses for each type. Each one of us is in his right place at the right time.

Lest any might think - apropos my own crises - that I am making excuses for myself, let me say at once that I realize that within myself is the cause of everything that comes into my life, and I take full responsibility for all the catastrophies which have come to me. One of their objects has been to teach me humility, for we can make no real progress in the spiritual life without true repentance, humility and love. I think that I can say that I have done my share of repentance and have tried to love all humanity and to be a universal lover and friend, but I fear that I have failed in humility.

Consequently many of the blows which I have received have been necessary, in order to teach me humility. We are all inclined to become proud

and self-satisfied, and it needs great blows to rid us of these vices. A blow to our pride is one of the most painful experiences through which we have to pass, and as such come through other people, it is a great help if we have learnt the great art of returning love for every wrong done to us. It is pride which makes us want to justify ourselves and to resent false attacks and misrepresentation.

There is another great cause of severe trouble arising in the life of the true aspirant - neglect of waiting upon God.

'They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength.' The promise is not given to any others, but only to those who wait upon the LORD. Renewal of strength is conditional upon the regular practice of waiting upon God, therefore if we neglect this we become weakened and are liable to fall in the hour of temptation. We also find ourselves entangled in all sorts of difficulties. Then some great trouble comes which drives us back upon God: we are compelled to seek Him afresh, through much suffering, until at last we find Him and harmony is restored.

Quite often I receive letters from people whose story is that, through neglect of waiting upon the LORD, they have fallen into dire trouble and old weaknesses have reasserted themselves. Everything in their life appears to have gone wrong, and there seems to be no way out of their distresses.

They would like to get back to the Path once

more: in fact that is their one great consuming desire, but feel unable to do so. The remedy is, of course, to make a supreme surrender to the LORD. Jesus had to come to it in the Garden; Newman came to it when he wrote *Lead Kindly Light*. All of us have to come to it sooner or later. We come at last to that stage when we lose our life in order to find it - that is, we give up the puny life of the self and separateness, to find in its place the Life of God which is our true life.

It seems to me that no matter how perfect we may be, we must all come to our naughting place. The classic example is the experience of Jesus. He who went about doing good and who had overcome all temptations and had lived a pure and unselfish life - even He was brought to the limit of his endurance in the garden of Gethsemane. Even He prayed in his agony: 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.' In spite of his perfect life and his ministry of love and healing, Jesus was brought to that dark hour of utter surrender to the Father's will, and to the willing acceptance of all that was coming to Him. Yes, even He had come to his naughting place ...

My own experience has been that the life of the Spirit is in sections. During the first we live a life of faith and trust in God; we try 'to live a godly, righteous and sober life', and probably succeed most of the time while, if or when we fail, we are truly sorry for our sins and shortcomings.



During this period we think that we are doing everything and accomplishing everything which is accomplished - with God's help, of course. We are pleased with our progress; we are thankful that we can help others. We make progress in many directions and learn many lessons through experience. We meditate upon Truth, we may even work wonders through faith and prayer and may also become teachers and speakers, preachers and writers. But during the whole of this period, 'self' is really our centre and our master.

We may be unaware of it, but our life - as we have known it hitherto - has to come to an end, while the 'self' which we know, has to die. 'Ye must be born again.' As Jesus also said, we have to be reborn of the Spirit from above. Again Jesus said, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone'. That is the secret: we have to die in order to live; the grain has to die, as a grain, in order that out of it a new life may arise. It is this dying process which is so painful to the 'self'. We want to preserve the 'self' at all costs. But at last we come to the point of utter surrender; and when finally we give up the 'self') we enter into such joy and peace as we have never known before, and which we did not believe to be possible.

When we reach the second stage, we realize that we are not doing everything as we fondly imagined: we discover that God is doing it all, and that without Him we can do nothing, and indeed are nothing. God is in everything and the Divine activity is in every circumstance and happening.

When once we know this we can declare that God is with us in every experience and that therefore only good can come out of it. It is in order that we should reach this second stage that the naughting stage is necessary. We have first to go down before we can be raised up. But the naughting experience can assume many forms. It came as a dark time to the saintly Newman, and as a catastrophic series of experiences to my unsaintly self. But I believe that it was the same experience.

It is rather like taking a railway journey. We travel quite a long way, but at last we reach a junction where we have to change into another train and on to another line, if we are ever to reach our right destination. We have to break away from that which hitherto has served our purpose very well.

If it had not been of service to us we should not have arrived at the junction; but now it can no longer serve us. We have to break away from it all, and set forth anew. No matter, then, what form the experience may take, the time comes when we give up ourselves and our life entirely into God's hands. Directly we do this we enter into a great peace which is God's own inward peace, such as the Divine Mind knows and enjoys. Because we have given ourselves up entirely to God we are able to enter into His peace, and we become immersed in it.

The great experience through which I had passed had its effect upon my work. As I changed, so also did my teaching change. I had been through the dark valley and had emerged a changed man,

dependent upon God for everything. Therefore I was now equipped to help others through the same experience. So from that time on my teaching took on a new note and became more spiritual, less metaphysical and psychological. I could only teach effectively that which I had learnt through experience.

This entailed considerable financial loss, for I burned up all the tons of booklets and lessons which had been so laboriously prepared. The fire lasted for days, and with it perished much of my capital. It also entailed a tremendous amount of work, for all the things which I burned had to be replaced by others, all written by myself. This had to be done outside office hours, for at this time my office work was a whole-time job. In addition to writing new courses of lessons, my books also had to be withdrawn from circulation and rewritten.

How I survived all this labour without a breakdown seems wonderful to me now. Not only was I overworked, but at the same time I was making unwise and ill-advised experiments with my diet. Also I fasted a lot - equally illadvised - so that I felt completely exhausted.

However the task was at last completed but I could not relax, for with the issuing of the new teaching, came more students (floods of them, it seemed!) which meant more work and yet more work.

Many expressed their regret at the changes which were made, their objection being that the former teaching helped many thousands, and because of that it should have been continued. They

explained that the majority of those who were helped by the former teaching were not ready for the more advanced instruction, neither would they be willing to follow it, even if they were able to understand it. They also pointed out that the former teaching was helpful because it applied to this life and how to make the most of it: over-coming difficulties, rising above obstructions and living a life of service and working in harmony with the laws of life. I was reminded by all this of what happened to Jesus.

Many thousands of people flocked after Him, and thousands professed to be His disciples. But the majority of them, when they discovered that His teaching really was the gospel of the interior Kingdom (and not the founding of an earthly kingdom) went back and walked no longer with him.

Consequently, Jesus lost most of His disciples. They were glad to go with Him when He fed the multitudes and worked other signs and wonders, but when they learnt what real discipleship meant, they preferred to walk another way. I felt that I must follow Jesus in this matter, so I withdrew my teaching, and started all over again. Many left us, but not all - whilst others were attracted. These were seeking to become heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, who in their search for Truth were prepared to go anywhere the search might lead them. The difference between the new aspect of my teaching and the old was this: the former teaching did not accept the disciplines and what Paul termed the chastenings of life, but

overcame them by resistance and by the use of spiritual powers. My new teaching accepts life's disciplines and chastenings, works through them, learns as much as possible from them, and thus turns apparent obstacles and hindrances into stepping-stones to higher and better things. The former teaching stressed too much getting on in life; the latter stresses the necessity of 'giving all to life' and leaving God to give the recompense. The difference is a very subtle one, and a great many people have no patience with it.

They say that this change from 'self' to God is unnecessary and ask why they cannot go on as they are, but getting better and better, until they become perfect. But Jesus said 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone'.

Alas, the teaching of Jesus has been ignored and other things substituted.

Of course, I realize that everything is right at the time and in its right place: I can see now that I was being led by the Spirit as much when I turned out elementary teaching as when I promulgated a more advanced teaching. It was the same Spirit leading us on, both teacher and taught. Thousands of people were helped then who could not have been helped by a teaching more advanced. Even now, most of my books are what one might term pre-surrender teaching. But my one desire now is to help aspirants to find God and enter into Divine union. Yet on looking back on my life, the thing which stands out probably more prominently than anything else

is the wonderful way I have been led to do the right thing, at the right time. In spite of all my foolish mistakes, and wanderings into Bypath Meadow, yet just when I reached the critical point when another step would have ruined me for ever - I have been led to strike out on an entirely different path. And this path has always proved to be the only right one for me. This is the story of my own search for Ultimate Truth.

It is in no sense a textbook, neither does it presume to lay down any laws for others. Each seeker must go the way in which the Spirit leads him, yet because he may not yet be ready for the experiences which I describe, he should not be perturbed. Everything will come to pass - in his case, as in mine - just at the right time. All that he has to do is to live a life of trust in God, and deal with each experience of life in a spirit of love and service. He should put the little bit of Truth he already knows into practice, and if he does this greater understanding will come to him - not intellectual knowledge, but a real knowing by the soul of things which are quite beyond the greatest intellect.

We do not have to worry about our unfoldment at all, for the experiences of everyday life give us just what we need in order to advance us in spiritual understanding. If we make every difficulty a matter of prayer, then every experience brings us nearer to the heart of God. The many irritating incidents which happen during the day may all be resolved into harmony by turning to God and realizing the Divine Truth

about them. This not only conserves us physically, but also advances us in spiritual understanding. Everything that happens to us is an opportunity to seek our Divine Source in order to find a harmonious solution.

The mistake which we are liable to make is in being satisfied with living a life of faith, in which all difficulties are resolved by turning to God and realizing the Truth.

But of course we cannot stand still; we cannot remain where we are, in a state of satisfaction: If we try to do so, then a time comes when everything appears to go wrong and all our methods fail us, until at last we can only pray: 'Lead Thou me on'.

In the light of experience, it seems to me now that if I had been willing to be disciplined and chastened, then the change-over would not have been so painful and catastrophic. The Path of Liberation is not a vale of woe; Love accompanies us all the way. Everything is designed to bring us to greater joys than we have ever known before, while to experience God's peace is greater bliss than can be described. The greatest human or physical bliss is but a counterfeit of the real bliss of Divine union.

## 9

### THE OVERCOMING OF GRIEF AND SORROW

A passing reference has already been made to the bereavement which befell us and our family in 1918 and whose immediate impact made us feel that a light had gone from our lives. As all of us must at some time or other experience grief, sorrow and bereavement, let us consider this matter together: first, the necessity of overcoming the grievous experience; second, the best way of doing so.

It is as vitally important that we should overcome our grief and sorrow as it is that a boy should overcome his disappointment when he fails to pass an examination. If he were to give way to his disappointment he would never try again, and thus would never be able to retrieve his fortunes and make good.

If we give way to grief, we lower our own efficiency; we also invite sickness and illhealth. In addition, we attract financial loss, poverty and other negative ills. There is an old saying to the effect that 'troubles never come singly'.

This is very true, and the reason this is so is mainly, I think, due to the fact that the first trouble - if given way to - produces a negative condition which attracts other troubles and ills of various kinds. If therefore we overcome our grief and sorrow, we also are protected from many negative ills to which we might otherwise



be prone. Or, even if we do have to meet such negative experiences, we are able to do so with a stout heart and a triumphant spirit, instead of falling a victim to them.

For the sake of others also, we must overcome. If we give way to grief, we not only become less efficient, we also become a drag upon those around us. They, instead of being inspired by our example, become depressed and weakened by our mourning and sorrow. Instead therefore of being a help to those around us, we become a hindrance.

We see around us some lovely examples of those who overcome. I can recall one woman in particular whose face expressed to a remarkable degree a state of inward peace.

One could describe the expression of her face only as heavenly - there was no other word which could describe it. And as we looked at her calm face, we realized intuitively that here was one who had been through the fires and who had weathered many a storm yet one who had found God's inward peace, and that it flowed through her like a river.

Alas, we also meet those who give way to grief and sorrow.

How sad a sight it is to see them! They excite our pity, but they do not inspire us for if they have the opportunity they will pour out their tale of woe. Two extreme cases of this type might be mentioned. The first was that of a man who lost his son. Instead of meeting his trouble like a man and trying to find a certain amount

of relief by working extra hard and with increased diligence, he refused to go to work at all. He walked about telling everyone of his bereavement and describing his own sufferings. The end of it was that he lost his job, and thus became a charge on his own family; he also lost the respect of those who knew him. The other case is even more extreme and was told us by Swami Ramdas. Ramdas once met a man who had left his work and also his home, going about from place to place, wailing and weeping loudly. Swami Ramdas told the man to keep on repeating a certain mantram without stopping; this the man did, and then found to his surprise that his grief had gone.

Now I know that while it is easy to speak about over-coming grief and sorrow, it is far from being an easy thing to do. Indeed, it is only one who has come through the furnace himself who is able to help others to overcome. Those who do not overcome cannot of course help others, for their idea of comforting those in sorrow is to relate all their own griefs. But this can only make matters worse. In my own case I did not get much help from others. One parson said that I should look forward to the resurrection; another was most lovingly sympathetic and took hold of my hand in both of his and called me 'his dear brother'. I loved him for doing that. I also loved the other parson, for I knew that his sympathy was wonderfully deep and true; but neither of them could help me in any definite way. They had nothing to suggest. Consequently as usual I had to find my own way and puzzle things out for myself; which was probably the best way for me, as I have always been inclined

to be independent.

This brings me to our second point, viz. the way to overcome grief and sorrow. Briefly it can be stated that deliverance is achieved to the extent that we succeed in staying our mind upon God. Some however may exclaim: 'But how can I cease grieving, when it is as though my heart had been torn out by the roots?' The answer is that we do not try to stop ourselves from grieving, for to do so would be I useless. By trying to stop a bad habit or hurtful practice we do but make it stronger; the only effective way of dealing with a bad habit or hurtful practice is to cultivate an opposite good habit or practice. Therefore instead of giving way to our grief and sorrow on the one hand, or fighting against it, on the other, we make a deliberate effort to switch the mind over to God and Truth. To the extent that we succeed in doing this, do we succeed in overcoming our grief, for we have to do something positive if we are to overcome. Instead of making our bad habit stronger by fighting it, we cut the ground from underneath it by cultivating the most positive habit or practice of all, viz. staying the mind upon God. Thus we overcome by what is termed 'action in inaction'. In one sense, we do nothing; yet in another sense, we do something very positive.

I have heard some people say (and I also receive letters to the same effect) that they do not know why they fail, because they try so hard to overcome their weakness. Also, some tell me that they fail in spite of the fact that they pray so hard against their weakness. The reason they

fail is of course that they do not work according to psychological law. The laws of mind are infallible and unchanging. It has been said that we can overcome Nature only by obeying her laws; in the same way we can overcome our weakness only by obeying the laws of mind. This is the secret of all overcoming - not to fight, but to retire into the hidden Strength, keeping our mind stayed upon God.

How can we do this? In my own case the first thing that I had to discover was that the true way to meet life's experiences is just the opposite of the natural way. It was after I had discovered this that I noticed, rather to my surprise, that Jesus had taught the same thing. I could then understand why my father and others would not pay any attention to the teaching of Jesus, but said that I must accept certain doctrines instead. They were trying to explain everything by the reasoning of the human mind, and as the teaching of Jesus was the very reverse of this, they would not have anything to do with it. Having been taught certain doctrines instead of the words of Jesus, I knew very little about His teaching. Therefore I had to find things out for myself; then when later I found that what I had discovered had been taught by Jesus, I was greatly encouraged. What I discovered was very simple indeed - so simple and obvious was it that I could not understand why I had not seen it before.

All that I discovered was that the way of the Spirit, that is, the heavenly way of dealing with life's experiences, was the exact opposite of the way of the world and that of the human

mind. Consequently, as far as ethics were concerned, all that I had to do was to do the exact opposite of what I would naturally want to do.

Jesus taught us to agree with our adversary instead of resisting him; we were to go the other mile, and so on. All at once I realized that that was what I was doing: I had learnt to do the very opposite of what the natural man would want to do. And so it was with dealing with the problem of grief and sorrow. The natural thing to do when bereaved is to give way to grief and sorrow. We may feel that we want sympathy from others; that we want pity, that we want to show to the world how great our love is, by appearing crushed and stricken. We may want to indulge in self-pity.

...Instead, however, of behaving in any of these ways, we do the exact opposite. The bolder we are, the better. So we start off by praising and blessing God for all His goodness and mercy. (That in itself kills self-pity; it also destroys our self-centredness.) Only too often inordinate grief is due to self-centredness) consequently if we keep on praising and blessing God, our self-centredness becomes undermined, so that it dies a natural death, as does a plant when it has been deprived of its roots. Also it is an act of faith, for it requires faith to praise God when we are sorely stricken, and unable to understand why it is that we should have been dealt such a fell blow.

Is it easy to praise God in such circumstances? No, indeed, it is far from being easy; but it is

possible for us to master it, if we make up our mind to do so. At first it is like trying to swim in water that is choked with weeds. If however we persevere, we can actually make a habit of praising and thanking God, so that we feel at a loss if we cease doing so.

This method can be applied to any calamity which may come to us. No matter what it may be, if we perseveringly thank and bless the LORD in the face of the trouble, we do the one thing which will ride us through the storm, and bring us into a haven of peace.

But I have also found it helpful to thank God for the loved one whom we 'have lost awhile'. This requires more courage, for it reminds us of our loss. But we must be brave in this attempt to overcome; we cannot be victorious if we run away. We have to face up to that which we dread. I do not think that any victory can be won merely by trying to forget.

It is much better if we face up to things and try to overcome, instead of endeavouring to evade that which is painful.

Therefore it is helpful if we have a photograph of our loved one in every room - not in order to remind us of our grief, but in order to remind us to pray. If we pray every time our eye rests upon the photograph it leads not only to victory, but brings great blessedness. Therefore we take the brave course and thank God for the loved one, who has passed into another room of God's many mansions.

The first stage of our prayer, then should be:

*'I thank Thee for all Thy love and goodness.'*

The next stage:

*'I thank Thee for -'*(mention the name of our loved one).

Then this can be followed by:

*'I thank Thee for his (her) love and faithfulness.'*

This can be followed by:

*'I thank Thee for the years of blessed companionship which we were privileged to enjoy.'*

This is probably the most difficult prayer of all; and it is so, because it reminds us of the fact that this blessed companionship has been seemingly cut short. It is not easy to concentrate upon the years of blessed companionship which we have enjoyed, and to refuse resolutely to admit the thought of our loss into our mind. Of course, we do not fight against the intruding thought at all, but only concentrate on thanking God for the years of blessedness which we have been privileged to enjoy.

Finally, we come to the last stage of our prayer, which is:

*'I thank Thee because Thou art leading him (her) on to higher and better things.'*

Yes, life is ever progressing. The next world is not a stagnant one; the life there must be one of constant progression, a rising to higher and better and more glorious things.

Instead of limiting our loved ones by our selfish prayers, we let them go so that they can

rise into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

Then we can add:

*'I thank Thee because Thou art raising us all to higher and better and more glorious things.'*

It does not matter whether we are still here on this earth plane, or whether we have passed on to the Light Realms, we are equally in the love and care of God.

It is a good plan to master each stage of this prayer before passing on to the next one.

Indeed, one stage is about as much as most of us can manage at the time. When the first stage of the prayer by constant and faithful practice has been mastered, the next stage can be added. Thus in addition to saying:

*I thank Thee for all Thy love and goodness-* we add:

*'I thank Thee for -' (mention the name of our loved one)*

This will not prove at all easy, because it may bring back our sense of loss, and make us feel 'empty and raw inside', as one dear sufferer described it. But, again, if we face up to it bravely and persevere in using the prayer, we are helped to overcome. The natural tendency is to be tempted to do just the opposite at such a time. But if we follow the way of love and faith, by practicing the prayer, our grief becomes more assuaged.

When we have mastered the second stage, we can add the third.

We can say:



*'I thank Thee for his (her) love and faithfulness' ,*

This too will be a difficult addition. To use it may seem like raking over raw wounds, but if we try to use it, we are again helped by the Spirit and given strength and grace sufficient for our task. After this has been mastered, we have next to add what is probably the most difficult stage of all,

*'I thank Thee for all the years of loving companionship which by Divine grace we have been privileged to enjoy.'*

Having mastered this by persistence and by persevering practice, we are now ready to complete the prayer by adding:

*'I thank Thee because Thou art leading him (her) to higher and better and more glorious things.'*

And while praying in this way we should try to feel the uplift of these words. When this has been mastered, we can add:

*'I thank Thee, because Thou art leading us all on to higher and better and more glorious things.'*

While saying these words we realize that there is no separation, neither is there any loss. We are all of us, whether still 'here' or already 'there', one in the love of God.

So now we are ready to pray the complete prayer, which will now run as follows:

*'I thank Thee for all Thy love and goodness.'*

*'I thank Thee for -, and for his (her) love and  
faithfulness.'*

*'I thank Thee for the years of blessed  
companionship which we were privileged to  
enjoy.'*

*'I thank Thee because Thou art leading him (her)  
on to higher and better things.'*

*'I thank Thee because Thou art raising us all to  
higher and better and more glorious things.'*

This complete prayer can only be prayed when we have a little quiet time to ourselves; we cannot use such a long prayer while we are going about our daily work. At such times we must use a shortened version of it. If we are very rushed we can say 'I thank Thee' which will recall subconsciously some of the prayer itself. When we get a little time to ourselves, we can sit down, close our eyes, and pray the prayer right through.

The question may be asked what I mean by praying. Do I mean that we are to kneel down, close our eyes, and fold our hands in the conventional way? No, indeed. What I mean is mental prayer which can be practiced at odd moments.

We can lift up our heart to God, the Central and Interior Harmony, while busy about life's duties. If we can steal a moment to ourselves, we can also close our eyes while we connect ourselves up with the Divine Harmony, and utter our few words of praise and thanksgiving. Of course we must concentrate upon what we are doing. For instance, we should not close our eyes and pray while we are, say, driving a car;

but we can pray before we start. We can also maintain a joyous and praiseful state of heart which keeps itself going, subconsciously. All prayer must be fervent if it is to be effective. Therefore when we pray we should do so with all our mind and strength, and we should bless the LORD with 'all that is within us'. There is an interior central harmony, in which everything is perfect and right. This is the realm which we contact when we pray.

Through the practice of prayer, and also perhaps through the anguish of the sorrows which we all have to meet at some time or times during our life, we reach a stage when we can rise into the Divine peace and harmony at any moment. We know at once the peace of God: we enter into a state of blissful oneness and unity.

Some may protest that what I have been saying is all very well and that while it may apply to cases of ordinary bereavement, it fails to meet the needs of those whose experience has been of a violent and tragic character. Some, alas, have had a loved one murdered in terrible circumstances. What can those who have had such a terrible experience do? How can they bless and praise the LORD? Frankly, I do not know; but I do know that prayer is the only remedy for every ill.

Therefore the worse the experience the more need there is for prayer. I have found that the only remedy is prayer in some form, no matter what circumstances I may be in. And so to those who have had to meet such a tragic and terrible experience I would implore them to pray, and to

keep on praying, with all their strength. For the final remedy is the staring of the mind upon God, and it is only by prayer that this can be accomplished.

It is those who come through the greatest experiences and trials who enter into the greatest joy, and experience the profoundest peace. Those who go about in an atmosphere of peace, and with the Light of Heaven upon their countenances, 'these are they who have come through great tribulation'. No tongue nor pen can describe the inward joy of one, who has won through great tribulation and bereavement, and who has learnt to praise and rejoice in the face of loss and sorrow. Such joy can never be described, for it is of Heaven, although it can be experienced on earth.

My closing word is - let us all pray without ceasing, for prayer is the remedy for every ill. It is through prayer that the overcoming of grief and sorrow is to be found.

**SOME THOUGHTS ON THE LIFE TO COME**

It would seem consistent, at this point in my narrative, to consider some thoughts on the life to come - that existence which is ours when our earthly pilgrimage is done. What I have to say will be (as indeed is the case throughout these pages) the fruitage of my own experience, as well as my own convictions. Some writers speak with apparent authority about the next life, but when we come to look into the matter we find that most of their ideas are but a repetition of what somebody else has written.

Others too speak with authority based on certain interpretations of Scripture - generally somebody else's.

My consideration of the subject entirely rules out anything of a psychic nature, for I have neither experienced the trance state, nor heard voices nor been vouchsafed visions. Such being the case, how is it that I am so certain of life beyond the grave?

I am certain because I know; that is to say, all my life I have possessed what might be termed a consciousness of immortality.

I never could understand those who declare that when they die, it is the end of them. They on their part cannot understand how it is that I know that I am immortal, and that I shall always go on living, not in this material body, but in some other body. As Paul says, spiritual

questions can only be spiritually discerned – they cannot be encompassed by the human or, what he termed, the carnal mind. Now although I have had no psychic experiences, yet I have all my life been conscious of an invisible world impinging upon this one which at times has been very near and real to me.

For instance, when I was quite young we were once visited by an unusually violent thunderstorm and everybody was in a panic of fear. I clearly recall sitting down on a chair, when immediately I experienced a delightful feeling of peace and well-being. All fear left me and it seemed, that I was surrounded by invisible Heavenly presences, and that I could come to no real harm, no matter what might happen.

Consequently I know that there is an invisible world and that it is infinitely good. I know because I am at all times conscious of it. But this does not explain how I know that I am immortal, and that I can never die. When I speak of immortality, I speak of the soul, and not this material body. I believe that the physical body can be transmuted even as was the body of Jesus.

In addition to being aware of another world of infinite harmony and friendliness, I am also aware of my own identity. As I have described more completely elsewhere, I one day suddenly awoke to the fact of my true identity, and knew that I, in my true inmost self, am immortal. This was not a mere belief, or intellectual conception, but was a sudden awakening to a

realization of the truth of being.

It was the real self breaking through the shell of egohood which encased it like the shell of an egg encases the chick, and which longs to break through into a wider world.

This then is what I know by direct knowing; what follows is what I firmly believe.

*'In my Father's house are many mansions', said Jesus (John 14:2).*

Paul spoke of a man who was caught up to the third heaven, and others postulate seven planes or heavens - but I know nothing of these things. This however is quite clear to me that we shall all be provided with a suitable body whichever heaven we may go to. Here on this earth plane we are provided with a corresponding 'earthly' body, in order that we can function in this world. If we go to celestial planes, then we shall have celestial bodies through which we can function on celestial planes, or in the highest Heaven. But although our bodies will be different in texture and rate of vibration they will still be like us in appearance.

That is to say, we shall easily be recognizable, but glorified in appearance. I mention this because so many people, having read all kinds of conflicting theories about what happens to us after we are dead, are afraid that they will never see or meet their loved ones again. I am convinced that this is not so.

Love can never die, and those we love can never die, and love will surely bring us together

again. Also we shall surely recognize one another; we shall find our loved ones glorified, but they will still bear the same likeness. Now a word about death itself - and by death I mean the passing on of the victorious soul to higher realms when it sloughs off the physical body.

I am convinced that the act of dying is not a painful process, and that on no account should it be feared. It is no more to be dreaded than falling asleep.

