

STEWART EDWARD WHITE

THE STARS ARE
STILL THERE

1946

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DEDICATION

To my many correspondents
and especially
to those who will recognize
the contribution they have made
in this book and anonymously
to the reassurance of others

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I

People are Thinking about Immortality

ALL my life, since I grew old enough to, make my own living, I have done so as a professional writer. That means the publication of between forty and fifty volumes of fiction, history and travel, aside from more short stories and articles than I can remember. Therefore I have a fair idea of how the public reacts; and I know that when any book calls out, over a period of four years, an average of half a dozen letters a day, the letters themselves have significance as showing what people are thinking about. Such letters are a pretty accurate cross section of the general public's attitude toward the subject of that book. In this case the continuation of the individual in some sort of life after death. Immortality.

I said above that the letters have averaged half a dozen a day. That is over the years. In March, eighteen months after publication of the book I am talking about, I kept track. The average for that month was sixteen letters a

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day! While so fast and furious a pace has by now (mid-spring of 1945) slacked off, I still get them at the steady rate of about a hundred a month. These later letters continue to ask the same questions, voice the same bewilderments, seek the same hopes. The book that elicits them is *The Unobstructed Universe*, published in October of 1940,

This book bears my name as author. As a matter of fact, my contribution was the plain drudgery of verbatim reporting and the professional writer's knack of putting the material into easily readable form. None of the *concepts* were mine: they were dictated to me by my wife Betty some six months after her death through a friend who chooses to protect her anonymity under the pseudonym of "Joan." Joan is a psychic of the type that would be called a "trance medium," were she a professional.* But I can count on the fingers of my two hands the number of people who know Joan *as* Joan.

Betty herself was a "psychic." She had accepted this fact for some twenty years before her death, since the evening of March 17, 1919, to be exact, when she accidentally made the discovery. And between 1919 and 1939 she underwent a continuous and rigorous training as a

* She is the "Joan" of *Our Unseen Guest*, as well as of *The Unobstructed Universe*.

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means to what she called "expansion of spiritual consciousness." Though the gain of so-called psychic powers was not the objective, nevertheless she acquired them as a sort of by-product, and was able to do various feats supposed to be possible to "psychic" persons. She could enter at will a higher consciousness from which she reported back her experiences and what she had seen and was taught. She was also able to transmit to me the ideas of discarnate entities we called the Invisibles, either by reporting back as though by dictation or by permitting her speech mechanism to be used directly. These powers and abilities she never used idly, for curiosity, personal satisfaction or any such lesser purposes. She sought and used them to one end only, the expansion of spiritual consciousness.

The accumulation of her records, Some 2300-odd single-spaced pages, had, up to the time of her death in 1939, yielded the makings of four volumes: *Credo*, appearing in 1925; *Why Be a Mud Turtle*, 1928; *The Betty Book*, 1937; *Across the Unknown*, 1939. Since she died three more have been published: *The Unobstructed Universe*, *The Road I Know* and *Anchors to Windward*.

For six months after her death I had no *outside* communication with Betty. Her direct contact with me is told

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in an added chapter to *Across the Unknown*.^{*} Then, in the fall of 1939, I went to visit Joan and her husband. On our very first evening together Betty proved her identity—beyond doubt,[†] and began dictating that amazing "divulgence," as she called it, *The Unobstructed Universe*. It cannot be summarized in a paragraph. For the present purpose it is enough to say that, basically, it deals with the *hereness* of immortality. In the establishment of her thesis Betty explores the nature of time, space and motion; the structure of matter; the fallacy—and indeed the uselessness—of the "ether of space" hypothesis; the nature of consciousness; life after death—in short, the make-up of our "one and only universe" in its two phases of the *Obstructed* and the *Unobstructed*, the former being life as we know it here on earth, and the latter life as *she* knows it beyond earth. There is, actually, only one universe, says Betty, and death is but the throwing off of the earth's obstructions. The argument in *The Unobstructed Universe* is close and involved. Its reading requires sustained attention and considerable independent thinking. Nevertheless, concerning her "divulgence" Betty made what seemed to us at the time two most unlikely predictions.

^{*} See Part III, Chapter IX, *Across the Unknown*.

[†] See Chapter III, *The Unobstructed Universe*.

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"This book," said she, "will have a wide circulation, and it will appeal to scientists."

Which, we flatly told her, was absurd. It was an initiate's book; it required background as well as education to understand, and considerably more application than the average person has in stock for ordinary reading; a couple of thousand copies seemed to us the probable sale; and, anyway, it took a specialist to understand it. This last Betty denied.

"Each will understand *enough* of it," said she. "An eight-year-old child will understand that his universe is obstructed. He'll recognize that because be bumps."

As to the other half of her prediction, we pointed out that before the scientific mind the mere hint of discarnate communication drops a thick curtain; scientists would not even read it. Nevertheless, Betty stuck by her guns.

The book was, in December, 1944, in its eighteenth edition. Probably by the time this is published it will have gone higher in the selling list, for friends in New York write me that "it cannot be kept in stock—the call has again become so great for it." So much for that part of Betty's prediction. As for the other, I have had letters from just under thirty scientists, a number of them heads of research laboratories, and all of national standing. They simply ignore the alleged source. They are interested in

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the content, which they seem to find highly significant. Each claims to have discovered in it either some principle helpful to work he is doing, or suggestion for research along a new line. All agree that here is something "adumbrating a higher physics," which is beyond the comprehension of a mere layman—such as myself. A few of them prove it by talking technically away over my head. One wrote, "Dear Mr. White," followed by a page of complicated mathematical equations, and ending with, "so you see your wife is right."

Nor are the physical scientists the only trained minds who have thought it worthwhile to write me. I have had many letters from believers in every religion, every cult, every variety of philosophical thought, and about every shade of every doctrine one could imagine. None of them took issue with Betty's "divulgence." On the contrary, most of them claimed that, fundamentally, she was preaching their own especial tenets! Which would seem to show that she must have hit upon the denominator common to all.

This unanimity of endorsement from the technicians of thought, whether as scientists of the material or as professionals of the immaterial, has been surprising enough, though here at least were people trained to that kind of thinking. But the real miracle, it has seemed to

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me, is the steady and undiminishing stream of correspondence that has flowed over my desk from the citizenry at large, the very people I would never suspect of interest in such a book. They certainly have read and "understood enough." For they want to know; and not merely about the few obvious things, such as life and death, suggested by the nature of the book. Not at all; the subjects on which they have written me index at no less than eighty-three! It took me some time to realize that they would just *have* to be indexed.

Betty made one other prophecy, personal to myself. At the completion of *The Unobstructed Universe* I was rather at loose ends, and speculated over what I should do next.

"You'll be kept busy," said she dryly. "You will see. It [the book] will give you many new and interesting contacts, enormous new fields for service, for spreading the truth. You'll have to make the letters people will write you about all this your own particular job. They will keep you plenty busy," she repeated with a chuckle.

She was right. The letters—and the people who come to see me—have indeed kept me "plenty busy." They have brought me the "many interesting contacts" she promised; made me new friends; stimulated my own thinking; refreshed my enthusiasm, given me rare opportunity

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for insight into the minds and hearts of my fellow humans. A surety of faith can hardly need strengthening, but certainly these letters have lent mine an added glow.

And so in this present book I try to give the high lights of the most typical of these letters, what people most seek to know, and what I have been vouchsafed to say in reply. I shall reveal no secrets. My mail is confidential. I shall keep it so. But there is much that can be legitimately shared, much that is universal to all men's needs and thinking in these days of wanton war. Death; the possibility of a life beyond it; what responsibility the fact of Immortality imposes on each and every one of us. And—most helpful of all to me—something of the processes of thought by which men and women everywhere are struggling through the mechanistic maze—and wonders—of our age back to the "faith of our fathers."

II

The War Dead

IN THESE times of world-wide conflict and emotional distress it is natural that a great many of the letters I receive have to do with bereavement. The wave of interest in psychic communication after World War I was almost entirely powered by loss and the desire to know about, or hear from, those who had gone on into what Betty calls the Unobstructed phase of this, our one and only universe. This is still true, except that today's letters indicate that bereavement is no longer the sole or even the major interest of most. A wonderful expansion of consciousness, stimulated by the shocks of war, is bringing to the surface new desires and new necessities which occupy people's hopes. Nonetheless, the letters from the bereaved stand out as the most poignant, whether in cry for assurance, for contact, for knowledge, or—as is the case with a great, great many—expression of heartfelt gratitude for the comfort gained through Betty's books, particularly for the modern arguments for immortality in *The Unobstructed Universe*.

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This is outstandingly so of those whose sons and husbands and sweethearts have joined the hosts of the new dead set marching by this war.

It is my intention to quote my correspondents from time to time. But I find it difficult to select letters sufficiently typical as antitheses to the composite of my replies. That is especially true in this present subject of the war dead and bereavement. So many of our young men are "going west," and the death of each individual one brings grief and heartache and despair. The bereaved are searching for comfort of some sort, assurance of any sort, and when they find it in the pages of Betty's books many of them write to tell me so. Here are excerpts from only three such letters, chosen almost at random.

"This is a feeble effort to thank you and Mrs. White and 'Joan' for the miracle of renewed hope and courage and inspiration that you—all of you—have brought to me through *The Unobstructed Universe*. I was, as it were, a man lost in a world of dense fog and confusion. I moved, but in circles accomplishing nothing, and I felt as if I moved all alone. But now I *know* that I do not walk alone."

Another:

"I want to tell you that it was your book that made it possible for me to carry on, and as this is Thanksgiving

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time, I want to thank you for what you have done for me. I do not know how to tell you what this book has been to me. Something has been released, some tenseness, and I can place myself entirely in the everlasting arms and not be anxious."

Again:

"...I found myself as though living in a void, in an atmosphere where I had no roots. I felt my sanity threatened. Then I found your book [*The Unobstructed Universe*] and I felt that a ray of light had penetrated a dark and unbearable prison. I found not only solace, but a reorientation of life."

Such letters are heartwarming. They give abundant worth to the whole effort of "divulgence." But they propound no problems; I have no carbons of replies that need quotation here.

However, here is something that I send such correspondents; something Betty once told us, from her vantage of the Unobstructed. It seems to have brought further comfort to many.

Once or twice in the course of dictation Betty referred briefly to that part of her work which she said was with the new dead, and promised us that some day she would tell us about it. That someday was delayed for nearly three years. Then one day she broke in on a casual conversation.

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Some one had been speculating on the confusion that must obtain on the other side because of the numbers of those killed in this war. At this point Betty suddenly took charge.

"No," she denied, "it is a busy place but not a time of confusion. This is an orderly place. There is for each one here a certain job, for him and for no one else; and he must not abandon that task until it is finished. Want to know the procedure?"

Naturally we clamored that we certainly did—it was an old promise.

"Well," Betty began, "first of all, we have to find one who speaks the language of the newly arrived soldier. It is a mistake to imagine that merely coming here enables us to speak and understand all languages. We don't. Suppose the newly arrived is a Russian. He is met by some one who speaks Russian, who not only speaks to him in his language, but surrounds him with the vision of familiar things. For instance, he might be furnished with the kind of bath used in his country, or the same sort of clothes, and all that, so he could start at ease in things familiar. You must remember that most of them [the new dead] do not know what has happened to them. They probably think that they have been wounded or stunned, and that now they are in some new rest area.

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Most of them argue that as they can see and hear and are not under the ground, therefore they are alive.

"Next, when so many of them come here all at once, we have officers assigned who have been here some time, who assemble these men in the formations they are used to, and who explain their new status to them, *en masse*, in their own language, and who even may march them away to a rest place.

"Curiously, the first thing many of the soldiers want is to send a letter home. You see, they are still confused, they still do not fully understand. If they can write, we arrange for them to do so; if they cannot write then there is always some one here who can write in their own language for them; and they do so. Of course the letters cannot be sent; but just the writing of them helps somehow.

"Then most of them [the new dead] are taken to a big place—" (She fumbled about for a word, rejecting 'hospital.') "Well, the nearest I can get is a kind of solarium. You see a great many require treatment. For instance, a man who has been hit *thinks* he is without one leg. That thought must be cured here, just as the leg would have to be treated with you, in one of your hospitals. Here is where we treat and care for such—well—disabilities.

"In the case of some, when finally they realize they are

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dead, they become uncontrollably hysterical. We then induce sleep.

"It is tremendous, but there are millions here, and there is no confusion. Our organization is like an army. We get our orders. I have mine. I could not be as useful dealing directly with shattered people, so my work is with the actual nurses—I deal with those nurses. At first I had five under me; and then another five was added, and another five, and another, until now I have many. Roughly, I teach the nurses how to meet the dead in their own frequency, and then slowly, slowly bring them up until they are our frequency. That is my job—to teach that.

"There are places for them [the new dead] where there is nothing but peace. There each is given a vision of the future, of what the sacrifice he has made is going to mean to the world; what his contribution has been; how much better the world will be because of it. And to this place each brings whatever is his contribution for this peace. For instance, right now there is a group of Russian soldiers who have brought music. And the others bring whatever they have that can make pleasure—the enjoyments of life.

"Here's another thing: a natural first instinct is to go back to their homes and people. They are not allowed to do so until they understand that they cannot now do

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so in the flesh. And when they do go, one of us is assigned to accompany each—if possible one of us who is more or less able to make an impression on some member of the family or a friend. As a matter of fact, one entity here is assigned to each one who comes here. It is a question of individual frequency, and therefore the assignments are arranged by skilled and higher beings here: what one might call the staff command.

"This staff work is important. What I am told to do, no *one* but me could do. It's a matter of my own individual frequency.

"Entities here of lower development take very little part in this reception business, but a great part in the midst of battle. You see we can't allow these entities to have anything to do with the new dead, because they would want to take them back again.

"During the night we are sometimes able, while they sleep, to bring parents, wives, sweethearts to their loved ones here. I know of one very touching incident. We brought a woman who is still there, in the Obstructed, to her daughter, who is here. The daughter had been a nurse, and she was killed. I don't know just how, but she was killed with her arms outspread, like a cross, across a door. Anyway, the night we brought the mother, in her sleep, this girl insisted she must have on a nurse's uniform.

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When the time came for the mother to go back she did not want to go. She threw herself on her knees to me, and begged to stay here with her daughter. Of course, I could do nothing about that. But she was so frantic that finally we had to put her to sleep here to induce her to go back; and we did not leave her until she was safely back.

"So you see, I am very busy, for this is only part of what I do."

Some one mentioned the possibility of resuming such work of divulgence as had been begun with *The Unobstructed Universe*. This was out of the question for the time being, Betty explained. Sustained communication of the kind required to do such a book is now impossible because of the psychic turmoil of the war—too difficult to insulate against outside interferences.

"I am studying still for what I want to say," she told us. "When the time comes, I'll impress Joan."

"What I'd like to do," she continued, "would be to get out a little book for soldiers. A short one, not over fifty pages. To sell for twenty-five cents. It should be sold for something, and not given away, for they don't value things given away. What does man live for? What does he *seem* to lose by death? What does he gain when he passes? He finds over here what he wanted to find there."

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I would want to explain it in simple words and sentences. Something a man could remember and pass on. What does a man want of life? He gets exactly the same thing after death. Every man in the army comes sometime to think of death. Maybe not in camp, but when he *knows* he's going to fight. This book would give the assurance, by one who knows, that there is *nothing to lose!*"

III

No Real Separation

WHAT I have called the "war dead," the multitudes passing over from battle, are the bereavements that hit with the strongest impact. Yet actually they differ in no manner from any other loss by death. We are inclined to think more of their mass, their sheer weight of numbers, than of the fact that each carries its full of poignancy. Indeed, it may even be some small comfort to reflect that others are grieving too! And there is the sustaining glow and pride in sacrifice for a common cause. But each death on the battlefield is to some one the full measure of bereavement. We forget that. No matter in what manner we lose our dearest, we feel exactly the same grief. And the cry for help in the lone instance is often the more anguished because there seems to be no reason.

"Help me in my blind despair! I am a little on the side of feeling the things that are going to happen, and just six weeks ago I lost my husband and felt it all happening

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but couldn't tell what was going to happen. I am so sad and heartbroken. I feel I am losing faith and feel so very helpless. Can and will you write me something that would give me a lift to go on in this hideous world?"

Letters of appreciation, like those quoted in the preceding chapter, are easy to answer, but who am I to respond adequately to such a need as voiced above? And also the swarm of other questions, things people desperately want to know, if it is possible, of the present condition of those they have lost. At first the responsibility terrified me. Then I realized how little, really, I had to do with it. Any more than I really had much to do—besides reporting and editing—with *The Unobstructed Universe* which bears my name. All I needed to do was to ask for help and I got it. A moment's quiet preparation of receptivity—no more—a mental call, "Now, Betty, rally round! This is your job, you know!" and I find given me the effective things to say. I have no especial wisdom of my own. Without this "inspiration," if one would call it such, who would dare arrogate to himself the right to meddle? To offer anything to one who cries out in such a storm of grief? "How can I go on! Why should this thing have happened to me; what sense is there in it, or justice?" Especially in case of loss of a child! And other questions not so deeply rooted in the emotions—cremation, reincarnation,

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suicide, the survival of animals; all sorts of things.

In my opinion the usual pious "letter of consolation" is utterly futile, except that it shows the writer is sympathetic and wants to stand by. That is a good deal, to be sure, but the ordinary platitudes of resignation are more likely than not to arouse rebellious resentment. After all, it is not consolation people want; it is some sort of *assurance*. Does the loved one go on existing? Is he unchanged? Is he happy? Is he busy on a congenial job? Is he aware of me? Why can I not be aware of him? If communication is indeed possible, why does he not manifest himself to *me*? That is the sort of thing people long to know about, whether in their letters they say so in so many words, or not. Satisfied on such points, the needed "consolation" comes of itself, and the background plea of all—help me to bear the separation—is answered.

Only occasionally, as I say, are all these questions clearly formulated in one letter. This comes the nearest:

"Here are my questions," writes my correspondent. "Immediately following the transition we call death, what generally is the first thing of which the 'dead' person is made conscious—what I mean is, is he 'asleep' for a greater or lesser period, then awakened and some one assigned to make him aware of his present surroundings?"

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Is he still a creature of free will? Is his progress in wider fields, greater horizons, and better understanding, slower or faster according to the individual? If he is instructed, *what* briefly, is that instruction? What of those, who, by suicide, hurry their departure? What is one of the difficulties that confront those over there, in the same sense that poverty causes unhappiness and discontent here? Shall I find and recognize and know a lost one, or will she have developed beyond me into a higher plane?"

Except for the last, these questions have more of the intellectual than the emotional in them, but in turn their content is back of most of the questions asked.

The two best assurances I can offer in reply are these: The one who is gone on is unchanged, busy, and not in some far-off and amorphous "heaven"; he is still in intimate touch, and there is no real separation.

"The only thing I miss" Betty answered a question, "is the use of the five senses* in the Unobstructed universe for the expression of my love for the people who are still there in the Obstructed; and of course if I had that I wouldn't be here. I miss your not recognizing me, not hearing my voice, not feeling and seeing me when

* Curiously, one or two have misinterpreted this to mean that Betty has no five senses now! What she says is that she cannot use them to make us aware.

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I'm there. And of course I am there. I miss your response, and that is all."*

I quote this; and also the following based on another statement of Betty's.

"There is no genuine separation, and the only unhappy barrier that can be interposed between yourselves and those who have gone on into the Unobstructed is undue grief carried to the point of desolation. That interposes a barrier. Your dear ones understand perfectly, of course, how natural it is that you grieve. But the very closeness of the tie brings us [it is Betty telling this, from her vantage of the Unobstructed] a complete awareness of your grief; and it must make us sad to see you suffering. Those on this side do not suffer or sorrow as you do there." Betty was expressing the general principle, not speaking personally, of course. "We too regret the separation, but we understand and we cannot grieve. But we must share your sadness when you grieve so much. You love us who are here, and you would do anything for us, would you not? Then if you want to contribute something to us, do something for us, keep away from undue depression and grief. That is the one positive thing you can do for us. You can at least avoid casting a shadow on our new estate."

* *The Unobstructed Universe*, page 221.

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Or, to put it bluntly in another way; we certainly cannot be sorry for *them*, where they are now. If we are sorry for anyone it is for ourselves, and that is really a form of self-pity. We are hardly justified in indulging that, especially at the expense of our loved one's peace of mind.

