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" CLAUDE"

Pilot R.F.C., killed in mid-air 11th November 1915,
aged 20 years, 6 months

CLAUDE'S SECOND BOOK

EDITED BY

L. KELWAY-BAMBER

EDITOR OF "CLAUDE'S BOOK"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

ELLIS THOMAS POWELL, LL.B., D.Sc.

WITH A PORTRAIT AND ONE DIAGRAM

NEW YORK
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CLAUDE'S SECOND BOOK

IS DEDICATED

TO HIS FRIEND

LADY (AMY CHRISTIANA) PALMER

IN APPRECIATION OF MUCH KINDNESS

INTRODUCTION

WHEN *Claude's (First) Book* appeared, I pointed out to his amanuensis, who is also his mother, that there were many passages so deep and pregnant that I could not suppose Claude to be aware of their full significance. They were completely in accord with the deeper philosophical knowledge of the higher life, as humbly yet firmly possessed by those who have devoted many years to its study; but these profundities were obviously beyond the ken of a young soldier who had just passed into the spirit life, and who had not carried with him any such attainments as those of the late Alfred Russel Wallace or my venerated friend, the late Sir William Crookes. Since there is no miraculous bestowal of knowledge upon the spirits who pass to the other

plane, the inference from Claude's language was his spiritual contact with the sources of advanced knowledge, and his ability to echo some of their teachings, without being alive to the full purport of that which he was transmitting.

This inference is wholly confirmed by the Second Book. The expert in the psychic sciences recognizes in it, at once, a marked advance upon the First. The First Book was the work of a matriculated student in the great Cosmic University. The hand of the graduate (the possessor, may we say, of a first degree?) may be traced in the Second. Claude is in nearer "touch" with the actualities of the other sphere. He is keenly anxious to explain its fundamental truths in terms of this life; and as he is now in closer contact with, and possesses a more incisive appreciation of, the conditions of the life beyond, he performs his task well. The chapter on Prayer, particularly its earlier portion, is a perfect gem

of exposition; and this is but one instance out of many.

Over and over again, as he reads, however, the student of psychic philosophy will have forced upon him the conclusion that Claude, though he has greatly advanced in knowledge, remains occasionally unconscious of the full purport of his words—that is to say, he is in "touch" with exalted sources of teaching, though he has not yet fully assimilated what he has received. A characteristic instance occurs in the chapter on Premonitions. Says Claude:

"The spirit tunes the mental and physical up to a very high rate of vibration till it attains almost a state of exaltation: the spirit knows there will be no depressing after-effects—no reaction. This quickening of vibration can be effected by very diverse and opposite means—by prayer—or by drink (I know the juxtaposition sounds horrible)—"

Yes, the juxtaposition does sound horrible: yet if some accomplished Spirit Teacher is instructing

Claude in the chemistry of emotional states, this sentence is an echo, an adumbration, of one of the truths that will have been told to him. The greatest psychic expositor of all time was guilty of the same juxtaposition, because he, too, reflected on the chemistry of emotional states. "Be not filled with wine," said St. Paul (Eph. v. 18)—"Be not filled with wine, wherein is debauchery: but drink deeply of God's Spirit." Claude, the pupil, thinks it necessary to apologize for what seems to have a horrible juxtaposition of associations. The Great Apostle, as one of the Masters of the Science, offers no apology at all for a similar parallelism of ideas.

As he contemplates the obvious intellectual progress which distinguishes the Second Book from the First, the observer of Claude's spiritual climb can hardly avoid recalling two splendid passages of the Bible, both obscured by inadequate translations, which are illustrated by his experiences. "Thine eyes shall see the

King in His beauty," says Isaiah (xxxiii. 17), "they shall behold a land of magnificent distances." And this pre-Christian assurance is emphasized by the revelation to that later psychic who was privileged by a peculiarly sacred intimacy with his Master: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: yea, even so, saith the spirit, for they rest from their irksome toils, but their congenial activities follow them." Assuredly Claude is engaged upon congenial activities as he investigates the conditions of the real life in that land of magnificent distances whither he has gone. We may well picture him among those

"To whom cometh our great Lord God, Master of every trade
And tells them tales of His daily toil, of Edens newly made,
And they rise to their feet as He passes by, gentlemen unafraid."