Actually, it is like going into another room or rather it's like stepping out from a gloomy room into a lovely, sunlit garden, where are beautiful flowers and the singing of birds. Jesus said to the thief on the cross:

*'This day you shall be with me in Paradise'.*

Some scholars tell us that the word translated paradise is an Asiatic word meaning a garden. Jesus did not say that the penitent thief would be with Him in purgatory, or that he would have to sleep in the grave for a few thousand years until the resurrection.

No, what He promised was that he, the thief, would be with Him that day in Paradise, or a garden. Death therefore is not a thing to be feared, for it is merely a stepping out into a lovely garden. We should therefore try not to mourn and sorrow too much over the passing of our loved ones, but rather try to rejoice with them in their newly-found liberty and freedom. I was brought up in the belief that after death



we would summarily be sent to hell or to heaven, according to our doctrinal beliefs. If we believed in a certain doctrine we would at death be changed miraculously into perfect godlike beings; on the other hand, if we did not believe in this doctrine, then we should go straight to hell, in spite of the fact that we might have lived blameless lives. Of course I protested against this idea. I could not understand why a person who may have been far from Christlike in his life here, should go to Heaven just because he believed in a certain doctrine, while a man who may have been a much better character should have to go to hell and be tortured for ever, just because he did not believe in that particular doctrine. When I raised my feeble protest I was simply ignored by my elders who declared in no uncertain voice that living a good life was no good at all, that it would not save us from the wrath of God but, on the other hand it did not matter how wicked we might be, if we believed in the doctrine, we should go straight to Heaven!

From what they said it seemed obvious to me that it was a disadvantage to lead a good life, in the Spirit of Jesus, and an advantage to lead an indifferent one, if with it we believe in a certain doctrine about Christ.

My elders declared that they were right, for they had learned it all out of some books. As I was young and had never read their dreadful books, I had to give in - but I was far from convinced.

Now I know that what happens to us in the next

life depends upon what we are within, and upon our thought life. According to the teaching in which I was reared, Dives would have gone to Heaven instead of to a place of torment if he had believed in this certain doctrine. But Jesus never taught anything so unmoral. Dives went to the place he was fitted for, by reason of what he really was, and according to the life he had lived.

He had fared sumptuously every day, while others starved; he had looked after himself and paid no attention to the beggar at his gate. If what my parents and other teachers had tried to make me accept had been true (and if Dives had believed in this particular doctrine and had gone to Heaven instead of a place of torment) where could the Heavenly denizens have put him, and what could they have done with him? Such a character could never have been fitted into a Heavenly community, neither could he have been able to tolerate the love atmosphere of Heaven. Nothing hurts more than the high vibrations of Divine Love to one who is far from being attuned to them, for Love then appears as Divine wrath. But of course there is no Divine wrath, but only Divine Love. God is Divine Love to all Eternity.

We must never forget this great fact; we must never allow ourselves to be deceived into thinking otherwise. When we are faced by devilish suggestions that God is a god of wrath, fury and anger, let us repeat to our soul this great truth, that God is Divine Love to all Eternity.

God is Love and cannot be anything that is not Love. But what is love to one who is attuned and filled with love, appears as wrath and anguish to the one who is not attuned - especially one who not only lacks love, but is filled with envy, strife, jealousy, hatred and resentment. Consequently we all go to an environment which is an outpicturing of what we are inwardly. The same law applies in this life; the man with a pot-house mind is happy, in his way, only in a pot-house; if he were put into a cathedral, or forced to attend a classical concert, he would be miserable and irritated and would know no rest until he got back to his pot-house. In the same way one who delights in cathedrals and classical music would be revolted if he had to spend his hours of leisure in a pot-house. Even in this life, we are generally to be found in an environment which corresponds to what we are within.

The old idea was that when we die we suddenly become gods - that dying in some magical way transforms us into perfect godlike beings, and that the most selfish and bad-tempered of us would be just the same as the most saintly person who ever lived. The mere act of dying would make us all perfect provided, of course, that we believed in a certain doctrine. We know now of course, that this idea is all wrong. We know that we shall begin in the next life where we have left off here, and that our environment will be just right for us. I am convinced that there are various grades or planes and that in one of them we shall find just the environment which will suit us perfectly.

The essential thing is that we should cultivate

Heaven in our own heart now.

We may have Heaven in our heart, although in this life our environment may not be altogether heavenly; but if we do this then in the next life we shall have the Heaven in our heart expressed outwardly in the form of beauty, perfection, love, joy, peace and holy laughter, which always seems to me to be like the sound of silvery bells.

At last we shall find complete satisfaction for all the deepest longings of our soul for perfect purity, selflessness, and expression of our love to God. Deep down within us is a great desire for goodness and a great love for God. This will find satisfaction in the next life. The important thing therefore is to cultivate an inner life of heavenly thoughts and ideas – and this of course is what Jesus taught. Change your minds (and consequently your thoughts) for the kingdom of heaven is nigh, or with you; think heavenly thoughts, cultivate an inner life of heavenly aspirations, commune with your Father and my Father in the depths of your being.

Yes, that is the great secret. What we think, that also do we become; if our inner thought-life is attuned to Heaven, then we have Heaven within us and we become Heavenly men and women. If we have Heaven within us, then we shall find ourselves in a corresponding Heaven when we pass on.

Everything is beautifully arranged, so that no pure and noble thought is ever lost - no aspiration Godwards can ever be fruitless.

Consequently, we should not grieve too much when our loved ones pass on. Neither should we be anxious about them if they did not accept the doctrines which certain people tell us are necessary. They will find themselves in just that environment which suits perfectly their present stage of unfoldment, and which will enable them to make progress towards higher and better things.

God is Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom, therefore everything has been arranged exactly right for each one of us, no matter at what stage we may be. God has a place for each one of us, and that place is perfect. God can never be anything other than Love and, combined with Infinite Wisdom, this ensures perfect everything for each one of us. When our loved ones pass over, we should not mourn unduly, neither should we worry about them should they not have become spiritually awakened.

Everything comes to pass at the right time for God's ways are perfect. We must also remember that the outward man that we see - the man of sin, or weakness - is not the real man. The real man is within; the real nature, the real self, is created in the likeness of Elohim and the time for his manifestation is not yet but will arrive in due course. Because God is Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love, we need be anxious about nothing - we need be troubled about no one. What really troubles us is the wicked old theology which has held the world in bondage for so long. When we get rid of that and learn to love and adore God as He really is, we enter into peace, and all our fears and apprehensions

come to an end. Instead of sorrowing and mourning, we should praise God and thank Him because He is Infinite Love and Wisdom, and does all things well.

We can commit our loved ones into God's hands, completely and unreservedly, for we know that Infinite Love and Wisdom can only do the highest possible good for them - the most lovingly perfect and wisest possible form of good the Infinite can devise.

We can thank the Lord too because He is leading them and us on to higher and better and more glorious things. We can rejoice with our loved ones in their newly-found liberty and freedom, and joy and laughter - yes, laughter. Some people seem to think that laughter is wicked. So far from this being the case, I am sure that Heaven is filled with laughter as indeed it is filled with worship and praise. On some occasions I have awakened from a deep sleep singing a happy devotional hymn with great feeling, while at other times I have wakened up laughing heartily in a very deep way, much deeper than any ordinary laughter. So deep indeed as to be quite beyond either description or explanation, and somewhat akin to the feeling which comes when deep breathing comes to us. Some readers will no doubt think the foregoing very elementary. So it is. It is written by an ordinary person for ordinary people. I know that mystics look upon the idea of going to Heaven as rather childish, because they know that there is something far greater, I admit this. Truth is beyond all Heavens, but still the Heavens remain, in the same way that the earth remains

in spite of our realization of higher things.

## 11

### WAR AGAIN FROM 1920

when my work started, until 1939 when the second world War broke out, were years of comparative tranquility. There was of course the general strike in 1926, but I cannot remember that this affected us very much. There were also the struggle of changing or rewriting my books, and the strain of starting a magazine without much preparation or previous experience in such a venture. But generally speaking, life was fairly tranquil and the work grew and prospered. A sad feature of this period however was the number of unemployed who streamed past our place. Every day we had dozens of callers asking for work, or assistance on the road, and my work was frequently interrupted. Some of the men may have been imposters, but on the other hand many were genuine, and I do not know how I managed it, but I provided them with new boots of the army type, food, clothing, money, and also odd jobs of work.

In those days there was of course a certain amount of freedom. I was able to buy crates of boots from a well-known London store as well as well-knitted woollen socks of good quality. Also I could give a man a few hours or a day's work in the garden. Now, of course, such boots are not available, the tax gatherer takes most of the money I might otherwise spend on them, while I am not allowed to employ anyone without stamping his cards for a whole week.

There are still in this year of 1951 almost as



many men on the road as there were before the last war, in spite of the fact that most of the casual wards have been closed. Despite food rationing, however, we manage to provide them with simple meals and also money for the road, but as for clothes and boots, we cannot alas do much for them.

I have been visited by murderers, ex-convicts and confidence-tricksters - some of whom would have made splendid actors whilst others would have made very good salesmen.

I was known all over England as the man who gave away boots and it was generally accepted that I was a millionaire! Not that I live like one, far from it: indeed, our house is small, while as for our clothes, we spend as little on them as possible. 'Make do and mend' is the rule in our household, yet in spite of this, I had the reputation of being a millionaire - a strange idea not only held by the men-on-the-road fraternity, but also by some of the local inhabitants. One lady who came from Portsmouth told me that when she enquired from a man at work on the road where I lived he said that he knew me and that I was a millionaire chap who kept a lot of typewriters! On another occasion a man living about two miles away came to see me and said that he had fallen out of work, and that he had been told that I would help him, as I was a millionaire! This mistaken idea was evidently widespread. There was also another strange idea, equally mistaken, held by quite a number of men on the road. This was that I was Max Pemberton, the well-known novelist and journalist. For years we had persistent callers,

all asking to see Mr. Max Pemberton – some even brought manuscripts for his expert opinion! When they were told that Max Pemberton did not live here and never had done so, it was easy to see that they did not believe it, but that they looked upon it as a trick to get rid of them. I had so many callers and down-at-heel visitors that at times I found it difficult to deal with them all and, at the same time, carry on with my work. Directly I sat down to a meal, there would be a ring at the door-bell and away I would go to render help to someone whose need was greater than my own. When I got back to my meal, it would be cold. This did not trouble me, but it was disappointing to my wife who had spent hours in preparing it. As soon, too, as I settled down to my work, the bell would go again. Then I would leave my desk and minister to another ‘out of work’, only to be met on my return by two or more unfortunates who wanted to see me. And so it would go on ... Sometimes I felt rather harried and driven by it all, but I tried to be as patient as possible, remembering the One who trod the hard way before us and who bore so many stripes. Also it seemed to me, very often, that in ministering to these ‘men of the road’ I was ministering to Jesus in disguise and after it was over I would feel glad in my heart. I thought of those words of His: ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.’ This experience was a good opportunity for me to learn something about the lives of these flotsam and jetsam of life.

I wanted to know why these men had come down in the world.

Some were drunken, others vicious, but most were merely weak; some were doctors, some lawyers, while others had at one time held similar positions. Mostly in these cases there was a history of giving way to drink or vicious habits.

But there were plenty who were neither drunken nor vicious.

And there were also the criminals, a few of whom made a bee-line for my place as soon as they were discharged from prison. After a time I began to recognize the new suit with which each long-term prisoner is supplied on the day of his discharge. Other men's clothes were old and worn, whereas the newly-discharged prisoner always had a new suit. I soon found that criminals were all alike, psychologically. They all had a grudge against life; they nursed resentments towards all in authority. They believed that everyone was engaged in a racket from the judge down to the humblest warder, even including the chaplain; that what these officials were doing was simply for what they could get out of it.

Missions and the Salvation Army, too, were simply a big swindle, defrauding the public and oppressing the poor prisoners! It was easy to see that so long as they held these ideas and nursed their resentments they would continue to find themselves in prison from time to time. But how to cure them was the problem, for they were set in their ideas and habits of thought. It seemed that nothing could ever change them. To attempt psychological treatment seemed to me

to be hopeless and even foolish; what was needed was a complete change of heart and mind such as came to John Bunyan.

But this is the work of the Spirit and not of man, although man may be used as a channel as also may be the printed word.

Many of the men would no doubt have worked if someone had arranged for them to do a certain number of hours' labour each day, and then to draw their wages at the end of the week. But as far as one could judge they had no more idea of how to find new work, or how to create new work through their own resources, than a pig has of flying. They were mere 'dumb driven cattle', victims of circumstances.

How to help them was indeed a problem.

A large proportion of these poor failures had sunk down to the lowest stratum of life simply through expecting other people to help them, and through self-pity. They complained that they had never had anyone to help them. One man told me that his mother had died, and so he had no home - never a thought apparently of his ever making one for her! Others were down at the bottom through not facing up to life's difficulties.

They tried to dodge their responsibilities, always following the path of least resistance.

It looked the easy way, but always it turned out to be the hard way. All criminals apparently belong to this class. They see a thing and take it, because to do so seems to be an easy way out; they run a swindle because it promises them a rich reward without the grind of working.

There were however some good workers and I admired them very much. I told them that their

trouble was only temporary, for it was obvious that because of their energy and willingness to serve they would find a regular job sooner or later. As my readers will know, if we grapple with life's difficulties and choose the difficult way instead of the path of least resistance, life yields up to us her richest treasures.

It does not matter how difficult or impossible our path may appear to be, there is always a way through if we go forward in faith. These experiences of meeting all sorts and conditions of men were really helpful to me, as they gave me a valuable opportunity of studying at firsthand the problem of failure. I could see myself in these failures: I could say: 'There, but for the grace of God, goes H. T. H.' However, as I have already said, life on the whole was uneventful and peaceful. But of course I had struggles of a spiritual kind, and also my share of sorrows and disappointments, as all people have - but outwardly life was fairly serene ... Then came September 1939, and with it yet another war. The actual outbreak of hostilities was preceded by an unnatural peace. As a rule one in a position such as mine is conscious, in a special way and to an unusual degree, of the existence of powers which battle against the soul and all that is of the Light. But just before the outbreak of war these forces seemed to have been withdrawn, so that there was a great calm. This proved to be the calm before the storm.

Since that experience I have always been suspicious of those occasions when all the warring forces of evil disappear and there is a great and

unnatural peace. This is a sign that great trouble is brewing. It is natural for the soul to be in conflict and for the warfare of the soul to continue almost without cessation, for it is only in this way that we can make progress in our spiritual unfoldment. Therefore should all the warring elements suddenly be withdrawn, this is unnatural and should be looked upon with suspicion. Also it should make us prepare to meet the blow which is to fall, by waiting upon God and finding His inward peace (which is of a different quality from the spurious peace of the unnatural calm before the storm.) The difference is like that between real period furniture and a cheap and shiny imitation.

The blow fell and caught me unawares, as I had been deceived by the unnatural calm and had therefore not made the preparation that I ought to have made. Preparation by prayer, I mean. (I do not mean that I was so conceited and foolish as to think that my prayers could prevent the war from happening which was a Karmic effect of years of wrong thinking on the part of millions of people. No, all that I could have done would have been to prepare myself for the shock of hostilities and to have put on the whole armour of God more completely.) Consequently I was hit rather hard, because the outbreak of armed conflict in the material world was accompanied by an ever fiercer war in the invisible world: all the forces of hell seemed to be belched up at that time. These hellish agencies seemed to make me their special target – but I was only one of many; yet at the time it seemed to me that I received their special attention.

This was only natural, for the object of the Dark Forces is to destroy the Children of the Light. Although all are attacked, those who are leaders and teachers are their special target, for if they can but be destroyed then the movement which they represent will collapse like a pack of cards. When hostilities broke out a cloud of spiritual darkness descended upon me, and I seemed to be gripped by overwhelming forces of evil. This was not merely depression from which most people suffer when overwhelmed by trouble and fear of impending disaster; it was something of a far different quality. It was a darkness of soul, as though God had been completely wiped out of the universe, as though all goodness, light, truth and love had been destroyed and that nothing remained but eternal ruin and despair for the soul of man. It was impossible to find God or to realize His presence; all my attempts at prayer were fruitless. There were nothing but darkness and emptiness. God had apparently ceased to exist - that is, the God whom I had known. Of course God was still operating in His universe as usual, for the heavenly bodies still pursued their respective courses just as serenely as before. Indeed, after a time, this very fact was a source of comfort to me. To watch the various operations of Nature taking place as usual, in spite of the awful upset on this planet made by man himself, became in time a source of satisfaction to me. But the God I had known, the God of intimate intercourse and companionship, had apparently disappeared. I could no longer retire into the Inner Chamber of my soul and find God there as Infinite Joy, Peace and Bliss indescribable. There were nothing but darkness and the seeming despair and lamentations of countless millions of apparently lost souls.

As I say, this was no mere attack of depression, such as one can overcome by an effort of will, compelling oneself to cheer up. I found myself in a new experience. I was indeed under a cloud, and I seemed to be in the grip of all the Powers of Darkness from which there seemed no way of escape. One Saturday afternoon found me busily engaged in making black-out shutters. In actual fact the frames had been made by the local carpenter to fit every window in the house, and what I was doing was covering them with suitable opaque material. While I was in the middle of this task John Moreton arrived. Now John Moreton is no ordinary man. Without my telling him anything he had divined intuitively that something was amiss, so he had come down from London to see what he could do to help. There was no need for me to tell him that I was under a cloud, for he could see it ... But let me digress for a moment. Some years ago I read a little book written by a vicar, in which he related an experience which came to him during a church service. The curate was taking part and while he was reading the lesson the vicar, who was at times clairvoyant, saw a powerful dark angel approach the young man and envelop him.

After the service the vicar spoke to the curate on the matter, who told him that at the moment when the dark angel was seen to envelop him, he felt a great fear come upon him, and that it still remained with him. Now in my present experience I could understand what had happened to the young curate, for I seemed to be in much the same fix. I was the curate, John Moreton was the vicar. He did not say anything about a dark angel, but he said that he was conscious of an evil presence.



I recalled an incident which had occurred some years previously when a man was brought to me by his wife.

What his complaint - a form of paralysis - was called I do not know, but none of the doctors and specialists who had been consulted could do anything for him. He told me that it started when, as a curate, he was conducting a church service and he was suddenly seized by a great fear. After the experience he lost control of his thumbs which became weak and which twitched and could not be controlled. Then the nervous disease spread over the rest of his body. When I examined him I found that he was perspiring like a man doing hard work, with every muscle flexed and as hard and rigid as though he were lifting a hundred pound barbell.

Unfortunately, much to my sorrow, I could do nothing for him, but I am sure now that the poor man was suffering from a form of psychic invasion, even as had happened to the other curate. I also believe that I was attacked in the same way, and that it was due to the grace of God and John Moreton that I was set free. It will be observed that in all three cases, we were trying to help humanity and so perhaps it was partly because of this that we became targets for those dark forces which seek to destroy the children of the Light. But, of course, in each individual case there must have been some weak spot or chink in our armour which allowed the enemy entrance. I think that some people are liable to become so busy trying to help others that they neglect their own defenses. Our first duty, so I think now, should be to guard ourselves by putting on the whole armour of God, and through waiting upon Him close the chinks

which might leave a loophole for the enemy. Both John Moreton and I wrestled with the dark presence, but without any noticeable effect. So he went back to London and I was left to struggle on alone. He had his work and I had mine, but at intervals we both tried to realize Ultimate Truth. The nights of course were the worst: I spent hours wrestling with those powers which seek not only to destroy the body but also the soul. I tried all the methods which I knew, including the famous affirmation: 'God is the only Power and Presence, and God is Love' which, repeated very earnestly for hours at a stretch, kept the foe at bay - but that was about all. I persevered. The days and weeks went by with apparently little or no improvement; but all the time the steady work which we both (John Moreton and I) did in affirming Truth, was gradually undermining the power which gripped me. At last I began to feel that the cloud was lifting and the power lessening.

Finally, I entered into the Light again, and found God's Inward Peace - much to my joy and relief! And so the danger was past; but it had indeed been a trying and searching experience. I do not think that the experience was unnecessary; certainly I am richer (and, I hope, wiser) for having passed through it. I am sure that no experience would come to us if it were not necessary, for if it did it would be quite meaningless. There is a purpose in everything and in every happening which comes to us, which is that we are brought into our final happiness and bliss in God, the One Central Harmony. I have to admit, however, that painful experiences may come to us because of failure on our part to maintain our own integrity. But the

experience which we attract to ourselves is not a punishment from God: it is the natural result of our failure to keep close to our Centre. It is remedial and not punitive. We are not punished for our sins; but we reap as we sow. It is a case of action and reaction: as we sow, so do we reap. The experience which comes to us is the best possible thing, as it is devised by Infinite Wisdom, and Infinite Love exactly to suit our condition and meet perfectly our need and correct our weakness, whatever that may be.

This was by no means the last of the attacks made upon me by the dark forces. Indeed, every conceivable effort has been made by would-be possessing spirits to gain an entrance, and I have had to fight, as it were, for my very life and soul. Presences have visited me which were so evil that they made every hair of my head literally to stand on end.

I had previously read of people's hair standing on end, but had thought that such a thing was impossible and that it was merely an exaggerated figure of speech. But I was to experience it myself and to know that it was something far worse than any figure of speech. However, each time I was brought victoriously through. I found that there was one infallible method of dealing with these evil powers, and that 'was to make use of the name of JESUS. This Name is all-powerful on all planes, and evil powers and entities simply cannot stand up to it.

The name JESUS is all-powerful over evil powers because He overcame them, being Himself tempted at all points even as we. During the time of his

ministry he was attacked again and again by infernal powers, and those who would follow him may be attacked in the same way. But those of us who do try to follow him, possess an infallible talisman in the Name which is above every name- JESUS.

Again and again, calling on this Name has brought speedy deliverance to me when all seemed lost. The all-powerful Name is JESUS - not Christ, although the two may be used together of course. The word Christ merely means the Anointed One, or Messiah, whereas according to Weymouth JESUS means Joshua, or Yeho-shua, meaning Jehovah the Saviour.

*'Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.'* This means saved from sinning which again means that we are delivered from sin and its dominion over us, and from all the evil powers to which sin connects us. Every sin and every wrong thought connect us by invisible cords to hellish and infernal powers and forces. By calling on the Name of JESUS, sinful thoughts and also our love of them, are destroyed in us and the dominion of their corresponding infernal powers and potencies is broken. Having been delivered from the terrifying experience with the Dark Forces, the first decision that I made was that I must continue my work as usual. It seemed to me that what I had to teach would be needed very much during the period of hostilities, so I made up my mind to do my best to help our people through the difficult times through which they were passing. I therefore brought out my book *Life Without Strain*, and sent it to our friends as expeditiously as possible.

The fact that it was given away, instead of being sold, made some people very suspicious. They thought that there must be a 'catch' in it, especially as it was attractively bound in blue cloth with gold foil lettering and a dust-jacket without any advertisement on it. I had 10,000 copies printed and bound. (Since the above was written, another edition of 10,000 copies has been prepared)

So many applications were received from people who wished to buy this book that I had inserted a printed notice inside each copy stating that a copy would be sent free to any applicant, and that on no account should any money be sent for it. This made some people even more suspicious, one man writing in great perplexity: 'How are you able to give away books such as this while other people charge top prices?' The answer was a simple one given to us by Jesus who, according to Paul, said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'. Our supporters had been giving, giving, giving to this work over the years, entirely on their own initiative.

I thought that it was time that I gave them something. One feels happier after giving (rather than receiving) a gift which proves the truth of what Jesus said. As to how I could afford to issue the book free, or find the money with which to pay the printer and binder - which was probably what our inquirer meant - I must confess that I did not give it a thought. I did not even know how much the project was going to cost; I simply gave the order, leaving the price to the printer to settle. When the bin came in, we had no difficulty in paying it at once.

Now I do not recommend others to follow this happy-go-lucky way of dealing with financial matters. The important thing is to be Divinely led: if we are doing the right thing, supply comes as it were of its own accord, whereas if we are not doing the right thing, the financial side may be something of a nightmare. The essential thing is that we should do everything according to the mind and will of God - when we know this to be the case, we can go forward with confidence, knowing that supply will follow just as surely as day follows night. This is so because if we make sure that what we propose doing is according to the will of God, we obey the injunction to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, consequently all needful things are added - the right activity attracting its corresponding supply, according to whatever the need may be. The right activity and its corresponding supply together form one complete whole, and are part of the Divine order.

If all our outer activities were according to the Interior Order, in correspondence with the activities of the Real World in which the True Self lives and moves and has its being, then our life here would be beautiful and harmonious beyond description. But alas, our outward activities and our thinking seldom even approximate to the Divine pattern, and so our terrestrial lives shew forth much disorder, instead of Heaven's harmony and peace ...

Outwardly our lives were fairly peaceful during the war. We were only attacked from the air once, when we had two bombs in our garden and two over the hedge in the next field. These caused a certain

amount of material damage, but no one was hurt nor even scratched. Not one beehive was knocked over, while our hens continued to lay as usual. The villagers also were wonderfully preserved. One night two mines were dropped, causing considerable damage to one hundred and sixty houses, but not a single person was injured. So we had much to be thankful for.

Nevertheless, all this was rather trying to two elderly people. Also my wife and I got very little sleep most nights as we had to be our own fire-watchers and fire-fighters.

In all this, of course, our experiences were much the same as those of thousands of others, and we would not have had it otherwise. During the whole time we had not the slightest feeling of resentment, neither did we suffer from self-pity. We simply took things as they came, and kept on praising and thanking God for all His goodness and mercy. We felt sorry for those who tried to destroy us, and prayed for them and their loved ones that they might be Divinely blessed in every possible way. I think that this was possible because for so long we had made a practice of praying for our enemies that they might be blessed in every possible way and be the recipients of all manner of Divine good. If our home had been destroyed and our little grandson killed it would have been harder to do so, yet we should still have persevered in thanking and blessing God, and in praying for those who had caused the destruction. 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do', is the prayer which comes naturally to one when badly attacked by those who regard themselves as our enemies. They are the

victims of hellish forces working through them, and do not really know what they are doing. After being bombed, I spent the rest of the night in blessing, thanking and praising God. I simply felt that this was what I wanted to do; I did not want to be protected or saved from any pain or suffering, or be favoured more than other people. I felt that I just wanted to bless and praise God and express my love and gratitude.

At first when bombing began, I think that I resisted mentally and wanted to be protected. I am sorry to have to confess it, but I think that I wanted to be protected and also my loved ones, and also my work, and that I was not so concerned about other people, at any rate, at that time. It is a dreadful confession to have to make, for it reveals an incredible selfishness, but I think that we should try to be as truthful as possible in all matters.

It was after we were bombed, when things became even more difficult and trying, that I realized that I no longer wanted to be protected but that I just wanted God, no matter what might happen. This, I felt, was a great advance.

Previously I had been putting my own safety and that of my loved ones first, and also my work which is my very life. I had been putting these things first, and God second. This was all wrong, for Jesus said that we should seek first the Kingdom of God, after which whatever we might need would be added.