Even to those convinced of immortality come doubts and uncertainties as to the completeness of the separation; both now, of course, but also in the future when they themselves shall enter the Unobstructed. They fear one gone before may have developed, grown, far beyond reach. And there is the anguished despair over the eternal loss of old relationships. Especially in the case of the orthodox who take literally the Biblical statement about no marriages or giving in marriage in heaven. The fact of death strengthens the love of true marriage, and if that is to vanish then there can be no desirable heaven.

"My husband died on the fifth of last August and his death, after fifteen years of happy marriage with him, left my life empty and forlorn indeed," writes one woman. "Jim was the most affectionate person I ever knew, and I, though not demonstrative by nature, crave affection and love more, I think, than the average person. Now I feel as if I were starving—I am groping for some sort of comfort—for something that will let me know

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I shall be with Jim again, and see him and hear his voice." "When Betty stepped across," I quote from another letter, "and you still felt that companionship stronger than ever* did you actually feel her as the same person who was here on earth? I have tried so hard to get that companionship, but have failed. Wherever my husband is I am sure he is terribly busy as he was a very active person with a very keen mind. I cannot see how our lives when we step across can harmonize with our mate who has been in the spiritual realm so much longer. I should think he would have advanced far beyond me."

"A silly question I wanted to ask is," goes still another, "does my husband *hear* me—does he know and spiritually respond when I speak to him, as I occasionally do, involuntarily, not calling or demanding him, but just making a remark. And if our friends in the other world are near us and can see and hear us, is this all the time, or just occasionally? And have I lost my relationship to him *as* my husband?"

This woman, too, refers to that old tag about no marriages in heaven. I wrote her that she, like all the others, had failed to consider the nature of the times when that was written, and the average person to whom it was

* See *Across the Unknown*, last chapter, and *The Unobstructed Universe*, pages 17 *et seq.*

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addressed. The sex relationships, Betty has told us, serve two purposes—procreation and unification. With animals they are confined to the first of these, with primitive or only partly developed humans it is preponderantly the same. Only with the higher types is the growing emphasis on unification. In the Unobstructed universe the procreation aspect, of course, vanishes; but *unification* is stronger and more nearly perfected. "Marriage" to the average Middle Eastern peasant of Biblical times meant largely, children; and to that sort of "marriage" the dictum refers. Naturally, not all earth marriages are the true and eternal mating. They are not on that account in any way to be reprehended, for many of them fulfill a respectable and necessary purpose—what might be called an interim purpose—pending the appearance of the real mate. Children are one fulfillment; a need of family companionship is another; even certain necessary but temporary requisites of development might be a third. True and deep affection, even the belief that this is the real thing, may be felt by both parties. The separation, by death or other-wise, may cause genuine grief. But gradually that separation is seen—or felt—to be final as a marriage, though whole-hearted affection may still remain, and will continue. And many people are puzzled by the question of second marriages. As a concrete example, one of my

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callers, after considerable discussion of all this, threw up her hands with a rueful laugh.

"I've been married three times," said she; "which of them am I supposed to tie up to when I die?"

"The one you really love," said I.

"I love them all. I should certainly not have married without love."

"Then perhaps none of them. Possibly you are still to meet what we might call your affinity mate. I believe you when you say you loved all three, and I respect your integrity in not marrying unless you felt that justification deeply and truly. But I think you would recognize something different in the real affinity, something that not only survives the temporary necessary obscurity, but—when that obscuring is past—comes back."

We talked about other things. She got up to go.

"Thank you," said she. "I do know. I have really known all the time. What you have said released the knowledge."

So I am able to write on this topic, with the confidence based on my own experience and Betty's statements, that mates do find one another and that in essence their relationships are unchanged.

As to the other worry—lest those who have gone ahead will, in those favorable conditions, develop so much more

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rapidly that they will advance to a "higher" and inaccessible plane—Betty was much amused. My replies, again based on her information and assurance, run somewhat thus:

"Do not worry about that. The development of consciousness in the Unobstructed universe is indeed, in a manner of speaking, passing from one plane to a higher. So people there do live on different planes. But right here on earth it is exactly the same. You are on a different plane of consciousness from the man digging the ditch for a sewer in front of your place. You can go out and talk to him—on his plane—but he would be unable to meet you on your plane. That is to say, he would assuredly fail to meet you were you to talk calculus to him. In that sense you and he certainly live on different planes, do you not? Nevertheless you are not physically separated. And you can meet on whatever ground is common to you both. The mistake is in taking 'planes' as geographical.

"So I consider it undoubtedly possible for the truly mated to continue together. In fact, I think it is impossible for them not to do so. As for 'catching up'; in the first place I doubt if the gap will be as broad as you fear, provided you live to the best of your capabilities while you are still here. Advancement is measured by resistance

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overcome, and possibly we have more resistance here. "Concerning your anxiety that he is worrying overmuch about your troubles, it is a good thing, of course, to spare those we love from the infliction of our moods and difficulties. But it should be remembered that they 'over there' have a compensating broader outlook on such things. They are no more really worried than we, when we drop into the nursery, are worried over the problems of the children. There is not quite that insulting discrepancy between, but it illustrates the point."

And in any case, Betty always refused to take the question of separation tragically. As I wrote one grieving mother:

"Betty has had considerable to say about separations such as this. From the Unobstructed side of the fence, such separations do not look as serious to them as they do to us, which is natural. From what she has said again and again, I can assure you that you will be with your son again."

How about children?

"Does my child grow and develop in the 'Unobstructed Universe' into an adult, or is his development conditioned by the years he has spent in our world?" writes a father. "Does a parent who has out-lived his child, upon crossing the boundary, see the child as he has known him—two,

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three, four or whatever years of age? Or the child may be matured? If that is so, how can the former relationship be possible? I am asking not only because I lost my boy of four last summer, but because right now it is important to all parents who have sons in the army—important not only to the parents, but to the sons who will die. And why should my boy be taken so young?"

The above is one of many, many similar letters. The following is the best I can find in my filed replies:

"We must think of existence as continuous, not parceled off into this life and that life. We start in simple beginnings and we grow and develop toward an ultimate maturity. Now in this life, as children, that we move our residence from one part of the country to another does not mean that we are going to remain exactly as we were when we migrated. We are going to go on growing just the same. It is no different when we, as children, move from the Obstructed aspect of the universe into the Unobstructed. We go right on growing. As to our bodily appearance—that, I think, is what you mean—we are told that the child goes on in growth until it reaches that balanced age-appearance which is the best height of maturity. So when you yourself go there and meet your child, it will not be that child as he was in his earth years, but the one you would see if he had grown up here.

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But that will in no way interfere with your recognition because, actually, what brings recognition is the personal frequency, the thing that made him your child and which brought your response here and continues to bring your response there. That affinity transcends mere outside appearance.

"Why should he be taken so young? That is indeed a puzzle until one looks at life as all of one piece. The fragment of existence we spend on earth is only a very little bit of a *continuous* whole. I do not know about this particular child, but the probability is this: that he had certain small things to get from the earth phase of his continuous life. He came here to get them. In the Unobstructed he goes on in development, throwing off the handicap of earth resistance necessary to getting those certain small things.

"The time or reason for *termination* of our sojourn here, in the Obstructed universe, is still beyond our comprehension. All I can say is that I have faith it all fits into the general pattern. When one dies young it may be that he has finished gathering his meed of what *Our Unseen Guest** calls quantity of consciousness, and can be better employed in other environments. While we, less

* Published by Harper & Bros., 1920; republished 1943 by the Borden Publishing Co., 727 West 6th St., Los Angeles.

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avored, must stay and work here where our talents are best suited."

Sometimes there seems no end to the imaginary alarms grief may conjure up, even when the belief in continuing life is firm. One man worried about the kind of form his beloved would be bound to inhabit. It must be one to correspond to conditions, he argued, and no one really knows what those conditions are. He even went so far, poor dear, as to consider the idea that she might be a rhomboid or other mathematical shape—is not the universe fundamentally mathematical?

"You will know me," Betty told me emphatically. "I am just as I was."

The problem set forth in the following letter is naturally more anxious than any other. Suicide is held secularly as a crime; and to that knowledge is added the uneasiness as to what effect it may have on those who thus prematurely enter into the Great Beyond.

"I would like to enquire what your opinion is as to the welfare of one 'over there' who has taken his own life—the tragic suddenness fills me with most terrible anxiety. I cannot help but wonder whether now all is well with him, or whether he has been plunged into an even darker abyss than when he was suffering here.... Perhaps I can reconcile myself to what is done, but how can I find peace

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unless I know that all is well with him? Please believe that I am in desperate earnestness."

It is a strong temptation to return generalities of a comforting sort. But it is unwise.

"I do so much wish that I had some information for your comfort," I wrote one such inquiry, "but the question of suicide and the status of those who commit it has been merely touched on by Betty and her Invisibles. So I know nothing much from authority, and am hesitant on hazarding a personal opinion.

"However, from the few statements that have been made, this is what I gather: In general principle nothing one has earned spiritually is ever lost; and one must go on in the evolution of spiritual development. One can do things to retard or make difficult that progress, but can do nothing to lose it or stop it. Suicide is one of those things that make it difficult. Very difficult, perhaps."

"What of those who commit suicide?" writes another, probably raised in orthodox beliefs. "Are they helped and instructed? If so, in what? And," this correspondent adds wistfully, "is it considered wrong to look hopefully forward to the time when the old man with the scythe comes along? And if so, why?"

I could meet these questions more directly.

"Of course they [suicides] are helped and instructed,"

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I wrote. "As to what they are instructed in—isn't that a rather large order, considering the great variety of development needs? One of the reasons we are on earth is to fill out as best we can the capacity with which we came here. The degree to which we accomplish that determines our status—and our capability—in the next phase of life. Naturally if, of our own volition, we cut this life short, we are handicapping ourselves for the future. No, I don't think it wrong to look forward to another life, but not at the expense of this one, and certainly not to the extent of suicide. No matter how much we look forward to a new existence—or why—as long as we feel we have a job to finish here we should not choose to quit it and step over the border, even if the free choice were offered us. Only when we have finished off are we ripe and ready to go."

I have no reason to believe that this person was making any personal application to himself. But I have heard from several such; I mean people inclined to make way with themselves, but hesitant.

"Betty says suicide is cowardly, I know," writes one, after a recital of unhappiness, "but recently the heavy burden has been made unbearable to the point of insanity, or rather such mental confusion as not to know what I am doing at times."

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This was a real cry for help.

"I wish," was part of my reply, "I were possessed of greater wisdom than is given me. I can only give you generalities on which you can work yourself. But, our Invisibles say, it is the work that one does himself, and not what is handed to him ready-made, that has the real constructive power." Then a few paragraphs of the best I could do by way of encouragement on the especial problems. "Suicide," I continued, "is no solution to anything. The very act of suicide cuts one off, for a long period, from normal participation in life. One does not, as in normal death, go on at once there from where he left off here. He is not 'punished,' but he must first get back to normal, so to speak. Like getting over a shock; and it is most uneasy and uncomfortable. He is not escaping one bit from anything. There is no possible gain from a mere shift of environment."

I am glad to say that, shortly after, I received from this correspondent a long letter in which, among other things, she said:

"I want you to know how very helpful your very lovely letter has been and will continue to be. It explains a great deal and helps me to bear an otherwise unendurable burden.... I have read and reread it a number of times and have applied its teachings. Such a letter as yours

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was as a drink of water to a parched throat, and I shall always keep it and cherish it."

So often it takes so light a touch to restore the balance!

The next query may seem to some like a painful lapse from proper seriousness, but I do not think so. It is generally asked with a certain deprecation, but also a certain wistfulness, and more or less shamefacedly after discussing a number of "more vital" subjects. To my mind the deprecation is unnecessary: it is the most natural thing in the world to want to know about our friends, and the mere fact that this particular friend is a dog and not a human has nothing to do with it. In basic traits that make up friendship, like unselfish and staunch loyalty, dogs have rather the higher batting average.

"Another thing which you may call silly," is a typical approach, "—and you are at liberty to do so, for I have long since learned to laugh at my own expense. However, I would not expose myself to unkind ridicule and to anyone who would not understand. I am sure you will.

"I am a dog lover. I am sure from having read your other books that you are too. So was your wife. Here is my question: We lost two dogs by their having been killed, both unmercifully. My boy and I have grieved over them as though they were human. Now, if consciousness is never lost, do these dogs exist somewhere as

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dogs? Would it be possible that sometime I'll find them running to meet me?"

"I think your question about dogs is far from silly," I wrote back. "In fact, we propounded it to Betty very promptly when we had determined that it was indeed Betty and in full control. She replied categorically that 'of course my dogs are with me, and I love them.' She went on to explain that animals, just animals *per se*, are born from their own quality of consciousness and return to that reservoir; in that case no personal life is lost. Those that have attained what she defined as 'volitional reasoning,' on the other hand, have also attained personality and do carry on as individuals. Assuredly some dogs and other pets have volitional reasoning, certain schools of psychology to the contrary notwithstanding. Betty says that eventually, in the expansion of consciousness, the dog form will not fit, and then it will have some other form. She did not go further into details."

IV

I Take My Pen in Hand

NO, WANTING to be reassured about a faithful dog is not "silly." As a matter of fact, one of the several outstanding things about this whole business is the remarkably small number of unsound letters I have received. They have been so few, indeed, as to be negligible; for out of all the thousands who have written me, I can recall but seven indubitable crackpots, and only three who were demented.

I had expected the subject to flush a swarm of cranks, at the very least. Such has not been the case. Apparently Betty's approach has not drawn them. One I here quote simply because it expresses such an admirable *non sequitur*. This poor lady wrote me most kindly to warn me that I was surrounded by evil forces telling me all this *Unobstructed Universe* stuff in order to snare my soul for their own fell purposes; that none of it was from Betty, as Betty herself had been unable to get through

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to warn me. Until now. "Betty has reached *me* and wants me to tell you this," the letter went on. "I know that it is Betty because she came to my door in an automobile covered with ectoplasm, and I knew I must send you her message because the ectoplasm fell off in chunks."

One thing the great variety of letters have in common. Each indicates how tremendous an effort is forward, through all sorts of channels, in all sorts of ways, to get into earth consciousness a few fundamental truths. The interest evidenced is not merely intellectual. It is a genuine groping for expansion. Innumerable "psychic" communications are reported to me; and fundamentally they all say, or are trying to say, the same things. The expression of them is often crude, diluted, fumbling; but essentially they are alike, and the likeness is easily recognizable. Immortality, a present reality, here and now, rather than a future vagueness; *Continuity of the person* as he is at the time of death; *no sudden blaze of illumination*, but rather a better opportunity and eagerness to go ahead and earn and develop; *Continuity*, not merely of the person, but of the job. We carry over just what we have gained on earth in the way of equipment and character, and right here is the only place we can acquire these things; therefore *we should keep our feet on the ground*, and do our jobs to our utmost. *Consciousness is the one*

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and only reality, and *expansion of consciousness* is the ultimate of evolution; but evolution moving by natural growth and not by any extraordinary or extranatural regimens. This is the sort of thing being iterated and reiterated by the Invisibles to whomever is sensitive enough to receive.

And right here I want to say that I answer every letter I *can* answer, without exception. I mention this because so many people fail to put in their address. Gradually I have accumulated quite a batch of letters simply crying, out for replies—for answering letters, *all* letters, I look upon as part of my present job.

It is a good job, and I am glad to have it and to do it. But I want again to make it very clear that I have no especial wisdom of my own on which to base my replies. It is furthest from my thoughts to set up as any sort of "authority" in these matters. That would be an inexcusable arrogance. I have a number of sources not possessed by others, and that is the only reason why I take it upon myself to set down answers. First of all, there are the twenty-odd years of association with the work Betty was doing while she was here, the record of which, as I have said, fills over two thousand pages. Second, there are the "divulgences" Betty has given since she left, and they, too, cover a wide field. But most important of all,

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I have found that if I am puzzled, or feel especially inadequate, I can get help if I ask for it and hold myself receptive to it. This is markedly true when I deal with those whom I call "clients," people who visit me in person. There are a great many of them. Some even make long journeys from out of town, or even from other states. More about them later.

At first these people terrified me; the gap between the effort they had made and my own inadequacy to make that effort worthwhile, gave me a sort of stage fright. After all, a letter costs only three cents, and one has all the time in the world to think up some kind of a reply. But face to face! Who was I to give these people answers to the vital questions they brought so hopefully? And, in addition, I have a holy horror of meddling with other people's inner workings. But very shortly I discovered I really had not much to do with it. To my genuine, amazement I found myself telling them just what needed to be told. At least, they seem to have gone away satisfied, enlightened, comforted—and they have written to tell me so, sometimes in almost extravagant terms. Soon I began to meet them with confidence.

"Now, Betty!" I say silently, "you have to help, you know!"

This same sort of "help" seems to be forthcoming at

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need in the event of a letter difficult to answer, which—as I said before—is why I have the nerve to answer at all.

Short cuts such as form letters are Impracticable, even though the questions and requests and problems do, in the long run, fall into categories. Latterly a friend has undertaken a real labor of love and sorted a few hundred carbons of my replies, put them into folders, and indexed them according to topics, of which, as I have already mentioned, there proved to be no less than eighty-three, the accumulation of nearly five years. Letters still pour in on me to answer, but only rarely one whose subject, or subjects, cannot be found in the index. The carbons are valuable reminders of my thinking as to that particular topic, but I cannot merely have them copied as form letters, no matter how exactly applicable to the present instance. Something behind the words and thought must be conveyed; a dynamics of *personal* contact of mind, so to speak. That can be created only by a fresh and *personal* approach to each.

It might possibly interest a few were I to quote the complete list of all those eighty-three topics, but the majority of readers simply skip formal lists. However, it will give some idea of the ground covered if I state that the general subject of Bereavement, for example, includes under subheads, Children, Contact, Cremation, Suicide,

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Fear of Death, Intellectual Doubt, the "Beta Body,"* Mediums, Reincarnation, Animal Survival, and Conditions in the Unobstructed. The other major topics, such as Spiritual and/or Psychic Training, Meditation, Obsession, Interference, all the religious aspects, War, Dreams, the question of forming groups for one purpose or another, Healing,—I select at random—have also each its subheads to deal with the various aspects that crop up in people's minds. And I repeat my belief that I am "helped," for I certainly do not know enough about any eighty-three subjects to dare answer questions about them.

* See Appendix to *The Betty Book* for an explanation of what St. Paul calls "the spiritual body."

V

The Doubting Thomas

ALL this—Betty's "divulgence"—is wonderful; it is illuminating, it is comforting—but is it so? Are you, as the reporter of it, sincere? What reason have you yourself to believe?

At first I was inclined to feel just a bit insulted over the questioning of my honesty, but I soon realized that such queries were born of a desperate need to know. By honesty, I do not mean deliberate fabrication; but rather it was a fear, or a suspicion, that *The Unobstructed Universe* might be fiction by a fiction writer, a flight of imagination, cast in this form either to get over ideas of my own, or, quite simply and baldly, to make sales and money.* In the back of these people's minds must have lingered a slight feeling of at least diffidence over the asking, for almost always the skepticism has been attributed to "a friend."

*Here is a good place to say that I can recommend these books gracefully in that I use none of the royalties for myself.

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"While I have several friends who have read *The Unobstructed Universe*, there seemed considerable doubt as to whether it actually happened or was a philosophy which you have presented in that way with a writer's skill."

Or perhaps, like this one, the letter is entirely frank:

"I read your thrilling book, *The Unobstructed Universe*, over a year ago. There had been a death in the family and it was an unbelievable comfort; in fact, here was a book that I believe could change a person's life into a great adventure. Alas—and I beg your pardon in advance, for I am asking for my peace of mind, yes, and soul—I was truly a different person until I began to doubt, and of course other people helped my doubt along, and finally I came to the conclusion that a cultured intellect could make up a book like that, with all the good intentions in the world, but nevertheless the book would then be worthless, a beautiful wish-dream. And I certainly didn't, and do not now, *want* to think that. If the book is truth, it seems to me what the whole world is waiting for. Could you tell me it is truth—that your lovely Betty is more gloriously alive than ever—in some way that I can be sure of? I am sincerely and seriously concerned."