Claude's swift achievement and rapid progress may perhaps mark him out as one of

the band who, during the coming century, will break down the barrier between the two worlds, and utterly destroy the sting of death. Some of us, at all events, are humbly hoping for their own ultimate promotion to the rank of auxiliaries in the same splendid endeavour. Meanwhile we, and a myriad others, are heartened and invigorated by such messages as those which Claude and his fellow-immortals send to those who, in eager expectation, stand poised

"on visionary hill
Watching and waiting for ethereal news:
Looking beyond life's storms and death's cold dews
To habitations of the Eternal Will."

ELLIS T. POWELL

PREFACE

THIS book records a continuation of the "talks" already published in *Claude's Book*, which described a young airman's first impressions and experiences of life after death in the spirit-world in which he suddenly and unwillingly found himself when he was killed, while fighting two Germans in mid-air, in November 1915. Some of the following chapters have been received by me through direct impression from Claude, but the majority of the communications were given as before, by Claude through the mediumship of Mrs. Osborne Leonard. It must be understood that owing to the limitations of language, which is inadequate to express spiritual things, the words used throughout his talks are in every case only the "nearest equivalent" to

whatever Claude wishes to express, explain, or describe, judging from the very large number of letters I received on its publication, it is obvious *Claude's Book* proved a comfort to many by helping them to realize that a further, fuller life follows on this one in natural and orderly continuity. While I know that communication between the living and the so-called "dead" (though they are actually more alive than we are) is possible, under certain conditions, I believe there are only two reasons that justify it. One is an honest desire to know and prove the truth and to learn the conditions of the future life (we can none of us escape death eventually, it is therefore a matter of general interest); and the other is the very natural desire to speak to some one dearly loved who has passed on, to know that all is well with them, and that the bond of love continues. The subject should be studied either from the scientific or religious point of view, for in this latter case the communication

is a sacred, beautiful, and holy thing. To treat the matter with vulgar levity or to hold indiscriminate seances by way of amusement with anybody, in any place, and under any circumstances, is foolish in the extreme, for the spirits attracted under these conditions are of a low and undeveloped kind; there is therefore nothing of good to be gained by this association. There are enough undesirable people about the world in the body as it is, without inviting the return of those of this order who have left it.

It has been said that we should be satisfied to know through "faith" that the dead live, and some few among us, who are acutely conscious of the spirit within themselves, are so satisfied; but the majority, while anxious, like St. Thomas, to believe, require proof In that particular case it may be remembered Christ Himself afforded His disciple the opportunity of proving, by the material evidence of his own senses, that it was indeed the dead

Master who stood before him. "Reach forth thy finger and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." In the following pages whenever the word "medium" is used it denotes anyone sufficiently developed psychically to see or hear or sense discarnate spirits (for we are all spirits here and now), and does not only refer to "professional" mediums.

One of the most convincing proofs for the sceptic of the fact that spirits are visible sometimes is that certain animals can also see them, and, curiously enough, are very much afraid, evidently recognizing their appearance to be abnormal; there are many well-authenticated cases of the kind on record. Another most interesting phenomenon not commonly known is this: that certain quite uneducated mediums, who in their normal condition are unable to express themselves correctly or grammatically even in English,

can, while in a trance, under the control of foreign spirits, give tests of identity and carry on long conversations easily, correctly, and fluently in various languages, both European and Asiatic. There are now so many books on the subject written by highly educated and scientific men that it is possible to study it very thoroughly and carefully and from many points of view. But whatever the means that bring conviction, once assured of the fact of unbroken and progressive existence, the outlook on life and death changes entirely. One realizes it is worth while trying to live worthily here—for death is not the destroyer who ends all things, but the deliverer; for those who pass through his portal under these conditions enter a more beautiful life. For them there is no more worry nor anxiety, no more pain nor disease, nor the weariness of old age, but youth and radiant happiness, for they live "for ever in the light."