Immediately I gave up wanting to be protected and I knew that all I wanted was God, and that it did



not matter what might happen so long as I had God - it was then that I entered into a new and more intimate relationship with Him. It was an inner union with God, so deep and intimate that I cannot describe it, but it brought great satisfaction to my soul. Then I thanked God for the experiences which had brought this wonderful thing about, for it did not seem possible that I should ever have arrived at this state of inner union without them. That is how it appears in my case, but of course with others it may be different. Some mystics speak of the Abyss and falling into it which may have the same effect.

The object of our incarnation here is simply that we should find God and enter into eternal union with Him. The 'I', the 'me', and the 'mine' have to be surrendered, so that God can be All in all.

*'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die,' said Jesus, 'it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,' John 12:24.*

*'He that findeth (or clings to) his (personal or self) life shall lose it; and he that loseth (or gives up) his life for my sake shall find it.'*  
Matthew 10:39.

The war dragged on, and we got used to ordinary bombing. Then came the flying bombs which were much more fearsome, for they seemed to emit a spirit of evil. After that the rockets began to fall - On London and Kent mostly - so they did not trouble us. Then came the most terrible thing of all - the invention of the atom bomb. When we learned over the radio that the U.S.A. had dropped an atom bomb on Japan we felt overcome with horror. In addition, we knew that this was only the beginning of a new reign of terror. We

remembered the words of Jesus: 'For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again ...

After that came the day of rejoicing---that is, for those who could rejoice.

We regarded such rejoicing with horror. If only, instead of an atom bomb, we could have dropped a bundle of compressed love on Hiroshima!

## PART II

### 12

#### IMAGINATION

Perhaps my readers may wonder what I used to teach in the early days, and why it was helpful to some. Here then is one aspect of my work which it may not be out of place to mention.

I discovered that, to a large extent, man creates the conditions of his life through his imagination. In one of my early books, I wrote: you are the architect of your own life. It is yours to make or to mar. By the power of thought you are building. Are you building aright?

This statement was true as far as it went, for we as well as our environment are the products of our thoughts; but thoughts are powerful because of what they do - not because of what they are in themselves. It is because they awaken and direct the imagination that they are so powerful in their effect upon our life and circumstances.

That great mystic Jacob Boehme whose teaching is so difficult that few can understand anything of it, confirms this. Although his writings are so deep and even obscure, he makes one thing very clear, which is that it is our wayward imagination which is the cause of our present hellish conditions, and that things can be put right only to the extent that our imagination is brought into correspondence with the All-Wise Imagination.

*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the  
unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return  
unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him;  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither  
are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so  
are my ways higher than your ways, and my  
thoughts than your thoughts.  
--Isaiah 55:7-9.*

What all this means is that our imagination has fallen away from the All-Wise Imagination and has created disorderly and even hellish conditions, for Mind is creative; Thought rules all.

Thought rules all because it affects our creative imagination; consequently as we think so we are and so do we become, and so does our environment become.

The invitation is that we should return to the One Creative Source of all perfection, thus forsaking our wrong thoughts and imagination, and so think God's thoughts instead, consequently bringing our wayward imagination into unison with the All-Wise Imagination, which can create only perfection. Prayer is an attempt to bring our mind and imagination into correspondence with Infinite Mind and the All-Wise Imagination. We do not pray in order to alter God or change His purpose. The sole object of prayer is to bring ourselves back to the likeness and image of Elohim in which we were created. 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him? ...For thou hast made him a little lower

than Elohim'. Elohim, according to Genesis I, was the creator or creators of the world. Scholars tell us that Elohim is a plural word, consequently we read: 'And Elohim said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness'. Such being the case, it is difficult to understand why the old hymn-writers described themselves as worms. It would have been better I think if they had described themselves as caterpillars, for they, after passing through the chrysalid stage, turn into butterflies - whereas worms always remain worms. But what a lovely hymn the old writers could have written about the caterpillar! First, a poor creeping thing; next, a chrysalid (corresponding to the hymnist's long sleep in the grave); then after that the resurrection - that, I feel would have been a much better theme. But the Bible does not teach that we are worms in spite of what Bildad the Shuhite, and also David, may have said. It tells us that we are created in the image and likeness of our Creator.

In the teaching of Jesus we see that we have departed from the All-Wise Imagination and have created hell for ourselves through the misuse of our imagination, and that the only remedy is to get back to that which is for ever true, viz. God's idea concerning each one of us. This outer man is not the real Man; also this outer world is not the true World: both are falsities. What we need to do then is to get back to God's idea concerning both the true Man and the true World. Prayer is an attempt to bring our wayward thought and imagination into correspondence with God's thought and imagination. We pray in order that we may see

things as they really are; not as they falsely appear; in other words, what we seek is to know the Truth, after which the Truth will make us free, even as was promised by Jesus.

Paradoxically, however, we have to seek Truth for its own sake, and not in order to win the reward of freedom.

If we persevere with our attempts by means of prayer to think God's thoughts after Him, a time comes when we experience a sense of great peace; we feel completely at home in God and in a state of great harmony. This is due to the fact that our mind has begun to function in correspondence with the mind of God. When we see the thing which may be troubling us, as it is in the mind of God, then our mind is thinking in the same way that God's mind thinks.

If ye abide in my word. ..ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free. -Jesus  
Jesus taught the gospel of the Kingdom-He told those about Him that the Kingdom of Heaven was nigh; He spoke of the Kingdom and of heavenly things. He said that if His hearers would abide in His teachings (that is, to think of God and His perfect order), they would be made free. The moment we really know, when we actually realize the Truth, we become free. I wish I could describe this experience, but it is not possible to do so. Truth is always present with us, although we may not be able to realize it. That we cannot realize it does not alter the fact that it is always with us, awaiting the time when our mind and imagination cease their errancy and become attuned to the mind and imagination of God.

It may be asked how I could have taught this, seeing that, generally speaking, practically no one can realize the Truth, whilst those who could do so would not be taking any instruction from me? How could I exhort my students to realize Truth, seeing that they had no idea what Truth is? I used to tell them that until they could realize Truth themselves, they should accept the testimony of those who have realized it. I told them that man, in very truth, is a Celestial being, belonging to Celestial Realms. My great desire was, and still is, that they might realize their true identity and might know that in their true inwardness they are sons of God, true children of Eternity, and one with That which changeth not.

The beloved John expressed the same truth when he said: '*Beloved now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear (it is not yet apparent) what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him*' - that is, identical with Him. I told them that in their true inwardness no real harm could ever come to them, for the real Self in them was a spark from the Sacred Flame, deathless, diseaseless and eternal. Worlds might be born, and worlds might flourish and pass away, and even the whole universe be rolled up like a scroll, but they in their true inwardness would always remain beyond time and unaffected by change, because they were one with, identical to, the Eternal.

I used to suggest that they should say:  
Man is a spiritual being living in a spiritual universe, governed by spiritual laws, and upheld

by spiritual powers.

And by spiritual I really meant celestial, which is the highest realm of all to which man in his true inwardness, as a son of God, eternally belongs. By 'Man', I meant of course not the outward man, who is 'of the earth, earthy' and full of frailties - but the real inward Man, the image and likeness of Elohim, who in most people is so effectively covered up that it is difficult to believe that He is present at all. By realizing the Truth about Man, we learn to realize the Truth about ourselves. We discover that we are not this body, nor this mind, nor this soul, nor even this spirit, for we can speak to them all and command them. No, we are something far greater than any or all of these. What we truly are can no more be defined than God can be defined.

When we reach this point we are not far from what Jesus called the Kingdom. Of course the beginner wants to ask how he can know God, without knowing something about Him. If God is undefinable, he asks, how can he ever know Him, how can man ever know the Undefinable? This is a deep question, and I do not think that I ever dealt with it adequately in those early days. It is true that it is impossible to define God who is the Undefinable, for the God whom we define, or try to express in words, is not the Transcendent One. We limit God directly we try to define Him, for by so doing we bring Him within the limitations of the human mind. Our God whom we define is really only man's idea of God. Another deep thought is that our highest ideas about God are really only a sort of



preview of what we shall ultimately attain to. But of course we can know the Unknowable, but not by the human and finite mind. God, who transcends man's intellect, can only be known by that Divine Something in man which also transcends his intellect, and also cannot be defined. In other words, only God can know God. However, this was too deep a matter to broach to beginners, so I did not mention it; in fact I did just the reverse, for I taught them to meditate upon what are called the attributes of God: wholeness, perfection, justice, and so on. They did not know that they were meditating upon the attributes of their real interior Self, and that as they meditated their false ego or self (the enemy of their souls) was being liquidated. He, the true or Christ-in-you Self, must increase; but I, the false self, must decrease. It was also suggested that students should make use of their imagination by trying to see good everywhere, and also beauty.

Instead of seeing other people as they appear to be, they were to try to see the Real Man who is hidden within.

To do so is not a new idea by any means, for it was Calvin who said that we should not look at the imperfect outward man, but rather that we should try to see the Divine image hidden within the man. (I did not know anything about Calvin then, except the unfortunate doctrine named after him, and it was many years before I came across this statement from him.) It was good to have what I was teaching confirmed by so great a theologian; the fact that I possessed no learning and consequently had to rely upon

intuition made it the more interesting to find that what I had been teaching was the same as one of the great and learned men of the past had taught. Trying to see into people and into things in order to find their hidden perfection trains the imagination along Heavenly lines, for by so doing we are trying to see things as they really are in the Real World of perfect everything and perfect order and absolute rightness.

I suggested to our students that they should spend a certain amount of time every day in using and training their creative imagination in a special way. I suggested that they should close their eyes and think of a perfect heavenly state, in which were order, wholeness and completeness. Instead of disease, sickness, pain, suffering, they should imagine a state of health, wholeness, and fullness of life; instead of poverty and anxiety, they should form a mental concept (but not visualize), a condition of instant and ever-present abundance, every need being supplied fully and completely just as it arises. And so with all the many negative concepts of the mind: discord, failure, sickness - their opposites should be imagined.

The Intellect can do little in this field. But the imagination combined with feeling is capable of bringing about changes in our body and affairs such as are beyond the wit and wisdom of man to explain.

I must confess that in the very early days of my work I suggested that people should visualize what they wanted.

This of course was all wrong, and as soon as possible I gave it up. It is wrong to do so, because it is using the human mind to attempt to force Life to produce conditions according to our pattern; whereas of course our greatest good can come to us only through our life being lived according to the Divine pattern. Therefore when we use our creative imagination we should not try to enforce our pattern on life, but should be willing to accept whatever form God's answer may take. Thus if we are poor, we should not envisage ourselves as being rich in worldly goods, but should try to realize that we have entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and set free from every limitation. It is not sufficient for us to use affirmations, but in addition we must enter into a realization of the truth that we have affirmed.

Many of us I am afraid are inclined to become slack when times are prosperous and easy with us; then when difficulties arise and troubles sweep down on us, we are not able to realize the Truth which makes us free. This is a great error but alas, we are prone to fall into it. What we should do is to make the most of our opportunity when the sky of our life is clear. When beset by troubles it is not easy to realize Truth: we have to work through the darkness before we can do so. But when our sky is clear, and the barometer of our life is at 'set fair', then is the time to realize Truth for to do so is easy, and each time that we do so we make it easier for us to meet our next difficulty or test. There are times when we feel unusually peaceful and at one with the whole universe: a lovely

view, or even smoke belching out from a factory chimney-stack, may appear unusually beautiful. At such times Heaven is very near to us, and we should make the most of it. Then it is easy to realize our oneness with the Whole; we feel perfectly at home in God, in our right place, in right relationship with everything and everyone else, all included in one complete and perfect whole.

### 13

#### ON TRYING TO ENTER THE SILENCE

For many years I tried to enter the Silence - but in vain. I often read about it, but could not find it - for one thing, no two writers seemed to agree as to what the Silence was. Some seemed to think that it was a kind of trance; others taught that it was simply inhibiting all thought, thus making the mind a blank; yet others again said that it was a state of negative passivity, or a sinking down into a state of dreamy self-hypnotism. None of these methods would bear examination. First of all, falling into trances is at any rate, undesirable for us Westerners. I cannot see how it can fit us for the battle of life. Trances, visions and the like are psychic and although they are mentioned in the Bible, and were indulged in by some of the saints, I am quite sure that - speaking personally - I am better without them. The wisest of the Christian mystics confirm this view by stating that in most cases these phenomena are hindrances rather than helps. Most of us will remember that Christian and his companion in Pilgrim's Progress when travelling the Heavenly road were attracted by what appeared to be a much pleasanter path - that of Bypath Meadow. Instead of pursuing their hard and toilsome journey along the King's Highway, how much pleasanter and easier it would appear to be to get over the stile and walk in the cool and delightful Bypath Meadow! So off the two of them went along this new and interesting way; but alas, because it led them away from the true path, they soon met with trouble and finally

into doubt and despair. In the same way the wise saints and mystics warn us against being attracted by visions and trance experiences. They are not necessarily a sign of divine favour, but may be a hindrance in that they may distract our attention away from God. This is the object of the Adversary - to get our attention away from our Divine Centre and to direct it to something which flatters but keeps us away from God, instead of bringing us nearer. If therefore we find that we have a gift for visions, trances and so on, we should not fall into the error of thinking that we are especially favoured by God; but rather we should look upon them as something to be transcended as soon as possible, even if we cannot avoid them altogether.

There are exceptions of course and we must not criticize, still less condemn, those who have derived comfort from a psychic experience, but rather give thanks to God that they have been blessed in the way they have.

My father for all his orthodoxy declared that when he was converted he saw the Lord Jesus as plainly as ever he had seen anybody in his life. He said that it was not a spirit that he saw, but that Jesus was as real and solid as any man could be and that He turned and looked at him - a look which captured my father's heart for all time. Then again after our mother died, Father saw her in a similar way.

Experiences of this kind are helpful to those who need such consolation, and who are so constituted that they can be helped and

comforted by them.

Then again inhibiting an thought, which means making the mind a blank, is a dangerous practice for it invites possession. Instead of emptying the mind, we should fill it with thoughts of God. Then no evil can come into it; whereas, if we try to keep it empty, the most evil thoughts may enter and become a fixed obsession. The other idea of making oneself passively negative is equally dangerous and to do so would be to invite mediumship. We should at all times keep our mind positive, and directed towards God. Being positive makes for integration: being negative produces disintegration.

When we sink down into a state of negative passivity, we vibrate in correspondence with hades; but when we rise up into a positive state of realization, we vibrate in correspondence with celestial realms. We need to go up and up until the vibrations are so rapid that we reach a state of stillness. When we turn a wheel slowly we can see all the spokes moving, but when we turn it rapidly the spokes disappear from our sight. So is it with the Silence: we get beyond all conflict and all thought, until we reach That which is beyond thought, in the great Stillness. It is a state of rest, in the same way that the heavenly bodies pursue a course of great activity and are themselves masses of activity, yet they are in a state of poise, balance, and ease, resting easily, each in its appointed place, without effort or strain.

I tried many and various ideas and suggested

methods, mostly without success. My search was a difficult, even dangerous, one for I was quite alone and had no one to advise me. Also, the right kind of books never seemed to come my way - I know now that there was a reason for this: it was necessary for me to travel the hard and solitary way, in order that I should know what I know through experience and thus be able to speak with conviction. Yet no matter how much I tried, I could not find the Silence - until all at once I realized that it was my trying so hard that was hindering me, and that if I would cease my efforts, then I should find that already I was in the Silence. It was then realized that the Silence is always with us, and only needs recognition; it is not something that has to be created.

What we have to do is to stop our fruitless strivings, and instead rest in the Love of God, which supports us in much the same way that the earth appears to be supported in its atmosphere. Whilst I am strongly against regulating respiration and retaining the breath, yet I believe that possessing the ability to breathe deeply and fully has been a help to me. When I was young, I breathed through my mouth shallowly and I can recall my mother telling me on every possible occasion to close my mouth and to breathe through my nose.

Through this bad habit my nostrils had become narrow and almost closed, so that I could not breathe through the nose properly. This went on for years, until I became interested in physical culture. Then I started in earnest to try to breathe deeply through my nose. The first thing



that I had to do was to enlarge my nostrils, so I practiced distending them. I had to do this mentally, of course, in much the same way that it is possible to send blood to any part of the body by the power and use of thought. This I did to such good effect that I developed muscles like those of a professional singer, and also my breath control was almost as perfect as theirs. I could never see quite what use this was going to be to me, but now I believe that this development has been a help to me as regards entering the Silence. Of course nowadays I do not do any deep breathing consciously, but when I think of God and divine things then deep breathing in tune with the Inner Life of the Spirit comes to me of its own volition. I also think that this development, this capacity for very deep physical breathing, may have had something to do with the interior respiration which has come to me of recent years. But of this, more anon.

Nervous tautness had always been one of my difficulties. I did not know how to relax and when I was interested in anything I held my breath, hardly breathing at all - consequently I found it difficult to do deep waistline breathing and yet remain relaxed at the same time. But practice makes perfect and in course of time I found that my breathing, when I allowed it to be free, took on a rhythm and a quality all its own, and that I did not control it, but that it was working in harmony with the rhythm of the Hidden Life. However, that did not happen all at once, indeed it came only after many years ...

As I have said, the first sign I had of any

success in trying to enter the Silence was when I woke up to the fact that I was already in the Silence, and that I only hindered my progress by my constant trying. I was like a person learning to swim who, after many struggles to keep afloat, suddenly discovers that the water will support him if he will but lean on it and cease his frantic and jerky efforts. As soon as he trusts the water and rests on it, his hitherto taut body relaxes and becomes supple. I found that it was much the same with my attempts to enter the Silence. I had hitherto strained and struggled in a state of tautness - which was the very thing which kept me from entering; yet, paradoxically enough, I should never have found the Silence if I had not made such efforts.

Another hindrance was that at first I left out devotion, and also did not realize the value and necessity of humbleness. I found that I got on better when I followed the path the saints have trod. They knelt in adoration, and no doubt turned their eyes upwards. I did not always kneel in a literal sense, but mentally and metaphorically I cast myself at the feet of the LORD, but turned my physical eyes upwards (with lids closed) as though looking up to His face. Jacob Boehme says 'Steadfastly fix thine inner eye upon one point and by Faith press into this inmost cell within thee'. I am sure this is good practice; indeed I follow this method very often to start with, then after a time I look upward and am all the better prepared to do so, because of the preliminary looking within to the region of the heart.

In the Hindu philosophy we are told that there are three paths of attainment: Karma marga, or

the path of good works; Bhakti marga, or the path of devotion and Jnana marga, or the path of knowledge. The second path seems, predominantly, to be the one which I am following, although we have to follow all three paths simultaneously. Yet it is generally admitted, so I believe, that Bhakti marga is not only the easiest but the simplest and most direct path of all. All that we have to do is to love and adore. Because God is Love, it is only natural that it should be so. Love is the key to every situation in life! Although He did not so classify them, Jesus taught the three paths of attainment: first, the path of good works (as given in the Sermon on the Mount, and elsewhere); second, the path of love and devotion ('If ye love me, keep my commandments.' 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you'); third, the path of understanding. ('If ye continue in my words ...ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.') In the teaching of Jesus we have all that we need; but it is interesting and helpful to make a slight study of comparative religions - not in order to try to prove that any one religion is superior to all others - but rather to see how wonderfully all religions in their deepest implications agree and how they all meet finally at the same one goal of Divine union.

Let me however return to my subject. It is useless trying to enter the Silence if we have any unconfessed sin on our conscience; neither can we even begin to approach the entrance to the Silence if we bear any resentment towards anyone whatsoever, or have done him a wrong. 'Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar,

and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' It is useless to try to enter the Great Stillness which is the Presence of God realized, if we are possessed by the angry devils of resentment. We must first get rid of these disturbing influences if we would enter into the Central Harmony. Also, if we have wronged our brother we must put the matter right, because we must not try to enter the Holy Presence with the guilt of our action resting upon us. And if wrong has been done to us, we must forgive freely and become filled with thoughts and feelings of good-will.

What is termed 'entering the Silence' is really becoming attuned to the Divine Presence, which means that our vibrations have to be raised to a higher pitch until they vibrate in harmony with the Divine pitch or note. In the Hindu philosophy we are told that the Divine note sounding through the Universe is Aum, or Om. If this is intoned with the lips closed, the whole of the head vibrates accordingly. I do not use it myself, but I can quite understand that our brothers in India find it helpful in meditation, or in preparing for meditation. One of the results achieved by religious exercises and practices is to change the vibrations of the whole body so that a process of transmutation takes place: every cell is affected, so that the body becomes less dead-looking and more translucent, to the extent that it becomes filled with the Divine Light. When first I heard one from the East intoning Aum, I was at once struck by its similarity to

our Western intoning -particularly the word 'Amen'. I found upon trying it that it came quite natural to me to intone both Aum and our liturgical prayers; it was the same note and produced the same vibration. I have never pursued the matter, but I think now that I ought to have done so for I think that it would help and perhaps expedite the process of transmutation. St. Paul (quoting Ferrar Fenton's translation) says:

But our policy consists in possessing an object in heaven: from where also we expect a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humility, making it like the body of his majesty, by the internal working of his power; and he will subject all to himself. - Philippians 3:20-1.

From this we see that St. Paul taught that through contemplation - the same Power of the Eternal Logos which raised up Jesus from the dead and transmuted his earthly body into an immortal body of eternal light substance, the vibrations of which could be changed at will - would also transmute our material body and make it the same as the body in which the Lord Jesus ascended.

Some teachers demand that on sitting down to enter the Silence we should adopt a right posture, hold our hands in a special manner and breathe in a certain way. But in my experience this has not been found to be the case; instead I discovered that, as usual, Love is the key. If we approach God with love in our heart towards Him, and with love in our heart to all mankind

then, as Jesus said, we are not far from the Kingdom.

Love is indeed the key. We may possess all the technique that was ever conceived by the mind of man, but if we have not Love, all our efforts to enter the Silence will be in vain.

The Silence is the Presence of God realized; therefore if we would enter it we must be attuned to the Presence of God who is Love. Love is ever the key.

We might intone to further orders, but if our heart were not right, it would be all in vain.

## 14 THE LAW OF PLENTY

I firmly believe that there is a law of plenty. As we gaze at the prodigality of Nature we cannot fail to be impressed by this fact. Nature is indeed most bountiful.

Wherever we go we see how great that fullness is - except of course where man has exploited the earth and turned it into a waste and a desert. But that is not the earth's fault, or Nature's, but it is the result of man's selfish exploitation.

'Deserts are on the march.' Why? Simply because of selfish, ignorant, and wicked exploitation on the part of man. The very forces which are causing the deserts to invade the cultivatable land are the same forces which, if they had not been thrown out of balance, would have maintained the earth in fullness and abundance. The law of life is balance. If we put back into the soil as much as we take out Nature will nourish us abundantly; but if we try to cheat her, by taking out more than we put in, then we upset the balance of life. As a result, the forces and powers of Nature become inverted and work against us instead of for us, as they were designed to do. From this we see that the laws of life are designed to give us unlimited plenty, far beyond our needs, and that if they were obeyed, there would be more than enough for all. Where wise and just methods obtain, there is no lack, for the earth then becomes a transformer of solar energy so that the solar

energy is changed by the earth into growth. This we take and use and then if, afterwards, we put the whole of the residue back into the soil, the cycle is completed. The earth is neither robbed nor exploited, but continues to be as fruitful as ever. We thus see that the Divine idea is one of plenty through the amazing prodigality of Nature. *'The earth is the LORD'S and the fullness thereof.'*

When I was young I was enterprising, but always ground down by poverty and lack. By great struggle I managed to start my own business, but my customers all appeared to be poverty-minded. Their main idea seemed to be to beat me down as low as possible, so that they could benefit at my expense. I did not know then that I attracted this 'thrifty' type of client because of my own poverty-complex. I had been born into a remarkably thrifty home where we never knew the comparative plenty such as was enjoyed in 'artizans' homes and whose standard of life was almost extravagant compared with ours. This ultra-frugality and system of the most rigid economy in which I was brought up made such an impression upon my young mind, that I do not think I have ever completely recovered from it. Its good effect has been that I have never wasted anything; its bad effect has been that I have had great difficulty in spending money for myself on even the necessary things of life. As I say, I attracted the acquisitive-thrifty type of client, whilst I on my part was prepared to give the best service possible - and I did give it without stint. But still there was always a miserable response. Of course, the cause of my difficulty was that I possessed a



penny mind; I was concerned with the cutting down of expenses, with saving a penny here, and twopence there, and so on. I did not know at the time that such thinking was conditioning my circumstances.

However, although I had a penny mind, I was, strangely enough, daring and enterprising. Consequently I looked out for suitable premises in the best and most expensive part of the town. It was while inspecting certain business premises which later I was able to rent on a favourable lease, that I had a curious experience. I, the poor struggling young man with a poverty complex, suddenly had a strange feeling that the air all round me was filled with golden sovereigns! The air seemed to be crammed with them, just like snowflakes in a snowstorm. I suddenly realized that there was unlimited substance or wealth which could be mined by anyone who had sufficient energy, faith and enterprise. I realized also that life was not the poverty-stricken thing that I had imagined it to be.

This was far from being a full understanding of the truth about the law of plenty, but it was an important step in the right direction. After that experience I found that most people were not as cheese-paring and 'close-fisted' as I had thought them to be and I also had more clients than ever before. My previous attitude of mind had not only invested my clients with my own meanness and ultra-frugality, but also had kept many more generous people away. But it was many years before I began to realize that there is an inner realm of sufficiency

which desires to supply all our needs. Jesus said that we were not to be anxious about our food and drink, our clothing and other necessities of life, but that we should seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Then, if we did so, all the necessary things of life would be added, without anxiety. Such an injunction seems to be pure foolishness to most people - but then, so do all the other injunctions given to us by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The wisdom of God appears to be foolishness to the carnal or material mind. The sayings of Jesus, alas, receive scant attention today, but we ignore His teachings at our peril.

Experience has taught me that there is an inward source of supply, and that this is the Presence of God. In the ordinary way we ignore this inward source, therefore it cannot operate in our life and affairs; consequently we have to live in the same way as people of the world - fighting, struggling, grasping - or else be like dumb, driven cattle. Then when we reach a certain age, we are discarded.

'The trouble with most people', once said an American humorist, 'is that they have no invisible means of support'. When outward means fail, such people are helpless, for they do not know how to tap their inner resources. In the day of adversity their fortunes crumble away because they have no roots in God, the inexhaustible Substance, in which everything has its origin and source. The worst of it is that the more fiercely adversity hits us, and the more we are pushed about by life, the more difficult it becomes to

find time for meditation and private, personal prayer. Those who have been through such an experience will know what I mean. At such times one seems to be caught up in a huge net, and the more one struggles, the more enmeshed one becomes. Also one seems to be in a vicious circle, so that all that one does only makes things worse. Everything is wrongly timed and comes to pass at the exact moment when we are caught on the wrong foot.