That is a nice letter. Others are not so considerate. A

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few—a very few—are belligerent. All I can say, as politely as possible, is:

"I can give you my personal word of assurance that everything I have written in these books is a straight reporter's job, as carefully prepared as possible. These things all happened as set down, without embellishment. I really think I would be considerable of a skunk to have done other-wise. Don't you?"

Or where there is no suspicion of my intentions or honesty, I am asked how I can be certain that I am not deluded.

"Your book has given me great comfort," writes one man, "but may I enquire how sure you are that the message of that book really came from your wife? I am utterly unable to tell you how much your information will help me."

"You ask how I am sure that the messages of the book really came from my wife," I replied. "In the book itself [*The Unobstructed Universe*] I have given examples of the evidence she gave us, as in the episode of the Chinese box, the twenty-odd pieces of indubitable evidence for her sister; the incident of the blue slippers and a number of similar ones. Those in the book are only a few of many, and are quoted as typical examples. At every meeting she has given many more as clear and indubitable.

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These have now accumulated into several hundred, equally good. Like any other evidence often repeated, it has forced acceptance by its volume and invariable accuracy. One thing is accident; two is coincidence; three is remarkable coincidence. But a hundred or more just simply moves out of that category. That is why I am absolutely certain in my own mind."

Over the years have come enough letters of this kind to indicate that a public statement of assurance on my part would be very desirable. But I never insist an certainty in others just on my say-so.

"I think that each must make up his own mind as to the authenticity of the source of this," goes one of my answers. "I've heard from a good many scientists, and they ignore that question entirely and hop right over into considering the content of the book. The source is unimportant to them, but they find enormous value in the subject matter, which they describe as the adumbration of an unchallengeable 'higher physics.' Personally, I've had almost an embarrassment of riches in convincing evidence, but whether this convinces others does not seem to me to matter. The purpose does not seem to be research society proof, but divulgence."

"I do understand exactly your frame of mind and your prayer for reassurance as to the actuality of what I report."

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runs my reply to other complaints of the same sort, "but I do not know of any recipe for getting it otherwise than from within yourself. Outside testimony helps only when it comes from someone in whom you have complete confidence, and even then only when that confidence is itself an inner conviction. All I can do is to report honestly my own conviction and belief.

"The only way to do, if such conviction and belief are not spontaneous, is to adopt it as a provisional hypothesis—or throw it out entire! There is no sense or help in mere wishful thinking."

However, whether it be a sign of the times or not, most people—and not only the bereaved, but many with other types of interest—accept the basic facts. Quite naturally they desire experience of their own. A few of the unreflecting request me "to ask Betty the next time you talk to her," or even demand Joan's name and address so they can call upon her themselves! The direct experience these people want ranges from trivialities, like finding a lost bunch of keys, through a great variety of merely intellectual curiosities, to the desperations of sorrow. The first two categories are easy. It is sufficient to say, bluntly, that it cannot be arranged. But deep sorrow is a different matter. That cannot be rebuffed, even though refusal is necessary. I must explain; and this explanation comes

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nearer to being standardized than that on any other subject. This is because the letters themselves are cast in so uniform a pattern—"ask Betty through Joan."

But some of them are hard to deny.

"I am afraid to go to an ordinary medium, for I know some of them are liars and, even when they are honest, it is hard to know which ones. Also how can one know if the entity speaking to you is the person he or she says he is, and how is one to know that it is not someone who does not wish you well?... Mine have all met violent deaths in the war. I wish I knew.... I do wonder if I could talk to Betty through Joan? Or if you would give me the name of someone really fine and of great integrity like Joan? I would never never reveal who she really was. I know it is an imposition to ask for such favors of people who do not do such things professionally. There is no reason why they should want to help a complete stranger, except out of kindness and pity."

"A flood of such requests comes to me," I write, "all of them of a sort to enlist my heartiest sympathy, and each appealing to me as fully deserving of what help we can all give. But I have had perforce to adopt almost a standard form of reply in pointing out why Joan cannot do this sort of work.

"One reason, of course, is the very multiplicity of these

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requests. Joan and Darby both have their own jobs in life. Joan could not possibly take on the whole bulk, and on what basis could I make a selection?

"That is the first reason, but not the important one. The second is that for over twenty-five years Joan has been held to strict anonymity. The reason for this is that she has been trained and reserved as the best available instrument for this work of Betty's. She is still reserved, for more of that work in the future, when war conditions permit its continuance. Indeed, after Betty's last 'divulgence' she made the categorical statement, 'This station* is now closed for repairs,' and was emphatic that Joan should do no more psychic work until she, Betty, gave the green light.

"Those are the good and sufficient reasons why I cannot ask Betty, through Joan, your questions. But even if they were not mandatory, the fact still remains that Joan and I live three thousand miles apart, and our very occasional visits are never long enough for what Betty has saved up to say along the line of her especial work."

Since these people are reasonable, they see the point.

* Back in 1916, when Joan, like Betty, accidentally discovered she was psychic, "Stephen"—the young American volunteer killed in France, who dictated *Our Unseen Guest*—called Joan a "receiving station" rather than a medium. For further explanation see *Our Unseen Guest*, Chap. 11, or *The Unobstructed Universe*, pp. 49-50.

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I think most people see the point in advance, for the great bulk of requests for help to communication do not ask for Joan, but merely want me to recommend to them a reliable medium through whom they can get their personal assurance.

Unfortunately I am a broken reed when it comes to that. Only on the rarest occasions have I myself had contact with professional mediums. My interests and needs, intellectual or other-wise, have never required their services; and neither Betty nor I was ever particularly concerned with technical "psychic research." So even if I had a hundred per cent confidence in those I have happened to sit with, they are too few and scattered geographically to fit my correspondents. But of course I have not one hundred per cent confidence in them. That attitude is not necessarily any reflection on the integrity of any one of them, but of their ability to produce, undiluted, what my particular correspondents want and need.

So the answer I pass on to people who seek from professional mediumship comfort and assurance in bereavement must, perforce, be a generality. It is proffered in free acknowledgment that it cannot be expected to cover the especial case.

"I myself have never had much to do with professional

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mediums. It seems to me that even the most gifted, dealing as they do with such a variety of people, must be required to 'shift frequencies,' so to speak, so often that a certain amount of 'coloring' must be unavoidable. It takes an expert to sift out the coloring. There are thousands of honest mediums in the world, Betty tells us. But the vast majority of them are limited in gift. They can do perfectly one thing; they can produce sufficient personal evidence to convince the sitter of presence and identity—in other words, the continuity of life. But once that conviction is given, the job is finished. Continued 'chit-chat' communication rapidly fades into a futility that may end in skepticism. Excursions into exact descriptions, philosophies, religions and so forth are probably largely or entirely from the ideas and preconceptions of the medium's subconscious. Parenthetically, it is only human for them to branch out into such subjects in all honesty and belief. That is why so many of these people seem 'queer.'

"With that preface and warning, if you are able to make appropriate discount for what we call coloring, you might conceivably get what you want from a medium. But even evidence will not satisfy you without a growth of conviction from within. But, as I say, my experience *i.e.*, die contribution of the station's subconscious mind.

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is so slight that I am not really fitted to advise. Why not write the American Society for Psychological Research in New York? They may have listed someone in your vicinity."

Although nine in ten of the inquirers after a chance for communication are impelled emotionally—by bereavement—there are quite respectable numbers who just want evidence, for their intellectual conviction and satisfaction. Except in certain cases, so rare as to be too especial for common consumption, so to speak, I doubt if the average medium can do so laboratory a type of sustained work.

Some of these seekers are wholly detached and impersonal.

"Since the age of fifteen," says one, "I have been seized periodically with a driving urge to know more on this subject. I have tried to explain it to myself. I know it is not sensation seeking, or mere curiosity. For the past few years I have been delving into all manner and phases of psychics via books—not with any ax to grind, as fortunately no one close to me has died—but simply to find out, if I could, the manner of person who believed in this sort of thing, what he had to say and what we could do to approximate such experiences; to prove to one's self that this thing is truly real.... As you know, what one reads

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may be very impressive, but still and all the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and what is applicable to one's own life makes a thing real, not what one reads. The reading only opens the door."

That is an intelligent agnosticism, and expresses a need quite as worthy of help as those of more emotional content.

"I would like," goes my reply to people like this—and there are a great, great many, by the way—"to answer you more satisfactorily than the facts permit. But, bluntly, I do not think you will gain the conviction you desire by that sort of outside evidence—I mean psychical evidence, obtained through mediums, courses of reading or instruction, or any extraneous device. It never has convinced. It was tried. Years ago there was produced a body of such evidence, attested by most eminent, sane and trustworthy people, whose testimony—on any other subject—would be unassailable in any court of law. I refer to the period of Sir William Crookes and his contemporaries. Nevertheless, only those who had themselves had personal experience accepted the testimony.

"I do not believe such evidence will ever be accepted by those without their own experience. This sort of opinion and conviction comes only when one has ripened to it; ripeness comes only through growth; and growth

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results from living, education, sincerely held aim and intention. It cannot be grafted on by 'evidence.'"

And finally, to finish off this aspect of the subject, there are those who complain, indignantly or merely in bewilderment, that they see no reason why a medium should be required at all. "If Jim"—or Jane, or whatever—"could communicate at all, it would certainly be to me, not to some stranger."

Of course there is the trite and conventional—but quite true—reply; that even if Jim or Jane were still here on earth, but at a distance, they would not talk direct, but through a medium. In one case, the telephone girl. But that does not quite answer the why of it. Without going into what Betty has told us technically—of the mind as a field of energy, of the impact of selected frequencies and the like—it is useful to recall what she has explained as to why one person is mediumistic and another not.

"Betty has said many times," is one of my replies, "that a medium or station is one who possesses a special gift; just as one might possess a special gift for music or painting. Each person has a basic frequency that makes him that individual and not someone else. No two such frequencies are alike; they are as unduplicated as thumb prints. Now, suppose that the very highest frequency an ordinary

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human being, ungifted psychically, in the Obstructed aspect of the universe could register on a machine capable of such recording is, say, 100, whereas the lowest communication frequency in the Unobstructed universe is 150. The ordinary person—you or I—cannot bridge that gap. The medium's especial gift or talent is the ability temporarily to step up her basic frequency—or allow it to be stepped up—to 150. 'Temporarily, I say,' explained Betty. 'If it were to be permanently, she would be where I am now.' If I have not that talent, spoken communication is impossible for me; just as impossible as it would be for me to compose a musical symphony."

VI

Conditions in the Unobstructed

AFTER assurance that those who have left us are still alive and aware, the next thing people want to know about is the present circumstance of their dear ones who have gone. What is "heaven" like? What is the way of life? What kind of a job are they doing?

Now, that is a subject on which my own opinion counts for nothing. I am like Will Rogers—all I know is what I read in the papers; all I know is what I have learned directly or indirectly from Betty and her Invisibles. And they have steadfastly refused to go into exact details. They say that any attempt at factual description must be translated from their terms to ours; that in these matters we simply do not speak the same language; that the translation is almost certain to be garbled. They instance the "brick houses" and "cigars" in *Raymond*.* The ideas back of the words were genuine, but the brain of the receiving station translated that idea, whatever it was, into cigars and brick houses. Some association of ideas,

* *Raymond*, by Sir Oliver Lodge.

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possibly bodily ease and comfort, to her was connoted by the comfortable smell of cigar smoke and shelter. Betty called any attempt at precise description of her present habitat as "getting Oliverlodgish." Better no picture at all than a false one, she says. And I pass on just that to my correspondents.

However, general conditions are another matter. Betty has said something of them. What that something is is fully set down, verbatim, in *The Unobstructed Universe*,* and to that I refer inquirers.

But the application of these generalities is sometimes a different matter. Where the subject of this chapter ties in with bereavement, for instance. You will remember the anxiety lest the one who had gone before should "get so far ahead" that the one who was to follow would never catch up. That anxiety is amplified by the fear that the first to go may be called to some distant sphere whence he—or she—finds it impossible to get back to this earth. Or that he, or she, has a job that keeps them too busy to come. It is a cry against a complete loss of companionship.

We have touched on part of this before in a different connection, but some of it will bear repetition.

"I gather," went one of my replies, "that Betty, and at least all others in the Unobstructed universe who have

* *Pages 202 et seq.*

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attained a certain degree of development, inhabit the *whole* universe, and are able to see all of it, theirs and our own. If they do not habitually see our aspect when they happen to be here, they can at least easily adjust their frequency to be able to do so. All that Betty has said on this subject has indicated that most certainly your husband can see and hear you. She has many times remarked that one of their great deprivations over there is their inability to obtain from us a response to their efforts and their proximity. As for contact depending on some contribution from us, I think we shut them off by indifference or lack of faith. And no, I do not think they are always near us. Betty told us, with considerable scorn, that most decidedly she is not 'always hanging around.' After all, they have a life to live. But they are within magnetic call, so to speak, in case of a deep desire or a real emergency. And they may spend with us considerable of their leisure off their own jobs. But isn't that exactly what we do here? Betty once announced that she was 'going to have more time with you now.' We urged her not to curtail what must be important work just for us. 'You do not understand,' she replied. 'I have earned this time, and when one earns time off here, he has to take it.' So there is leisure to spend with us—if the tie is close enough."

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To one kind of question I have never been able to give what I should expect to be a satisfactory answer—what happens when we first go over? That experience has been reported back in so many ways that the only conclusion we can reach is that it varies with the individual. And the, variation probably depends on the type and degree of development. However, apparently some few things are typical; there is no pain or struggle; one emerges into a condition of vitality, health, exuberance; one gains no sudden illuminations, but goes on from where he was and with what he has; it is what Betty calls a "fine busy place." Otherwise, as I say, the procedure varies. There is no average. Some are said to have a period of adjustment, even of sleep. Betty, because of her long training, was able instantly to take up her new life. One without such training generally requires a period of transition which Betty says is not far from the Catholic idea of purgatory.

Of such generalities I can be certain, but generalities rarely satisfy. People want details right down to the last coat-button, and of course they cannot get them. Or, rather, they can get them in abundance from certain sources but not in any degree of reliability. That is why Betty and our own Invisibles so consistently discouraged us from becoming "Oliverlodgish." Especially do correspondents demand something more specific about the

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form of those in the Unobstructed universe—what we named for convenience the beta body as distinguished from the alpha, or physical, body. You remember some pages back the poor gentleman who wanted to be sure his wife's form was not now a geometrical figure!

"You quote Betty as saying, 'You will know me; I am just as I always was.' What did she mean by that? Surely she cannot be just the same:—her present correspondence to her present environment cannot require, say, a liver! Granting that her body now is in external appearance the same as it was here; how about the inside? Is she," the writer asks quaintly, without the slightest idea of being funny, "a hollow shell?"

At first glance that looks sufficiently Ohverlodgish, but after all the question is natural. I so informed this correspondent, and further confessed:

"We ourselves have asked it and similar questions and have had reply only as, and to the extent that, the Invisibles thought us capable of understanding. We were told that the form of the beta—or spiritual—body is exactly like that of the physical body. When we asked if that body had internal organs of our kind, they replied that it has but they have not the same functions. In our own experience, they told us, certain of our organs subserve two purposes, one distinctly and solely of the material

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earth, the other partially of the Unobstructed aspect. The sex function, for example, on the purely material or animal side, for procreation; in the higher aspects, for the spiritual purposes of unification." I repeated what I had said in another connection: "We can certainly not follow down into exact detail what that secondary—or is it primary—function of your example, the liver, might fill. Do we need to? Cannot we accept the general principle?"

"The best thing, after all, is to wait and see! And meantime to have confidence in Betty's statement that 'it is a fine, busy place.'"

VII

Our Common Human Ingredient

IT HAS become a bromide to say that all people are psychic. Nevertheless few, I think, really understand that "psychics" are an inevitable and necessary ingredient in the human make-up, just as much so as is the blood of the human body. Like any other faculty, it grows in strength by use; and—again like any other human faculty—the incentive for its use ordinarily arises from the necessity of the moment. When it is valuable to men as a protection or a means of getting forward, it plays a prominent part. When the need of protection lessens, it fades into the background. But it is always there.

No one who has any familiarity either with primitive men or with early records can have any doubt of this. All of the latter, including the Christian Bible, are full of accounts of the psychic powers of men, intuition, sixth sense, prophetic vision, anything you want to call it. The history of every race in every age, the folklore of both civilized and savage people, the very fairy tales of

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our nurseries all are based on this fascinating and least understandable faculty. For more centuries than it has been denied or discounted, psychic power was recognized and honored, the "prophets of old" have been read and their wisdom revered.

As for primitive men, I have in my time done quite a bit of exploring, and I have had opportunity, many times, to see in action what Dr. Rhine calls "extra-sensory perception," generally in most practical application.

But with our modern understanding and control of the natural world, the need for what might be called intuitional protection—or just plain hunch—has diminished. For proof that it is merely the need and not the faculty itself which has suffered that diminishment, I would refer you again to those who explore into the primitive. Over and above all safeguards of equipment and experience, the most scientifically trained man in the world soon learns that he is a fool if he does not heed that "still, small voice" within his soul which frequently is all that keeps him out of situations in which no amount of equipment and experience could possibly save his skin. He probably will not admit it, if he is very "scientific," but he knows it is true. A little nearer home to most of us are our young men at war, and what they report of the value of "hunch."

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But these people who know are still in the minority. The psychic faculty has been so little needed until recently that it actually fell into ill repute. It came to a low estate, publicly fostered and catered to for the most part by people trading on credulity. Note I use the words "publicly" and "for the most part." Nevertheless, belief and investigation, though generally made a private matter, have never quite died down into the prevailing skepticism. I have spoken often of the experiments and conviction of men like Crookes and Lodge. Our own Edison, before he died, predicted that the next great discoveries will be in the realm of "so-called spirit." Science is just beginning to think so. Scientists everywhere, singly and in laboratories—not a few of them commercial, by the way—are experimenting in the subtler forces we know as psychic. The big fellows in the scientific world are no longer agnostic as to the spiritual. It is increasingly difficult latterly to get even the hardest-boiled intellectual to commit himself that "there is nothing in it." They would say so, violently, only a few years ago. Now the most mechanistic is inclined to be cagey, to sidestep. He does not *know* there is nothing in it! The subject has become respectable again, both to talk about and to investigate.

In consequence, increasing numbers of persons are

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discovering in one way or another that the simple forms of "communication" are possible to them, and are experimenting therewith. I put the word in quotes because it covers a great many possibilities of origin besides the one usually attributed—communication with excarnate entities. People do not know that, or do not want to believe it. When things happen or are said inconsistent with the idea that they are in touch with well-intentioned outside entities, they are distressed, or resentful or frightened or merely puzzled. So they write me.

The letters, and my replies, include so wide a field that its proper covering would require a textbook on psychics. Certainly there is material enough. But I am not a very strong believer in the value of a textbook for those seeking expansion of consciousness. That is a definite movement in personal evolution toward which "psychics" is but one of many steps on one of many personal paths. And "psychics" are very personal indeed. If there is to be specific detailed guidance it must be much like the guidance of a parent to a child first learning to walk. If he is a wise parent, he knows when to hold up and when to let bump, and there is no blue print or rule book to define that "when." In this sort of growth, as indeed in all others, each must be allowed—for his best advantage—the "God-given privilege of blundering."

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So I am not going to compile a textbook. All I intend is to set down a few principles, and to cite a few individual cases illustrative of the various kinds of difficulties people get into when they first grope into this world of new experience.

Nine in ten start with a ouija board or automatic writing or yes-and-no answers to some easy code. Necessarily the beginning techniques must be very simple and easy to manipulate. For that reason they are difficult to guard, and it follows that they can be easily upset or interfered with. That interference may originate in a dozen ways—ranging from the receiving station's own inability to distinguish and edit out subconscious contributions, to what may be strong opposition from mischievous, scatterbrained or downright inimical personalities. If the effort really has a serious ultimate purpose, the last may be the case, for constructive effort always calls forth its complementary opposition. Consequently the first burst of amazed enthusiasm is often followed by a period of doubt, resentment and fear. Then either the whole business is thrown overboard in disgust or the neophyte moves into a state of mind that will accept the moon as green cheese provided "weegee" says so. Maybe he pulls out of this; maybe not. A beneficent skepticism rescues many; some just plain get in trouble; a few emerge into something

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real and reliable. I will add, on my own, from a rather wide observation of such cases, grading from mere annoyance to dire peril, that it seems to be a policy, or perhaps a law, that each of us at this stage must make his own way out from whatever mess he happens to get into. We get no help. That is how we must learn. In these formative stages I doubt if we would be guarded even if it were possible.