The only remedy, so I have found when passing through a difficult time, is to find God's inward peace and enter into a state of inner harmony, oneness and unity, at the same time being as patient as we can in our trying circumstances, doing our work as well as we know how, looking to God to bring about a Divine adjustment in His own way and at His own time. That, in a nutshell, is the method which I have been led to employ, and which God has graciously blessed on many occasions. I have known some people, however, who tried to restore their shattered fortunes by 'get-rich-quick' methods, which promised a rapid and large return for little work and small capital outlay. Because such schemes were not based on service but were launched to benefit themselves and not the public, such activities failed. I cannot remember a single one which turned out a success.

The only remedy is through work, patience and acceptance in the outer life, and a unity and oneness with our Divine Source in the inner life. Work on the outer plane by itself is not enough; it leads to exhaustion, and perhaps a

breakdown. Work, too, on the inner plane alone is not sufficient. Both are necessary, so also is patience.

When the inner rhythm of our life is broken, or has been upset, it takes time for it to be restored. Consequently we have to be patient.

*'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.'*

*'Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him.'*

*'Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring (it) to pass.'*

In every life there come times of drought and adversity. There is a process of going forward and returning; there is an ebb and a flow of the tide of life. We have to be patient while the tide is running out, and must be content to wait until the tide turns in our favour. Then when we move forward we are carried along on the crest of the wave to victory and achievement.

I have on occasion made losses, and have wasted a lot of work and energy, strength and health in a vain effort to force things, when times have been unpropitious. Being of an impetuous nature, I have rushed on when I ought to have waited. Not being content to await God's time, I have tried to make everything conform to my time. The results have always been disastrous.

We have to keep to God's time and keep in step with God, if we are to express in our outward life even a shadow or outline of the inner perfection which is God's idea or pattern of what our life should be.

What puzzles beginners and those who are not

accustomed to philosophic thought, is that everything is and yet is not, at one and the same time. For instance, the mystic and the metaphysician may say, 'There is no evil', yet at the same time they readily admit that evil is all around them. The explanation is that they are affirming what is true of the inner reality and the mind of God. There is no evil in the mind of God, nor in His archetypal ideas. These are permanent and eternal, and form part of Reality. They are absolute perfection.

But these perfect ideas, when expressed in the outer life, lose their perfection. That which is a perfect whole in essence, becomes thrown out of balance, so that what is good when it forms part of a perfect whole, with everything in its right place, at the right time, becomes disorderly and what we call evil. Consequently the mystic, having contemplated the Reality in all its beauty, wholeness and completeness, and also the metaphysician, who has argued and reasoned himself into a realization of absolute truth, can both declare that there is no evil, and yet be surrounded by very obvious evil. There are two sides to everything. It has been said that there are two sides to the shield of Truth: the outer is what man in his ignorance sees; the inner is what God sees.

God Who is perfection absolute can create and see only perfection. We see this truth even in our human relationships. 'To the pure all things are pure.' God, who is infinite and absolute Goodness, Perfection, Life, Health, Wholeness, Completeness, can see only these and other virtues in His creations, for He can see only Himself reflected in what He creates. Therefore,

on the inside, there is only perfection. It is only on the outside where an inversion has taken place, that imperfection is to be seen. Because God, as the Absolute, can see no evil but only the perfection which is His own reflection, some anxious souls think that they and also their troubles and sufferings are unknown to God, and so have been discouraged. But God has other aspects. Where God in His absoluteness cannot enter, God as LOVE can come even into our most secret griefs, losses and sorrows. LOVE manifests as Jesus, 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief'. There is no trouble or failure of ours into which LOVE cannot come. God, in His absolute aspect, cannot see poverty. It does not exist in His mind. 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.' But the invitation is for man the unrighteous to forsake his thoughts and his unGodlike ways, and to return to the LORD. The law of being is plenty, not poverty. God, who is infinite and inexhaustible substance, creates in profusion, regardless of cost, so to speak.

There is a spiritual basis from which plenty flows. In the inner World of Perfection thought becomes clothed with substance, instantly; in the outer life on this material plane it takes longer, but the process is much the same. Matter is simply electricity, and thought also is electric force. This may explain why a man with a poverty type of mind, finds himself in poverty-stricken surroundings, or at any rate,

never attains to a state of freedom; while another one whose mind is quite different, may start with nothing and yet in a comparatively short time becomes surrounded with everything that he needs.

Ordinary thinking will not achieve such a metamorphosis. *'For my thoughts are not your thoughts ...saith the LORD.'* Human thought of lack and limitation must give place to Truth, or God thought, of infinite and inexhaustible abundance. It makes a tremendous difference to our lives if we can make such a change, even though it be only partial in extent.

The great secret is in recognizing that all good things come from God, and not from man, or as a result of our own effort and toil and strain. *'The earth is the LORD'S and the fullness thereof.'* We who are the sons of God may draw freely from the invisible and inexhaustible resources of God. We possess invisible means of support. We do not need great possessions, for all our needs are supplied, *'out of His riches in glory'*. Because God's resources are infinite, our resources also are infinite. We must not judge by appearances.

If Jesus had judged by appearances when the people were hungry, they would never have been fed. Jesus refused to be restricted by the apparent limitations of five barley loaves and two small fishes, but drew upon the inexhaustible resources of Infinite Substance. In the same way, if we allow ourselves to be overawed by appearances of lack, forgetting that we are sons of God and *'joint heirs with Christ'*

of all the resources of God, then we make it very difficult for ourselves to manifest the same abundance which Jesus did. I admit that it is far from easy to trust in God's invisible resources when we are confronted by arrears of rent, large bills to be paid, an overdrawn account at the bank, and a mortgaged life-policy - to say nothing of a completely empty purse. Many readers would say that to ask anyone in such circumstances to trust in God would be demanding too much of any man. Well, I would never ask anyone to do what I would not do myself, or what I have not done myself. I have had to face such experiences myself, and of course I did not find them easy, but each time I was brought through. Each time that I considered my financial position I felt a thrill of fear go through me.

But, somehow or other, I managed to maintain my faith. Of course, it would have been far less difficult for me if I could have lived in the consciousness of Divine supply, but I had not then reached that stage.

Jesus said, *'But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you'*. What did He mean by this? I suppose that I have heard thousands of sermons but I have never listened to one which explained what Jesus actually meant by this statement.

What did Jesus mean by the Kingdom of God? He meant conscious union with God. What did Jesus mean by 'His "righteousness"? He meant God's Divine order. Therefore logically paraphrase the words of Jesus into: 'But seek first a state of union with God's consciousness of abundant



perfection and completeness, for if you do this inwardly, then outwardly you will have all your material needs supplied.'

Having been brought up and trained in a consciousness of lack and limitation, I naturally found it very difficult to change over to a consciousness of abundance and plenty.

I had been brought up in the idea that we live in an unfriendly universe, and that everything is against us. Also that we have to chase after things, and hold tight on to them otherwise they would slip from our grasp. And all the time that I remained in that consciousness things eluded me.

When I thought that I had them within my grasp they slipped away from me. I had also been nurtured in the idea that we are separate from God.

Consequently my life suffered in much the same way as that of the prodigal son. He left his father's home (state of union) and went into a far country (state of apparent separateness), the consequence being that he hungered, and fed on pigs' swill. 'And no man gave to him.' Then, when he returned home (to a state of unity with his Divine Source), he experienced plenty and abundance.

'Life, of course, is not for feasting and gluttony; life also is not meant to be austere and severely ascetic. The middle path, so I have found, is always the path of wisdom. Moderation and simplicity should be practiced, instead of going to extremes. It was never meant, however, that man should live a life of indigence. Jesus promised that all the things necessary for a full and care-free life would be added. He did not say that only part of them would come to the one who sought first the consciousness of

oneness with the Creative Spirit, but that all necessary things should be added.

I have always found that the simplest methods were the most effective in my case. I discovered that words have power to cleanse the consciousness of wrong ideas, and to instill right ideas in their place. Appearances and my feelings told me that I was not paying my way, and that I was not well. 'Troubles never come singly', so that when I was not feeling well, bad news would arrive and worries would pile up! When I was in one of these black moods, I thought that it was due to my circumstances, instead of which my worrying and depressing circumstances were the result of my depressed moods.

I discovered a very simple way of dispersing dark moods. I would take a deep breath and say: 'Health, success, happiness and joy.' I needed health very much, I also needed success in my affairs, and also I longed to be happy and filled with joy. When I uttered the words I became lifted up - if only slightly; yet it was a move in the direction of liberation. I found that long arguments did me no good, but repeating these words did lift me up. Needless to say I soon slipped back again into the black, hopeless mood; but again and again I would repeat the performance.

I did not say, 'I am health', or 'I am success', but simply, 'health', success'. If I had said that I was health when I was unwell, I should have been stating what was not true; if I had claimed to be successful, when obviously I was a failure at the time, I should have been going

against the facts - therefore the statements would have been rejected by the inner mind, and the very opposite of what I claimed would have been manifested. But stating the words in the way I did could produce only good results. It kept the ego out of the picture: that is, the false ego of illusion and separateness.

It may be thought by some that the words which I used were mere abstractions, and therefore could not be helpful. On the contrary, I found their use very helpful. I found that such words have power. They represent, or stand for, real potencies and powers in the Invisible.

Consequently if we can but anchor our mind to these substantial realities, powers and principles, then states corresponding to their nature and quality will manifest in our visible life.

Some who have attained to God-consciousness have done so through repeating the word 'God'. In the East they intone the sacred word Om, or Aum. From this it can be seen that if we make use of certain constructive words - words which stand for eternal principles and archetypal ideas - then our mind becomes anchored in 'That which changes not', and which never decays or becomes old, and which is the eternal pattern or archetype. On looking back, over my life I can see how wisely I have been led by the Spirit. Quite ignorant, and having no one to teach me and no good books to guide me, I was yet led to make the right use of words, and to avoid the evils of affirmation of the 'I am' type.

What has all this to do with the law of abundance? Everything. As already pointed out,

my dark moods were probably not the result of distressing circumstances, but rather the other way about. Assuming this to be true (which I believe to be the case), the use of words in the way I was led to practice was both sound and scientific. If my moods were the cause of the dark experiences, then the practical and scientific thing to do was to cure the mood, after which the circumstances would heal themselves.

It may be thought strange that I said nothing about supply or plenty. I was no doubt led to omit all such references, but it seems to me now that it was not necessary to include any reference to supply, for if we can attain to a mental state of health and happiness, and a joyful sense of being on top of things, then all necessary supply and all manner of Divine good will naturally follow.

It is our moods which have to be overcome, and not our circumstances. If we get our moods right, then circumstances will right themselves. This is why Jesus said that we should seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, after which all necessary things would be added. The effect of acting in the way I did was that in course of time I found myself lifted up on to a higher plane, in a state of oneness with the Perfect, and this enabled me to overcome my difficulties. 'When that which is Perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.' That is to say, when we find ourselves one with, and forming part of, the Real and Perfect, then all our troubles and difficulties become overcome and conquered. They disappear,

because they are not anything in themselves, but are simply the result of our lack of, and separation from, the Real and Perfect.

Another baneful emotion which I had to overcome was envy. I had been taught when young that envy was a sin, and that we should not indulge in it; but I never knew that it was a cause of poverty and lack. I had to learn this by experience.

When I went to the bank to pay in all I could scrape together, the somewhat meagre results of a tremendous amount of work and industry, and also to draw out as little as possible, it made me rather envious to see other people paying in much more than I, and drawing out far more than ever I would dream of doing. It not only made me envious, but also mildly resentful. Here was I, working almost till my eyes dropped out, paying in so little and drawing out only a pittance, while other people seemed to be having a much better time, and able to draw out of the bank in one day more than I could pay in a whole month ! So I thought how much better it would be if I could do the same or something very similar. But entertaining envious thoughts is one of the worst possible things for us to do, for it puts us in a negative position. By doing so we acknowledge that our position in life is inferior, thus putting ourselves in a position similar to that of one who asks for alms. So long as we retain this attitude of mind, the things we need and want will tend to flow from us instead of to us. The remedy for this state of affairs is to bless those whose apparently more fortunate state might otherwise incite us to envy.

The cause of our straitened circumstances is our own state of mind. Instead of knowing that all things are ours, and that all the resources of the Infinite are behind us, seeking to find expression through us, the dominant thought in our mind is that nothing is ours and that if we do not chase after things we shall lose them. But if we bless those whose prosperity annoys us or excites our envy, and pray that they may become even more prosperous and blessed in every possible way, then through so doing we heal our own state of mind. When we pray in this way and pour out our blessing upon those who apparently are so much better off than ourselves, we enter the consciousness of one who, possessing all things, pours out of his abundance plenteous gifts upon others. In other words, by blessing others, we ourselves are blessed and all sense of inferiority and lack is overcome.

Many a tussle have I had with myself over this. My early training, although so good in most ways, was against me in this respect. My father was for ever condemning those who got on in life: he said that such people were hard, ruthless and selfish. But child as I was, I could see that he was envious of the very people he condemned, and also that he was covetous of their prosperity. Now there is nothing more destructive and more calculated to drive supply away from us, than this - to condemn and judge harshly those who are better off at the time than we are, at the same time being envious of their prosperity and covetous of their wealth. It is quite clear to me now that if the temptation to envy had been given way to at that time, I should never have overcome my poverty

complex and consequently would never have entered into a state of liberty as regards supply.

I have had many talks with men who have come down in life: men who started life with everything in their favour, yet who have let everything slip through their fingers until at last they have had to live on the charity of their children. In every case I have found that they condemned those who had passed them in the race of life, and yet envied them their success and coveted their wealth. They complained that they never had a chance, and that no one ever helped them.

Having been brought up in an atmosphere of condemnation and envy, it is not surprising that I experienced difficulty in breaking away from it. But I do not think that I did any condemning although I must confess that I thought that those who appeared to be more fortunate than I were to be envied, and that I would like to be as fortunate as they. This of course was sheer wishful thinking and most weakening. As I have already stated, I found that the remedy was to pray for those who were better off than myself so that instead of envying them I desired most strongly that they should be blessed and prospered more than ever. Although I prayed in order that they might be blessed, and not myself, the result was that I was wonderfully blessed in that I found myself delivered entirely from an envious spirit, and instead of being an indulger in wishful thinking, I was a dispenser of blessing. Prayer of this character brings us right into

our God Centre, so that it is as though God were speaking benedictions and pouring out blessings upon those for whom we pray.

The great secret: of liberty therefore is the practice of the Presence of God. We can practice the Presence as a help in our work and in our spiritual unfoldment; we can also do so as an aid to healing, realizing that we live and move and have our being in the Infinite Life, and that we draw our strength from the One Life which never grows old. We can also practice the Presence of God as the Source of all supply: we can realize that here, with us, is all that we need in its invisible form, in the Invisible which surrounds us. As we bless others and pray that their lives may be filled with Divine abundance, it becomes possible for blessing to come into our own lives. We do not beg and pray for it - we express it: it flows through us.

Of course, I have nothing to say to encourage those who expect things to fall into their lap. I believe in work and plenty of it, and in trying to serve so well that life owes us something. But work alone is not sufficient: the imagination must be reorientated.

Neither would I hold out any hopes for those who have made a definite mental demand, expecting it to be demonstrated in a certain form. My experience has been that it is the unexpected which usually happens, and that what we invoke from the Invisible very often comes to us in quite a different form from that which we may have outlined. But always God does exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think.



**CEASELESS, INTERIOR PRAYER**

I have already related, my first idea of prayer was to beg and pray that life should be altered. In my youth, that seemed to be the generally accepted idea of prayer - simply begging and pleading with God to be merciful. If one spoke about prayer it was assumed that one meant supplication and begging. I have known people to say that they left off praying years ago; yet they were praying people. What they meant was that they left off beseeching God for things and favours. After many years of supplicating which was not successful in my case, I discovered that making demands upon God in a very positive way, did bring results. But I found through experience that although I might get what I wanted, yet only too often when I got it it proved more of a curse than a blessing. Then again, even if the thing I got was not exactly wrong, there could not be any blessing in it because I was trying to get all I possibly could from life, instead of trying to give as much as possible. It was later on that I learnt that it is more blessed to give than to receive', and that we should keep on giving until at last there comes an overflow, after which nothing can keep blessings from coming to us. It was a great day for me when, after praying for blessings for many years, I suddenly realized that God is always blessing us and that blessings flow from our Central Source continuously. 'If that is the case', I reasoned, 'then instead of asking for blessings, what I ought to do is to thank God for the blessings He is continuously showering upon me.'

Instead of saying "I pray Thee" I ought to say, 'I thank Thee'. This at first sight might seem to be contrary to the teaching of Jesus who said: 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive (them), and ye shall have (them).'

But that belonged to an earlier stage of prayer. On another occasion we get a glimpse of a higher stage, the kind of prayer Jesus himself used, when at the tomb of Lazarus he said: 'I thank Thee Father because Thou hast heard me'; also when Jesus fed the multitudes, he blessed and gave thanks: he did not supplicate or demand.

Of course, we can thank God for something which we desire, in order to get it, but while this may bring us a certain amount of satisfaction, especially if we are successful in getting what we desire, yet it does not bring joy to the soul. If however we thank God out of sheer gratitude for all His goodness, for all His love and for all that He has done for us, and the blessings which He is continually pouring upon us, then our soul becomes satisfied and our heart filled with joy. We receive so much from God, and yet how little we thank Him for all His goodness! The more we advance in experience and understanding, the more we realize that God is all Goodness and that His one great desire is to bring to us the utmost possible joy and blessedness.

As the years passed by, I found myself getting into the habit more and more of thanking God so that it became a habit with me. When I thank God, I look inwards to the region of the solar plexus and this gives me a feeling of power.

I developed this sense or feeling of power through making use of the Psalm 103 I used to use, and

still frequently do. The first verse, 'Bless the LORD O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name'. It was more particularly the words, 'and all that is within me' which I used most - and as I said them I called upon all that was within me, to bless and praise the holy name. I tried to pour out my soul and all that I really am, in adoration, praise and thanksgiving. My breathing had something to do with it, for I found that quite unconsciously and without intent that I always breathed out while I repeated the words with all the strength I could command. Gradually the solar plexus region became quickened and made alive. At first there were a few faint flutterings, but in course of time these increased until there was a feeling of life and power.

Consequently, when later on I came to the conclusion that I wanted to thank God continually, I found it easy to do so with fervour, and with the feeling that I was putting all my soul into the words which I uttered.

The two disciples who walked to Emmaus, and who conversed with Jesus and listened to his exposition of the Scriptures said afterwards, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way? I think that by the term 'heart' that they really referred to the solar plexus which was aroused into life and activity, through their close contact with Jesus after His resurrection. It would be easy for them to mistake the heart for the solar plexus which is a network of nerves situated behind the stomach and in front of the aorta, whereas the heart is merely the great pump which circulates the blood. Anyway, it is this area which becomes alive, and which gives

us a feeling of power, yet what the connection is between the solar plexus and our spiritual unfoldment, I do not know. There are those who teach what they term 'solar plexus breathing' which, so they aver, arouses inward powers. Whether such claims can be justified I do not know, for I have never practiced breathing in order to arouse spiritual powers. It seems to me to be putting the cart before the horse to try to arouse spiritual power by means of breathing exercises. I think the right way is to keep turning to God and pouring out our soul in love and thanksgiving, not in order to receive power, but simply because we are so grateful that we feel that we want to do so, and never to cease doing so.

I think that it is unwise and even dangerous to awaken spiritual centres by methods of breathing. They might be opened before we are ready, and this would indeed be a catastrophe. We are told that the possession of power corrupts. It does indeed do so if we are not ready for it, and not sufficiently humble and surrendered. But to continue my story, I found myself thanking God at all times-not for anything in particular, but for everything I simply wanted to thank Him, because of the love in my heart. Jesus said that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength. I found this to be true. I found that I loved God with all my heart, soul and strength-with all the power that I possessed; and the more I tried to express this, the more power I received with which to love God.

Gradually I developed a technique similar to that

of the Russian pilgrim which is described in that well-known book *The Way of a Pilgrim*. Those who have read it will remember that the pilgrim was told by his starets to repeat a certain prayer verbally six and even twelve thousand times daily for a specific number of days. But this was only a beginning.

Gradually the pilgrim learned to pray mentally and also to coordinate his prayer with his breathing and also with the beating of his heart. The prayer was: 'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me'. As he breathed in the pilgrim would say: 'Lord Jesus Christ', allowing one beat of the heart for each word, then as he exhaled, he would say: 'have mercy on me', also allowing one heart-beat for each word.

My prayer was different from that of the Russian pilgrim. I did not feel it necessary to keep asking for mercy, because I knew that mercy flows from God like a river. What I wanted to do was to thank God for His boundless mercy and love, So my prayer was simply, 'I thank Thee'. Neither did I find it necessary to repeat my prayer verbally, hundreds of thousands of times. I began with mental prayer straight away. Also regarding breath control, I was able to manage this quite easily. So as I breathed in I said, 'I thank Thee, I thank Thee, I thank Thee' in time with the beating of my heart. I could feel the throbbing of my pulse by holding either my neck or one of my wrists. There is another great difference between the two methods. The Russian pilgrim could only say his prayer once during a complete breath, whereas I was able to say mine six times:

## RUSSIAN PILGRIM'S METHOD

In-breath  
Lord 1 heart beat  
Jesus 1 heart beat  
Christ 1 heart beat  
Out-breath  
Have 1 heart beat  
mercy 1 heart beat  
on 1 heart beat  
Me 1 heart beat

## THE OTHER METHOD

Inbreath  
I thank Thee 1 heart beat  
I thank Thee 1 heart beat  
I thank Thee 1 heart beat  
Outbreath  
I thank Thee 1 heart beat  
I thank Thee 1 heart beat  
I thank Thee 1 heart beat

The idea behind both systems is that we should pray without ceasing. We should make such a habit of saying our prayer that subconsciously it continues ceaselessly both day and night. While we are engaged in our ordinary surface activities, and even while we are asleep, this subconscious prayer continues. That is, of course, if we have mastered the art by constant, persevering practice.

Thomas R. Kelly, in his now well-known book, *A Testament of Devotion* (Friends House), speaks of a somewhat similar method of prayer. He describes it as 'walking in the vast fellowship of unceasing

prayer'. He suggests such simple whispered words as 'Thine only, Thine only', or a fragment of one of the Psalms, such as, 'so panteth my soul after Thee, O God'. He says that such phrases should be repeated over and over again, for the conscious co-operation of the surface level is needed at first, before prayer sinks into the second level as habitual divine orientation.

He does not advocate keeping to one prayer, but recommends a change from time to time, during the day. He also points out that 'this inner level has a life of its own, invigorated not by us, but by a divine Source'. This is very true. As I write at this very moment I am conscious of a greater life within which thrills and fills me with its power, and also its love and compassion. This inner life is part of the One Life which is in all men. We are all one; we are one in Him, and He is in us. I have found however that most people cannot manage either of the above methods. They would be quite willing to buy and read a lot of books on the subject, if such could be procured, but they do not seem able to practice either the Russian method or the other one. What many questioning people need, so it seems to me, is not to read more books but rather to put into practice the little bit of Truth which they already possess. If they were to do so, then greater understanding would come to them.

There is however a simpler method which, so I think, most people who are really in earnest might follow to their advantage. It can be used whenever the seeker thinks of it, or can find a moment to spare in his busy and strenuous life for its practice. As often as possible during the day he

can use it, and also if he awakens during the night, he can apply himself to it. This in course of time will bring about quickening and a sense of inner life and power. It consists of relaxing, taking a deep breath, and then praying mentally, 'I thank Thee, I thank Thee, I thank Thee' and so on, according to the capacity for deep breathing which one possesses. As one exhales, the words should be repeated inwardly with great earnestness; indeed, one should put all one's strength into them. While breathing in, it is not possible to do this to the fullest extent, but when breathing out great power and intensity can be infused into the words.

We should not only follow this practice as an exercise: we should also use it when we want to thank God for everyday mercies and blessings. Blessings are constantly being showered upon us, but how little we take heed! If we acknowledge God in all our ways then we find our life filled with blessings, for the more we thank God the more blessings we discover for which we want to thank Him. Also if we thank God for the things we do not like, such as distasteful tasks, we find in due course that there is something in them which we can like and be interested in, and this makes the work much less fatiguing and our life much happier.

Also, it makes a great difference to our health. If we allow exasperation to creep into our work, our nervous system suffers as also does our happiness. Blessing and thanking God for the duty which is distasteful to us changes us so that we meet those experiences which ordinarily would exasperate us with sympathy and co-operation.



Although so simple, this practice is very advanced - not intellectually, thank God, for it is something which we all can follow - but advanced as regards our spiritual unfoldment. When we engage continuously, or almost continuously, in thanking God for everything with all our heart and strength, we have entered the last lap of the race which is set before us.

Rufus Moseley in his book *Manifest Victory*, describes this as the fourth empire. In this realm, conflicts are overcome, not through compromise, but through fulfillment and transfiguration of conflicting factors. It is as if the conflicting factors were taken up into a realm where they manifest themselves as complements rather than opposites. But this is beyond ordinary logic. Moseley continues: 'Even in the glimpsing of such a realm, I was superlatively satisfied, so satisfied that I asked for nothing. I rejoiced in the whole purpose of God and in all His works, as I was permitted to see them through such different and healing eyes. The consummation and all the experiences leading to it were seen together in eternity as a single glorious consummation ... In this realm prayer becomes thanksgiving, the giving of thanks for everything.' I thank our beloved brother for these words. They are another way of describing what we call the Mid-Point, where all opposing forces are reconciled and become one. Both of us are trying to get the same truth across to our readers, yet with this difference, perhaps: friend Moseley says that when we reach what he terms the fourth empire, we find that we have to ask for nothing, and merely give thanks for everything; whereas I suggest that if we continually thank God for

everything, then we find ourselves in the fourth empire, or state of God-consciousness, in which we feel within us the power of the Hidden Life. This is far beyond the Russian Pilgrim's prayer which contained no thanks, but was a continuous imploring on his part for mercy. But his prayer had one merit which our prayer of continuous thanksgiving lacks - and this is that it repeats the name of JESUS. Neither does Kelly use the actual name of JESUS. The phrases he suggests are very devotional and lovely, but he does not use the actual name of JESUS. It may be said that the name is implied also in my prayer of 'I thank Thee'. But that is not quite the same thing, for there is power in the Name. Now to get back to our main theme -- ceaseless, interior prayer. At first the prayer can be maintained only by conscious effort. We have to keep remembering and then uttering the prayer, inwardly and mentally. This may continue for a long time, and we may seem to make but little progress. The first intimation we may have of any progress being achieved is when we experience a feeling of there being something wrong: we are dissatisfied and restless and cannot think what the matter can be. But all at once we remember that we are not praying! Then directly we start the prayer going again we experience a feeling of great relief - it is like the prodigal son getting back to his father's home again. Also if we find our work becoming trying and exhausting it will be found that it is because our inward prayer has stopped. Then, as soon as we restart the prayer, a sense of well-being returns and our work ceases to be an effort and a strain.