Having weathered this phase of confusion and doubt, the next danger is a sort of starry-eyed awe. This is the "especially selected" stage, when the receiving station is convinced that he or she is set apart from the rest of humanity for a unique and world-shaking revelation, which must be accepted intact as sacrosanct gospel, and in due course is to be passed on to the aforesaid shaken world. Why not? Is not this experience in itself a thing utterly outside the ordinary life experience of all but a few; and were not those few chosen? And furthermore the ouija, or the pencil, says so, in so many words. How doubt the statement, when obviously the content of these "messages" is promising, gives some evidence of genuineness and constructive intent, perhaps has conveyed indubitable evidential? It is still beyond the station's discriminative ability to perceive that the especially-selected and give-to-the-world stuff is merely a reflection back

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from the station's own amazement at finding the thing itself there and workable.

A typical extension of this is the daily visitation into the family circle of the most amazing coterie of celebrities, who have taken on the job, not only of personal supervision, but of a sort of bellboy attendance. Just name them, and you get them. Or they name themselves. The curious thing is how complacently and unquestioningly their identity is accepted. At one time it was a poor group indeed who was not under at least part-time supervision of William James, Moses, Julius Caesar, Theodore Roosevelt, Galileo, Thomas a Kempis, Shakespeare—I mention but a few at random—each eager and ready to forsake all else and pop in at a moment's notice. If some of these excarnate visitors are strangers to earthly fame, they bear Greek or Greek-sounding names, or Hindu or pseudo-Hindu titles. The people reporting these affiliations are not crackpots; the stuff they get in other respects is good and sound and constructive. Most of them use a sound caution and skepticism in evaluating what they receive, except as to this one thing. And they have a sane and saving sense of humor. For example:

"Last fall we tried out a ouija board—with skepticism in our hearts, but had some interesting results. Since then we enter into communication quite seriously by repeating

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the Lord's Prayer and singing a hymn—in cracked voices, but our spirits are melodious. For protection, we asked my father to prevent unwanted entities from entering. Not long ago he introduced Nimrod who lived in the time of Christ and received inspiration from him. We were surprised recently to have Thomas the Apostle introduced. He gave us no information we did not already have, but we appreciated his encouragement. The most exciting visitor we've had is Frederick Myers, who came through last week"—and so on.

Nevertheless, in this instance, as in most of the others, the context of what was conveyed by this brilliant galaxy could not be dismissed with a chuckle. That would be too easy.

In usual course the next phase is the one through which it is most difficult to come with faith and enthusiasm intact. A chill creeps in. Confident predictions simply do not come out. Positive statements of evidential fact just are not so. Advice fairly insisted upon turns out to be as unwise as a radio blat. At first discrepancies are generally trivial and easy to recognize. But they become progressively more subtle, more plausible in imitation of the real thing, more difficult to spot. The difficulty becomes impossibility if one permits even a slight tendency toward wishful thinking or will to believe; it can turn dangerous

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if the station takes sides, and begins to rationalize and explain the discrepancies. That offers a handhold for opposition that leads to real trouble and ends sometimes in terror, despair, or even what appears to be actual obsession or domination.

Fortunately the latter is not often the case. Beneath all these barnacles that encrust early experience is evident a solid core of intention. The effort is genuine; it is constructive; it is in charge of Invisible entities of beneficent purpose; in due course they succeed in stimulating a healthy growth that rises above all the miasma of bewilderment.

But in the meantime, why, why, why! Why do not these beneficent Invisibles stop the absurd impersonations? Why are these falsehoods, discrepancies, Contradictions permitted? If they come from outside entities, why are not the latter kept out? If from the station's subconscious, why are they not denied? That is the sort of thing I am asked, over and over again.

VIII

Impersonation

THE priority troubles are obviously *impersonation* and *false witness*. If these are indeed excarnate entities communicating with us, we want first of all to know who they are. If they lie to us about their identity, how can we have confidence in anything else they tell us? Or if they lie about anything at all, or even if they are proved to lack knowledge or wisdom, why should we trust them; These things are basic.

Nevertheless, wholly innocent impersonation—or rather impersonation by default—is possible; and perhaps we alone are responsible for the false witness.

Leaving aside for the moment William James, Julius Caesar, Moses, Galileo and the rest of the historical celebrities, the whole principle of the thing can best be illustrated by considering the numbers of people who are firmly convinced that they are under Betty's personal supervision. They speak of it quite casually, unsurprised and unquestioning.

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"I had the pleasure of talking to 'Betty' for a half hour this morning.... She is going to stay with me for several weeks...."

It never seems to cross people's minds that they are not the only ones; that if Betty were to spend a "half hour" with each, let alone several weeks, her eternity would be pretty full. Indeed, there is sometimes a direct statement of reassurance on that point.

"My first visitor was your charming wife. We had a long talk about many things, and she asked me to write and say to you that now this circle in is the only one she has visited."

"I do feel very sure that Betty has been talking to me and she has truly been a real and very helpful friend. I seem to have been in a way an individual project of hers."

Not all accept identity without evidence. They demand the latter, and get it, and send it on to me with the utmost confidence that I am going to corroborate it. *Not once*, in all these letters claiming Betty as a personal mentor, has the evidence proved out. They report incidents of the past, conversations Betty and I are supposed to have had with each other, names of supposed acquaintances, all sorts of little things. "Did she ever call you Edward?" Never in the world! "One night," she said,

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some young hoodlums attacked the shop and broke the windows. I cannot remember whether the woman was hurt, but the name was Mrs. Herman Claus.' I asked if I should mention this to you, and she said yes. I wonder if you recollect this incident?"

I do not, and for the simple reason that there was no such incident, and no such woman, as far as I am concerned. Very often the whole weight of evidence is thrown on a single name. "Ann Newblett," writes one, and adds, "Mrs. White went through such painstaking effort to get this name through and seemed so satisfied." "There has been much insistence on the name Ellen as being important to you." Both are wholly strange to me.

Sometimes the "test" is almost childishly simple. "She said you had remarked that the United States had taken a great many slaps. Do you remember if you said that?" Such a remark is certainly not so brilliant as to stick in memory if I had said it, which I had not. "I am writing you at the address Betty gave me—2456 Crestwood Avenue. Betty said, 'She got the address just as I gave it to her! It was wonderful!'" That is not my address, nor is there even a Crestwood Avenue in my home town. "She said her pets were a collie and a horse named Johnny Boy." Betty had many dogs of many kinds, but never a

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collie; she owned and rode many horses, but none so named.

Or they describe to me Betty herself, as she appeared to those of them who seemed to be clairvoyant, and the descriptions were not only wrong, but—amazingly—almost the exact opposite of the fact. Indeed the hundred per cent inaccuracy might conceivably mean something; perhaps a rather backhand way of eventually impressing on these various people—or on me—that the communicator was *not* Betty!

As for the material from the Betty this evidential was supposed to authenticate, some of it is sheer balderdash—like the ectoplasm lady and the automobile—but most of it, taken by and for itself, is good, very good indeed. That is also likely to be the case with what the other "impersonators"—Julius Caesar and the rest—have to say. It is of too high an order to be dismissed with a shrug. So here is another discrepancy crying for explanation.

So on my very first visit with Joan and Darby after the publication of *The Unobstructed Universe* I asked Betty how about it. Was she taking charge of people, and if so why couldn't she do a little better job of proving herself? Here is what she said:

"As far as I am concerned, this is my official station.

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That does not mean that it is exclusive to me, that others may not use it. I could not possibly reserve it for my exclusive use. But because of the work she and I have done and because of the peculiar type of station she is, those who are guiding my present work have designated her as my official station. I might speak through another, but that does not alter the fact that for highly important material I shall come only through this station, or I must be identified through this station. When these others think it is I, that is a form of wish fulfillment. They have become interested in what I have said through this station and long for confirmation of their sometimes good and valuable psychic experience. Their wish names it Betty. I am definitely not communicating to a lot of people around the country. Right now I'm going to school."

That statement I could quote to people, but without other explanation it was a dismaying thing to tell them. It rather knocked the props from under. We had to get something better than that. What it finally distilled down to came as near to being a form letter as any in my files. Indeed, I had it mimeographed and send it with replies of a more personal character. It appears to satisfy; and, what is most important, it shows that in the situation should be nothing of discouragement.

"What you write as your experience fits in very accurately

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with Betty's own early experiences, and there is nothing in it which is incompatible with a beneficent desire to get you well on the road. I want to say this emphatically so that you will understand the rest of it. But I am afraid there is nothing to prove that you are actually in touch with Betty. A great many write me that Betty has come to them but the evidence never fits. But there is not necessarily anything discouraging in that.

"Early in our experience, we were constantly puzzled by the fact that so many people confidently expressed themselves as being in contact with all sorts of personalities, most of them very celebrated. They seemed to have an especial predilection for such people as William James, Julius Caesar and all sorts of celebrities. When Betty had attained a certain facility we asked our Invisibles why it was that this so often obtained. The explanation was about as follows: Something that is being said to the station in a perfectly genuine way arouses in that station's subconscious an impression that refers itself, say, to William James. That impression is so strong that every time that same Invisible comes back, and no matter on what errand, he is immediately tagged with the William James label, simply because he arouses a recognition of his actual identity in the station's mind; but the station's subconscious has attached that identity to another label. You see

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what I mean? Now, if that Invisible is really doing constructive work through that person, and if it does not matter in the least whether the material is said to come from William James or anybody else, then he lets that identification go by. If it were denied, it would stop reception completely and it is not considered worthwhile, as an inaccuracy, to insist on the proper label.

"We rather protested that this might be a highly immoral procedure, but the Invisibles assured us that the false identification would fade out in due time. This we found to be the case. Indeed, our own teachers among the Invisibles insisted on remaining anonymous, thus cutting short any likelihood of mistakes being made. As our Invisibles said, in the case of what they called 'innocent impersonation,' the trouble does not come from their side of the fence but from ours. All this long preamble is because I want you to understand that if I do not find anything evidential in what you got, presumably through Betty, you must not be discouraged, nor need you be distrustful of those attempting to communicate through you. As facility becomes more reliable in your case those mistakes will not occur. If you allow them to overshadow things too much it has an inhibiting effect.

"I am writing a great many letters every day, and this is a good long one, so you see I think it is well worthwhile

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to try to straighten out all this matter for you, for I feel that you are constructively on your way. If this is not clear, if it is not reassuring, if it dismays you in any way, please do write me again, for it is a part of my job to do just this sort of thing.

"Keep on, keep your aim and intention pure, that is, do not try for psychic power or any of those things. Accept what is given you, place it on file. If true, it will eventually separate itself automatically from the small slips and errors inevitable to early technique. By all means keep accurate notes, because it is to them you will refer as you gain perspective. By all means, do your own work first, because that is what we are here for. The other will supplement and finally aid that work."

And yet, as I invariably point out, there is always a chance that it might be Betty after all, drawn for the moment by some interest especial to the case.

IX

Doorways to Trouble

THE same hair-trigger credulity that at first considers everything true and sacred works just as blindly when things go wrong. In the first instance it all comes from the angels; in the second place, from the devils. The moment anything untoward happens that is ascribed to the interference of malicious and evil entities, of formidable powers, the inevitable result is distrust and a fear that sometimes becomes frantic.

In my opinion nine-tenths of these feeble beginnings at psychics do not rate opposition as formidable as this seems to make out. They may grow into that importance; and it is of course possible that a certain percentage of these failures and perturbations may even thus early be engineered by some form of intelligent interference. But the chances are that the trouble is merely "coloring"—that is, contribution from the station's own subconscious mind. Whatever the source—and it is almost impossible in the early stages to sort it out—a certain amount of it is inevitable.

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"Even though inevitable you may make it unimportant by understanding that it cannot be avoided, any more than you can avoid a cold draft if you go outdoors. If you do not take it seriously, it will pass away; if you let it concern you, it will linger around." So goes one of my carbons.

Here is a letter to me that is apropos:

"Since the first of June my sister and I have been using a ouija board. Although progress was maddeningly slow, we have most certainly had results. We have the jolliest chats imaginable with our mother and other members of the family.... Nor do we stick to the family and friends. We call for such as Thomas Edison, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Paine, Billy Sunday, etc., etc., etc., and we get them! Who can now say that life holds no thrill!"

As you can see, so far the experience is true to type. Furthermore, this letter is from a woman of sense and rather exceptional philosophical intelligence, as is evidenced by her five-page letter discussing abstruser portions of *The Unobstructed Universe*. Her next paragraph comes to the next phase—that which this chapter discusses.

"But it is not exactly a path of, roses, this thing. We must constantly contend with devils..." She tells of some specific advice the origin of which she doubted. "It

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seemed to be our relatives who were urging us, and we've been using every method of checking, double checking and triple checking that we know of. We learn new ways as we go along, but the devils seem to get onto them. Then we have to get more new ones and we're at our wits' end sometimes to know what new ones to devise." She describes a drastic move involving a change of residence that had been urged, and lists the reasons given for doing so. These latter begin simply with plausible common-sense personal matters; progress to a patriotic appeal for war workers in the section recommended for new residence; touch on health and climate and needed actinic rays; and finally arrive at a theory that "a combination of traitors and devils there [in the Unobstructed]"—she is unclear whether she thinks these the same who have been using the ouija board with her and her sister, or whether they are interlopers forcing their way in—"have gathered their forces to plot this thing and are all set to cause the destruction of this section of the country around the first of the year because of the vast amount of food produced here. It will, so they say, involve a great loss of life as well as property. So we are to be up and away and out of here by December 23, to be exact."

Up to this last my correspondent and her family were seriously considering the reasons for migration as sensible

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and worth attention. But this last gave her pause. I said she is a woman of sense.

"It sounds so fantastic," she writes. "And yet—that might be because we have known so little about war from experience. We have found from our ouija board experience that we cannot be too sure of what it tells us. Indeed the devils have sent us off on a minor goose-chase or two."

Now this sort of thing is a very good example of what I said a few pages back on interference. It does not matter whether the interfering is done by mischievous or inimical excarnate entities or by the sitters' own subconscious working out hidden ideas or desires through the mechanism of the ouija board. The latter is very common, especially with beginners, and most especially with the ouija board. It must be remembered that the ouija board usually requires two sitters, two mundane personalities, two subconscious minds, two sets of hidden and unrecognized worries, or ideas or desires. I know nothing of the writer of this letter, or of the sister, nor of any of the background and circumstances, so what I am about to say is not an opinion but only a use of this case to illustrate a point. Such circumstances and such warnings to avoid catastrophe by moving out of the country might conceivably be a totally innocent reflection from the subconscious

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mind of the one who did not write the letter. Perhaps the latter was, without knowing it, eager to get out of that community, or take a trip, or even simply bored! That happens, and most convincingly, but fortunately only in the earliest stages of development. That is, provided one is really developing. The protection is simple—merely recognition that the thing is possible, and understanding how it works. If doubtful, just receive it and lay it away to ripen. If it is true, the fact will become evident. After a time one learns to spot some of one's own subconscious contributions. Then they practically cease, or diminish to a point that is negligible. In any case, it is nothing to be afraid of.

Some students of the subjects are inclined to attribute all interference to this cause, denying any outside intervention, whether malicious or mischievous. That is controversial. However, my own experience and observation are against that view. Constructive effort arouses opposition. In other words, I do attribute a certain percentage of these dismaying experiences to incarnates.

Returning to the letter from this woman, I pointed out that, *whatever the source*, there are two sure indications of interference. The first is the specific advice to do a certain thing; the second is the urgency to haste.

"Wise Invisibles," I wrote, "never will advise us in

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detail as to our material conduct on this earth. They say we gain our development by making decisions, and if they make a decision for us they have taken away just one opportunity that can never return. If they were to do so they would consider themselves as nothing better than thieves. Betty herself has told us that the free will of man is one thing which they, the Invisibles, do not control; that man's great advantage over the instinctive creatures is that he has 'the privilege of blundering.' Without it he would be as static in progress as the bee or the ant. So, ordinarily, specific advice does not come from Invisibles. Nevertheless, it must be realized that even well-meaning Invisibles are not necessarily wise. Some of them may give advice, even to what to do about selling property or moving residence or any everyday problem. It is still interference, though not malicious or mischievous.

"As for the urgency to haste, that also is a hall-mark of falsity. Hurry-hurry and attempt to stampede are always interference. It's too much like those financial advertisements that tell you to buy the stock right off quick today because it is going to go up at 12:00 on Friday. Nobody but an investment imbecile falls for that. And I might add that if they ever ask you to do something as a 'test,' throw them out. Especially if the 'test' is an absurdity.

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Well-meaning Invisibles do not impose tests. If they want to find out how much of a fellow we are, they fix it so we test ourselves!"

This woman has the right idea, and it is probable she will grow up through this undergrowth without harm. She has the proper attitude in case of doubt. Do not reject; do not accept; simply receive and acknowledge. "Yours received and placed on file." Above all, do not act on it, *either* mentally or materially. No decisions; just place on file. If the matter has any actual importance, it will recur and clarify in due time. Outright rejection leaves no chance for this, and may establish an inhibition against future receptions.

After all, the student will find, in looking back on all this early turmoil, that the thing itself has slight importance. Which is perhaps part of the reason why the Invisibles in charge have so little bothered to deny or to clarify. Another of my correspondents was indignant about that. She, like the other woman, had been working with a sister.

"You and your sister," I wrote, "seem to be in the middle of that confusing time when the channel is being fully established. The Invisibles in that period are not so much concerned with *what* they communicate as with our own responses. They permit a lot of mistakes and errors to come through simply because they are not important

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enough to interfere with the main purpose. 'The content of first messages through new stations,' they once told us, 'is important only as it seems to hold interest and does not discourage by too complete irrelevance. We are merely trying to get a reaction to stimulus. Thus our major interest is fixed on the *process*, while your interest is naturally fixed on the *content*. So perforce our aims must be diverse; and since at first we see the trend of progress while you do not, we are naturally reluctant to divert our purpose any more than is absolutely necessary. Therefore we give our attention and force to complete accuracy, or to the production of what you call evidential, only when our hand on the pulse of your interest or belief indicates slowing down below the danger point.'

"So when something in an attempt at evidential comes through that does not turn out quite as it was anticipated, the Invisible is likely to let it go without confusing matters by an attempt to clear up, *unless* the situation is so serious as to shatter belief and effort on the part of the station."

When the latter is the case, and the whole business is given up in disgust, that may itself be a sort of safeguard. If this one had gone on, he might very well, with his cast of mind or temperament, have got into the sort of serious trouble we will examine later.

"I have such a tremendous distrust of myself," writes

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one, "because I know better than anyone else how fanciful and imaginative and impressionable my mind runs."

And then she goes on, at length, to describe an experience which more than most carries internal evidence of genuineness and goodwill supervision.

"I recognize very thoroughly your own self-distrust," I wrote, "when you say that 'I know better than anyone else how fanciful and imaginative and impressionistic my mind can be.' Without that impressionistic sensitivity and power of imagination you would not get anywhere. You do not need to accept as gospel all these impressions that come to you, but neither need you deny their possible validity. Place them on file for later corroboration. Denial might shut off completely any continuance of them. If they are indeed to continue they will get stronger and stronger until they are indubitable, but only if you do not deny the first of them entrance."

Nevertheless, the impulse toward rejection is a sound instinct, from deep in human nature which dislikes to be fooled. Still, in this business if you are fooled it can only be for a little time, *provided* you have your feet on the ground and do not chase off after wishful thinking. And anyway, as Betty once pointed out, if being fooled is such a dire disgrace, isn't it just as disgraceful to be fooled by believing too little as by believing too much?

X

"The Deville, the Prowde Spirite"

THERE are various ways of nullifying this "interference." One is, as I have just said, to grow out of it. Another is to find out where and how it finds its chance to get in and operate, and plug up that hole. There are all sorts of soft spots, surprising and unsuspected, in the best of us—weaknesses of character, of credulity, bidden and unrecognized desires and egotisms—dozens of things that spoil the integrity of our insulation. Mostly they are things we must grow out of; and perhaps that is why they are here—so we may have a chance to do some growing.

But basically they originate in two things. The aim—why are we doing this at all? And our personal attitude toward its effect on ourselves.