The fact that we feel uneasy and unhappy whenever we leave off our inward prayer proves that the

continuous inward prayer habit is being established. If we continue to persevere it will not be so very long before it is established wholly and completely. We may be unconscious of the prayer while it is at work, but we quickly become aware of the fact should it be suspended.

Again, we may wake up in the night and feel a sense of hopelessness, or the mind may want to think and worry about mundane things. But directly we re-start the prayer, everything becomes all right again and we enter into God's peace, and find ourselves in perfect relationship with the one Complete Whole of which we form a part. I have found that it is possible to combine the name JESUS with our prayer of thanksgiving. We can repeat the sacred and all-powerful Name three times as we inhale, and 'I thank Thee' three times as we exhale. Thus:

In-breath

JESUS 1 heart beat  
JESUS 1 heart beat  
JESUS 1 heart beat

Out-breath

I thank Thee 1 heart beat  
I thank Thee 1 heart beat  
I thank Thee 1 heart beat

It may seem more rhythmic to take four heart beats when breathing in, and three when breathing out (or vice versa), making seven in all, but each one should do what seems best and most harmonious. As I have already said, the majority of people

will not want to try to master the technique of co-ordinating the words, the breath and the heart beat, but will be satisfied to keep on repeating the words. This of course is the most important thing - to repeat the words, at the same time putting all possible feeling of love and gratitude into them. We should try to put the utmost love and intensity into our prayer - in other words, our prayer should be a giving of ourselves to God. We should pour out our soul to God, giving all that we have and are, to Him without holding anything back. We have long left behind us the elementary idea of praying to God in order to receive something. Now, all that we want to do is to give ourselves and our all to God.

Give, give, give - that is all that we desire to do ! Therefore our constant prayer is one of thanksgiving: 'I thank Thee, I thank Thee, I thank Thee', uttered with all the intensity of our being, and all the strength of which we are capable. This, coupled with the use of the Name which is above every name, will make the prayer all-powerful so that we become changed from day to day. And as we become changed, so also shall we find others change correspondingly.

It is important that I should emphasize the following point: no one should attempt at first to do more than repeat the prayer. If the beginner will be content to do this, then in course of time he will find it increasingly easy to keep the prayer going below the level of consciousness. Probably later on, without planning it, he will find his breathing falling into line quite naturally, so that he does not have to trouble about it. Anyway, the first important thing is to

establish the repetition of the words of the prayer at a level below consciousness, and to be satisfied with this. Nothing that is attempted should be a strain - if it is, then it should be abandoned. Everything we do in the way of prayer should be happy and joyful, leading to God's peace.

**HOW I FOUND GOD'S INWARD PEACE**

As I have never kept a diary I cannot say when precisely it was that I found God's inward peace, or when it began to flow through me like a river. Perhaps there was no precise date, for I think I began to experience the peace of God after passing through a trying experience or a severe trial of faith. When deliverance came, and the strain and stress, struggle and strife were over, then what I experienced seemed to me to be similar to that which came to Jesus after His temptation in the wilderness. We are told that angels came and ministered to Him. Now what was true of Jesus must also be true of us, for we all have to make the journey of Jesus. He came, it is true, to destroy the works of the devil, but He also called us to follow Him. He came in order to show us how to tread the Path of Regeneration, so that we too might become one of the Immortals, a Son of God, joint heirs with Himself. Therefore whatever Jesus passed through, we also have to pass through. Just as He met and overcame times of great testing, trial and temptation, so also do we have to meet, in a much smaller way of course, similar tests and trials. Consequently, when we have been brought through a severe testing time, it may be that we, too, are ministered to by angels in the same way that Jesus was.

Of course, I cannot prove this. It is only a surmise on my part. But it seems to me to be a reasonable surmise. All that I actually know is that on such occasions I have become filled with God's inward peace. It is an indescribable

experience, to glide out on to the ocean of God's peace, and yet at the same time to be conscious of God's peace flowing through us like a river. It is bliss unalloyed. The highest human bliss is but a miserable counterfeit of the real bliss which comes to the soul on such occasions. As I write this I am filled with blissful emotions. At such times, it may well be that we are ministered by angels. All that we can be sure of is that we find God's inward peace; that we are immersed in it, and that it flows through us like a river.

The effect of a great trial or test is to throw us back upon God, and to make us seek God, and to stay our mind upon God, more than ever we have done before. Also it causes us to surrender ourselves to God, so utterly and completely that we find Him in a new and more intimate way than ever before. The effect of all this is that we become attuned to the mind of God, and thus we enter into His peace - the same peace which God Himself enjoys.

Before we can enter into God's peace we have to be prepared for it. It was many years before I found it. Of course, my whole previous life had been a preparation for this great experience, but I had to spend many years of actual conscious seeking before I was rewarded. I do not think that I really sought for peace so much as I sought for God, in order to find release from great trials and difficulties. I knew that my poor tormented soul could never find rest apart from God, and also that I could never be released from my sins and weaknesses except through finding God; neither could I be delivered out of my great trials and sufferings except through really knowing God. At the time, the torments I went through seemed very

hard to bear. It did not seem that flesh and blood could bear the stream, the suffering seemed past all human endurance. It did not seem possible to endure it and live. One was not tempted to do what Job was tempted to do by his wife, to 'curse God, and die', but instead to cast oneself into the arms of Divine Love and die of grief.

But that would never do, for we are exhorted to 'endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ', which means that we must never give in, but must endure to the end, or be willing to do so. To those who are faithful, God has promised to give a crown of life. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' We are not called upon to pass through fiery torments merely for nothing, or for a joke. There is a purpose in everything, and nothing comes to us which is not for our highest good. We are not the sport of an unkind fate, but are being led and guided by Infinite Love and Wisdom. The cause of our fiery trial is that we are so determined to find God and really to know Him, that we are willing to suffer anything and to sacrifice everything in order to be successful in our quest. There is a great difference between one who has one consuming desire to find God at any cost, and one who merely uses God-powers, so that he can have a comfortable life here on earth. Jesus said: 'For many are called, but few chosen': many are called, but it is only a comparative few who are willing to 'go the other mile. There are many who are willing to add religion to their lives - to go to church on Sunday, to subscribe to church funds, and to listen to a good sermon; but there are only a few who are prepared to go all out in their search for God. There are many who are willing to



take all that they can get from religion, but there are not many who are willing to leave all and follow Jesus.

Why then should those who give up their all, in order to put the quest before everything else, have to pass through such tormenting experiences? Why should they have to pass through times of anguish, while those who only make use of Godpowers for their self-interest have a comparatively good time? The reason is this - that in our eagerness we press on so fast that we enter a reality for which we are not yet quite prepared. Swedenborg speaks of spirits belonging to a lower plane wanting to go to a heavenly one, and that when their wish was granted they were so tormented by the love, joy, peace and loveliness of Heaven that they begged to be taken back to an environment more suited to their inward state. Heaven did not torment them, for it was all Love and Goodness; it was the visitors' lack of correspondence with heavenly vibrations which caused their sufferings.

It is the same with us. Our soul is tormented because it is for ever pushing on to higher vibrations, and these at first are painful. These painful experiences are due entirely to the vibrations of Divine Love being too high and powerful for us, but the very experiences themselves change us so that we become adapted to the new conditions. As soon as this is achieved we enter into a measure of God's peace. This may last for a time. It is like a rest at the Delectable Mountains in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. But soon we are found pressing on again, and again being tormented and, tried, simply because we are not

yet conformed to His Image.

We have again to pass through the furnace - but the flames of this fiery ordeal can consume only that which is of no use to us, and which indeed is a hindrance to us.

These peaceful rests always come after a big and trying experience. We go forward for a time, and things go more or less smoothly; then we come to a standstill, and clouds gather. Then after another season of testing and trial we enter into a state of rest and peace. Our progress seems to be like that of a plant which grows for a time, and then comes to a standstill, so that it can recuperate and become filled again with life and energy. Then when it is ready, it again goes forward.

The same law applies to us and our spiritual growth.

Things do not go smoothly all the time: we have to be willing to wait when we are brought to a standstill, and we must be willing to go forward when called upon to do so. Also we must accept the tests and trials of life, for by so doing we make it possible for God to lead us in the right path; that is, the only path which can lead us to God's peace, and His eternal joy. What I want to emphasize is that everything is right at the time. We can only unfold in a Divinely ordered way, like the unfolding of a flower. We may fret and fume over apparent hindrances, but they form part of our training; we can only advance through meeting with resistance, and through being subjected to trials and tests. The object of these experiences is to bring us into God's peace. That is the glorious thing about God's dealings with us -

everything is designed for our good, and in order to bring us into His perfect peace.

When God first began to deal with me in this more advanced way I was filled with anguish and grief; I thought the experience was evil, and could see no good in it. Then when things seemed at their worst, it was suddenly given me to know that the black cloud which overshadowed me was big with mercy and that it would 'break in blessing on my head'. Directly I realized this, I entered into a measure of peace such as I had never experienced before.

I cannot remember ever having experienced such a measure of God's peace before, neither had I previously ever had to pass through such a time of remedial tribulation.

Consequently I came to the conclusion that one could only find God's peace through tribulation. At this point I parted company with all those who teach attainment without tears, for I felt convinced that such a thing was impossible. We can attain only if we are prepared to go all the way with Jesus, instead of only part of the way. There are many who are willing to go with Him as far as Gethsemane but there, like the disciples, they fall asleep and that is as far as they get. If we are willing to go all the way, then this makes it possible for us to meet with the tribulations and trials which are necessary if we are to find God's inward peace, and to experience His eternal joy.

There are millions of people today whose religion is really an attempt to avoid what I have termed

redemptive tribulation. They are willing to go with Jesus part of the way; they are willing to go with Him so long as He provides the loaves and the fishes, and heals their sicknesses. But when they discover that His Kingdom is a Spiritual one, and not a material one, they walk no more with Him. or should they find themselves at Gethsemane, they forsake Him and flee from Him. 'No cross, no crown' is an old saying which is almost forgotten in these times, but it is eternally true, for we can never get something for nothing. Minions are trying their best to avoid the cross, but in so doing they will certainly lose the crown. 'If any man will come after me', said Jesus, 'let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' I think that before my redemptive tribulation started, I must have belonged to the great army of those who cherish the vain hope of attainment without tears. But my first great searching experience convinced me that God deals with us in love, and that we have been called to a high estate - so high that the mind staggers at the thought of it - and that we are being trained for the high duties and responsibilities of our new calling. My difficulty was that I had been brought up (as I have already described) in the erroneous teaching that everything was done by somebody else: that we could sin and not suffer for it and also attain - although the word attainment was never used - without working for it. It is time that this weakening doctrine was discarded, and that we returned to the robust teaching of Jesus. But when I realized that God deals with us individually, and that we have to make the journey of Jesus and literally follow Him and pass through similar experiences; and also when I realized that the blessing is in the cloud, and that without the

cloud there could be no blessing, it was then that I entered into a measure of God's peace. Then it was, I think, that I began to understand the inner meaning of the injunction of Jesus that we should agree with our adversary.

Our adversary in this case means the hard experience, the redemptive experience which is so difficult to bear when it comes to us. Directly we co-operate with the unwanted experience it loses its power to hurt us.

Now what do I mean by peace? To many people the word peace conjures up visions of funerals, marble monuments and wax flowers; it speaks to them of death, sadness, sorrow, bereavement, and sometimes even hopeless despair. This is because of the age-old error of thinking that it is through death that we find peace of soul which would be only a negative peace, a mere cessation of strife and struggle. But God's inward Peace is a very different thing. Instead of being a mere negative absence of struggle and turmoil, it is a positive thing in itself. It means coming into harmonious correspondence with the very peace which God Himself enjoys. In order to make such a thing possible we have to be tuned up like a musical instrument, so that we become attuned to the Divine Note which sounds eternally through the universe.

No one can explain what God's peace is. We can experience it but cannot explain it or describe it. It transcends all words, but it fills us with bliss and joy. When God's peace comes, it is like a mighty river which bears us blissfully, along on its broad bosom; yet at the same time we become

conscious of it flowing through us like a river. It is the most lovely experience which can come to us; it makes all earth's joys seem cheap and tawdry in comparison. But of course there can be no comparison. Now if we possess the peace of God we possess everything; if we have not the peace of God we possess nothing. So long as we possess the peace of God we are happy and filled with the joys of Heaven, but if we lose it then we are miserable and filled with anguish.

Although we cannot define God's Inward Peace, yet we can carry it with us so that other people who are ready for it can become conscious of it. Just as people who are devil-ridden carry trouble with them wherever they go, which upsets those whom they meet, so also he who is filled with God's peace brings a sense of calm and peace to those with whom he comes into contact. Also it can be transmitted through the medium of letters. Nearly all the letters which I dictate finish with a prayer that the recipients may know God's inward peace, and that it may flow through them like a river. When I dictate this I really pray, and as I do so feel God's peace flowing through me like a river, and I feel lifted up into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory. Sometimes a reader becomes conscious of this and feels lifted up for days in consequence. This shews that God's peace can be transmitted, and also that if recipients are ready to receive it they can become conscious of the same blissful peace which I experienced at the time I prayed for them.

Well, to continue my story. After each trying experience and trial of faith I entered into God's peace. As I came to the end of the experience and

was delivered out of my distress, I would experience a sense of great relief, and be filled with great joy and gratitude and praise and thanksgiving. This all blended into a lovely peace and bliss such as no one can describe. This might last for a time, but soon I would find myself in trouble again and filled with fears and forebodings.

Then the whole process would begin again: working through the darkness and trying once again to find the peace I had lost. Of course in the case of one who has advanced as far as I had done at that time, any lapse or departure from the true Path would bring very serious and painful consequences. A beginner can lapse seriously and suffer little as a result; but the farther we advance, the more serious becomes the result of any lapse on our part. Consequently such a lapse may deprive us of God's inward peace and also of any ordinary peace of mind which we might usually enjoy.

Then begins the long journey back, beginning with confession of our sin to God. For if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Then we have to keep working through the darkness and aspiring Godwards, until at last we come out into the Light again and into God's peace. But I found that I had trying experiences to meet, even if there had not been any lapse on my part. This was due to the fact that the time had come for me to learn yet another lesson of life.

Through all these experiences I was brought more deeply into God's peace.

The mistake I made at first, and for a long time after, was in dealing with the outward disorder instead of the inward cause of it. All my experiences were of a twofold nature: there was trouble in the outward life, and darkness and almost despair in the inward life. When this happened, I fell into the error of thinking that the inward anguish was the result of the outward trouble, and so I tried to deal with it instead of seeking an inward adjustment. This was putting the cart before the horse.

Although such cases were not brought on by any outward lapse, yet there was always an inward cause. This was not a lapse even in thought, but was really a lack of development.

The experience might be described as a growing pain: I had still a lot to learn, and being a practical mystic (in the making) instead of a purely contemplative one, I could learn only through experience.

Certainly I did not lack experiences, for no sooner was one trouble surmounted than another one was ready to appear - that is, after I had enjoyed a brief rest and enjoyment of God's peace. But each experience brought me nearer to the heart of God, and more deeply into His peace. It was a long time before I learned the right way of dealing with the experiences which came to me. At first I did what many people mistakenly do: try to wipe out the outward experience by what are called by some 'treatments'. Because I did not succeed, so that things had to take their natural course, I thought that my methods were at fault. But there was nothing wrong with my metaphysics; the fault



was that I was trying to obliterate effects instead of dealing with causes. I had not yet learnt that it is always 'first within and then without: first in the unseen, then in the seen'. Or if I did know it, it was only in an intellectual way; I did not really know it by true understanding and certainly I did not put it into practice.

In course of time, however, I began to realize that what was needed at such times was not an outward cure, but an inward adjustment. In other words, if I could only find God's inward peace, then the outward disorder could take care of itself. When once there was an inward adjustment, then an outward healing of circumstances and affairs would naturally follow, for the simple reason that the inward cause of the outward trouble had been removed. So instead of attacking the symptom I sought a removal of the underlying cause.

In other words, I sought God's inward peace (or rather, I sought for an inward adjustment through a surrender of my will and all my desires to God, the result of which would be that I should enter into God's peace ). It might take a long time, but I was prepared to await God's time. Instead of concentrating upon an outward adjustment in my own strength and wisdom, I looked within and waited upon God for Him to bring about an inward adjustment, through which I might find His peace. As soon as I entered into God's peace and floated along on an ocean of bliss, feeling God's peace flowing through me like a river, the outward trouble - no matter how complicated it might be - began to dissipate, like a morning mist before the

rising sun.

How often have I longed to impart this knowledge to others! Especially to those dear souls who go from one teacher to another in a vain search for some magical formula or 'treatment' which would set them free from all their outward troubles. If instead they would seek God's inward peace, they would find a remedy for all their ills.

The reward over the years of all these tests and trials is that we reach that state when God's peace is always with us. If a disturbing experience should rob us of our peace, it is quickly restored. This is because to be in God's peace has become the normal condition for us, consequently it is natural for peace to be restored. If we throw a stone into a pond the surface is rippled, but soon it becomes smooth again because it is normal for it to be smooth. God's inward peace is Heaven's most precious gift, for if we possess it we possess all things.

Therefore we must on no account jeopardize it through any lapse or fault on our part.

One of the most frequent causes of such a loss is the neglect of prayer and getting into touch with our Divine Centre and Source. So many start off well. They set aside an hour a day for meditation and devotional exercises, and all goes well for a time; but after some years, they begin to neglect the quiet hour, the result of which is that they become attuned to things of time and decay, instead of the things which fade not away. It is so easy to backslide; but it is not easy to get back to the peace and joy which we once enjoyed. To keep in touch with God and thus to enjoy His peace does not require either cleverness or great will-power.

All that we need are persistence and perseverance. Finding God's inward peace, and being carried along on it as though upon a mighty river, and then finding that it also flows through us like a river, seems to explain what Jesus said in His wonderful prayer given us in John 14:20, 'I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. ' This cannot be understood by the human mind, but when we find ourselves laved in God's peace, and at the same time find God's peace flowing through us like a river, we realize or know the truth, and the Truth makes us free. We experience inwardly that which we cannot grasp with the outward understanding.

**17**  
**ON PRAYER,**  
**MEDITATION AND CONTEMPLATION**

As already related, my father was a man of much prayer which consisted mostly of agonized entreaties on behalf of us children that we should not be eternally lost and damned. Years afterwards I did much the same thing; I even banged my head on the ground in my agony and fervour - both were supplicatory, beseeching in content. Such prayer is the best that we are capable of at the time. It is easy for us to look back later and be faintly amused at it all, seeing that God is Love to all Eternity and is the Essence of Goodness, and always doing the best for us. Supplicatory prayer is, as I say, all right at the time. It is a turning to God, and that is the all-important thing. If we persevere with it, so that we turn to God frequently, then although our prayers may not be answered in the way we hoped, yet they will be answered in another way: we will be given insight and understanding. Then we realize with gratitude that God is at work always, bringing us to the highest good that we are capable of bearing at the time.

Now I must confess that I was very frequently both disappointed and discouraged when, after praying vehemently for a long time, the very thing which I dreaded still came to pass, or the thing which I wanted still eluded me. It seemed that my unkind fate was inexorable, and that when I prayed, 'the Heavens were as brass'. Yet when another great trouble or difficulty arose, I would start praying again, but still without achieving the results hoped for. Surely this shows that man is by nature a praying creature. The reason why none of my

prayers ever seemed to be answered was probably due to the fact that they were purely supplicatory. I did not pray in the way taught by Jesus, but simply implored and beseeched God: I did not exercise faith; I did not believe that what I asked for was already mine. I paid no attention to the text 'Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear'.

Evidently I did not take the trouble to enquire into the subject for if I had done so, I should have discovered that those who were great in prayer used to supplicate to some purpose. They did not merely supplicate and remain in a state of conscious lack as I did, but they prayed until they knew that God had heard their prayer. Then they asked no more but instead praised and thanked God because He had answered their prayer. And they did this, in spite of the fact that there might still be no visible change in their affairs.

Apparently everything that was wrong in their life remained unaltered; but in spite of this they kept on praising and thanking God because He had already answered their prayer.

It is extraordinary what can be achieved by some people through believing prayer. George Müller is known principally because through prayer he attracted a million and a quarter pounds sterling to his work for orphans; he also had power over the forces of Nature. Once the ship on which he was sailing was stopped by a thick fog. Müller realized that if this continued he would be late for a preaching appointment and also that his whole program would be thrown out of gear. So he

took the captain below and got him to join him in prayer. The captain agreed to do so, just to humour an old man who must be touched in the head to imagine that prayer could disperse a thick fog! They both knelt down and Muller prayed for the fog to be dispersed. Then he said to the astonished captain: 'Come up on deck and see the fog disperse.' They went up on deck, and already the fog had half disappeared. In a few minutes it had gone completely and the ship was able to steam full speed ahead to its destination. And so George Müller kept his appointment.

The point to note in this case is that George Müller (who was by this time greatly experienced in prayer, having had about fifty years practice) did not pray alone - he took the captain with him. I think there was a reason for this, and also for the words of Jesus: 'If any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven': But on the other hand there have been some great praying people who have been able to work alone. For instance, Holy Ann of Toronto achieved some amazing things simply through asking her Father. One was to pray about a well, which had gone dry. Those who had been down it said that the bottom was as dry as the kitchen floor. Ann was asked to pray about it, so she did. The next morning there was plenty of water and, so the record goes, the well has never since failed. Of course such praying can be carried too far. There is the healing of a woman through the prayer of Holy Ann which does not make good reading. In this case Ann really demanded that the woman should be healed and healed she was - to become a curse to herself and her husband. Holy Ann admitted that

she had gone too far in demanding this particular healing from God.

We learn through experience that it is possible to pray for the wrong things; and so if we are powerful enough to get our own way, life is made worse instead of better. We do not know at the time that our real object in making supplications is not actually to get God to give us something: or to do something, but is really to find and know God. The prodigal son was disgusted with his diet of pig's food and decided to return home where there was 'bread enough and to spare'. But what he really wanted was to return to his father; in the same way, our real desire is to get back to God, our Centre. We may think that we want this, that or the other, but really at the back of it all is a deep longing for God.

There is also something else which we discover - that the thing which we pray for only too often is the very opposite of that which would be for our and others good.

We might pray for difficulties to be removed and that we should not be tested and tried; but if our prayers were answered, the result might be that we became weakened and increasingly unfitted for the battle of life.

However, we continue to pray and learn through experience. At first we pray that our will should be done, and that God should do what we want Him to do. We may go on thus for years (even many years), but a time comes when our affairs become so tangled that at last we begin to discover that we need Divine guidance. We may be faced by such a

hopeless complexity in all our affairs that we have to acknowledge that we can do nothing about it. We realize that if the tangled skein of our life is to be unraveled, then it is only Infinite Wisdom, Love and Intelligence who can accomplish such an (to us) impossible task. And so the character of our prayer changes; gradually in this process of prayer evolution we learn to trust God more, and our own wisdom less. Now we are convinced that we are quite incapable of deciding what is best, or of finding our way through the maze of life.

If we are really in the Path of Life, and are not like those spoken of by Jesus as recorded in Matthew 7:21,22, we are brought in course of time - just at the right time, of course, when we are ripe for it - to our Gethsemane. Then we learn to pray, with Jesus, 'nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt'. Henceforward we pray only that God's will may be done, and that we may know the will of God so that we may follow it. This may include some sharp discipline, and we may be given difficult tasks to cope with, but these are all turned into stepping-stones and are really our greatest aids in our spiritual unfoldment, in spite of the fact that they appear to be hindrances. We begin to realize that God's will means everything being done according to the Divine order; that when God's will is done, then the Divine order begins to appear. Our life may be in a hopeless tangle but if we pray for a Divine adjustment, which means that the Divine order should be made manifest (which, in turn, means that the Divine will is done), then the tangle of our life begins to unravel in a most wonderful way.



This of course is what one might term a 'long-term policy' of prayer yet it is not suggested that 'short-term policy' prayer should not be practiced. For we should turn to God for guidance and strength in every situation. We should seek Divine co-operation in everything and, like Brother Lawrence, ask God's help before commencing every task, and thank Him when it has been accomplished.

If we should find ourselves faced by a state of lack and limitation, we can certainly speak to God about it. We know that such a state of affairs is not according to the will of God, consequently we can ask for deliverance and a state of harmonious adjustment. But we should also pray that whatever there may be in us which is the cause or partly the cause of our lack, that this may be removed or changed.

Of course what most of us are concerned about is the welfare of those whom we love. When they are in dire trouble, how can we help them by means of prayer? It was this concern for our welfare which made my father pray for us children, in spite of his Calvinistic belief that our end was predestinated before the foundation of the world. And we of to-day also desire just as strongly to help those whom we love, through the medium of prayer. Indeed, if they are in trouble, it gives us an inward ache and gnawing at the heart which we feel can only be assuaged by turning to God on their behalf. And so we turn to God, using the words of the Psalmist as an introduction: 'O, Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come'. (Psalm 65:2.)

At first our object may be to get God to change or coerce our loved ones so that they change according to what we think they ought to be, or what they ought to do. But while this type of prayer is not answered, in the ordinary meaning of the term, yet it is answered in another sense, for it leads to a deeper understanding of what prayer is. The very practice of prayer, and the many experiences connected with it, gradually open our understanding so that we become aware of the fact that prayer as usually practiced is wrong, and that it is not God who has to change but we who have to become conformed to His pattern of perfection.

Also we learn through experience that we must not coerce those for whom we pray. We must not pray that they should conform to our pattern of what we think they ought to be, or that they should be compelled to do what we think that they ought to do. We learn that when praying for them we should give them complete liberty; and also we learn that we must give God complete liberty as well. God is at work in the life of each one of us, consequently He is at work in the life of the one for whom we pray, just as much as in our own life. So gradually we are led to see that the best prayer we can pray is to hand our loved ones over to God, and give them up entirely to Him so that He can deal with them in His own way. Our loved ones will get on much better when we cease uttering our interfering and coercive prayers. For a long time however we fear to do so; we are afraid to trust God, afraid to commit our loved ones completely into His care. We still want to interfere - we cannot let them go entirely. But the time comes - it may be through much painful

experience -when we are at last willing to release our loved ones from the bondage in which our wellmeaning fears have held them. This is not by any means easy for most of us. But at last we are able to surrender our loved ones entirely to God, so that He can deal with them in His own way.

Learning how to pray, so I have found in my own experience, is a long drawn-out process, extending over many years. Prayers, then, fall into two categories: first, our prayers are supplicatory, pure and simple; next, we may discover that it is more effective if we affirm that what we need is already an accomplished fact, and to thank God accordingly. We discover also that what is really needed is not that God should alter, or even do anything, but that what is really needed is that we should realize the fact that Divine perfection already IS, and is the reality concerning ourselves and our affairs. In other words, the causes of our troubles and disorders are in ourselves. And the principal cause is ignorance or lack of understanding of Truth. Therefore what is needed on our part is greater knowledge of Divine truth.

This brings us to the next stage of prayer, which is Meditation. It is through meditation that our mind becomes attuned to the mind of God. Yet it does not suit everybody. My system of meditation is very simple, although not everyone can practice it for the simple reason that it deals with abstract thought. But for those who can think abstract thoughts, it is very easy indeed. (I would suggest, however, that those who find meditation difficult, tiring and a strain, should not proceed with it. Meditation should be a restful and happy

exercise.) My system - which is quite original, so far as I know - is simplicity itself. All that I do is to hold a thought at the top of the mind, and keep it there. I do not think any other thoughts, but simply hold the one thought at the summit of my mind. Then without any help on my part, other thoughts of a like nature become attracted and settle - like a flock of pigeons settling on the roof of a house.

By holding a thought, or idea, at the top of the mind, I really mean at the top of the head. We close our eyes, turning them upwards towards the top of the fore part of the head. We also direct our attention to the same spot, and in imagination hold the thought of Wholeness, or whatever it may be, just at that point.

Each subject of meditation is an abstract thought, and each represents one of God 's attributes. Of course I am aware that God is far beyond all attributes, but we cannot very well meditate upon God without them. Also I know that what we call the 'attributes of God' are merely qualities which we ascribe to God, and are therefore merely human ideas. They represent what we think God should be like. But God is infinitely beyond all such ideas, therefore what they really represent are the qualities which belong to our real selves, or the real spiritual man - God's idea concerning each one of us. But meditating on what we term the attributes of God is a help towards knowing God: it is a bridge to understanding. For instance, if we meditate upon Wholeness, in course of time an understanding will come to us of the Divine idea behind wholeness which can never be put into words. Thus through meditation we enter into an

understanding of real knowledge which the greatest intellect could never encompass and which, of course, could never be found in any book.

When we have meditated on one attribute daily for a month, and the real meaning of it has been incorporated into our being, we can then take another one (Wholeness, Love, Justice, Mercy) and so on, for the next month. If we want to know the true inwardness of any word descriptive of God's nature, all that we have to do is to meditate upon it. We shall not be able to describe this true inwardness to others, but we can know it in our soul.

But those who practice meditation should not overdo it. I have known one or two people who spent nearly their whole time in meditation and who neglected the practical duties of life in order to do so. As can well be imagined, the result was the reverse of satisfactory. A few minutes each day is all the time that most busy people can spare. There is a wise and happy middle course which we should follow in everything. I have always been inclined to fly to extremes, and have suffered accordingly; but experience has taught me that the middle path is the path of wisdom. Therefore, as in everything else, we should be moderate in our meditation. With most people, however, the danger is in their neglecting meditation; indeed, I expect many will say that they have no time at all for meditation. They are in a whirl of activities from early morning till late at night, so that there is no time for anything apart from work and duty. When this is the case, I would suggest that no meditation be attempted. Such active people can however practice the presence of God, bringing God into every duty and activity.

They can learn to see God everywhere, in every happening, in every thing, and in every individual. And later their circumstances will alter so that they will have time for meditation and many other things which are denied them now. Our circumstances alter as our spiritual unfoldment proceeds. We have all of us noticed that just when we have been ready for it, the right book or the right person has come to us. In the same way, when we are ready for meditation opportunity to engage in it comes to us. After Meditation comes Contemplation. From our earliest years most of us I expect have been familiar with the hymn, one verse of which is as follows:

*Eternal Light, Eternal Light,  
How pure the soul must be,  
When placed within Thy searching sight,  
It shrinks not, but with calm delight,  
May live and look on Thee.*

No doubt the hymn-writer had a theological idea in his mind when he wrote these lines, and was referring to what may happen to the soul after the physical body has been sloughed off. But it is capable of becoming true in the experience of every aspiring soul here in this life. How then can we contemplate the Divine? Shall we form some sort of mental image of Divine Perfection and contemplate that?

I believe some people do this and I have nothing to say against it, and it may be a help to some for a time. In its favour is the fact that we tend to grow into the likeness of that which we contemplate. The form which we contemplate

however is not God, but simply the image of what we shall become. We cannot form an image of God for He is form-less; we can only form an image of our true selves, or what we are capable of becoming.

I have frequently spoken and written about forming a mental concept of Divine perfection and contemplating it. This is good, of course, as far as it goes; but it is far from being the highest form of contemplation. True contemplation is formless. But we must not condemn lesser methods, for everything is all right at the time, at the stage at which we then are.

Just because as we advance we have to discard methods which hitherto have served us well, it does not follow that they are bad methods. When we discard them as being not only useless now, but actually a hindrance, we should not look upon them with contempt but rather with gratitude, for without their aid we could never have reached our present stage. When we are ready to move forward, we experience a desire to do so. We should always wait for the appropriate moment (we should never, for instance, attempt anything that is beyond us, just because we have read about it in a book), otherwise it would be like trying to hasten the opening of a flower bud by pulling it apart with our fingers. It may seem strange that we should now have to cast away all that they have learned and become as a little child. Yet that is what Jesus said, but very few have ever understood what He said. He said that we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, except we become as little children.

At this point, when we are ready to go forward, we simply move forward, but we cannot take our knowledge with us, we have to exfoliate all our intellectual ideas and what we think God is. Our loftiest thoughts about God are only hindrances now; they have served us well hitherto, but now they have to be cast aside because any thought about God is limiting, not only to us but also to God. In one sense, of course, it is impossible to limit God in any way for He is limitless, but we can limit Him, as far as we are concerned, by our thought. God is infinitely beyond thought, therefore our thoughts about God limit Him to our thought.

It is the same with a name. God is the One without a name - the nameless One, consequently if we attach a name to God, He eludes us for He is above all names. The God who can be named is not the Ineffable One, but as it were a God of our own limitations.

As we move forward towards the Ineffable, we lay aside all names and forms; we also emerge beyond all thoughts and ideas about God. Consequently, because we cease trying to limit the Limitless, it begins to become possible for us to go forward. All forms, thoughts, names and ideas have to be laid aside by us. So as they arise, we gently brush them aside and continue steadily forward to That which transcends all forms, thoughts, names and ideas. And so we move forward to the Nameless, Ineffable One. We discard everything until at last we come to Nothing ... And when we have come to Nothing - we find that we have found Everything.



**CAUGHT UP IN THE SPIRIT**

Before allowing me to say anything about this subject, philosophers would doubtless insist that I should first define my terms. What do I mean by being 'caught up' and by 'Spirit' ? As a matter of fact I can define neither, so I shall not attempt to do so; but as I proceed the terms used will, I hope, explain themselves. But in any case, it is impossible to define Spirit, for 'God is Spirit: and they, that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth', and one cannot describe That which cannot be defined.

It all began in quite a small way when I was in my mid-twenties. I think that at that time I thought that I had in me the making of a preacher; indeed I may have cherished hopes and ambitions of becoming a great preacher, capable of attracting and swaying enormous crowds of people. Consequently when there was a call for local preachers, I was one of those who volunteered for the honour and without examination or test, was accepted. As viewed from the pew, the office of preacher seemed simple and I often wondered why so many preachers did not do better than they did. But when I came to try to preach I found it quite a different story. As a rule I found it extremely difficult to say anything, and if I did manage to do so it was mediocre in the extreme - depressing both to my hearers and myself.

As a rule the people endured me. They were obviously bored and wearied by my performance; I got nothing from them, while of course they got

nothing from me. I was no more in touch with them than I should have been if they had been a hundred miles away.

No matter how carefully I might prepare my sermon, the result would be that when I got up to preach I seemed to be completely alone, in a kind of mental and spiritual wilderness, bereft of ideas and unable to say anything that I had hoped to say except a few hesitating, halting words that were helpful to nobody. These attempts at preaching were very hard work and a great mental strain. The end of my sermon would find me exhausted and miserable, oppressed with a sense of failure and frustration.

That was the general rule; but there were exceptions, rare ones it is true, but all the more precious because of their extreme rarity. On such exceptional occasions, I enjoyed what preachers in those days used to term liberty - an excellent description, for at such times I was set free from all restrictions. Instead of being shut up in myself, cut off from God and man, bereft of ideas, and in a state of misery and loneliness, I found myself lifted out into a state of liberty.

My hearers were in sympathy and responded to everything I said and ideas flowed into my mind, like water from a perpetual fountain. And these ideas found immediate expression in words of simplicity and clarity, without any strain or effort on my part.

The congregation gave me their attention, and there were less fidgeting and coughing than usual. For myself, I was filled with joy and in a state

of uplift. All fear was lost and I felt that I was in my right place, with everybody else in his right place also. After it was over, instead of being exhausted, I was stronger and fresher than when I commenced. There was something else which I noticed: whereas in the ordinary way my throat was rather troublesome and I had to relieve it with occasional sips of water, yet when the Spirit took hold of me my throat gave no trouble at all in spite of the fact that I had been speaking without a break for quite a considerable time.

But alas, this happened but rarely. Some who heard me on one of these very infrequent occasions said that I ought to pursue preaching as a calling; but I had changed my mind about this for I had come to the conclusion that I was not intended to be a preacher. If the Spirit had come to me oftener, it would have been a sign that preaching was to be my vocation. But the fact that It came so very seldom, and that for the most part I was left uninspired and flat and lifeless made me decide that preaching was not to be my forte.

I was sure that the only preaching that was really worthwhile was that which was the work of the Holy Spirit alone, so that He spoke through the preacher: then and then only could God's message get through. I have already related the story of an experience which befell me when I was living in East Anglia. On that occasion, for some wise purpose quite unknown to me, God meant to use me in a special way. Time seemed non-existent; I was in the Eternal Now. There was no attempt at preaching, or exhorting, but all - both congregation and preacher - were caught up together in God, and in very truth the Holy Spirit

moved in our midst.

Now when the Holy Spirit catches up the speaker at a meeting, He also catches up the audience or congregation. Suddenly a change will come over the meeting, and there is a great stillness and a most impressive silence - the silence of Eternity. Such an experience of the Silence would be painful to one who was neither accustomed nor attuned to it. I remember some years ago being invited by Richard Whitwell to speak at a meeting at Worthing. By the time I got there the meeting was in full swing, and the presence of the Holy Spirit was apparent to me directly I entered the hall. I had purposely refrained from preparing any address or even selecting a text or a subject. If we are to be a channel of the Spirit, then we must put aside all our own thoughts, ideas and opinions. Consequently when I was called upon to speak, I had nothing to say myself, so all I could do was to open my mouth, and trust to the Spirit to fill it. I was led to say a few very simple words about the true objects of such a meeting - that it was not to give an address or even expound the Scriptures, but simply to find the presence of God, and become filled with the Holy Spirit. I went on to say something to the effect that if or when we enter the true Silence then we enter into Eternity and became one with That which changes not. As soon as I uttered the word 'Silence' we were immediately all caught up in the Spirit and given Cosmic insight. All the street noises faded away, and it seemed as though we were suspended 'twixt earth and Heaven, released from the fever and fret of life. We had entered into the Silence about which I had been speaking.

I have often read about what happened on the day of pentecost, how that when 'they were all of one accord in one place, there came suddenly a sound from Heaven as of s rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. I have read all available translations of Acts 2: 2, and all make it appear that it was the sound which filled the house, and not the wind. However, I have reason to believe that what happened was that the wind also filled the house and not the sound only, for when the presence of the Holy Spirit is felt very strongly in the midst of a gathering of people, a wind may blow through the meeting, although all the windows and doors may be closed at the time. It is also true that not all the people may be conscious of it, but only those who are ready for such an experience.

In the case of the early Church, on the day of Pentecost they were all of one mind in one place. Therefore they were all ready for the experience which came to them and it was possible for the experience to come to all of them. If people of to-day were all of one mind in one place, at one time, and all prepared to realize the presence of God and to receive the Holy Spirit, then the Pentecostal downpouring would be experienced in all its fullness. We read that after the ascension of Jesus, His followers returned, 'and continued with one accord (all of one mind) in prayer and supplication' (for the Spirit). Do we do so today? No, for one thing very few believe that such things are possible; they talk about the day of Pentecost as an event which took place nearly two thousand years ago, but never dream that it might be repeated in these latter days.

Apropos a wind blowing when the Spirit is at work in a meeting, I should like to mention an experience which one of our readers met with at a Salvation Army meeting. At the time this man was very unhappy, being the slave of the tobacco habit and unable to break it. He tried to do so but had become so ill that he had to call in his medical man, who advised him that he was suffering from tobacco poisoning and that he had better break off the habit by degrees. But he found this impossible and so was soon smoking as much as ever. He was unhappy about it, because the money he was spending on tobacco was badly needed at home. Attracted by the band, he entered a Salvation Army Citadel in order to listen to the music. He did not pay much attention to what was said for 'he had no use for such things' - until a fisherman took charge. This man was a visitor and, having had a real experience of God, was travelling about as a missionary. He possessed Spiritual power, and was evidently being used as a channel by the Spirit. Our friend had the shock of his life when the speaker pointed straight at him and said in a loud voice: 'That man there, do you want to get rid of your craving for tobacco? If so, come to the penitent form and ask God to take away the craving, and He will do so, and it will never trouble you again.'

Immediately our friend seemed to be engulfed in a sort of miniature whirlwind which appeared to raise him from his seat. The next thing that he remembered was to find himself at the penitent form where he knelt and reviewed his past life - becoming a changed man. Since that time he has not only had no desire to smoke, but has a great revulsion against it.

My reason for relating this is that our friend experienced a strong wind and that he was raised by the Spirit out of his seat.

Here too is an experience which befell a friend of mine whose son was seriously, even dangerously, ill. We were all deeply concerned and were praying for the boy, but instead of improving, his condition grew worse. A specialist was sent for and an immediate and dangerous operation was advised; but when challenged the surgeon had to admit that he could not say that it would be successful or achieve an good whatever, so the operation was not proceeded with. At last the Spirit came, and the father said that he could feel its power sweeping through the house. His son was completely healed. Healing does not of course always come like that - indeed it is the exception - but I mention this occurrence because it is one more illustration of the way in which the Spirit works in unusual and special circumstances. It is always when all seems lost and failure has attended all our efforts and strivings that the Spirit comes with mighty power, making all things new.

In 1928 a London Centre asked me to address them. As I am no speaker, I decided, as usual, to refuse the invitation, but I found it difficult to do so, for each time I made up my mind to send a refusal I was troubled by the Spirit. The upshot of it all was that I accepted the invitation; but when I recalled my shortcomings as a speaker, I was filled with misgivings. However, I argued that as it was evidently God's wish that I was to speak (and therefore some object was to be achieved), I

could safely turn the matter over to Him.

The lady who was in charge of the Centre meetings wrote asking me to write up my forthcoming visit to London in The Science of Thought Review. I replied to the effect that I would not be a party to any such thing, and that all that I could allow would be a short announcement. The lady wrote back that if I would allow her a few lines she would like to make the announcement herself, which she did in a few lines. I realized afterwards that this was a mistake; I ought never to have given in to her importunity. In the first place, we had enough subscribers in the London area alone to have filled the hall ten times over, but the announcement would be read all over the country. The unfortunate result was that people came from all parts and at considerable trouble and expense, only to find that it was impossible to get into the small hall. The result was chaotic. At the door there was a surging mass of human beings that when I arrived it was impossible for me to obtain entrance. It seemed that the only thing for me to do was to go home.

Suddenly I caught sight of a man there who knew me - George Corbett of Nottingham - and he would not allow me to return home. By dint of much pushing and struggling he at last managed to get into the hall, with me at his heels.

We found to our dismay that the body of the hall was not only packed, but that some of the audience were sitting on the platform.

All was strain, effort, excitement and confusion, whilst the lady in charge of the meeting implored the people to squeeze more tightly together so as



to make it possible for a few more to be accommodated ...I could not help thinking of the words of Jesus: 'But what went ye out for to see, a reed shaken by the wind?' That this text was to have special significance before the meeting was over, I little imagined at the time.

Pandemonium reigned, and to crown all there were some enthusiastic musicians playing fiddles with great gusto!

The meeting opened with a hymn, followed by a credo which everyone repeated in unison (such things to me dry, inadequate, unsatisfying and unnecessary). Then to my horror the leader announced that a collection would be taken - and would the people please give as liberally as possible as the expenses were heavy? This seemed to infer to me that the audience would naturally think that the visiting speaker was an expensive item, or at any rate that I was going to receive part of the collection. I felt inclined to get up and explain that I do not believe in collections at all and that I am distinctly opposed to asking for money. But I remembered that it was not my meeting but the Centre's, and that they were entitled to conduct it in their own way. Incidentally, when I agreed to speak for them I made it a condition that I should pay my own expenses, and this of course was what I did. The collection taken, the leader then asked me to speak. No, I replied, let somebody else speak first in order to give me time to become attuned to the Spirit. So George Corbey of Nottingham kindly came to the rescue. He told of a man who 'looked on the wine when it was red', whose clothes needed brushing, and who displayed all the

usual signs of the drunkard. One day George Corbett met this man in the train: he was neat, shaved and his clothes well brushed - obviously a man very much changed for the better. What was the reason? For answer, the man pulled one of my Science of Thought lessons from his pocket and said: 'This is what is changing my life'. George related this incident with his usual forthrightness and he was given a good hearing. After such a story I could hardly refuse to speak, but I was in no fit state to do so. I had not prepared anything, because I had expected the Spirit to speak through me -- and now the Spirit had apparently forsaken me... What was I to do? I was out of touch with my audience, and they with me; I was in an agony for I thought of how this vast crowd before me had come from near and far in order to hear me speak, and here I was letting them down badly! For a few minutes they heard me in patient surprise, then began to fidget.

However, I persevered doggedly but I felt neither Joy nor freedom. Speaking about God should be an uplifting and joyous experience, but I was in a state of separation and bordering on despair. Then I was led to say: 'The day of intellectualism is ending; the day of intuition and inspiration is at hand.' At that moment something wonderful happened, and I entered into a state of perfect liberty! In a flash I was on top of things, completely at rest, and my audience in perfect sympathy. I felt lifted up and given a measure of Cosmic insight and was able to explain in the simplest language how it is possible to know the deepest things by a direct intuitive knowing. The Silence which suddenly descended upon the hall was intense, and one could have heard the proverbial

pin drop. We were all caught up in the Spirit; we were all moved by the Spirit; we were in a state of heavenly peace and enjoyment.

Years afterwards, John Moreton told me his version of what happened. He was at the back of the hall where there was a large card with the word 'Personality' painted in large black letters. He described the failure of my address and the restlessness and disappointment of the people. 'But,' John Moreton continued, 'when you said: "the day of intellectualism is ending, the day of intuition and inspiration is at hand" a wind swept through the place, so strong indeed that it blew the large card with the word "Personality" painted on it, on to the floor. At that very moment the meeting became entirely changed'.

These incidents are not related as being in any way exceptional, for I realize that many may have had far more remarkable experiences. But I mention them because they proved to me that the Spirit works to-day as He did in New Testament times, for God does not change and has not changed; He is ever the same. It is through such experiences as this that have formed part of my spiritual training.

Through them God has taught me that it is only when we get to the end of 'self' that He can really use us; I have also learned that it is only through experience that we can reach that state of utter surrender. I have learned to depend more and still more upon the Spirit and less and still less upon my own understanding. But my attempts at public speaking were not the only experiences through which I was trained and disciplined. If we

refuse to be disciplined, we do so at grave peril. On the other hand, it is possible to go to the other extreme and invite more discipline than we have strength to bear. I knew a seeker once who was so anxious to attain that she prayed that she might pass through any suffering if only she might know God and enter into union with Him. The result was catastrophic, for she was hardly prepared what followed. She was, however, brought through finally - but I would not recommend anyone to follow her example. Rather would I counsel people to adopt a middle course (the middle path is ever the path of wisdom), by putting their unfoldment into Divine hands. If we allow God Who is Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom to set the pace and bring everything to pass at the right time, we find plenty of experiences to test our strength, but they are not beyond our powers.

**19**  
**I FIND THAT GOD**  
**IS AT WORK IN MY LIFE**

GOD is at work in the life of each one of us. Intellectually this raises many problems, such as 'was God at work in the life of Judas Iscariot?' But I do not intend to embark upon an intellectual discussion, for the question just posed is bound up with the problem of evil, and we all know that the only real explanation of that is not to be found intellectually at all, but only through realization or direct knowing by the soul. When we have had such an experience we realize that what is true in our case must be true also in that of all men, in spite of the evil in so many lives. It is the same with the question of God being at work in the life of each one of us. We could never arrive intellectually at such a state of knowing, but God reveals it to us through deep experience extending over many years.

In my own case, I must have been unusually obtuse for it was not before I was over sixty years of age that I began to realize that God was at work in my life, and that I was not directing it at all. After this discovery, I thought for a time that I had no free will whatsoever, but later it came to me that I had free will after all, but within certain limits.

For many years it had become apparent to me that God was over-ruling everything for good. In spite of my mistakes, sins and follies, good finally emerged from the tangled skein so that what at the time may have appeared as evil frustration, was

found to be a blessing in disguise. Consequently I could see that there must always be present a Central Harmony to which all things are related, and to which ultimately all things must conform. It was also borne in on me that this life is a reflection - and an imperfect one at that -- of our true and real life which is always being lived in God (the Central Harmony), and the disorders of life are due to our departure from the Divine Order or Central Harmony: first in our thoughts and, as a natural consequence, our actions. Free-will consists in our being able to think and act according to our personal self-will, which of course is at variance with the will of the Whole. But the real life goes on according to the will of God (the Whole, or Central Harmony). Our departure from what I like to term 'Divine family harmony and order' is that we make life difficult for ourselves. 'Let the wicked (he who misses mark or departs from the true order of life) forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man (the man whose thoughts are right, but are a departure from Truth) his thoughts, and him return unto the LORD', who is Creative Order and Harmony far beyond our highest conceptions of order and harmony.

The Perfect Order continues: that is, it is always in a state of 'presentness'; it is always in the Eternal Now and it does not wax or wane. What is needed is that we should conform to it.

After many years of trying to think rightly and act rightly (experiencing many failures, of course), I gradually became conscious of the interior Divine Order at work in my life and affairs. Up till that time I had so to speak thought that it was I who had to do everything. It

seemed that perfection had to be created by me as a result of much effort; but gradually I began to realize that Divine Perfection already existed, and always had existed, and that it was trying to manifest in my life and would do so if only I would allow it.

We belong to the Eternal, and interiorly we are one with 'That which changeth not'. The interior Order flows ceaselessly, in perfect harmony. The outward life is a counter of the interior Order, and all its disorders are due to departure from the Real and True. We have free will enough to make an awful mess of things in the outward life, but this can make no difference to the Inward life.

The prodigal son was reduced to poverty and misery, but his Father's house still carried on as usual; there was plenty of food and all the members of the household formed their various duties and acts of service, doing their appointed tasks at the right time and in the right way. The harmony of the home was not disturbed. It continued as before. It was only the prodigal son who suffered from hunger and discord, and this was because he had put himself outside the order of his father's home. He could find no order apart from his proper place in his father's home, doing the work which, as a son, he was privileged to do. Everything, he undertook, after leaving his father's home, ended in failure and created disorder, shame and suffering.

This was because he was not in his right place and was not doing his right work. His self-will, or the exercise of his free-will, took him from a

home of peace, plenty and order into a wilderness of unrest, starvation and disorder.

Although he could do nothing right while he was away from his true environment, directly he returned to his proper place in the scheme of things, everything immediately became very right indeed. Instead of starving and trying to eat the rough husks with which the swine were fed, he found himself the guest of honour at a sumptuous feast. Everything he did now was harmonious, because he fitted into the organization of the home and he found himself doing his right duties in a right way and at the appointed time.

As I look back upon my own life I am struck by the fact that the parable of the prodigal son describes it perfectly.

Whenever I went the way of the prodigal I was like a fish out of water, and my companions looked upon me as a fool.

Nothing would go right with me; in fact, I suffered much through my follies and reduced myself to the lowest ebb.

Yet as soon as I began to live quite another kind of life, I was welcomed by everyone and success smiled upon me.

I can see now that life was all the time trying to push me back into my right path. I can see now that we can be truly successful only when we are travelling the path, and doing the work for which we are born. God always raises up the right man at the right time to do a certain work at a certain period in the world's history - for instance, John Wesley, George Fox and William Booth, to mention



but three. No one else could have done their work. Each one was born at the right time; each one was born into just the right environment; each one possessed the right capabilities; each one could be truly successful only when he was travelling the path and doing the work for which he had been born. And each one passed on when his work was accomplished. What was true of these great men is also true of us lesser folk. Each one of us is born at the right time, in the right environment, and we can be truly successful only we do our right work and follow our true path. The farther we wander away from our true path and our right work, the less successful we become, as well as the more unhappy.

In my small way, I have found this to be very true. Whenever I was in my right path, doing my right work, life was harmonious and free from strain, whereas when I departed from my true path and work, my life was filled with disharmony and strain. Also (so I have found) we cannot be really happy if we are not in our true path, doing our right work. Worldly success cannot bring happiness if we have been destined to a life of consecrated humble service - indeed, great unhappiness and mental suffering will be experienced until wealth and worldly fame are cast aside and our true life's work entered upon instead.

This is where my former nefarious ideas - which that we can have every worldly desire satisfied by demanding it - fails. Making the search for things the chief object of life can lead only to unhappiness and frustration.

The more we clutter our lives up with possessions

and gadgets, the less happy we become. Life should be made as simple as possible. But simplification in itself is not sufficient. Indeed, if followed as a thing in itself, it may make life more difficult. What is required is that we should find our true path in life, putting first things first; then if we do this all things necessary will be added. When we have a true aim in life we naturally shed ourselves and our lives of useless impediments. This is the true simplicity.

Jesus said: *'but seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'* He did not say that we were to seek first the loaves and fishes, and the Kingdom of God would then be added to us. This, however, is what I did at first, and because of this I had to suffer.

Nefarious teaching always turns upside down the real and true; it takes truth and then inverts it. It teaches its dupes to seek first the material things of life, and to use occult powers in order to force them into manifestation.

It even teaches them to say such things as 'I am God' or 'I am Divine Spirit' which has the effect of inflating the false ego, that is, the self which has to die before we can ever enter the path which leads to the Kingdom. Thus if we follow such teachings we are prevented from making a start in the right direction. Before we can go up, we must first of all go down, down, down, until there is nothing of the selfhood left. Then, and not till then, God is able to raise us up to be His instruments in the world. It is when we are willing to lose all as regards this world, that God is able to make all things new and fill our

life with blessedness.

Yes, God is at work in the life of each one of us. Not only have I experienced it in my own life, but I have seen it in the lives of others. There have been those who have been able to make demonstrations every time, who thought that they had complete mastery over their own lives. But there came a time when they could make no demonstrations at all; everything failed, and they went down lower and lower until they died, and then rose again a new creation. The death of the 'self' is a painful experience, but first the 'I' and the 'me' and the 'mine' have to pass away before the Christ in us can be lifted up.