"You seem to have made a good start," I wrote a beginner who wanted to know whether this thing was going to get her into trouble. "Whether it is going to be constructive depends on yourself and why you are continuing the experiment. Is it curiosity? Is it in hope of acquiring psychic powers for their own sake, or for material or

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entirely personal gain? Is it even for expansion and enlightenment for the sole purpose of individual spiritual advancement? Then I think you may get a jolt. These are all valuable things to acquire, and they may be acquired in this fashion; but they are valuable only when you want them as tools. If on the other hand you strive for these things solely to become a better *agent* for their use in whatever constructive purpose is desired, then you are safe. The only certain safeguard is to keep the intention absolutely pure."

That is worth repeating: *the master insulation of all is the singleness and purity of the aim.*

The purity of the aim is the strongest defense; any form or degree of pride I should nominate as the gravest danger. The moment anyone gets proud of himself for what he is doing in this business; the moment he becomes in any manner cocksure that this stuff of his is real sterling ware and all else plated; the moment he begins, even secretly, to feel superior because of his being "chosen," at that moment he has unknowing turned down "the left-hand path" and is going to end in mud or a blind alley. Pride has many aspects. Sometimes it is hard to recognize; always it will be denied. But never, in all the cases of difficulty that have been brought to me, have I failed to discover some form of pride.

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This is the test, on the one side and the other. The AIM. Pride.

Ordinarily, as I have said, this question of "interference" has in the long run no major importance. Either the aspirant grows out of it, or learns to recognize it and how to handle it, or gives up the whole thing in disgust. That is all right, in either event. But occasionally, especially when a fundamental egoism results in arrogance of opinion—pride—there may be real danger. He recognizes interference, and is afraid of it, and believes himself unable to exclude it. In the majority of cases he finally hears voices, insistent, not to be escaped. They urge him to opinions, to action, against his desires. He struggles desperately to silence them, to shut the whole thing away. He fails; and his failure terrifies him.

This looks like insanity. It may be called that; it is a matter of definition. In most cases it is merely ignorance. A little knowledge can—and does—clear it up. The case of "Eloise" proves this latter statement. To be sure, this correspondent had better intelligence and balance than most; but the principle is there. I have from her in my files a number of letters. The first is one of thanks to Betty.

"I want *The Road I Know* because I have read the other books and I do not want to miss any record about

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Betty. The reason why I must not miss them is that Betty's experience and your comments give me a *way of living*, and because they make me see what I may have missed in not following Betty's road."

And later:

"I am sending you an account of my early experiences, few and soon over, through my own fault, not because they are interesting because they are not—they are more or less stupid, very fragmentary, and trivial. But I send them because if you read them you will see why I stopped so soon, and they will make you see why I want to read all I can about the road I do not know."

The script enclosed, copied from the records of the planchette writing, was a good and constructive beginning. The normal interference of beginnings was easily to be detected. So far merely the usual. But here, in departure from the usual, the interference named itself—Eloise. My correspondent knew of no Eloise. Nothing to bother about especially in all this. But shortly, it seemed, my correspondent began to hear a voice, with a sort of "inner hearing." This voice claimed to be Eloise. And Eloise was the only voice that manifested.

"The voice I heard said things no one would like to hear. If you have read my record you will know that Eloise, who wrote on the planchette, was an undesirable

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person. I was afraid to listen for fear I might hear her to the exclusion of others, or at times when it might be inconvenient to me.

"I had nobody to ask. I was ashamed of Eloise. I thought that, deep down, I must be without knowing it like her, or she would not suddenly have spoken and written as she did. Having nobody to ask, I tried to find out by myself what she was and where she was.

"I tried an ether state, she gave no evidence of herself. I examined my dreams. She was not in them—not a sign of her. She was not in my verse. She was not anywhere near my prayers. There was no trace of her, whichever way I looked. But because she came with the planchette, and because she remained with me a while after I threw it away, it is Eloise whom I must understand before I let down any mental barriers between the beauty of the other world and me. What is, who is Eloise? Is she a secondary personality? And if she is, who would want to face the possibility of having a Sally-one, Sally-two, Sally this and that like Miss Beecham? The planchette made me conscious of her. I was not afraid of her, I just resented her, but I was afraid of becoming completely or even intermittently conscious of her, and I didn't want to. If she is not a split personality, then is she simply a little wandering spirit with a not very nice mind? And if a

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spirit, is there anything in me to draw her to me? If so, I don't like my subconscious!"

So she threw away the planchette, and turned her back on the whole thing. But she could not wholly banish the "little things that happen." Then she chanced upon Betty's books.

"They made me see that I had not Betty's faith and patience. I hadn't much of either, and so I stopped in my tracks, and turned my back on the other world instead of going forward as Betty did. I read them [the books] rapidly through in amazement, understanding much but misunderstanding more, and simply not understanding some of it. So I went back and began at the beginning slowly, and now it seems to fit itself together like a picture puzzle. Betty and Joan and you and Darby have begun to seem like friends, like helpers, like signposts out of a cavern, like a sudden light from outdoors to show me where I shall come out myself. I had a light of my own, but I myself dimmed it because I was afraid of people like Eloise making themselves too evident."

All this indicates high intelligence, total integrity, and sincere search. Nothing batty about this person!

"There is no way for me to diagnose what Eloise is," I wrote back, "without more intimate and personal knowledge of the exact case. Whether it is a corner of

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your subconscious cropping up—I do not think it important enough to amount to split personality—or whether it is some entity that happened to find a chink to get in by, I do not know. But I do not think that she is important. What I mean is this: that withdrawal is not the way to handle that type of undesirable. Withdrawal implies a fear of consequences and a distrust of one's own strength in insulation. It is a repression, an inhibition, and you cannot block outlets without making trouble. Thrusting the whole thing aside is the wrong way to go about it."

Fortunately by now experience had compounded for me a prescription that I had found worked well in dealing with other types of interference. Especially has it been effective when there is real reason to believe that the interference comes from an outside entity. It is very simple; three words will state it.

Laugh at them.

"The thing to do," I continued my letter, "is to treat her humorously, as a kind of nuisance, like a small child whom you cannot instantly dismiss, but to whom you need not give serious attention. Every time that she intrudes tell her that she's a pest, to get out! Do it good-humoredly, without any disappointment if she fails to heed at the moment.

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"If you fear her, or take her seriously, or get worked up about her, that gives a foothold. But if you just shrug your shoulders and say, 'Oh, you're here again, are you? Well, you know you're not very important, and I wish you'd go away and leave me alone! I'm perfectly aware you cannot harm me, and I think you're rather funny when you try to do so. You're a bit of a nuisance, but utterly ridiculous.' But in saying that you must really mean it."

The prescription worked.

"Just to thank you. Eloise is like an impish shadow that has vanished in light," I read in a letter written much later. "That was what I wanted, just what I wanted. If I could have known just how to go about this, I would not have been such a coward all these years, shutting out a world that seemed to want to come near me, a world I wanted to be near. I never thought of *laughing* at Eloise. So now I am going on my way, and I won't turn my back on anything that comes to me, or be afraid to say my prayers often. It has all cleared up. I won't *try* for anything myself. I won't use the planchette. I won't turn tables or go to spiritualistic meetings, or see a psychic. I will just live along, and if anything comes I will welcome it and not fear it. But if it should be Eloise I will laugh her aside and keep on. You have done a great deal for me: you have

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shooed away Eloise, or made her negligible, and given me a way of life, and a guardian angel, and a sense of the fitness of things, and a fearless look into the future. And so thank you and goodbye."

Well, that was worthwhile. The prescription worked. And it has worked with literally dozens involved in difficulty of this general type, right up to and including some who have been terrorized into actual belief in insanity or obsession.

But some two years after I had begun handing out this advice I found it was an old wisdom. In one of C. S. Lewis' books I ran across two quotations.

"The best way to drive out the devil," Mr. Lewis quotes Martin Luther, "if he will not yield to Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn."

Sir Thomas Moore agrees: "The Deville, the prowde spirite, cannot endure to be mocked."

XI

Shouting from the House Tops

EVEN when there is no trace of arrogance in what the preceding chapter called spiritual pride, there are certain innocent mistaken by-products which can easily deteriorate into that separateness from ordinary humanity which is a first symptom of pride. One of those by-products is the conviction that the material communicated is unique, a revelation, that it imposes an obligation to convey it to the world, either by publication or by organization of groups. This is laudable in so far as it implies a sense of responsibility. But in the vast majority of cases it is mistaken,

In the first place, the experience is not unique. To the contrary. My peculiar position as a focus for correspondence has given me a bird's-eye view. I know just what is happening in this fine to the Joneses of Podunk, even when their next-door neighbors have no suspicion; I know that the Smiths of Oshkosh have also been having experiences, and the Robinsons of Byron Center, and a staggering number of other people all over the shop. And, since they

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generally send me the records of what they get, I know that, by and large, they are all getting much the same thing; the teachings they receive are all cast in the same general mold, the process of their illumination and development follows a standard curriculum, so to speak. Considered each by itself, as unique—which it is not—the revelation would genuinely be of value to the world.

Of course each knows only his own. So naturally he has a tendency to feel that upon him rests an obligation to publish, to "give to the world," and that when he does so the impact is going to revolutionize thinking and ways of life. A certain number do publish, ordinarily at their own expense, and are downcast and embittered at the lack of result. There are dozens of these little books, most of them sound, none of them of any effect on the general public. There are hundreds more of like little books in prospect, if publication can be managed. Their authors send me voluminous manuscripts to be read. It is a delicate job to try to get across to these people, without discouraging them, the idea that such experiences and such divulgences are not at all unusual; and further to point out that in the great majority of cases the communications, the "teachings," while true and valuable, are intended only for the individual and the group, and not for the public at large. Sometimes I think it an impossible job,

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for the reaction is so likely to be one of resentment. I am a nice one to talk! Look at the books I've published! I have to plead guilty to that, but I have further to point out that only after Betty had been at her work for seventeen years did any of it appear in print. It had never occurred to us that we had anything to "pass on to the world." I believe that ordinarily this type of teaching is adapted to and dictated to the immediate group. I believe that in the rare cases when the communications are intended for the wider audience, the wise Invisibles will keep that fact dark until the event is proved. I believe that the customary clamor supposedly from Invisibles that "here is a revelation for mankind" at the beginning, *before* there is any revelation at all, is merely an expression of the subconscious, interpreting its own astonishment.

I must add also a belief which is as firmly held as those just mentioned, namely, that the very multiplicity of these experiences, in cumulation, is going eventually to revolutionize the world's attitude. For these experiences, here, there and everywhere, all over the map, prepare a general public opinion that will recognize and accept the fuller revelation of truth when it comes, as it win. "Many are called but few are chosen." What is needed in this modern age to turn the tide of thought is not a John crying in the wilderness, but the "many." So all these many

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efforts have their place in the pattern. They are of indispensable importance, though perhaps not in the obvious way of public "revelation." It's a big work these people are doing, if only they could see the point.

However, it must be noted, rather sadly, that these "especially selected" people rarely do see the point. Perhaps they must come to it by experience. At the moment they merely get angry; which again is a symptom of that pride which must be eliminated before further progress can be safe. For there can be danger here too. One poor lady progressed—or deteriorated—from mere wonder to a conviction that she alone in all the world has been privileged to receive direct from God, from which source she has been passing on to me the most dogmatic advice on all sorts of subjects, and the most astounding "facts" in physics.

The same reflections apply to the other natural impulse—to organize, to preach the gospel, to convert the world by this or that ingenious scheme for "evidence," scientific or otherwise. If, as is usually the case, the writer is not in a position to take over the matter himself, then he wants me to do so; and is inclined to insist that it is my sacred duty.

I gravely doubt whether, at this phase of the world's spiritual history, it is anybody's sacred duty. The premise

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is that it is the height of desirability to convince, right now, the whole world that communication is a fact. To these people the end-aim of the entire effort is absolute proof of the continuity of life and the reported nature of the Unobstructed universe; if everybody, in the whole wide world, could be made certain, all our troubles would be over. I am not so sure of it. There occur to me a great many modifying corollaries against such an assumption.

How about the fellow who would therefore see no sense in bothering with this remarkable makeshift affair, but would just sit down and wait for the better world? In the present state of the human race I suspect he would be in the great majority. In view of him, one begins to see the wisdom of the ancients who preserved "occult" knowledge from the masses of men. We are simply not far enough along for it. As I wrote one man:

"As for your idea of 'proving' the continuity of life and the genuineness of communication by means of—, it might be feasible, but I gravely doubt the value of such a wholesale conviction. Conviction is only valuable when one has individually earned it by his own seeking and development. We get only what we earn, and the human race as a whole has not earned this."

I have left the blank in the above sentence to be filled in by any of the numerous means and "tests" preferred:

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various forms of publicity, various mass researches in schools, radio programs, lectures, ingenious "scientific" experiments. As to the latter, I might add that in at least four accredited laboratories research men are quietly seeking a means of mechanical communication, and are getting some very interesting preliminary results. The proposals both as to proof and as to "preaching the gospel" are highly commendable in evidence of interest and zeal, but nine times in ten they are also highly inadvisable as bases for action. In any case, ten times in ten the proposer is altogether too young at the game to undertake any action at all outside his own personal growth. Rushing in, wide open and full of eagerness, before any spiritual orientation or stability has been established can be fatal. Too soon and too fast is as catastrophic as too little and too late. I have seen many most promising beginnings toward understanding flatten into futility at best, and into something very close to insanity and obsession at worst, simply because enthusiasm denied the necessary, sober, stabilizing ingredient of time.

To point this out convincingly without at the same time damping off the necessary ingredient of eagerness is indeed to walk a tight rope.

In my belief, expansion of consciousness in what we call spiritual development is an individual affair. Each

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person is as he is simply because his basic frequency is different from that of anybody else in the universe. That in

Is what makes him an individual. His growth with that individuality must be by means adapted especially to it. Those means would not fit exactly anyone else. Only after he has germinated—sprouted, so to speak—will he find value in cooperation, help, discussion, with others like-minded to himself. It is profoundly true that a man can be told nothing he does not already know, whether he is aware of that knowledge or not. We refer to principles, of course, not to catalogue-facts, nor to the corollary extensions that can abundantly follow such personal and private recognitions. Most certainly he will fail to get anything permanently valuable from "teachings" unless he is already ripened to a subconscious understanding.

Nor will the arbitrary gathering of a "group" for study or development accomplish much—certainly not what its eager organizers hope and expect. The individual diversity is too great. What work is done in such a group will have to be, in a common denominator; and a common denominator of diversity must be low. A group, to be really successful, must drift together, when the time is ripe, by a sort of affinity.

So it is that I advise such people as write me asking

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me to recommend to them people or organizations. Of course there are such, capable of contributing—and receiving—enormous help. But I firmly believe there is no use in trying to pick them out. When the time comes they will pick you out. I have seen it happen so many times. That counsel, however, is never intended to encourage aloofness, nor to discourage natural interest in talking things over with congenial minds. Merely it urges awaiting the event, so to say. Do not rush to "join up." I cannot too strongly emphasize the principle of necessary ripeness, the idea that everything must await its time.

"If everyone could have this conviction," writes one, exultant over fresh and convincing personal experience, "the world's troubles would all be over!" and wants to rush out and found, a "school."

"I am not at all sure that universal belief in the mechanism of spiritualism would be a good thing for the world at large," I replied. "I think these things have to be grown into. A wise provision of nature, or so it seems to me, is that people are, so to say, insulated from belief until they are ripe. Action and development on this earth depend on keeping people at their own jobs. Hearteningly more and more people are developing beyond the need of that insulation. There may come a time when the establishment of more 'spiritual schools' may be desirable, but not

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now. One of the fundamentals of spiritual teaching," my letter continues, is that *nothing effective and permanent can be given except from overflow*. That is, one must perfect or rather fill up one's own capacities to the brim before one is justified in even attempting to work outside. That does not mean that in our daily life we cannot apply to the details of living whatever we have gained and have in us. But such work as you suggest can only be done from an advanced stage of development. The mistake of so many so-called spiritual schools is that they feel this truth, but stop short at the idea of filling up. They emphasize the spiritual development and quit at that.

"Moreover, and finally, it is not necessary to rush off to a crisis in far places in order to do to the full one's duty and one's job. It is a natural inclination. We want to help. Especially if sensitivity makes us acutely aware.

"'However,' says Betty, 'that very sensitivity is the means by which those of us whom age or other reason holds at home can accomplish.' If, as she says, 'we keep our own back yards clean,' we shall have contributed as much in our way as if we had gone on a medical mission to China. We five by functioning. The product of that functioning is not the thing we make but the channel we open and assure for the Source to pass through us. I think

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our lack of recognition of this fact has a lot to do with our impatience."

The same zeal that burns to rush forth and spread the gospel may also be misapplied on the personal side. When one is convinced, and keen to develop the higher consciousness, he is likely to run away with the thing, to use forcing methods in the interest of speed. It cannot safely be done. Development is nothing but growth. Growth can be encouraged by intelligent supplementing of its natural processes, but it cannot be done artificially by anything resembling a shot in the arm. And especially it cannot be done by cutting out any of its normal ingredients such as dignity and stability, which time alone can supply. And above all it must not become too self-conscious.

"This matter of growth is not a thing that one can pull up by the roots to see if it is sprouting." I tried to impress this on one of these letter-writers, worried because she could not judge whether she was getting anywhere or not. "You just have to let it go on in its natural way. The main thing to keep in mind is your aim. Otherwise you had best just 'let nature take its course,' keeping your aspirations vivid and your aim pure. Above all, do not reach for this growth and unfoldment with a sense of striving or effort. Live your life as it lies before you,

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knowing that each thing you do, however trivial, has its results."

A great many demand an exact blue print.

"I would greatly appreciate your informing me briefly:

"(1) Whether anyone can become a medium.

"(2) The course of training to be followed in order to become a medium.

"(3) The reason why all psychic phenomena cannot be demonstrated as are those of physical science.

"(4) Does mediumship expose the mind to possible seizure and control?

"(5) How can anyone prove to himself the truth of alleged psychic phenomena?

"(6) What are the conditions necessary for communication?

"(7) What are the types of mediumship?"

Well, this is categorical and comprehensive! I believe I said I have no intention of writing a textbook, though I might have taken up this man's points one by one and given some sort of an opinion on each. But it seemed to me inadvisable to try. A covering principle is of more ultimate value, on the basis of which each individual does his own digging.

"Specific directions of this kind," I wrote him, "such as would come with an automobile or a washing machine,

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cannot be given, any more than you can give a plant directions on how to grow. The life of the soul is not a mechanical thing. If you expect such specific directions, I am afraid you are going to be disappointed."

It is very hard for people to realize this simple fact and its corollary distinction between the divergent necessities for construction and for growth. You can hustle a building toward completion, but not a living organism. Until beginners grasp that, they do a lot of worrying about how they are not getting on, and how the first brilliance of illumination, the first strength of powers are dimming and weakening. They feel they have been rejected as unworthy, that they have been deluded, that they have been shamefully abandoned. They do not recognize bait when they see it. There is not much one can do about that except to pat them on the back.

"Do not worry unduly about the present moment and its meaning. Have faith that the meaning is an unfolding and a growing thing; that growing things must have time as one of the essential components of growth; that functioning to the full of one's present capacity is the real core of life. Externals are only attributes of this inner essential. Moments of first illumination always tend to fade away. They are permitted as markers, landmarks, toward which to journey. Why should the first vividness

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persist? That is what one can earn to, if he has the faith and steadfastness to keep at it. It is indeed something that one has been considered worthy of this initial illumination. Do not strain. Growth is an orderly and sometimes slow process. Be satisfied that bit by bit, in due course, details will suggest themselves as they are needed, but not before."

A more legitimate—or at least a more practical—offshoot of the missionary instinct is the desire for advice on how much to tell children and how. Certainly as human consciousness grows our methods of such education must alter. The old dogmas, taken in the literal-minded way of childhood, convey no desirable or adequate picture. The truth beneath their symbolism is too deeply buried. It is an interesting and most valuable inquiry and I always regret having to answer that this subject has never been formally discussed. It seems to me most probable that it is to be a part of Betty's next "divulgence," if, when and as it can be given.

There is, however, a brilliant flash in the following statement by the Invisibles of general principles. It bears thinking over. In answer to a question as to how all these teachings could best be given the very young, we had this reply:

"We do not believe you can teach children directly

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matters such as these by giving them a blue print. You have to propound and let soak into them very largely by example, very slightly by precept, and very extensively by radiation."

The best I can do now for correspondents is pretty well summarized in the following:

"The thing that interests me most in your letter is the point you bring up as to the education of young children in these matters. I wish I had something direct to tell you about it. Unfortunately the Invisibles seem to have been so busy hammering at our adult education that they have had little to say about the children. If I were to hazard a general principle of my own, I'd say our job is to use our wits in simplifying these things, in *essence*, to their comprehension. That would demand considerable thought, not to say inspiration, I admit, but possibly that is what we are intended to do. As for our records, I can put my finger on only two excerpts.

"'You must remember,' an Invisible told us, 'that a child is an immature thing in every way. You do not permit him to strain or injure himself by exceeding his physical powers—you would restrain him from jumping off a very high porch, or lifting too heavy a weight, or eating green apples or too much ice cream or cake. In so doing you are, to be sure, definitely asserting parental

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authority, but in a sane, sensible and needed manner. Now, laws work the same in all substances, so you will find the same principle will work also in the mental and spiritual. Let him alone to his own devices is good and true in doctrine, in principle, for the offering of full opportunity for self-education should be the basis for all teaching. As in the physical, arbitrary restriction and prohibition are legitimate only when the child is attempting to go so far beyond his powers as to injure himself. Then it is imperative. Otherwise he should be permitted to learn from his own bumps and defeats. So the imposition of arbitrary authority really must depend on the wisdom of the parent. Just as he did not allow the child to lift too heavy a weight, so he should not permit the child's judgment to lift beyond his mental or spiritual strength.'

"The other item on this subject in the record was an interpolation at the time when Betty was giving *The Unobstructed Universe*. She was answering a young mother who asked what she should do about the children's education. 'Teach them old-fashioned faith and fearlessness and honor,' another Invisible answered for her. 'When they are sufficiently developed to comprehend they will get the sort of talk Betty gives. Let them live simple Obstructed universe lives and get their faces dirty. It is a very good thing to teach children to pray.

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Prayer is a fact, an actuality, and gives them a belief. The world got along very well on a belief in prayer, for the facing of a need, an emotion, makes it concrete. It places it in your own mind, if nothing else, and maybe when you have formulated it you find you don't want it."

XII

The Law of Complement

A LOT of confusion in people's minds in regard to this whole question of connection with the unseen would be cleared away were it better understood that all such relationships operate under a law of *complement*. Curiously enough, it takes quite some doing to get that idea into our heads, though the stating of it is simple. Possibly this is another concept into which we have to grow.

In our own beginnings—Betty's and mine—it was told us often enough and plainly enough, but we took it merely as a personal spur to action. Here are a few only of these admonitions.*

"We are not permitted to carry the growth itself. That is in your hands."

"The force we bring into the world...comes from a combination of conditions created by the person himself. We can only take advantage of that combination. Once a person of his own force establishes it, we can act on it.

* See *The Betty Book*.

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The initial step is your work. This force is, roughly speaking, emanations from you which meet complementary forces from this side."

"The energy with which you demand of us will be the measure of what you will get. *It is not so much the energy of demand as the showing of a force that calls its complement.* It is the energy of measure for measure, given and received."

"Your progress is in your own hands. We can do little but watch you gain necessary strength before we can help you further. *That is the law. Me can act only as the complement to the act.*"

All that was fair enough. We accepted it cheerfully as necessary schoolroom discipline, incentive to get busy. And as only that. On that pragmatic basis it worked. Only years later has the statement carried its full meaning. Certainly it is plain enough: *"That is the law."* And if it is indeed a law, then it must apply beyond our schoolroom to every nook and cranny of cosmos.

In sum, these represent one of the few hard and fast categorical statements given us. I could wish that each and every person who writes me, on *any* aspect of this general subject, could fully and thoroughly understand what is meant. For here is a law.

What, then, is that law? It is embodied in the very

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next sentence: "*We can act only as the complement to the act.*" Not "we will, or shall act," but "we *can* act." The phrase means exactly what it says. What we loosely call the spiritual forces are *unable*, under the law, to act directly on the Obstructed universe. They must have something to complement, something to spark them, to set them in motion.

Like any real law, it works universally in many mediums. It applies alike to the processes of evolution and the reason for its interminably slow growth but accelerating pace, through such apparent trivialities on the material side as planting a garden, up to the relationships of religion, and the deeper meanings of life. It is not the purpose here to follow out the implications, though the more one does consider it the more one sees how fundamental that law is. Right now we are interested in how it works in this psychic field of action.

The moment we give the law of complement its full and literal value many puzzling things are explained. Why, for instance, as so many correspondents complain, does help, attention, aid, even just decent interest on the part of our Invisibles—our Guardian Angels so to speak—seem so capricious? Anybody with the slightest experience can report on that. Sometimes we seem wholly abandoned in a mess that one would think must impel the most

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misanthropic to lend a hand. There is no sense to it—if these Invisibles are really our friends who wish us well. And yet they seem to have the power to help us if they choose. Again and again, in other instances, they have done so, almost "miraculously" at times. The seeming inconsistency is most puzzling. It appears almost like pure whim. We do not like to believe our Invisibles are that kind of people, that today they feel good-natured enough to rally round and tomorrow they may not care to bother. But under this very simple law which we are discussing, we see that the inadequacy is not with the Invisibles, but with ourselves. When the beneficent "miracle" of help came along, it was possible because in some manner we had ourselves offered something strong and worthy to be complemented. We had given the Invisibles a *chance* to help us; and I think they are always glad of a chance. But when in a crisis our spiritual energy is weak and we proffer nothing that can be matched to any effect, then our cry for help seems to us to be ignored. As Benjamin Franklin put it more colloquially, "God helps them who help themselves."

The same thing applies to communication and the more technical phases of what we call "psychic." If understood, I think it would greatly ease the minds of those bewildered by the false predictions, the phony evidential,

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the supposed interference of outside entities—all the messes and troubles we have been attempting in some degree to clarify in the pages of this book. If things go wrong, why not examine ourselves before we blame the other fellow? A "good" sitting follows when the sitters have enough of sincerity, honesty and, above all, selfless purpose or aim to bring to the seance adequate material to be worked with. And the reverse, of course. It also explains why so often the Invisibles terminate any session of any kind with the statement that "power wanes," or "the juice is giving out." That does not mean, though we usually interpret it so, that they, the Invisibles, have come to the meeting on a certain tankful of gas, but rather that we, the sitters, have come to the end of our contribution for the occasion.

As for the other applications of this law, each must work out his own meanings. By way of general principle, Betty once pointed out that we need not look about us for something big and noble in order to get the full aid of complement. "Nothing," said she, "is too small to work an with the tools of eternal values." And says the Bible: "Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

But note that, in the one case you must work, and not by rote but by giving thought. And in the other case

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you must *ask, seek, knock* before you will be given or will find or have it opened. They are the complements to your own act—and impossible without it.

XIII

From Betty, Direct

AMONG Betty's papers I found a carbon of a letter she herself wrote to an inquiring beginner, thunderstruck by her own initial experiences. Since Betty should know better than any of us on the sidelines, I think it should be included here.

"The subject is all so much bigger than any of us can handle with our present knowledge," Betty wrote. "For the past seven years these psychic explorations have been my chief interest, both here and abroad; that is why I was in Europe last year to see what was being done on the other side. I have studied the history of the subject, read almost everything scientific and otherwise and had, myself, most astonishing experiences. I do not talk about it often because it arouses so much ridicule and antagonism in those who know nothing about it.

"Your experiences are absorbingly interesting. I know just exactly how you feel, how amazed you are, for I can look back to the beginning of my interest and remember the excitement of it and see how my comprehension

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and steadiness have grown with the years. I want to give you the results of those years, briefly summed up, if you are going on in psychic matters beyond the superficial 'fortune telling' sort of stage. First, there is absolutely no question in my mind of our survival after death. I have convinced myself of that. Also I feel sure we are much the same the day after death as we are the day before. There are, therefore, all kinds and conditions of people in the invisible world, as there are on Market Street today. They have simply changed their forms, just as ice becomes water, more mobile with greater possibilities. The point I want to make is that 'communications' are not to be considered from angels, 'all-knowing' and sacred. There are mischief-makers and undeveloped people on the other side to be taken into consideration, as there are here. Also there are many complications in transmission of messages, far worse than garbled cables and telegrams with us. Strength and character and an unselfish, loving purpose are the only safeguards against falling in with the wrong bunch occasionally. A deep affection on either side of the border is the best protection I know of besides the determination to get only truth and use it for the general good of humanity. That seems to be a magic insulation, but, even that is subject to grave trouble.

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"The second point in the picture of what happens to nine-tenths of all those who become interested in these matters: The person's first interest is so intense, when once convinced of its reality, that he asks for advice on all subjects regarding his personal life. It is quite natural, but finally he gets an untrue statement or a false prophecy and throws out the whole subject as fraud or bunk or devils. There is, by the way, no subject in the world that has more fraud connected with it than this because some of it is quite unconscious in an honest medium's subconscious personification. That is why it is so necessary to go slow and to study carefully.

"My third point is very important for it is the thing on which all psychic students agree. Those in the spirit world will not long continue to meddle in our earth affairs and make decisions for us if they are developed people with our real interest at heart. It is done sometimes to attract attention or in an emergency of importance, but the exercise of free will and making our own decisions is our method of growth here in this life, and those who care for us will not deprive us of it. If we pursue this and continue, to ask advice it has always led into a blind alley. The real way those who care for us on the other side can help us is by developing our own sensitiveness so that we will sense the right thing to do.

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But look out how you give up your own free will and good common sense judgment for that of anyone on this side or the other.

"I am writing at length because I have been through so very many cases in past years where people temporarily lost their stability in this life through the attitude of reaching for unusual powers and acting on unseen advice which did not coincide with their own good judgment. Much has been given from the other side, however, that is very valuable on how to manage and educate our minds and spirits to make life here more useful, beautiful and friendly. Advice on harmonizing things is the best they can do for us. I am sure that your mother would agree with this; she wants you to know that she is still near you and can influence you. We want you to have the results of our experience, to know the dangers of the game if you are going to seek the joys of it.

E. C. W."

XIV

The Half Truths

THINGS get ticklish, sometimes, when I am called upon to deal with the man of strong preconceived ideas. He is generally an adherent to some cult or form of religion, though sometimes he has worked out a system of his own. He either wants my enthusiastic approval, or he has run into inconsistencies which he cannot reconcile. If his perplexity springs from the teachings of a cult or religion, it may be that they are half truths, or it may be that he himself is misinterpreting.

The ramifications and arguments of the half truths vary widely, but the basic fallacy is generally the same. The framework runs as follows: God is good; God is all-inclusive; therefore everything is good and there can be no sin, or evil, or ill health. All we have to do is to deny their reality and they vanish. That is an oversimplified and crude statement, but it illustrates the difficulty. The same principle on the mystic side argues that material form is only the reflection or embodiment of Idea; that Idea is the actual reality; ergo, the material form is an

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illusion, "maya"; with, furthermore, the extension of that logic into the syllogism that as illusion is deceit, the first thing to do is to quit bothering at all with material form. Physics comes to identical conclusion by another approach; this chair's apparent solidity and specific variety analyzes down to neutrons, protons, electrons, and they in turn are not material at all, but pure force; *ergo*, this chair is an illusion without "real existence."

The logic is irrefutable, but when its conclusion is used as a basic for practical conduct, it simply does not work. If one is sufficiently sold on this particular set-up, he humbly ascribes the failure to his own lack of faith, or lack of understanding. But a good many suspect there must be a catch in it somewhere, so they write asking me if I know what it is.

The answer is simple. AM these cults and religions and people are trying to deal with ultimates. It is perfectly true that the ultimate of creation is good. But what is an ultimate but an *end*—an *end* of evolution, which can be reached only by progress and growth? It is also perfectly true that the ultimate of physical matter is pure force or idea—whichever you choose—but before physical matter can be so dealt with, it must pass through a long, elaborate analysis of intermediate forms. Now the answer, which I mentioned as simple, is this:

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We cannot deal directly with ultimates until we have ourselves reached the ultimate state. But we are not ultimates; we are immediates; and *as such we must act through immediates*. Evolution's goal is the ultimate, but evolution is far from that completion, and so are we.

In our simple example from physics: the ultimate of the chair is pure force; if we, in our present form were really capable of dealing with that ultimate and insisted on doing so, we would come to a disconcerting crash, when we tried to sit down. But since we are dealing, as immediates ourselves, with that chair as an immediate, we find it most comfortable. In the ultimate of all-perfection and all-good there can indeed be no evil or ill health. But we are not going to find good health and ethical perfection here in the immediate merely by making that assertion.*

To repeat the syllogism as it is most commonly applied: the cosmos is perfect, ill health is imperfect, therefore ill health does not exist. Why should we argue thus? Why should we take the valiant stand "ultimate or nothing!" God is all-awareness, all-wisdom, all-power, all-life. None of us would claim to be all-aware, but nobody

* I find so many of the literal-minded among my correspondents that perhaps I should add that the issue is quite likely to be confused by the "mental" cures ascribed to this type of philosophy, but actually attributable to a dozen other causes. Also, that we can intellectually encompass some ultimates, but intellectual understanding does not imply material control.

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would on that account deny to himself any awareness at all. Nor any wisdom because he is not all-wise. Nor any power because he is not all-powerful. Nor, in sum, that he is alive merely because he does not contain in perfection all the aliveness possible. If he were to refrain from functioning until he could deal with ultimates, he would not function at all.

And that is the one reply I can make to these people disappointed in the results from following some lofty, irrefutable, *but ultimate*, Truth. There is no trouble with the truth itself. The premise is undeniable. It is the syllogism that is at fault. Through that faulty syllogism the truth becomes only partial.

An allied perturbation of mind comes from those whose make-up does not fit them to the particular form of teaching they have run up against. Nevertheless, the teaching is sound. They recognize that fact clearly, and so are inclined to castigate themselves, and to despair of ever amounting to anything. This is particularly true if the doctrine happens to be one of discipline and self-denial. There is no doubt that such a system is sound and can achieve results, but in my opinion it is better adapted to specialists than to the generality of us. A world populated exclusively by specialists sounds to me appalling.

Nonetheless, I want to reemphasize that what follows is

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in no sense denial of the value of the disciplinary methods to those whom they fit.

Our own people in the Invisible, as was natural, belonged in the other camp. Their thought, as expressed, is that we are not placed in an environment for the purpose of avoiding it. They answered the argument as to the value of "retirement from the ordinary trivialities of life in order to concentrate more effectively on spiritual growth—look at the saints and holy men," by pointing out that it took a saint or a holy man to get anything out of such retirement. As for the world, the flesh and the devil, they are there to be used *property*, not denied.

"There is no physical aspect of life," said they, "no matter how unlikely it may seem at first glance, but has a spiritual complement which its use or indulgence alone can release. The task of the world is to find out and grow into these correspondences.... We do not attain merit by the conscientious ritualistic giving up of things. Giving things up, *per se*, has no merit at all. Possibly after we have progressed to a certain point we shall no longer want those things, and therefore shall naturally set them aside. The grown up does not use a child's toys. *But a child is not made a grown up by taking away his toys.*"

And on another occasion:

"Your part is to live, now, as far as you may, the

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principle of this evolution: that is, to live in full all the correspondences that your material earth presents to you. You should do this without negation, but in such manner and proportion as shall enable you to discern, and knowledgeably attract, the spiritual complement of each. This is not only a satisfying, but an immensely thrilling pursuit. You exercise in it your instinct and ingenuity, not of your mind but of your heart.... The balancing is the art of life. The ascetic is no more praiseworthy than the sensualist, and the sensualist is no more to be blamed than is the ascetic. And the pure intellectual is no more admirable—or deplorable—than either."

Such, very roughly, is the teaching of what Betty called "bountifulness." It suits the shape of my own head, and I believe that it gets further than a regimen of serious discipline, denial, "self-sacrifice." That is, for the average of us, in the present stage of the world's growth. Undoubtedly discipline—in the sense used by these people—is sometimes an indispensable ingredient, but not a complete diet.

So, summing it up, here is what I wrote one correspondent, deeply impressed by the sincerity, the truth, the very high character and spiritual attainments of a man who had attained by rigid and struggling self-discipline, and who now was teaching and urging the methods he

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had found successful—for himself. Deeply impressed, but despairing of her ability to emulate—and unable to pump up much enthusiasm about even trying to do so—she wrote me asking how-come?

"I fully realize that he is in development far in advance, that he has genuine insight," was what I found to say. "I would not have the nerve to say that his methods are incorrect. But I would have to add as corollary that those methods are not so nearly universal as he thinks. And there is something missing. All the terrible struggle to arrive which he describes has shut out what Betty has always insisted on—light-hearted gaiety, the enjoyment of the process. As her Invisibles told her, 'This is light-footed, not like the solemn tread of a processional. It has dance steps in it, and running for the joy of running, and leaping for the joy of leaping.... This is a gracious performance. It is not a child in a schoolroom; it is a soul gracefully entering into eternity.' Or again: 'It is to be the free swing of the athlete, and not the labored tread of the weary monk.'"

Apropos of this point, if I may break in on my own letter for comment, it is interesting to reflect that, in the Old Testament, despite Job, the people took the faith in a power greater than themselves in happy spirit. And in the recorded history of most religions, in the time of

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their full flowering, man's spontaneous love of God has been expressed with "timbrels and song." Only in decline and decay does faith become portentous and solemn.*

"You see"—to continue my letter—"this man seems to approach everything from the point of view of discipline, of uprooting, of casting out by a deliberate effort devoted exclusively to just that. Betty's idea is that one should not bother to uproot but rather to grow something else that will thrust aside, crowd out, the undesirable. She pointed out how things grow through the asphalt by pushing aside, how we can best eliminate thoughts by flooding them out by other thoughts, and so on. One can indeed attain by a humorless facing of things doggedly, and worrying on them and chewing on them and working them out. Some temperaments probably have to do it that way. But such will lose the deep sense of joy.

Incidentally, I believe that this man, and others of the same doctrine, are giving us another example of what I said about ignoring the immediate and trying to deal directly with the ultimate. If we skip right over our present environment to ultimate desirability, then all the value of that present environment is lost. We cannot skip

* See, for instance, Psalms 149: 3; 150: 3-6; Judges 11:34; Samuel I, 18:6; Exodus 15:20, and many others.

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a grade. We are supposed to utilize what we have and are at this moment.

"The difference between this 'self-sacrificing' attitude and Betty's," my letter concludes, "can be expressed in two contrasting words—frugality and bountifulness. Or expansion and contraction. Betty would strip away possessions for the greater abundance of giving and using. There is no room for egoistic greed in that aim and intention."

XV

"The Comfort of God"

MY OWN editorial arrangement of the material, or perhaps Betty's singleness of purpose, has resulted in one curious misconception in the minds of a few. Ordinarily this was not a distrust, but a mild puzzlement or disappointment that she had, in *The Unobstructed Universe*, said nothing of God. Occasionally, and quite unwarrantedly, it took the form of accusation that Betty actually denied God!

"What I cannot understand is the care taken to avoid mentioning either the Creator God or his Savior Son," one man wrote me. "They speak of 'in the image,' Genesis I: 2 7, but of what? Self? And self-creation seems to be the basis of all their [the Invisibles'] teachings. Is there no vision, beyond a worldly vision, of the inner potentiality of man? No Creator to love and cherish—only self, self? How tragic!"

This is so drastic a misreading that it is almost funny. The whole purport of the training of the Invisibles is indeed to aid our expansion of consciousness, our development of self. But not self for its own sake; rather self

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as a better tool, a better instrument, a better channel, a better agent for carrying on the job. And that job is, in last analysis, and in proper analysis, the general evolution of Consciousness, which is God's purpose. If one is going to ascribe egotistic content to all effort at progress, then as well hang onto the old sharp stick for plowing merely because constructing a better machine would add to our personal—and hence selfish—possessions.

You cannot leave the ego out of the argument, and you must put personal responsibility in. Betty's Invisibles, both before and after she went on into the Unobstructed, insist that each and every man and woman is most emphatically responsible for his own "ten, five, two, or one talent" endowment of God. For certainly, as my "self, self" correspondent pointed out, God did make "man in His own image" of intelligent, creative, free-willed responsibility.