I have been through this experience. I started out to improve my outward life first, and after that I might think about the Kingdom of God. I was reversing the teaching of Jesus. I sought the things of this life first and succeeded, but because this was a reversal of Truth it brought me much dissatisfaction and sorrow. 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' I was like the prodigal son. I had wasted my spiritual substance on acquiring the things of this world, and the things which I had won were as dust and ashes. What the husks given to the swine were to the prodigal son, even so were the things of this world to me - just as unsatisfying and nauseating.

God was at work in my life: I had been going one way, God wanted me to go another. He let me go on until I crashed and lay broken at His feet. Then when I understood fully how foolish and wrong I had been, and that without Him I could do nothing,

God raised me up.

*'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it', said Jesus. But it is open to all who are willing to die in order to live. 'He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life ... shall keep it unto life eternal.'*

*'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.'*

When we die in this way, God gives us a fresh start as a new creation. The seed of corn dies, yet out of it springs a new life. It is not the old seed come to life again, but the old has died in order that a new creation might arise.

Again, Jesus tells us that except a man is born again he cannot enter into the Kingdom. He tells us that we have to be re-born, even as the corn of wheat is re-born when it dies to itself, so that it may arise as a new creation. We are re-born out of the material into the spiritual, after which we pray no more for material good, but desire only God and His perfect order, and are content to wait for things to be added to us, in God's own way, and in God's good time.

Yes, God is at work in each individual life. When we are ready for it, and if we are willing for it to take place, the transformation is brought to pass - but for most of us the transition is far from easy, while for many it may yet lie in the future. Everything, however, comes to pass at the right time. 'God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.'

There was once a student who wrote to say that for many years she had been bed-ridden, in spite of the fact that she had prayed almost continuously for Divine healing. She had put her healing first and God second. And so the years went on, and still she remained unhealed and bed-ridden. But, in the great mercy of God, there came a time when the sufferer received such a realization of God that she prayed that if being healed were to mean that she would lose her new precious awareness of God, then she would rather not be healed. She wanted God, as well as to retain her 'knowing' of Him above all things. She would rather not be healed, if only she could have God. The result was that she was immediately healed and raised up. 'But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you ...'

God was at work in the life of that woman. She was brought to see that her prayers were the opposite of what Jesus taught. Then as soon as she put God first and gave up her desire for material good, she not only experienced the ineffable joy of 'knowing' God, but the healing for which she had vainly prayed so long, was added.

God also has been at work in my own life. I have been brought to see that without God I can do nothing, and that all that I had achieved was but dust and ashes. But this woman and I are not special people, singled out by God for special treatment; what is true of us and our lives must be true of all people and all lives, for God is no respecter of persons. Also, Divine law works always the same and cannot alter: if it did alter or change then it would not be Divine law.

There is a right course for each one of us. We may try many things before we find our true niche in life; then as we look back, we see that each thing which we have attempted has been a preparation for the work we are doing at the present time, and that what appeared to us at the time as our greatest hindrances were really blessings in disguise and stepping-stones to higher things.

Life unfolds to us as we are borne along on the stream of time, and gradually the Divine pattern is revealed. Also, more and more it becomes evident to us that the Divine purpose is love. Love is the key to every situation in life, and love is the secret power which brings every Divine adjustment to pass.

As I look back on my life, I can see that it has been love all the way. At all times love has been heaped upon me, in spite of my unworthiness. We do not have to wait until we are good in order to be recipients of Divine love - it comes to us wherever we may be; it blesses us no matter how unworthy we may be.

Love does not make our life soft or our path easy, but it supports us all the day long, and blesses all that we attempt to do.

God is at work in the lives of all, therefore He is at work in the lives of nations and in the life of the world. Although God is All and is the only doer, yet He is not the cause of man's disorder and suffering. God creates all things in perfection, order and wholeness. Thus, in the true world which is the perfect expression of the Divine Idea, everything comes to pass at the right

time in perfect order and harmony. In this true world, our real inner self has its being. This outer self is a falsity; likewise the world which we cognize through the senses is a fake world, or rather a distorted reflection or counterfeit of the real world of perfection. The world, too, is largely a reflection of our thoughts and the thoughts of others. If we think good thoughts - that is, thoughts in accord with the interior Divine order, then goodness manifests in our life; if we think evil thoughts, then evil manifests. It is because the thoughts of mankind are evil (not according to the Divine order), that disorder abounds. There can, of course, be no improvement in the world until mankind alters its thoughts and its feelings.

We all know this, of course. The point that I want to make however is this: the changes which take place in the real world, have also to take place in this phantasmal world. But whereas in the real world the changes are orderly, beautiful and harmonious, in this world they can be achieved only through strife and struggle. This is because we have departed from the Divine order, so that 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD.' The will of God which is Divine order, beauty, harmony, is always being done: the Divine action is always taking place: but we work in opposition to it, thus creating disorder in place of order. But although we create disorder yet God, as Divine Love, is always at work in our life, drawing us back to Himself and into His order and harmony. God is at work in all our lives; that is, in the life of each one of us and it is a great satisfaction to know this. For He doeth all things

well.



## 20

### LOVE THE KEY

*But the greatest of these is love - I Corinthians  
13: 13.*

For a good many years now I have made a practice of sending out my love to all mankind daily, in the well-known words:

Dear people, everywhere, I love you all.

I love you all, I love you.

I think that I came across these words, or something like them, in Trine's *In Tune with the Infinite*, about forty-five years ago. Afterwards I found the same idea, but in different language in the much older writings of an Eastern sage. He suggested that we should turn to the east, the west, the north and the south and bless all humanity.

The mere repetition of 'Dear people, everywhere, I love you', although an admirable practice, cannot in itself achieve much if we do not charge the words with the all-powerful vibrations of love.

But what do I mean by 'love'? By love I mean agape, which, so scholars inform us, is the Greek word translated 'charity' in the Authorized Version of the New Testament. This was done, so I imagine, to distinguish it from physical love, i.e. that love which demands something in return for what it gives. Agapé, some scholars assure us, really means the Divine nature poured out, which is a giving of Itself to the uttermost without any thought of, or desire for a return of any kind. In my own small way I sometimes think that I understand, in a very feeble measure of course,

something of what Jesus must have felt when He wept over Jerusalem, and also when He said: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.' As I utter the words: 'Dear people, everywhere, I love you al, I love you', I feel that I am pouring out my soul with all the strength of my being upon all men. It is not merely an utterance of words, but an outpouring of the soul with all the strength of which I am capable.

As I do this I experience a feeling of great power in my solar plexus. While uttering the words silently, I breathe out as strongly as I can, putting all the feeling of which I am capable into what I am saying, and this generates a greater feeling of power in the same region. We have to give out, with all our might and strength, not with the idea of getting something in return, but simply in order to give and give yet more and more. It is a pouring out of the soul in utter abandon. We have to be like Jesus pouring out His soul over Jerusalem and of whom it was said that He poured out His soul unto death. As a result of this pouring out of our soul we receive more power, we become capable of more love; for by pouring out our soul thus we create a vacuum which is at once filled with love of like nature to the Divine.

This sending of our love to all mankind is however the first stage. We have such compassion towards people that we desire more than anything in the world to pray for them that they may be blessed in every possible way, especially in the best of all

ways. It is our desire humanity should be at peace, that each one should have work to do, and return home tired but satisfied at the end of the day, rejoicing in 'something attempted, something done, to earn a night's repose'. That is what the masses of people everywhere really long for, but which war prevents them from enjoying. 'If only war could be prevented,' they say 'then we would sally forth at the beginning of the day to do work which is necessary and well worth doing, after which all our needs would be supplied.' But war cannot be prevented without a change of heart-only agapé can prevent war.

Consequently when we pray that all mankind should be blessed, we mean that they should be blessed in the best possible of all ways, instead of in only a material way. And so we continue sending forth our love, adding:

May you be divinely blest in every possible way; may your lives be filled with harmony, joy and peace, and may the deepest longings of your soul be satisfied, in God.

We pray with all our might that all men should enjoy the same blessings and satisfactions of soul which we ourselves desire. In the words of Jesus, we love our neighbour as we do ourself. Jesus also said that we should love God with all our mind and strength: this means that we should pour out our soul in love, adoration and gratitude when we pray to God.

When we pray to Him, we should pray with all the fervour of which our nature is capable.

I have found it helpful to make use of the opening

words of the Psalm 103: 'Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.' This can be made a powerful exercise if we say mentally the first half of the text while we are inhaling deeply, and the second half whilst we are exhaling strongly. But perhaps everyone might not like to do this; in fact many could not do so, because of their inability to breathe deeply enough or to control their breath.

Therefore I do not recommend readers to try it, but merely state that it can be done. The effect that this practice of sending out our love has upon those of us who practice it, is that we enter into a state of union with all mankind. We become a universal lover of humanity; in our heart we have a place for all men. We see the Christ in everyone - the beggar at our door, the king in his palace - all are alike to us. We are all one underneath the surface - all brothers and friends, united in God our Source. Yes, underneath the surface we are all one. 'I am the Vine, and ye are the branches', said Jesus. All the branches of the vine are united in the parent stem, and all have flowing through them the same one life of the Vine.

When there are quarrels and disputes, a recognition of this fact soon puts an end to them. I have frequently noticed a wonderful change take place when I have suggested to disputing and quarrelling people that 'deep down we are all friends, really'. A smile has come to their faces and their better nature has been displayed in their changed expression. Yes, we are all friends below the surface. We are all one in God. We need not however stop at sending our love to

our enemies and to all mankind, for we can proceed to extend it to all creation. We can say:

Dear earth and sky and land and sea, I love you all, I love you.

Dear trees and flowers and rivers and streams, I love you all, I love you.

And so we can proceed throughout all inanimate nature; we can send our love to mountains and valleys, to moor and fen, and so on.

But we can go yet farther. We can send our love to animate nature. We can say: Dear birds and beasts and live things everywhere, I love you all, I love you.

As we utter these words, pouring our soul in love upon all things, we become one with them all. The effect of saying that we love all things is that in course of time we really love them with a love which stirs our being, even though previously we may not have loved them at all.

Eventually we become universal lovers in whose arms the whole creation can find refuge and sanctuary. Behind the birds and the animals there are their archetypes from whom they proceed and to whom they return. These receive us as universal brothers into their everlasting habitations.

Thus we come to the end of all strife and struggle, into a state of peace, for it is intimated to us that we are at one with all creation and that we rest together on the bosom of God.

Love is indeed the key to every situation in which we may find ourselves. When we are attacked, criticized and abused the natural thing to do is to hit back, thus returning evil for evil; but the

Jesus or Love way is to send our love, pity, compassion, forgiveness, to our enemy, like a beam from a searchlight. Love applied in this way is dynamic.

The shafts of malice directed against us return to the sender -consequently love is the best defense. But I do not think that self-defense should be our motive, for that would be using the greatest power of the Spirit for our personal advantage.

This may however be the best thing that we can do at the time. Indeed, it is a great achievement for a beginner to refrain from retaliating, and to send forth love in return for injury, even though he does so in self-defense.

We should aim however at a higher love than that applied in self-interest; we should send our love and pour out our soul in order that our enemy may be blessed. What one might term metaphysical love - that is, love used as a weapon of defense or to achieve certain ends - is really a counterfeit of the real love (agapé) which is the Divine nature poured forth.

When however we can love and bless our enemy with all the power of our deepest soul nature, desiring above everything that he should be blessed in every possible way, according to heavenly standards, and also desiring no benefit for ourselves, it is then that our love becomes like unto the love of Him who poured out His soul unto death.

And the same thing applies to our competitors. It is usual to look upon them as enemies and to do

everything possible to hinder and thwart them. But when competitors arrive on the scene, the first thing we should do is to pray for their success, and to bless their undertaking. We should next call upon them and wish them every success. And finally, we should always speak well of them whenever their names are mentioned.

Jesus taught the secret of successful and harmonious living, which was to deal with every situation and experience in a spirit of love and co-operation. If everyone were to do this, we should have heavenly conditions almost at once; but alas, only too often we act, not according to the Jesus way of life, but rather to the worldly way of self-interest and opposition. Instead of loving and co-operating with each situation as it arises, we either try to avoid it or else fight against it. Or we might even pray to have it removed.

But the right thing to do is to welcome and cooperate with each experience as it arises, and to bless it. Father J. P. Caussade says (in his book *Abandonment*) that the secret of sanctification is to do willingly those duties which we would be compelled by life in any event to do. By this he means that we should have to pass through the experiences in any case, and that if we cooperate with them we become sanctified whereas, if we do not cooperate, we gain nothing from what we endure. How true it is that we have nothing to fear if we surrender and abandon ourselves to the will of God - if we cooperate with life instead of fighting against it or trying to avoid its disciplines!

Loving co-operation, so I have found, is the great

secret.

When passing through times of almost incredible difficulty and complication, I have found that by co-operating with the experience and doing the best that I could with it, and being as faithful as possible in a practical way, looking to God to bring about an adjustment in His own way and at His own time, God has in every case brought me victoriously through. And not only so, but I have been advanced in spiritual understanding and considerably strengthened and developed by having had to pass through the experience; or rather I should say that it has been through acceptance, and co-operation that the experience which - if opposed would have been most hurtful - has been turned into a blessed means of spiritual quickening and advancement. But by co-operation and acceptance I do not mean resignation. When I was young it was believed that God sent disease and sickness and other negative ills and that, if we gave into them, then that was doing God's will. This was called being resigned - by which it was meant that we were resigned to, and prepared for, the worst.

That, so it seems to me, was all wrong: Divine Love does not send disease or other negative conditions. It means that we have got hold of, or have sunk down into, an inversion of the real and true. A sinner is a kind of inverted saint. When however he is converted or turned round, he may grow into a saint because he will then be growing and developing in the right direction. Thus, when we co-operate with an experience we do not become resigned to the worst, but instead accept it in order to work through it and overcome



it. For instance, if we meet with insult and injury, hatred and violence, we know that it is all due to lack of love, and that it is really an inversion of love. Consequently we apply love to the situation, thus turning disharmony and disorder into harmony and order. From this it is easy to see that love is always the key to every situation in life.

God is Love, and God is All. We live and move and have our being in God, therefore we are immersed in Love even as a fish is immersed in the sea. The vibrations of Divine Love impinge upon us and would penetrate through us if we were not insulated against them. This insulation of separation and selfishness, however, wears thinner if we ourselves make use of the love which gives itself (looking for no reward) to the world. Also, active love and adoration towards God are equally efficient in wearing away and dissolving the insulation which separates us from Him.

From this we see how vital is the teaching of Jesus in emphasizing the two commandments that we should love the Lord our God with all our mind and strength, and our neighbour even as we do ourselves. Through following these commandments we enter into Divine union; we are in God and God is in us. Actually God has been in us all the time, for we could never have any desire to seek God if it were not for the fact that there is That in us which corresponds to God and is of the same nature, for only God can know God. Of ourselves we can do nothing and are nothing.

It is the Spirit of God in us who knows God. God immanent gazes face to face with God transcendent.

The Son has returned to his Father, saying:

I and my Father are one.

God, our Centre and Source.

When I wrote these words I thought that they were original and that it was a very daring thing to write, but now I find that the same thing was said much better by Hans Denck in 1542. In *The Luminous Trail*, by Rufus Jones (Macmillan, New York), we are told that Denck in one of his little books which is preserved in the University of Marburg, wrote:

'Apart from God, no one can either seek or find God, for he who seeks God already in truth has Him.'

Dr. Jones adds the oft-quoted saying of Pascal:

'Thou wouldst not be seeking God if thou hadst not already found Him.' It gave me a thrill when I read this, for it shewed me that there always have been those who have realized this great truth, and that even as the Wise Man said, 'there is nothing new under the sun'.

Of course, it is useless for us to send our love to all mankind, if we do not also put love into practice in our dealings with our fellow men – indeed, we do ourselves great harm if we do not practice what we preach. But sending our love to all mankind makes it much easier for us to act in a loving way in the common affairs of everyday life. If we pray for a certain person that he should be blessed in every possible way, then we find that we want to do him the greatest possible amount of good. Also, if in a moment of forgetfulness, we act outside love, we feel very miserable until we have confessed our error to the one we have hurt and made amends for it. Thus we

prove that if we have love (and act in love) we have everything; whereas if we act without love we lose everything and become 'as the heath in the desert'. The way of love is not all loss and sacrifice, and by that I mean that we do not give our love in vain, although at the time it may appear to be so, and we must be willing that it should be so.

Rufus Moseley tells of the love of a woman who took upon herself the care and upkeep of her sister's five orphan children, in spite of the fact that she herself was almost sick unto death. He writes: 'Her love and her will to live enabled the God of love and life to lift her up and to make her well. She did magnificently by the five children and in doing so opened the way for almost unbelievable blessings to come to her.' Then Moseley adds that there are no investments like those of pure love and mercy. It is when we look for no reward and expect no return that it is then possible for the richest blessings of Heaven to come to us.

## 21

### INTERIOR RESPIRATION

*With each Divine impulse the mind (soul) rends the thin rind of the visible and finite; and comes out into eternity, and inspires and expires its air. It converses with truths that have always been spoken in the world.-Emerson: 'The Over-Soul.'*

I use the term 'interior respiration' to indicate a type of inner breathing by the soul, as distinct from ordinary breathing by the lungs. For the greater part of my life I was quite unaware that there was such a thing as interior respiration. No religious teacher had ever hinted at it, neither did I find it mentioned in books. That for which I never sought came to me in due course of its own volition. On looking back, it seems to me that I became aware of interior respiration as a result of practicing interior prayer, and also that it followed the deep rhythmic breathing which came to me about the same time.

The same law operates both in nature and throughout our spiritual life; indeed, our spiritual unfoldment is similar to the growth of a plant and the unfoldment of a flower, and if we observe the unfoldment of a rose bud (for instance) we see the orderliness of the process. There is no hurry or fuss, yet everything comes to pass at the right time, and each stage of unfoldment takes place in its proper order and sequence. So it is with our spiritual unfoldment; it proceeds with perfect order, each stage being reached in its right sequence, and in due course -

if we are patient - all stages will be reached.

In my own case these successive stages were not clearly defined, and three stages appear to be somewhat merged and Intermixed. Never having kept a diary, I must rely on memory alone, but as far as I can remember it began in this fashion. First of all I noticed a sense of life and power in the region of the solar plexus and 'within you is the power' became a real experience so that I could feel the Power.

After this came the deep, rhythmic breathing in which my physical respiration seemed to be 'caught up' and conformed to the Hidden Life. It seemed to me as though there was a deeper breathing going on all the time, but that we humans were not in accord with it. Suddenly, as a result of contemplation, the two breathings seemed to merge into one, and I found myself inhaling and exhaling in rhythm with the breath of Hidden Life. I found my breath becoming deeper and deeper, so that I was led to say: Interiorly, my life has infinite extensions  
Beyond time and space.

All this is mixed up in my memory with the discovery of God's Inward Peace. It seems to me now that it was when I found God's Inward Peace flowing through me like a river, that I became aware of my real life having infinite extensions beyond time and space. It seems to me now that practicing inward prayer had something to do with my discovery of the Hidden Life. Praying inwardly in time with the beating of the heart, and the breathing of the lungs, is a very potent practice and must surely have a considerable influence upon one's spiritual progress. I do not recommend others to practice interior prayer, but I have to

record the fact that I have done so myself. After a time I began to notice something else which is much more difficult to describe. I became conscious deep down within my being that I belonged to a larger world which was also a world of finer texture. It was certainly not the world of departed spirits, but the world of true substance -the world of Reality. This was the world in which my soul functioned. But I realized by intuition that my soul life could be greatly strengthened by conscious co-operation on my part. I realized that deep down within me I could make my soul breathe the finer ethers of a most inward life, and in the same way that the inward peace which I had previously experienced was the same peace which God Himself enjoys, so also the finer ethers which my soul was able to breathe were indeed the very breath of God.

Now when I discovered that I could recognize this inward respiration by the soul, and encourage it by co-operating with it, I hesitated doing anything about it, for here was a vast new field, uncharted and unexplored, of which I was entirely ignorant. Neither did anyone else apparently know anything about it. St. Paul speaks only once of contacting what he described as the 'third heaven', but in order to do this he had to leave his body and go to another place. But as Jesus said, we do not have to go anywhere: 'Neither shall they say, lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.' It is true that Swedenborg was said to have practiced interior respiration, which was followed by what he termed 'open vision', so that like William Blake he could see angels and denizens of other planes and converse with them. But my experience

was entirely different from either St. Paul's or Swedenborg's. I did not leave my body, neither did I have open vision on other planes; but inwardly I knew that my soul inhabited Eternity and that my life was as deep as the Universe. This experience was quite big enough for me: I had discovered that interiorly I was a denizen of a great uncharted (by me) country. But I knew of no one who could give me any information so I hesitated to go forward, preferring to wait. There is an old adage amongst those who try to live by faith and who are content to be guided by the Spirit, that 'when in doubt, wait'. So I waited.

I have already said that the practice of inward prayer was a preparation for interior respiration; this applied particularly to the prayer of thanksgiving and praise. As I prayed 'I thank Thee, I thank Thee, I thank Thee', especially while I exhaled -- completely emptying my lungs -- consciousness of my interior life became extended. We have to make a practice of looking within, for if we do so we find all that we need. We find a new life and a new world - or so it appears to us. In the words of the parable, it is the home-coming of the prodigal son. Long have we wandered in the wilderness of duality, separate and apparently alone; now at long last we have returned to our Father's home. We have discovered our true identity; we have discovered that we are our Father's son and heir.

'Beloved, now are we the Sons of God.' As we look within we realize that it is our soul which breathes the breath of God. Our soul is infinitely deeper than our surface self, but it has been starved through lack of attention - now we can

encourage it to breathe the finer ethers of the Hidden Life.

Our soul is not something separate. We speak of our soul and of our spirit, but they are not separate entities: in spite of our various parts, we are complete unified beings, yet what we are at the Centre cannot be defined; in other words, we cannot say what we truly are, we can only say what we are not. We can say:

I am not this body  
I am not this mind  
I am not this soul  
I am not this spirit

But that is as far as we can get, for what we truly are can no more be defined than God can be defined; indeed, as soon as we try to say what God is we lose Him, for the God whom we define is merely a creation of the human mind. God is beyond all human thought and imagination, and that is why the mystic in his approach to God has to cast aside all his knowledge about God; all that he has learned he has to exfoliate, like a tree in autumn. It is only when we have cast aside everything and have come to nothing that we find everything – God.

Finding God's inward peace is indeed a most wonderful experience, as also is the deep inward breathing which comes to us of its own volition; but neither is sufficient in itself, nor are the two combined sufficient. There is something else needed: we have to co-operate and begin the interior respiration of the soul and this has to be a conscious act on our part. This can be



illustrated in the following simple way.

On the wall of my office hangs a clock which has a long pendulum. When I forget to wind it, it stops; then seeing that it has stopped, I wind it and set the hands to the right time. But something else is needed - that is that I must start the pendulum swinging. Without such help the clock cannot function, but with it it can carry on for another long period. It is much the same with the soul. Everything that is necessary is ready - with the exception of giving the final impulse. And it seems that the choice is left to us as to whether we let the soul remain quiescent or give it attention and co-operate with it, thus starting interior respiration.

One may often wonder where this new development may lead. It is early yet to forecast, but I am convinced that it can lead to nothing psychic (against which the saints have warned us, such as visions, lights, converse with angels and - so on), but rather to a deeper understanding of God and a closer union with Him. Also, although it makes us know in a way and to a degree never before experienced that we are immortals, yet it will never lead to physical immortality.

Jesus did not promise physical immortality, but He certainly said that some would not see death. This has puzzled the saints of all ages. What did He mean by this remarkable statement? I think that Jesus meant that with some, their physical body would be transmuted so that they would be translated even as Enoch was. 'Enoch walked with God: and was not; for God took him.' (Genesis 5:24.) We also read in Hebrews II:5, 'By faith

Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him. Translation is very different from physical immortality. It is promotion to celestial realms with a body of like nature and substance in which to function, but whether anyone now living in a physical body will be changed in such a fashion it is impossible to say. It is said of some that their bodies emit light which streams from every pore, and in such cases it is evident that 'the Light that is in every man coming into the world' is making progress.

It seems to me that those who are living the life of regeneration are having built up within them a celestial or light body in which to function on higher planes, and that in some cases this has advanced to such an extent as to shine through the physical body so that those who are 'in tune' are able to see the light. It may be that interior respiration may have something to do with this building-up process; but it is not possible for anyone to say, neither do I think that we should speculate about it. Everything will come to pass at the right time. We pass from one stage of unfoldment to the next without struggle or strain in much the same way that a flower bud does not worry or strain itself by ill-advised efforts to unfold itself.

All that we can do is to place our spiritual unfoldment in the hands of God, and then He will bring everything to pass at the right time. The pace at which our unfoldment takes place will always be exactly right and as it should be; we need never worry because others seem to be more advanced than we are, neither should we be envious

of those who seem to have experiences which we think we ought to have. The essential thing is that we should keep in living touch with our Divine Centre through frequent recollection, and through looking inward and practicing interior prayer of praise, adoration and thanksgiving. These seem to be the most important things which we can do -after which we can leave all other things to God.

**PRACTISING THE PRESENCE**

Most of us are familiar with the little book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, which tells of the way of life of one Nicholas Herman of Lorraine who is more generally known as Brother Lawrence. He was a humble 17th century Carmelite laybrother, a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water for those about him in the monastery. We are told that Brother Lawrence lived in an irreligious age, amid a sceptical people, yet he found God and lived his life in God, and found God within his own being.

So much so indeed that some who were much above him in his order, and also other orders, came to him to ask questions and be instructed.

Brother Lawrence's methods were simplicity itself. Instead of studying books of doctrine and theories about God, he started off with the assumption that God was everpresent with him, and therefore could be spoken to, and confided in, at all times. Thus he made direct contact with God, in utter childlike simplicity, from the very beginning. He had no theoretical difficulties; he simply took God for granted, as a child takes its parents for granted.

Some people believe that an extensive knowledge of the Bible is necessary. I have known people however who have been great students of Holy Writ who made a practice of reading it through from beginning to end, at least once a year, and yet they did not really know God, although no doubt they knew a lot about God, which is a very

different matter. But Brother Lawrence did not know much about the Bible - at any rate, his little book shews no sign of any such knowledge. (I remember once some years ago taking - copy of The Practice of the Presence of God with me to read In the train, when visiting a friend. He noticed the book and expressed an interest in it, so I handed it to him. While I was engaged in visiting a sick relative, my friend read the book, or rather raced through it, and when I left by train a few hours later, he handed it back to me with the remark that he did not think much of it, because it was not scriptural ! Yet this laybrother knew God; he knew God through constant prayer and intercourse with Him. Reading about God is not sufficient, even though it may be the Bible that we read. This is helpful up to a point, but we have to get beyond the stage of knowing about God - we have to have intercourse with God, and finally become one with Him.