Humanity's most sacred duty became more and more plain to Betty, as she advanced in learning from her Invisibles, as the disciplining, training and perfecting of the "self"—each one's own individual bit of the "image of God." That method was the principal aim of her training as set forth in explicit detail in *The Betty Book* and *Across the Unknown*; and, from another angle and with even more detail, in *The Road I Know*. It was

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formulated and given, not as a religious dogma or cult, but as a daily spiritual "growing-in-grace" exercise. Of course the "self" is benefited egoistically. That is the reward, the promise of "seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." You: not somebody else, but you. It is indeed personal, but for universal purpose, and therefore, as our Invisibles iterated and reiterated again and again, each of us as an individual soul must do his own seeking and his own knocking. We can be helped, but the desire and the act must be ours. So I am afraid we can't get entirely away from "self," and we should not try. After all the "beam in thine own eye" seems to be the immediate job. Consequently I have to disagree with this correspondent. The gentleman, I am glad to say, is unique. I quote his letter only as a horrible example of misunderstanding.

However, his first point, from which he draws his implication, does bother some people. I mean his objection that, in *The Unobstructed Universe*, Betty failed to discuss her conception of God. The need for a renewal of faith blinds a reader here and there to the fact that Betty was, in this particular divulgence, dealing with what might be called the "higher physics" of the finite universe, and with nothing else. She was dictating a specialized textbook designed to bridge the gap between

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the Universe of our five senses and the Universe *beyond the ordinary use* of our five senses. A gap in which, by the way, science is already beginning to operate. The whole vast range of electronics, for instance, is in that no-man's land between the obstructed universe of our five senses, and the unobstructed universe beyond them. But the point here is that a discussion of God has no place "in a textbook of the kind *The Unobstructed Universe* unquestionably was intended to be. Nor in the direction for running any kind of a machine. Nor would the omission legitimately imply one thing as to the author's religious convictions or lack of them.

As a matter of fact, Betty had a profound religious feeling. Indeed, had my correspondents remembered the chapters on Prayer in *The Betty Book* and *The Road I Know*—assuming they had read these two of the Betty series—any assurance from me would have been unnecessary.

"You see," Joan once wrote to tell me of a conversation with Betty, "we both thoroughly *believed* in God. Betty was deeply religious; had she not been, with so many other interesting things to do, she would not—indeed she could not—have given so much time to this psychic work.... To begin with, Betty and I were always afraid of making mistakes, of not getting the communication

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accurately. She confessed to me, and I to her, that we never either of us 'went out' [into trance] without first formulating in our hearts and minds a little prayer to God that we might bring back His Truth as nearly true as is humanly possible. In admitting to each other that we both were afraid of our own accuracy and that we always prayed about it, we also speculated that neither of us *liked* being psychic. The reason for this was that we each shunned being 'different,' as well as feeling the weight of the responsibility to be pretty heavy. And exacting. Betty's life, as just living, was always much fuller than mine, but in those days I, too, was busy and interested in my own work, and short of personal leisure. However, as you know, we both took our strange gift seriously—seriously enough, I'm telling you now, to pray about it."

So in the book under discussion it did not occur to me to touch on the religious aspects, for the reason that Betty herself had seen no relevance to this divulgence. I think, further, that she felt that exact formulations are impossible. Each one's idea of God is his own, for the reason that each is unique in perception and capacity.

"When you talk of Betty's idea of God, or mine or yours or anybody else's, then you are tempting us off

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the deep end," I wrote to someone who objected to this lack of definition. "One's *conception* of God is a matter entirely of his own vision and perception. When you get down to it, God is infinite and therefore inunderstandable as a whole to any finite mind. We merely embody in our conception the essence of the utmost our capacity can contain. That is so individual a thing that Betty in her book carefully avoided formulation."

Nevertheless, from the letter before mentioned from Joan, I am able to give a glimpse of Betty's own secret formulation. Joan had finished giving me her testimony as to Betty's depth of religious feeling, and continued:

"Betty and I had two talks about God; both entirely private. The first was in 1925 or '26, when she came east alone to see her sister. At that time she went to great trouble to see me privately.... The second took place in your garden in 1936. It too was private. I don't know whether she told you about that either. [She did not.] We boiled it down this way:

"God, the Creator, is the *Impetus* back of all form, animate and inanimate. We argued that each individualized bit of Consciousness here on earth, in the finite, is an expression of the Spirit of God—an 'image' of Him; that as such it is immortal since it is the same in kind though different in degree; that the *alike-in-kind* always

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remains the same, but that the *difference-in-degree* can be evolutionally lessened."

This is the fundamental. The details of the relationship are, as I say, matters of individual perception. When we agree on such details, we have doctrines. When we formulate them, we have dogma. We incline to make dogma of supreme importance, but it is the agreement that is important. Indeed, in comment on this Betty made the remark I have elsewhere quoted,* but which is worth repeating here. Darby and I were on the point of deciding that if we could get rid of dogma all our troubles would be over. Betty, talking through Joan, of course, would have none of it.

"Dogma," said she, "is a necessary container for truth. But," she added, "it should be made fresh every morning."

The difficulty with a good many of my correspondents seems to be just that; the old dogma has worn thin, and no fresh one is prepared for the new day. The old personal relationship of the loving and tender Father has vanished; and a personal relationship is what, just now, the world most desperately needs. The light of scientific and intellectual understanding has revealed much; but it has also dissolved much. In stress we long for assurance that our calls for help can be, and may be, answered from a greater-

* *Anchors to Windward*, p. 126.

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than-human store of comprehension and love. "Of course," wrote another of my correspondents, trying, as she expressed it, "to correlate our modern thought with the teaching of the Christian faith, of which I am a hopeful straggler...of course I do not mean the old man in the cloud banks we see in Michelangelo, but somehow I can't get enthusiastic about a chilly and tremendous sea of consciousness."

Well, neither can I. Nor is it necessary. Nor was that Betty's idea at all. This correspondent is one of many. They have by no means lost their faith in God, but they have lost the comfort of God. Or, as Jesus put it most simply in the 14th chapter of St. John, "the Comforter."

Yet after all the matter is very simple. It can almost be expressed in syllogism. God is infinite; and as such must be all-inclusive. The first half of that statement we cannot understand, and we should by now have learned better than to try. The lesson is so fundamental that it is proposed to us in our earliest years. No one of us but, as a child, has stared up at the sky and imagined a wall to end space, and then has wondered what is beyond that

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end. Or of what was before the beginning and after the end of time. And then simply given it up, once and for all. Or in later years may have speculated further on space as a curve returning on itself, or time swallowing its own tail in a mathematical and Einsteinish manner, but gaining no more than a boundary for his own segment of surrounding infinity. And so, when the fumes of mathematical mental satisfaction evaporate, has found himself in the face of an infinite God, Whom he still cannot understand.

The second statement, however, contains the full meaning for us—God is all-inclusive. There are various corollaries to this, some of them obvious, others not so clear; but for the moment let us concern ourselves with Consciousness, which is, after all—as Betty has many times pointed out—"the one and only Reality." As human beings, we possess various attributes of Consciousness, which we recognize and use. That is to say we are aware of ourselves and things about us; we possess awareness as an attribute of our basic aliveness. Similarly love, wisdom, understanding, mercy, compassion, gaiety, whimsy, and any other possible psychological or intuitional discoveries in the make-up of any human being anywhere are also attributes of our consciousness. I pick these examples at random. Since they are attributes of consciousness,

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and since the infinite God includes all of Consciousness, it follows inevitably that they—and all other possible attributes, discovered or undiscovered—are components of All-Consciousness. And since all-consciousness is also all-inclusive, each of these attributes is—not partial and fragmentary, as with us—but complete and perfect.

The last statement is so important that it is worth while to turn I it inside out. We, as human beings, possess attributes of consciousness, to be sure, but we have them in *varying degree*. Some of us are more aware than others; some of us are wiser, brighter, more inclined to mercy and compassion, gayer, more fanciful, or the reverse. The quality is the same, but the *degree* differs. Some of us can hold more of these things than can others. It is a matter of capacity. Capacity depends on what we are. Or to what we can be changed by development, by growth. Then the capacity enlarges. Education—which properly is growth—can make us more aware than we used to be—we can contain more of universal awareness—to take one attribute as an example. Or as we mellow we become more capable of love and wisdom, or whatever. That is growth. It is also evolution. However, our manifestation of, our command of, our use of any of the attributes of our consciousness must always be partial.

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But the infinite of God is all-inclusive. Every attribute of consciousness we can discern in ourselves is—must be—an attribute of all-consciousness. In that respect we are indeed "made in the image." And that all-inclusive consciousness must be ultimate, complete, perfect. Therefore the attributes also must be ultimate, complete, perfect. God is, or has, all-awareness, all-love, all-reality, all-life, and indeed all there is of anything and everything we can discover in our own consciousness; for the Infinite is the source of our being. In complete sum and proportion. Otherwise it would not be All-Consciousness.

Now, certainly one of the attributes of our own bit of individual consciousness is personality. That is how we differ one from the other. And if we stop to think of it, some of us have even more of that quality than have others. We all recognize this: Jones bursts with personality; Smith is drab and undistinguished. The former has the equipment, the mechanism—the capacity—to contain and express this very desirable essence; the latter just enough of a cupful to lift him out of the standardized robot class. Since personality is so definitely an attribute of ourselves, as individual bits of consciousness, it is, of course, an attribute of the All-Conscious. In full completeness and perfection. Our need of a personal God we can satisfy by calling upon that attribute, of personality.

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Again, "seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." All we have to do is to evoke personality by conscious recognition, and, from the divine all-inclusion, personality and its warmth are there for our comfort as singly to our self, and as fully, as our spiritual capacity can contain. And no more.

So we are under no necessity to content ourselves with merely a "chilly and tremendous sea of consciousness." Within ourselves we find the divine kinship that can summon our own friend and intimate whom we can name—if we wish to use that terminology—God the Father.

From here it is easy—fatally easy—to embark upon speculations which are indeed a chilly and tremendous sea. The voyage in all probability would be profitable. But not to the present purpose, or what seems to be the two needs in this crisis of wartime. These are, to repeat, a God of personal love and comfort; and a God to whom we can appeal with confidence for aid. Beyond this we would do well to follow the Psalmist in saying, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; I cannot attain unto it."*

But we have certain reliances. For example, we can depend on the uniform working of what we call natural

* 139th Psalm.

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law. On that we base every action of our lives. If we want to accomplish something, all we have to do is to set in motion the appropriate physical laws and we know we are going to get the result. If we go out to get help from a professional, we know he is going to do the same. What we expect from him is that he, too, shall work in accordance with the laws of physics, but with more knowledge than we possess of how to manipulate them. If we catch him trying something outside that framework we distrust him at once as an incompetent or a charlatan. Subconsciously I think some of our uncertainty as to the efficacy of prayer has its origin in our sense of the immutability of law. A "divine intervention" that requires an arbitrary miracle may be momentarily gratifying, but in the long run it shakes too many foundations, introduces a capriciousness into the orderly scheme of things.

We do not want miracles. And yet miracles do seem to happen, unless we have a faith in coincidence that of itself would be miraculous. I do not intend to labor that point. Ask any soldier, especially any combat aviator, though it is unnecessary, after all, to resort to the battlefields; any normally active career will furnish examples, if the narrator will be honest. At least we call them miracles because, as we express it, nothing but a miracle

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could have saved us, and more often than not they certainly seem direct answer to our need and our prayer.

I believe they are answer to prayer. I believe prayer is answered, when the personal relationship is well and truly established. We may ask in full trust and confidence for help in our need. And we shall get it. But since the response flows from the complete wisdom which we contain only partially, the answer may not be specifically what we think we need. And the response will be in proportion to what we ourselves can offer. The law of complement, remember; measure for measure given and received.*

Nor does there seem to me anything here for the physicist to boggle at. He is quite right in his dependence on the immutability of the laws by which the universe functions and in his resentment of the idea that arbitrary power can be called upon to supersede or alter those laws in the performance of a "miracle." Why should that be necessary? It is conceivable, of course, that Omnipotence could alter them, could work outside their action. That is what the word omnipotence means. But those very same laws were created by All-Consciousness, which means all-wisdom. All of wisdom means that no possible contingency could require modification for its purpose.

* See Chapter XII.

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You cannot improve a thing that is already completely wise. We, the bits of All-Consciousness that inhabit the finite, can go forward in all faith and confidence that we shall fulfill the Purpose—whatever it is—without arbitrary interference. The rules of the game are set for us; they will not be changed.

Nevertheless, that does not preclude the occurrence of what we might look upon as a "miracle." The Father can aid us within the laws, And will do so if that is wise. The means employed may *seem* to us miraculous, but that is merely because they do not fall under laws we know about, or—what is more likely—they represent a use of those laws which we do not at the moment recognize. After all, even in the field of straight material physics we understand as yet only a fraction of how its laws work. I would venture to say that there is no discovered law of which we know the whole application. Science admits it; and that admission is one of its greatest advances.

The "miracle," to repeat, only *seems* to us outside natural law. We ourselves can extricate a young child—or perhaps better, an animal—in emergency from which, unaided, it could not even imagine means of escape. If the child could express itself in these terms he might call the rescue miraculous. But we have merely taken advantage of our more adult knowledge of how to use "natural

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law." The aviator who ascribes his getting out of a hopeless mess to his prayer for help is quite right in his belief that the prayer was answered. He had utilized all the natural laws at his command without avail. Some little "coincidental" twist to the sequence of events "just happened" at the last split-second to swerve him aside from death. That twist was an entirely natural operation of, say, a law of aerodynamics. But at the moment it was wholly beyond his power; over it he—the child—had no control. Perhaps not even knowledge. Nevertheless, it came into operation; with "no reason to expect it" the "chances were a million to one against it." Is it too far a cry to substitute the Father's intervention—through His complete minute understanding and control of His own natural law—for the million-to-one blind chance? If the intricate and infinite Purpose was so served, and since the infinite Awareness was so apprised?

These are only a few of the reasons why, even in the most "emancipated" terms of modern thinking, one need not lose the Personality, the Comfort, of God.

XVI

The Strange Story of Mary Smith

THE foregoing pages by no means cover all the varieties of inquiry. I have tried to pick out those most often asked, those which best indicate what people want to know.

But letters are only part of what seems to have become my job. I have what—joshingly—I call "clients." I have mentioned earlier these visitors who come to the house, often by long journeys, to find out the same sort of things as the letter-writers.

Over the five years since the publication of *The Unobstructed Universe* they have come steadily, in such numbers that I have threatened to buy a black robe with silver stars and crescents, a crystal ball, a black cat and go into business! But among the long succession I can recall not one crank or crackpot. This is as amazing as the previously mentioned fact that only seven, of the literally thousands of letters, came from people obviously

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unbalanced or fanatic. My visitors have invariably been of a high grade of intelligence.

There could be no set formula for these interviews. Each visitor was an especial case requiring personal and undivided attention. But—happily—just as in the case of letters, the calling-for-help technique worked. These people departed all lit up and satisfied that they had got what they came for. Most of them wrote afterwards to tell me so, sometimes in almost extravagant terms. But I must repeat, and emphatically, that I personally had little to do with it except as agent.

So many times have certain crying needs in these people been so accurately met, and so often did these needs develop unexpectedly in the course of our interview, that it almost seems as though they had been especially "led" at the psychological moment to my door.

For instance, one afternoon a young woman called on me to say that she had unexpectedly received, via a crude automatic writing, a repeated admonition to "go see S.E.W." Just that, nothing more. She was worried about her brother who was in the armed service down in the South Pacific, and wanted to know if I could find out about him for her. Of course I could not. She had read *The Unobstructed Universe*. So we talked about that. And for no reason, just on hunch, the subjects I stressed

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were what could be said on death and separation and bereavement. That same evening she telephoned to say that she had got home from her visit with me to find an official telegram announcing that her brother had been killed in action. And added that, if it had not been for our talk that afternoon, she did not know how she could have stood it.

Another, and very different type of visitation is worth more detailed record. In my usual grist of mail one day I received a short note, postmarked, we will say, Marbury, Connecticut. It was at least directly to the point. "I have," it read *in toto*, "something to tell you, of the utmost importance. You will, on receipt of this, take a plane to Marbury." And signed "Mary Smith."

Since I make it an invariable rule to answer everything, I replied briefly and politely that this would be impossible without at least some inkling of what it was all about. In due course a second letter came, equally abrupt.

"You will call me up by telephone on Tuesday at eleven o'clock."

To which, naturally, I paid no attention at all.

On Wednesday my own telephone rang. Long Distance announced a call for me from Marbury, Connecticut, and would I accept the charges?

"Certainly not," said I, and hung up.

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On Thursday I was again summoned by a call from Marbury, this time with charges paid.

"Since," said Mary Smith, "you will not come to me, I shall have to come to you. I shall be there by plane tomorrow."

Panic-stricken, I threw myself into expostulation, demanding at least some notion of what it was all about. "You'd better write me," I urged hopefully.

"No," said the voice, "I cannot do that."

"Then," said I, "I must refuse, categorically, to receive the visit."

To this, apparently, after a rather long argument, she acquiesced. To clinch the matter I wired a long day letter emphasizing my refusal. Nevertheless, the following morning Reider, the butler, came to my workroom to announce a Mrs. Mary Smith in the library!

Dismayed—but a little curious—I went in. Mrs. Mary Smith proved to be a good-looking young woman, probably in her early thirties. She was dressed modishly, with good taste throughout, in dove-grey. Her demeanor was poised and well-mannered; her voice—when finally I heard enough of it to judge—was low and cultivated; in short, she was what our grandparents would call a "lady," and we ourselves might expect to meet at the house of any of our friends.

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"I sent you a wire yesterday," was my greeting.

"Yes, I know," she said.

I said nothing, for I was determined that the first move must be hers. For a long time—a really long time—we stood there in silence.

"Do you want Betty to talk to you?" she finally blurted.

"You have made a long journey" I assented. "Go ahead."

At once she began a breathless gabble, so rapid that the words almost tumbled over one another. The gist of it was (a) that "Betty" had at last, after long search, found someone through whom she could talk fluently; (b) that she had caused Mary Smith—forced, I think, was the word—to come into direct touch with me; (c) that by means of Mary Smith she, "Betty," was going to dictate "great things" to me. That was the purport; but after every sentence of even that much coherence, came a passionate, almost tearful, urge for my belief—"You must believe! I've worked so hard to come to you! I've made Mary Smith come all this way to see you! I implore you"—that sort of thing. Finally I had to cut across the spate.

"If this is indeed Betty," I interrupted firmly, "she must prove her identity. Nothing has been said to show

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that this is she. One of the easiest things Betty does is to produce evidential. And as for that, the statement that she has had, in vain until now, to go through a long search for a channel of communication is not true. She has a very reliable station in Joan."

This demand for identification was of course ignored, as I had expected it to be. Instead there followed an even more emotional plea for credence. Finally came a statement that had some tangibility.

"I took Mary Smith to Dutton's," hurried the alleged Betty, "and through her I did things for them, and they said it was the most wonderful thing they had ever seen, and they said there was going to be great work done—"

"Hold on," I interrupted, "here is at last something!"

At last was right; for this had now been going on for fifteen minutes and there seemed no way, short of brute force, of putting a stop to it. To my perplexity as to how to handle the situation the price of a long-distance call to New York seemed cheap.

"Do you," I asked Dutton's telephone operator, "know who can tell me anything about a Mrs. Mary Smith? She says she was in your office a week or so ago."

But I did not need to go further than the telephone girl.

"Good heavens!" cried she. "You don't mean to say

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that woman is out there! Yes," she continued, "Mrs. Mary Smith was in the office; and they had the most awful time to get rid of her, and I interrupted by repeating what the alleged "Betty" had said. "Then there's nothing to that?" I asked.

"We just thought she was crazy," said the operator.

I returned to the library.

"I'm sorry," said I, "Dutton's does not corroborate and repeated the gist of my long-distance call.

"But you did not understand," the alleged "Betty" at once shifted ground. "What I meant was that I took Mary Smith to Dutton's just to test her by making her do all sorts of things that she would not want to do, just to see if she was going to be sufficiently obedient

By this time I was losing patience.

"That was not at all what you said," I interrupted. "And furthermore, 'tests' of that sort are never, in any circumstances, posed by any responsible and well-intentioned Invisible. I have heard nothing to indicate Betty; I am sorry to say it, but someone has been and is being most cruelly deceived. We are getting nowhere, and I must now terminate this interview."

My firmness had effect. The flow of emotional expostulation—which had now gone on almost a half-hour—stopped. After a short silence Mary Smith looked up.

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"Is there a good hotel here?" she asked in a quiet, normal voice. "Will you please call a taxi?"

Her manner was quiet and reasonable. After telephoning for the taxi, I waited outside the library until it had driven to the door. Then I went to summon her. I found her stretched out on the divan, limp and apparently unconscious, nor could I arouse her. I sat her upright. Her head lolled, and when I released hold of her, she collapsed again.

After a time, and after trying everything I could think of to bring her to, I went out and dismissed the taxi. The situation was disconcerting, to say the least. In the first place, I was by no means certain of what the situation really was. Mental unbalance seemed the most likely; but fraud for some ulterior purpose was possible. In either case, what was I to do about it? I knew nothing of her, except the name of the small town where she lived. She might or might not have a husband or family; even if she had, how could I communicate with them? She might or might not have money enough to get back; even if she did have, would she go, and was she capable of taking care of herself? The thought of the possible publicity was not agreeable either.

I returned to the library. She was still slumped on the divan. I stood in the middle of the floor and spoke aloud.

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"I am addressing," said I, "whatever intelligence is here present and in charge, whether this woman's or another. I am going to leave this room for just ten minutes. At the end of that time I shall return. If this same state of affairs still continues, I shall have to call a doctor and the police authorities and turn the matter over to them."

When I returned she was sitting up, weeping softly. She seemed normal enough. She asked if the taxi had come. I told her I had had to dismiss it, but that I would have Reider take her to the hotel. Nothing more was said until he drove the car to the door. I escorted her to the top of the steps.

"I am sorry," said I, "very, very sorry."

She bowed her head and hurried into the car.

After Betty had finished *The Unobstructed Universe*, through Joan, and I was about to leave for the West, she told me this.

"Joan is my official station—but I will find somebody through whom to talk if it becomes really necessary."

For a long time this necessity did not arise, but finally Betty had something she wanted to say as to a new book and therefore she put me in touch with Mrs. Adele Halman of San Francisco. Mrs. Halman is a psychic, a woman of high intelligence, good education, fine ideals and absolute

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integrity. She is not a "medium" in the usual professional sense, though she works mediumistically in the small chapel she conducts for spiritual teaching. Her standing is unassailable. Betty had known her in life, but in a social rather than a psychic connection. On the occasion I mention above Mrs. Halman had called me by phone to say that she hesitated to do so, felt like an intruder, but that she had been nagged to say that Betty wanted to talk to me. I drove in; Betty authenticated herself in her usual manner; said what she had to say about the book, and that was that. Over a period of more than three years this happened just four times. Always the occasion was special in emergency; always Betty's communication was directly to the purpose. I made no attempt to get in touch with her, through Mrs. Halman, except when summoned. However, I did call on Mrs. Halman two or three other times, but merely socially, in passing, and our conversations were of the current topics that would naturally suggest themselves. Betty did not attempt to take part, except on one notable occasion when she broke in to describe her work with the war dead, as described in an earlier chapter.

So, as soon as the door had closed on Mary Smith, I called up Mrs. Halman on the phone, with the vague idea that she just might be able to get in touch with Betty

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and get some opinion on this situation. However, before I had a chance to explain to Mrs. Halman at all, she said:

"I'm glad you called. I was hesitating whether to call you. Betty wants me to tell you something."

"Yes, what is it?"

"She says, 'Tell Stewart I am sorry this had to happen. I tried to prevent it, but this woman was surrounded by so many forces that I was unable to get through to her. Tell Stewart he is to have nothing to do with her family.'"

This was reassuring to me. I am accustomed to Betty's occasional brilliant production of what is called "evidential," but this was an extra fast one! Just consider what that short message from Mrs. Halman implied.

In the first place, this message was given before I explained the situation.

In the second, Betty, of course, had never communicated through Mary Smith, as the latter so devotedly and disastrously believed, but obviously she knew about Mary Smith—"I tried to prevent it," she said.

Further, she was cognizant of what was happening in my library at the time of occurrence, and was able to communicate with me about it through another person twenty miles away. And particularly welcome to me was the assurance that Mary Smith was neither crazy

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nor a fraud, but rather a victim of the "surrounding forces" that prevented Betty from "getting through to her."

That Mary Smith was indeed neither crazy nor a fraud will appear later in this narrative.

Personally, I think also that Betty—or some other Invisible—possibly worked on Mary Smith during her further stay in Burlingame; and certainly on me to inspire a wisdom in handling her which I do not natively possess.

I had hoped, of course, that Mary Smith would at once leave for her home, but she did not, and continued for the next three days to try to get me on the phone. I had the strongest "hunch" to stay clear, and therefore instructed Reider always to report me as out. Nevertheless I could not avoid a sense of responsibility; I felt that something should be done by somebody. I strongly suspected that the young woman's family did not know her whereabouts; I feared she might not even have the money to get home. And, above all, if she insisted on hanging around, I could not guess what she might do next! Beyond the name of her home town and the fact that her name was supposed to be Mary Smith, I knew nothing of her or her circumstances. She had never signed her husband's name, so I could not get in touch

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with him. The obvious course was to find out through the police whether anyone of that name was missing from Marbury, but I hated for her sake—and my own—to stir things up through official channels. By Friday morning I had about made up my mind to take the hotel manager into my confidence and let him, through his own channels, investigate her status—financially and otherwise. Before I could act on this decision, however, Reider came to me in the garden to say that Mary Smith was at the front door insisting that she intended to wait until she could see me, and what was he to do? As I have said, my hunch had been strong to stay clear. Suddenly I had as strong a hunch that now I should see her. So I told Reider to send her out to me in the garden.

"I had to talk to you," she said without preliminary, "and I was going to do so if I had to wait on your doorstep all day. I now see that I have been deceived. I know now it was not Betty, but I have to find out why this should have happened to me."

This sounded sane.

"Well!" I cried in relief, "perhaps now we can get somewhere! Let's talk it over."

For two solid hours we walked back and forth and talked. Mary Smith was hurt, she was humiliated, she

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was deeply puzzled and bewildered, but she was obviously not unbalanced in mind. And she wanted to know.

"If I had been after something for myself—psychic power, money, influence, publicity—anything, anything at all for myself! But I have been trying honestly and sincerely only for spiritual development. I've thought and thought, and cannot see where I went wrong. You said in your books that a single and pure aim is a safeguard. I have tried to develop myself as sincerely and as honestly and unselfishly as I could imagine. So why should I have been subjected to this?"

"At least it has given you the answer to the prayer of Ajax," said I, "—you now see the face of your enemy. Let's dig into it. Tell me from the beginning how this all came about. There must be somewhere a soft spot by which the destructive things have entered in."

She had read; she had aspired—a genuine aspiration, she thought; she had discovered she could do automatic writing. The writing had seemed constructive; in a rather simple way, to be sure, but definitely constructive. It purported to be from her father. The latter had alleged to bring her in touch with Betty, in whose books she had found so much of interest and help. "Betty" had taken charge. Mary Smith had followed direction blindly, even to the visit to Dutton's New York offices.

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"Looking back, I do not see why they did not give me in charge. I acted so foolishly! I knew it was foolish, but I had been told it was a test. I believed it. There were other things, also described as tests. And over and over and over again I kept hearing, sort of with an inner sound, 'Go to Stewart Edward White; go to Stewart Edward White,' over and over again, day and night. That was all that came to me that way. The rest was the writing."

"Possibly," I interjected as surmise, "that was the only genuine part of it all. Perhaps you were really being directed here so we could dig this out, exorcise it from your mind. If we can, then all this long and expensive journey, and this humiliation and mental anguish will be worthwhile. For, I assure you, if you had continued on the same course, you would have been in an asylum within a month." This was blunt, and perhaps a little brutal, but that was what I seemed to be supposed to say.

"Yes," she said simply, "you are right. I am grateful."

So that hunch was good. Suddenly—and very powerfully—I had another.

"Tell me about your father," it inspired me to ask. "What were your relations with him when he was alive?"

"He always hated me from the time I was a baby," said she astoundingly.

"And how did you feel toward him?"

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"Naturally I hated him back."

"There's your soft spot! Hatred is one of the widest, perhaps the very widest door for the admission of destruction. It does not matter one bit whether it was really your father and he still hates you and is trying to do you harm, or whether this was an impersonation taking advantage of a condition. The fact remains that the hatred was there. And there, in spite of the singleness of your aim otherwise, is where you got off the track!"

We threshed that out at length, and she agreed.

"But what am I to do?" She was at a complete loss.

In the first place, I told her, do not make the mistake of clamping a lid of negation on the whole thing.

"That would be a natural revulsion," I said, "but it would not alter the fact that you *are* a sensitive. Suppressing all that side of you would be an inhibition that might bring all sorts of complexes. You do not need to pursue the subject, but if something does come to you, do not throw it out. Let it come. *But do not act on it either materially or mentally.* Do not decide about it one way or the other. Do not either accept it or deny it. Just take the attitude of 'yours received and placed on file.' In due time, if you do this, things will clarify. But do not suppress rigidly; and above all do not be afraid. Fear is just as much a soft spot as is hatred."

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This is not intended as a dissertation on techniques. But, as I say, we talked it out along that general line for two hours. She had a quick intelligence, was indeed a sensitive, and she desperately needed this sort of first aid. She finished in what I can only describe as a glow of enlightenment, and certainly with a new spirit and energy. But it was temporary. The present situation, after all, was unchanged, the plain practical facts of it.

"But what am I to *do*?" she voiced again her dismay. And confirmed my suspicion. "My husband does not know where I am!"

"Then the first thing to do is to let him know where you are, and the next thing is to get a reservation on a plane back."

"But what am I to tell him? What can I say?"

"That," said I, "I do not know. Except that I'd tell him the exact truth as fully and as plainly as possible. But that is the daily bread of tomorrow."

I went on to talk to her of that phrase of the Lord's Prayer as subsequently I set it down in *Anchors to Windward*—that *today's* bread is what we ask for and what we should expect, and no more. If, when night comes, we can stretch between the sheets and no actual disaster or catastrophe has overtaken us, then we have had that day's bread. And we can have full trust that tomorrow—

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but not until tomorrow—can we ask again in confidence. "What you are to say to your husband, and how he will take it is tomorrow's daily bread. Today's daily bread is quite simply to get on the plane."

We talked of this also for some time, and again she seemed to assent and to be strengthened. She departed about noon. A week or so later I had a letter from her. She had done as I had suggested—told her husband all about the whole experience, plainly and simply. To her surprise and relief, he had accepted and understood. And he did not think her crazy. But her mother still did. Would I please write her mother? This would not be worth record had it not been for Betty's admonition through Mrs. Halman to "tell Stewart he is to have nothing to do with her family." So I wrote Mary Smith herself, repeating what I had told her in the garden, and to the letter I clipped a note saying that a letter directed to her mother would indicate that Mary Smith had asked me to write it, but that here was something she could *show* her mother. Of course, there is no certainty that the warning covered this situation, but it might, so I played safe.

That is all of the episode, except that some months later, and subsequently two years later, I received grateful letters from Mary Smith reporting her continued physical,

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mental and spiritual well-being. It is pleasant to think that she was, as the saying goes, "led," as a client, to her own safety from a real disaster.

XVII

Incoming Tide

AS I pointed out in the beginning a great wave of interest in "psychics" overspread the country accompanying and succeeding World War I. It lasted a number of years, then ebbed. A similar wave of interest in "psychics" is accompanying World War II. Its intensity will in due time lessen. Superficially they are alike. Superficially they might be ascribed to war emotion, the hungers of bereavement. But, except superficially they are not at all the same, save as the curves of a spiral are the same.

In 1919 "psychics" meant principally the possibility of communication with the dead. Whatever phenomena or evidence of identity were produced were aimed directly at this bare fact of survival. In 1945, while naturally the bereavements of war have revived the desire for these two things, they are no longer the leading objectives. Indeed, to an astonishing number of people their possibility is more or less taken for granted. Anyway they are conceded as a provisional hypothesis on the basis of which to proceed to a new objective. If, as I believe, my enormous

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correspondence indicates a true cross section of intelligent thought and desire, then we must conclude that the major emphasis of the interest in "psychics" is now on what "psychics" actually do, or can do, for everyday living. The thing has moved from an amorphous future into a practical present. To have value to today's inquirers it must help toward fuller living right here and today.

To be sure, this present revival of interest is set going by World War II just as the former was by World War I. But it is well not to get the cart before the horse and ascribe complete causation to war emotion. Rather, the latter offers a sensitization that permits the impress to be made. "The time has come," said Betty in *The Unobstructed Universe*, "for a distinct step forward in man's psychological and social evolution, and sometimes it takes a great shock and sorrow to force him to make that step." And again, in the same book, "Now man must be retold. Always in world crises he has been told; *always it has taken a world crisis to make him receive.*"

It is, as Betty says, "being retold"; but, as I myself said at the beginning of this chapter, at a higher turn on the spiral. People are no longer chiefly interested in strange stunts and bell ringings, in the amazements: of the mere fact of communication *per se*, in the controversies of "scientific proof." I am talking of preponderances.

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They are more interested in terms of the present job. That is true even of the bereaved. Back of their hunger for assurance and the comfort of personal contact is the desire for the establishment of that comfort and assurance in commonplace, everyday life, right now. The thing is connecting up. The spiritual and the mundane have, by and large, lived in separate compartments, influencing one the other almost by indirection. Now it seems they are to blend. The keynote of the present effort is just that. Full living must be sought, is possible, not merely in some postponed future state, but *right here and now*.

That advance will be made. And then we must expect the pause for consolidation. That is the way evolution works, in rhythm. I am not stating this here, at the end of this little book of testimony to the present intensity of interest, by way of discouragement. Rather by way of reassurance to those who will find, in their purely personal experiences, the same rhythm, the same "pause for consolidation."

"The flood of this spiritual interest will soon rise to its height for the present," said the Invisibles shortly after World War I, "and then gradually subside—at least the fashion for it will—and then we shall see what really came in with the flood. Each tide brings a little more, and we have to be content."

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"We work in rhythm," the Invisibles told us in 1925, "allowing the force of each wave of effort to gain the effect of its power, to fall and break, to ebb back in gatherance for a new surge. The pause is fruitful. It allows the scum and windrift and jetsam to be floated away, leaving the sands clean for the new impression. A few years ago [referring to the "wave" of World War I] such an impression was made. We obtained a definite result, both in germination and in precipitation of what was ready. With the surge was thrown up, in exact proportion to its power, a foam of premature credulity, of false or half-false contacts, of sterile curiosities. These moiled up in a scum of books and talks and efforts and frauds and dinner-table clackings. Space necessary for the winds of common sense to blow them away could be made only by withdrawing the surface of interest so that the idle-minded and the weak-minded could turn the inconstancy of their attention elsewhere.

"That has been done. Now the apogee of another rhythm is on the swell....

"Our object then will be to convince the world of nothing except the need for continual conscious spiritual growth."

Now, nearly twenty years later, to judge by the tone of my letters, that objective is being sought.

The Stars Are Still There

As to the reason for the ebb, the Invisibles had this further to say:

"Flourishing growth has started which cannot be maintained without nourishment. Sustained effort is far more difficult than the spasmodic. The novelty is wearing off; the real work has begun. This next phase is outside our influence. We have widened your vision, we have given you impetus, now we must leave you to manifest or retrogress. Do you see the danger in the ebb?"

I am quoting all this comment on a "wave of psychics" which is now past history merely to remind us what to expect in natural process. The tide is still strongly rising. What will it leave at the high-water mark? Something precious, we can be sure. It would be well if we could be as sure that we shall appropriate that preciousness as our own. Yes, the tide is still rising, but ebb is bound to come, and that is well to know lest we be dismayed. Without it the treasure could not be disclosed.

Now I shall close this book with the quotation from which its tide is taken. It is Betty speaking from her superconscious state, while still living here on earth.

"I am trying to get something clear-cut for the rough-and-tumble. You are apt to send out then a sort of desperate feeler for something you think you have lost. You feel that you ought to be doing something different and extra

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special about something you have left behind you. I want to do away with that. If you are running a car at high speed, you can't afford to look up rapturously for inspiration. You've got to trust that *the stars are still there*, and that you can look up at them when the night comes."*

* *Across the Unknown.*

APPENDIX

A Guide to Rereading

ONE other category of letters I have received in such numbers that it seems something should be done about it. They come from people who have not been content merely to read one, or more, of all of these books, but who have been tempted into serious and considered study of them and the actual application of the principles set forth in them. Sometimes these people even form groups or study classes with regular times for meeting.

The following is a suggestion for procedure in such a study. It must be clearly understood that the tabulation is in no sense an index, and cannot be used as such with any benefit. In other words, there will be no profit in looking up a subject of interest at the moment and thus finding out what is said about it. Rather, this is a study exegesis to be consulted only *after* a seriatim reading of the books themselves. It is exactly what the heading to this appendix says—a guide to re-reading—and only that.

Of the five previous books attributable to Betty, four are here included. They are *The Betty Book* (BB); *Across*

Appendix

the Unknown (Across); *The Road I Know* (Road); and *Anchors to Windward* (Anchors). The parentheses are the key words of identification in the table of references. The fifth book, *The Unobstructed Universe*, is omitted for the reason that it does not deal with the primary object of this study—spiritual expansion, expansion of consciousness, growth, development. The references themselves, in the sequence here proposed, offer an unbroken sequence, and should be read and practiced in the order given.

I. THE AIM.

BB 94; Across 278-80; BB 34-5; Anchors 62, p. 2; BB 50, the last paragraphs of Sec. 2.

II. After understanding clearly what it is we are after, the first thing, before we even try for the simplest contact, is to prepare ourselves to receive. To become porous to spiritual forces, as Betty had it. It is a definite process we can work at. The first step is

RELAXATION: BB, page 44, Sec. I; Across 129-31; Across 59-60; Road, from middle of 136 through 137. From that we proceed to earn something by our own effort; we must deserve something; we must fulfill what is a universal law, the

LAW OF COMPLEMENT; the Dead Lift: BB 36-9; Road

Appendix

99-103, and will get our first encouragement and recompense in

AUTOMATIC ACTION: BB 50-1; 178-82; Across 23-6.

III. Having established a mechanism, so to speak, we must again recast our desires as to what we shall do with it, and so must consider

ASPIRATION: BB 47-50, and so pass on to the first outreaching positive action, which we name

IV. SPIRITUAL CONTACT, or Contact with the Source, or simply Contact: Road 201-5; BB 38-43; 52-55; Road 182-200; a personal experience as example, Across 21-2; 27; 35; 42; 44-5; 87-100; 125-34; 161-9.

MEDITATION, so called, here considered as a tool to gain contact in the fullest possible: Anchors 39-41; 108-141; to be followed by a consideration, for this purpose, of PRAYER: BB 133-9; Anchors 142-62. Other tools are

IMAGINATION: Across 38-9; Road 127-9;

INTELLECT and its place: Across 294; 301-2; Road, from last paragraph on page 122-26; BB 65-9

V. Whatever we gain, great or small, we must assure before it is ours, so we must

MAKE-IT-SO: Across 118-19; BB 177; Road 170-5; 178-81; Road 129-33; Anchors 92-8; 105-7

VI. It is beyond human imperfection to avoid trouble, so

Appendix

FIRST AID, and what to avoid, and what to do about it: BB 49; Across 176; 199-208; Road 90-91; and the greater aid which Betty called the

INNER CITADEL: Across 138-42; 156-58; 172-3; Road 104-108; Across 147-55; Anchors 105-7; 99-104

SUMMARY of the whole process to here: BB 140-143.

VII. All this has dealt with our own inner relationships. To apply what we have gained to everyday living and our contacts with our fellows, we must first protect ourselves—BB 196-8—from getting into what Betty called the

VORTEX: BB 189-196; 204-210; Across 311-16; 211-17.
We

REACH OTHERS: BB 188-92; Across 36; Road 223-29;
Across 316-23;

BB 123-4; 182-4; Across 304-5.

SYMPATHY: BB 199-203; Across 238-41. We can help only from

OVERFLOW: BB 207-10; Road 131; and the result of it all is

RADIATION: Across 245-58; 283-4; Road 244-53.

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