Brother Lawrence did not think of God as being afar off in another place; instead he thought of Him as being with him amongst the pots and pans of the monastery scullery, and as much interested as he himself was in their efficient scouring and polishing. Now Brother Lawrence was what might be termed a natural saint through and through - he owed nothing to the schools; he had no teacher but the Holy Spirit. He was not converted in the ordinary way, for God dealt with him direct in the same way that He dealt with Saul of Tarsus, turning him into Paul the Apostle in a matter of seconds.

The following extract taken from the First Convergation in the book tells in a few words of

the wonderful transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit in this unlearned kitchen menial: He (Brother Lawrence) told me that God had done him a singular favour, in his conversion at the age of eighteen.

That in the winter, seeing a tree stripped of its leaves, and considering that within a little time, the leaves would be renewed, and after that the flowers and fruit appear, he received a high view of the Providence and Power of God, which has never since been effaced from his soul. That this view had perfectly set him loose from the world, and kindled in him such a love for God, that he could not tell whether it had increased in above forty years that he had lived since.

There surely has never been a clearer case of direct action by the Holy Spirit than this! And it was all accomplished through Nature, not through ecclesiastical channels at all.

He looks at a tree in winter stripped of itsleaves and behold, the miracle takes place. It was much the same with Jacob Boehme who one day in 1600 was 'sitting ...in his room when his eye fell upon a burnished pewter dish which reflected the sunshine with such marvellous splendour, that he fell into a deep inward ecstasy, and it seemed to him as if he could now look into the principles and deepest foundations of things'. Jacob was a humble and unlearned shoemaker; Brother Lawrence was a one-time soldier and footman.

Jesus called not learned people, but fishermen, to be His disciples and to carry on His work after He had ascended.

Now our lay-brother took God's immediate presence for granted; he made a practice of speaking direct to, and making a confidant of, Him. He believed that God was with him as an invisible presence, in whom he could confide at all times.

And this reminds me of a story told by that great man, the late F. B. Meyer. One day he was travelling in a tram when he noticed a sad-faced and tired woman sitting opposite to him. She told him that she was a widow, that she lived alone in one room, that she went out charring all day, and that when she returned home at night, her room was in darkness, without fire or meal ready. And oh, how lonely and hopeless it all was. Mr. Meyer sympathized with the woman but, discovering that she was a follower of Jesus, he proposed that she should believe that He was in her room. He also suggested that she should reserve a chair for Him, believing that He was sitting in it. Then she was to speak to Him just as though His visible presence were with her: also she should tell Him all her troubles, and also all her hopes. At night, when she came home from work, she was to knock at the door, and say: 'Are you there, Lord Jesus?' In every way she was to act precisely as though He Were actually present.

The woman listened to all that Mr. Meyer had to say and determined to put his suggestions into practice. Some months afterwards they met again. But he did not recognize the former sad and unhappy woman, for she was transformed. She was now happy and radiant. She made herself known to him, and then told him all that had taken place since their first meeting. She had put his

suggestions into practice with the result that she was no longer lonely, neither was she alone, for the presence of Jesus was always with her. That was her way of practicing the presence of God which was not so very different from Brother Lawrence's.

Their methods were the same in principle, although differing in detail. Brother Lawrence found God amidst the pots and pans of the scullery in which he worked, while the woman found Jesus in her oneroomed

home. Both were simple and unlettered people, neither of them spent their time in reading books about God: instead, they worked at their humble tasks and found God in the ordinary affairs of life. Neither would they have read books on psychology (if such had been available in their respective times), yet what they practiced was based upon a great psychological law. Brother Lawrence asked for God's help before beginning each task. Then when it was finished, he thanked God for having helped him to perform it perfectly. We can imagine how interested he became in the work which formerly he loathed and despised! God became very real to him and was always present with him, and this filled him with such joy and happiness that he had great difficulty in restraining himself from bursting into such exuberance as would have been an annoyance to those around him.

But after all, the practice of the presence of God as followed both by the charwoman and Brother Lawrence, is but the beginning of a wonderful adventure into Omnipresence.



First of all, it is as though a person were in the room with us -a loved friend, real although invisible. If we can realize this, it is indeed a great achievement, sufficient in itself to transform our life. When our life and all its actions become based upon a realization of this truth, it means goodbye to our inclination to sin, to worry, to fear, and to be selfish.

But as I say, such practices are only at the beginning of the great adventure into Omnipresence. We have to advance by stages, and we are brought to each stage in God's good time. Let me cite a personal experience which has an indirect bearing on the subject. All my life I have been subject to heavy colds. In winter time, almost as soon as one cold has run its course, another would begin. This was very discouraging, for they continued in spite of all my attempts to overcome my weakness by means of what are called Nature Cure methods. Even after I had gained quite a lot of benefit from right thinking and mental self-treatments, I still remained a victim. Now, when a cold was coming on I used to feel chilly and shivery and want to sit by a fire with much more clothing on than usual. I knew that this was all wrong, so one day I started imagining the very opposite of this. I saw myself mentally in the open air with the wind blowing on my body, the sun shining upon me, and rain - even hail and snow - falling on me. I imagined and felt myself to be one with the elements and welcomed all these forces of nature and co-operated with them. I noticed that after practicing this applied imagination for a time, I began to feel better, while the congestion of the cold seemed to grow

less. But I had to repeat the practice many times before getting the better of the cold.

I relate this experience simply to shew how my experiment with Omnipresence began. In course of time, as I practiced this method, the realization came to me that the forces which played upon my body were part of the life of God. I recalled the words of St. Paul: 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being.' I had thought of these Nature forces as being apart from God; but gradually I began to realize that they are an outward manifestation of inward spiritual powers, and that that was why my imaginative exercise was helpful to me. I realized that the sunshine, the wind, the rain, were not merely beating on my body, but were entering and passing through it; or rather, the invisible forces and rays of Infinite Life which they represented, were doing so. Of Course, it was all done in my imagination; actually I did not stir from my chair while I experienced and felt the forces of Nature beating upon my body.

Later I used to say to myself: 'God is in this room: His presence fills it.' Then I would try to realize that there was not a fraction of an inch space in the room which was not filled with the presence of God; then after realizing this I would add: 'His presence is Love.' Jesus said: 'God is Spirit' - which means the one universal Spirit in which we live, and from which everything proceeds. Spirit surrounds us like an atmosphere and penetrates us, just as wireless waves pass through concrete or brick walls.

All such creative work must of course be done in a

state of relaxation. Somebody has said (I think it was Emerson) that the Absolute abides always in smiling repose - or words to that effect. Some learners (we are all learners) think that such a thought is discouraging, for what can such a God care about them - He, in smiling repose, while they are being so tried and troubled? It is however simply a matter of relaxation; if we relax sufficiently we can experience some measure of the same smiling repose, for what we suffer is due to our tenseness and resistance. We can experience the repose of the Absolute to the extent that we truly relax, and as soon as we do so we experience a feeling of deep peace, which shews that our mind has ceased its agitation and is working in correspondence with the Divine Mind.

All our work with the imagination must therefore be done while we are in a state of relaxation. In fact, I do not think that we can use our creative imagination at all without first relaxing. But when we do so completely, so that we lean back on the Everlasting Arms, we are then able to realize that the rays of the One Infinite Life are not merely impinging upon us, but are passing through us. The more relaxed we become, the more possible it becomes for us to realize that this is actually happening.

The effect of practicing the presence of God in all its various forms is that we become changed into His likeness.

Probably the luminosity which some people exhibit is due to the Spiritual Man within and the Celestial body which is being prepared for them to use, when they pass on to: Celestial planes. But

at this stage, I must repeat that we should never practice negative passivity. When I say that: we should relax, I do not mean that we should become negatively passive - far from it. Although we relax, our mind still remains concentrated upon God; consequently, we are positive. Neither should we enter the Silence when we are in a negative condition, or when we are over-tired. We should always maintain a positive attitude.

It may be wondered what this about Brother Lawrence and others may have to do with my search for Truth. This much: like Brother Lawrence, I am of humble origin with hardly any education and like him I know nothing about theology or doctrine, but at certain times in my life God has come very close to me, and has raised me up into a higher state of consciousness. Now there is an all too common idea that we can only find God if we are learned and well-educated, capable of reading very difficult books about prayer. I thank God that this is not the case, and it is my hope that this book will bring encouragement to many, seeing that it is written by one who is neither learned nor clever, but who has nevertheless found a safe and happy anchorage at last. 'What God has done, God can do.' If God has been able to bring me through in spite of my ignorance and frailties, then He can do the same with anyone and everyone. Nothing is impossible with God.

Of course, I realize the value of culture; I realize that cultured people live a fuller and richer intellectual life than those who are not. But the point which I wish to make is: it is not necessary to be highly educated or learned in order to know God. Indeed, in the last stage of

our journey we have to cast aside an our intellectual knowledge about God, like a tree shedding its leaves in autumn. This process of exfoliation casts off everything that is not God, every atom of self, until there is nothing left. Then, when we have succeeded in casting off everything and have reached nothing - we find Everything! This is indeed a great paradox.

## **STANDING FOR EVER IN THE DIVINE LIGHT AND RADIANCE AND GLORY**

JESUS said: 'I am the Light of the world: he that cometh after Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life.' In the same way that the sun lights up the outer world, so also does the LORD, or I AM, supply that supernal Light which never was on sea or land.

Interiorly, we are children of the Light. In our true inward essence we belong to the World of Light, and it is possible for us to stand in the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

In the Fourth Gospel we read: *'In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. ...In Him was life; and the life was the Light of men. ..That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'*

We are also told that the Light shineth in darkness, but that the darkness has failed to absorb or master the Light.

The Light, we are told, is in every man but it is hidden in darkness. Man, until he becomes spiritually awakened, is unaware of the fact that the Light is within him. It is as though he had a lamp inside him, but that it is covered by various wrappings of selfishness and worldly desire, so that no light can escape from it.

But in due course the Spirit of God gets to work in him, and the process of unwrapping the lamp

within begins.

When once we have started out on the life of regeneration, every experience which comes to us is so designed as to make regeneration possible; and this means of course that the wrappings are being unwound from our inward lamp.

In course of time the wrappings may be so far removed as to allow a small amount of light to become visible. In place of complete darkness there then reigns a dim twilight.

The process continues over the years, during which more and yet more wrappings are removed until at last our whole body becomes full of light.

However, this in itself is not sufficient; God is not only immanent, He is also transcendent. We are not only able to find the Inner Light, we are also able to rise into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

I have found this out for myself, or rather it has come to me like the dawn of a lovely spring morning after a dark and troubled night. It is all the work of the Spirit who brings everything to pass just at the right time. It is not the result of studying any theory or doctrine, but is the fruit of experience.

First of all I had to discover the Power within - not the power of the finite self or ego-hood, but the Power of the One Life or Infinite Spirit. This led to the release of the Inner Light or Imprisoned Splendour. It was after being quickened by the One Spirit in this way that I found it possible to rise into the Divine Light and

## Radiance and Glory.

St. Paul said that he once knew a man (probably himself) who left his body and entered the third heaven. He also said that when we are present in this material body we are absent from the Lord, and that when we are absent from this material body we are present with the Lord. I must confess that I have not yet been able to confirm this statement. I find that it is possible to be present with the Lord in an interior way while still in the body, and that no act of dissociation is necessary.

It is true that in the past I have known people who claimed that they had been absent from the body for as long as three days, and I believed them; but I could not see that they were any the better for such an experience. Indeed, if I were to find myself becoming dissociated, I should quickly pull myself up and interest myself in the practical, mundane affairs of life instead. No, what I term 'rising into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory' is simply an act of pure contemplation.

When once we have mastered it it is almost as easy as looking out of the window. It is formless contemplation, for we are past all forms and have become lost in the Divine Light and Glory. It is not the result of willed effort, but is an act of relaxation. I think however that the practice of interior respiration is a necessary preparation for such contemplation.

We cannot of course rise into the Divine Light if we are not attuned to the interior Divine order.



We know, however, when we have reached a state of attunement, for directly we reach that state we experience a blissful sense of peace. This inward peace is God's peace which He shares with us, so that the peace which we experience is the same peace which God Himself enjoys.

If anything occurs in our life which robs us of our inward peace, then the first thing for us to do is to remove whatever is the cause of the disturbance. It would be useless for us to attempt to rise into the Divine glory if inwardly we were not in a state of harmony and peace. As Jesus said: 'First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' Therefore the first thing to be done, so my own experience has taught me, is to find God's inward peace. After this has been accomplished, it becomes possible to rise into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory. I have not always realized the supreme importance of this high and pure contemplation. For too long I concentrated, on the roots part of the spiritual life. Our life, if it is to prosper, must have its roots deeply embedded in God; if it is not so rooted, then it will dry up and wither away. Therefore it is of the first importance that the roots of our life should be in God, so that we draw from Him infinite nourishment and strength. But having established such rootage deep down in the depths of our being, it is necessary that we should grow upward and extend our branches into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

The law of the spiritual life is the same as that of the natural life: indeed, the same law extends through all planes. A seed is sown in the ground after which certain changes take place. First of

all, as a seed, it begins to disintegrate and die. But its potential life now starts manifesting: it shoots downwards to form a root, and also upwards to form a stem. After this has taken place, development proceeds in both direction, downwards to form more rootage, and upwards to bring forth branches and leaves. Development proceeds downwards in the dark and upwards in the light and sunshine.

It is the same with our spiritual life. We are brought by the Spirit to that point where our self-sufficiency begins to break down and disintegrate; then after many experiences we find at last that we possess a new life - a life whose roots are in God. We cannot however stop at this point. Having established our rootage in the One Life, we have to look upwards towards the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

Or to put it in other words: it is not sufficient that we learn to meditate and practice it; the time has arrived for us to learn to practice the art of contemplation.

In meditation, we close our eyes and look within, ever more deeply, until we reach the point where our life merges into the life of God, In contemplation, also with closed eyes, we look upwards until the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory flood our consciousness: we become bathed in it and permeated by it; we also become one with it.

'The light of the body is the eye, said Jesus, *'if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.'* When we with closed eyes

look upwards, our spiritual eye begins to function with the result that our whole being, including our body, becomes filled with Divine Light. Such contemplation is not a thing in itself, or by itself; it is the cumulative result of many things. First, there is the looking deeply within until we realize that the roots of our life are in God; then there is the deep breathing which comes to us as the result of such realizing; next, there is the interior respiration of the soul, breathing 'the sweet ethers blowing of the breath of God'. These are accomplished by a complete relaxation - a perfect resting in the Love of God - which is like floating out on to the ocean of God's peace, while at the same time God's peace flows through us like a river.

Finally, as a crowning result of all these, we find that we have entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God, that we have become filled with all the fullness of God and raised into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory. We have found the Ineffable because something has been opened within us that is of the same nature as the Ineffable. It is nothing of our own; it does not belong to the ego-hood at all. It is entirely of God.

It has been said that only God can know God. We (that is, the self-hood) cannot know God, but there has been planted within us by God something that is part of Himself.

It is this which is able to know the Ineffable, and stand forever in the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

We see the same law operative in nature. An acorn does not create within itself a potential oak tree. This is inherent in it and is according to the mind of the Creator. All that the acorn has to do is to co-operate with forces within itself and also with forces outside itself - then in due course it becomes an oak tree, a true replica of its progenitor.

I am writing this because I do not wish it to be thought that our self-hood is in any way self-sufficient. What I want to emphasize is the fact that we, as far as the self-hood is concerned, are nothing and that God is everything. It is only because God is, that I am. Without God I am nothing; not even a memory. God is all and in all.

Now although the process of regeneration is all the work of the Spirit, yet we have to do our part - which is to co-operate with the experiences which come to us, and also to watch and pray. Then when we are ready we are raised to the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory. The extreme importance of contemplation is seen at once when we remember that we become changed into the likeness of that which we contemplate. If indeed there is a royal road to final attainment, then this is surely it. The extent of our contemplation of the Divine Light and Glory becomes the measure of our transformation into its likeness. In the last stage of regeneration we are found to be a likeness and image of our Divine archetype. This is attained to, not through personal effort, but through contemplation. Of course we have to cooperate with the experiences which may come to us.

We may be maligned, misrepresented and even persecuted by those who do not understand, and who may think that they are doing God 's will by attacking us. But instead of justifying ourselves, we make no defense: we turn the other cheek; we go the other mile. Such experiences when borne with meekness and co-operated with instead of resisted, draw us nearer to God and help to break down the hard shell of egoism which separates us from full union with God.

How much experience we may unconsciously avoid through contemplation I know not, but I should think that it is considerable. By this I mean that if we practice contemplation we may attain to a certain extent without the necessity of having to learn through practical experience. The object of practical experience through trial and suffering is simply that we should be changed into the Divine likeness.

As the effect of contemplation is that we become transformed into the likeness of That which we contemplate, it would appear that the more we practice it the less we have to learn through experience.

In case this may sound too simple and easy, let me say at once that contemplation is the most difficult to master of all the spiritual arts. As already stated, it is the accumulated result of many things. Before it can be practiced, everything leading up to it has to be just right. Everything, from the deepest depths of our being to the highest supernal heights, has to be in a state of perfect functioning and also has to be in complete harmony with everything else.

Consequently the least thing can upset our contemplation and make it quite impossible of achievement. If we are emotionally upset, then no matter how much we may try, all our effort will be in vain. One wrong thought may spoil everything; also bad news, worry, a feeling of hurt or grievance - any of these may make the act of contemplation impossible.

If or when any of these things happens, what we first have to do is to find out what is wrong, after which we set about putting it right. By this I mean that if we have been invaded by a certain fear, then we must overcome the fear; if we have a worry we must master it by concentrating on certain scriptural texts or other statements of Truth. Whatever it may be we make use of Truth until we find again God's peace, after which we can generally re-start our contemplation. Then we ought to find that from the deepest depths of our being, right up to the summits of Divine Glory, all is completely free and deliciously harmonious. We realize that our life has its roots in God, and also that it has infinite extensions beyond time and space. What, however, is achieved by contemplation? St. Paul supplies the answer, I think, in the following words: '*But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*'

From this we see that while we contemplate the glory of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord changes us into the same image, from glory to glory. It is all the work of the Spirit. All that we have to do is to contemplate.

But our contemplation is not formed contemplation. Some people concentrate on pictures (mental or otherwise) of Jesus or one of the saints, and call it contemplation. But they are merely using the human mind and not the super-conscious mind at all. Real contemplation regards not the form, but the glory of the Lord. We enter into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory and then in turn we become filled with the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory, the result of which is that it changes us into Its own likeness.

Such contemplation is possible only through the use of the superconscious mind. This is the mind of discernment, the mind which knows the deep things of God by direct knowing and not through the intellect at all, and often in spite of it.

This mind is called by some the mind of Christ. St. Paul said, 'But we have the mind of Christ'; he also said that spiritual things could only be spiritually discerned, and that the carnal mind was incapable of understanding or grasping the things of the Spirit.

What all this means is that an upper mind -- call it superconscious, Christ or Buddhic, as you will - is opened up and begins to function. This mind knows by direct knowing the deep things of God - the great spiritual truths of the Real Man, created in the image and likeness of Elohim.

This mind of Christ in us is used when we contemplate. We become, so to speak, lost in the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory while at the same time It fills us, so that our physical body becomes a veil, covering It from the vulgar eye. The consequence of this is that there is formed in us a body of light substance which is

indestructible and in which we can function on Celestial or Light planes. Without another body we should, after leaving our physical body, be merely disembodied spirits. Not having a body of light substance, we should be unable to function on the planes of Celestial Light.

Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the marriage of the king's son. When the king came to look at his guests he found one who was not wearing a wedding garment. So the man had to leave, for he was not 'clothed upon' with a garment suitable for such company.

The effect of standing in the Divine Light, Radiance and Glory is the formation in us of a body which is made of that same Light, Radiance and Glory. St. Paul suggests that our material body becomes changed or transmuted in the process. Be this as it may, it is a fact that those who are much given to prayer and communion with God have a light and bright and semi-translucent appearance. With some it is as though light streamed from every pore. In comparison ordinary unawakened and unilluminated people look dull and opaque; it is as though a shadow rested upon them. The light is in them, but it shineth in darkness; their time of awakening is not yet come.

Very pertinent are the words of St. Paul in 2 Cor.5 when he says: *'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'* By this 'earthly house' or tabernacle St. Paul means our material body; by 'a building of God' he means our body of Light, or Celestial body, which is eternal and



which will enable us to function on Heavenly or Celestial planes. This Celestial or Light body which has been built up within us over the years is of God; it is not material, and does not belong to the earth plane, but is of the same substance as the Realms of Light in which God dwells. St. Paul goes on to say that in this material body we groan, desiring to be delivered from its restrictions so that we can be clothed upon with our Celestial body, and thus live in Celestial Realms. In this case, St. Paul describes our Light body as from Heaven. First of all he says that it is from God; then he says that it is from Heaven. Both, of course, mean the same thing. He then proceeds to explain that we need a Celestial or Heavenly body, so that when our material body is dissolved we shall not be found naked - meaning by this that we need a body in which to function on higher planes (in much the same way that we have a material body now in order to function on this earth plane).

He adds further that although we groan in this material body we do so - not in order to be unclothed - but rather to be clothed upon by our Heavenly body, so that mortality is swallowed up of Life. People sigh to be delivered from this life and its trials.

They would like to leave this body for good and pass on to Realms of Bliss. But if they were to do so they would be insufficiently clothed, and therefore would not be ready to function on Heavenly planes. No, we have to stay here until we are ready and until our 'house not made with hands' is ready. Then when this is accomplished, and the right hour has come, we can make a happy

transition.

In the case of those who pass on prematurely, we can be quite sure that God who is Infinite Love has made provision for them so that they can make progress and development by stages. All who love God and their neighbour and who are followers of Jesus will find a Heaven exactly suited to their stage of development, and be possessed of a body to correspond. St. Paul speaks of being raised to the third Heaven from which we see that there are various grades, one of which will suit our need exactly. St. Paul speaks of three Heavens, but there are probably more, for seven is the complete Heavenly number. All who love the Lord will find a place in one of them which will suit them exactly; and as they grow and develop they will pass, when ready, to the next Heaven above them. And so they will proceed until they reach the highest Heaven of all.

It is the same with children. Provision is made for them; indeed, I feel convinced that many of them are advanced souls who come to earth for a brief time in order to accomplish a work which they alone could do. Then when this work is completed they go back to Heaven, taking our heart with them. I am quite convinced of this, that everything is far better than we think it is, or could possibly imagine it to be. I am also equally convinced of the reality and nearness of Heaven: Heaven is all round about us and Heavenly influences are always ministering to us. We realize how true were the words of St. Paul: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath

revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Some may feel disappointed because their material body continues to grow visibly older. There have always been those who have hoped and expected that their physical body would grow younger, and thus make it possible for them to live on this earth plane for ever - yet they have all died in the ordinary way.

It is not the physical body that is renewed, but the inner one, As St. Paul said: 'Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day,' What probably has misled some people into believing in possible physical immortality has been the fact that there is a higher order than man, There is a race or order of Immortals. An Immortal is one who can appear and function on any plane at will; he is able to do this simply by changing the rate of vibration of his body. He has mastery on all planes and is able to adapt his body to each and all of them, Also he can enter and leave a locked and barred room. We have a supreme example of this in the risen Jesus and His appearance to the apostles, as related in Luke 24, and also in John 20. In order that they should be convinced that He was not a spirit, but that His body was solid and real, Jesus said: 'Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have'. Then He clinched the whole matter by eating some solid food,

In spite of this solidity, Jesus went and came by dematerializing His body in one place, and materializing it in another. He simply vanished

from one place and suddenly appeared in another. In the Epistles to the Hebrews we are told that Jesus having 'learnt obedience through the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec'. The order of Melchisedec is an order of Immortals.

But this is far beyond us, so we need not discuss the matter. Sufficient for us to know that we possess an 'inner body' with which to function on Heavenly planes whenever we are ready to do so. And so we come to the end of this book.

I would like to conclude with a prayer that you, dear reader, may be raised by the Spirit to higher things: that you may enter the glorious liberty of the children of God, and that you may stand forever in the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

## 24 EPILOGUE

Now that we have together come to the end of the story of my search for Truth, and as by the time these pages appear in print I shall by the grace of God be in my eightieth year, it seems both desirable and fitting that I should say something in appreciation of those whose most faithful and loyal cooperation have not only made this book possible, but have also been responsible for whatever may have been achieved in my life. I would like to say something more in grateful appreciation of my dear wife who for fifty years has been a strong supporting and steadying influence in all my endeavours.

Our married life has been full of changes and upsets, for no sooner had I become settled in one calling or occupation than I would leave it for another. In the face of all these trying vicissitudes, each one of which involved beginning life all over again, my wife always rose to the occasion both cheerfully and heroically. She could always be relied upon to back me up, no matter how wild and hopeless my many changes and experiments might seem to have been. Without her unfailing encouragement and unconquerable optimism I should have accomplished nothing. Together we learnt the saving grace of laughter. When all things would appear to be going wrong at once, we could always sit down and have a hearty laugh! This restored our sanity. It is because of this that I believe Heaven to be a place of laughter - 'the happy laughter of ransomed souls', as someone has expressed it.

This work, called for lack of a better term, Science of Thought, had to be started alone. I did not know a single person who was in sympathy or who knew anything about the power of thought or the power within. It was indeed a lonely furrow that I had to plough. However, soon after The Science of Thought Review was started and became known in America, it attracted the attention of Henry Victor Morgan of Tacoma, Washington. He has told me that directly he had read an article of mine he realized that he had found a kindred spirit. In like manner, directly I had read some of Henry's articles and poems I too recognized in him a fellow-traveller on the journey through life.

Ever since then he and I have remained fast friends, although we have only met on those two or three rare occasions when he visited this country. On his first visit Henry was accompanied by his wife, a most gracious and spiritually-minded lady, who charmed us all. Soon afterwards, however, she departed to Higher Realms and we all felt that earth was the poorer for her passing. A few years after the starting of our magazine, Richard Whitwell came upon the scene. He, although English, was brought along and introduced by an American, Pat Helling by name, who was over here on a visit. I had never heard of either of them until they arrived, but ever since then we have been firm friends and Richard has been a regular contributor to our pages. His love and spiritual support have been a great help and encouragement through difficult times. Also that of his wife, Alice, who is the author of that charming book for children, Adventures in Wonderwood.

John Moreton, editor of The Rally, a little magazine now called The Healing Messenger, has also been a great help and most faithful friend over the years. Back in the early days he was one of my students, but he has since branched out on his own lines. He has always proved himself to be a real friend and brother.

After him came Derek Neville, poet and freelance journalist. He too has been most helpful and steadfast, and a much-valued contributor to The Science of Thought Review.

There are others whom I would like to mention - Kate Simmons, for one, who supplies that intellectual element which I lack. She also has been a faithful, supporter over the years. Then there are the helpers in the Office who have laboured so faithful and so long --- some over thirty years. I would like to pay tribute to their most valuable services and most helpful cooperation, without which very little could have been achieved.