L. KELWAY-BAMBER

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CLAUDE'S SECOND BOOK

CLAUDE'S TALKS

SOME DIFFICULTIES OF MEDIUMSHIP

I WANT to try and explain further the cause of some of the difficulties of communicating through a medium. Suppose we look upon him or her as a gramophone for the time being. Mediums work automatically under our operations; we can't impress them word by word. The *modus operandi* is this: the spirit communicating gets a train of thought complete, say two or three sentences strung together; this is his "record." He then has to lift and fix it on to the mind of the medium (the gramophone). Now the difficulty is that the record may not fit that particular instrument; if it does, the sitter hears the sentence as it was given or only altered in unessential details.

suppose the record was, "I came to see you at the beginning of last week on a beautifully fine day, and I think you felt I was with you"; and the medium says, "I came to see you on Monday or Tuesday of last week on a glorious day," etc., the record has fitted. The spirit is not usually able to tell if the record is correctly given until he senses the effect on the sitter. For example, if the medium said, "I came to see you at the end of last week on a very wet day," the sitter's disappointment would be sensed by the spirit and give him a shock. He would know he was not getting things through correctly, but he might not be able to cancel the false impression for fear of further complications.

Sometimes under unusually good conditions, when the harmony between sitter, medium, and spirit is very complete, as in our case, the spirit communicating can hear everything the medium says, but it is not usual. When drawn by love or family ties, the spirit communicating is actually in the room, but a very highly developed spirit from the higher spheres would impress the medium from a distance. Every sensible person must judge each thing on its

own merits; complete and blind faith without any basis of fact is useless; build each bit of faith on its own bit of foundation of fact. Each record put on a medium's brain is bound to be registered on his or her subconscious mind; this explains a point that often leads to complications, for sometimes on a second visit to the medium the spirit may try to communicate something further on the same theme as before, and thus automatically taps the record of the previous sitting, for it is easier for the medium's brain to flash up the copy which is on the subconscious mind already than to take the new impression.

If the medium (quite unconsciously) does this, the sitter gets the right message of the previous sitting (and not of the one taking place at the moment), even if it was given wrongly at the time it was uttered, for the subconscious mind registers things as they are, and would take the strong thought of the spirit impressing it correctly. The subconscious always remembers correctly; it's the conscious mind that makes mistakes.

The most correct communications are generally

ally given a sentence at a time; a flow of language is often the repetition of a record already on the subconscious mind of the medium.

For ideal conditions, the conscious mind of the medium should be dulled or asleep; the success of the sitting depends on the extent to which it is anaesthetized—the mind in this respect varies, this is why a trance medium is best, for it is difficult to control the active action of the conscious mind. The normal medium may only be able to do this occasionally, and may alter the trend of a sentence consciously but not intentionally.

In a well-developed psychic who is a trance medium (given a perfect state of trance) the conscious mind should be completely anaesthetized, and if that is the case (an ideal condition in every way) the communication would come through correctly and unaltered; but such little things may prevent the trance state from being perfect. For instance, if the medium has been worried before the sitting or too actively interested in anything, one part of the mind might be still thinking and working on that

subject, and it might colour some part of the communications; that's why it is a mistake for a sitter to talk to a medium much before a sitting, for some strong normal impression may be recorded and interfere with the sitting. Some mediums would be indignant if they heard this; they think all they get through is unadulterated; they forget all on the earth who interpret the higher side of things, like music, painting, etc., are liable at times to faulty interpretation. Why should they think themselves less liable to error, particularly as many have given comparatively little time to the study of their subject—especially as mediumship is the most subtle of all gifts. When an artist or musician makes a mistake, he generally knows where he was wrong; a medium does not.

Some mediums get a little bit of one thing and a little of another, some have a form of clairvoyance that penetrates distance and can see things even a spirit cannot see, others psychometrize through the sitter, but all these are "jumbled" and mixed up, and the result is incoherence. The best and only reliable way

is for the medium to get thoroughly into touch with one spirit connected with the sitter first and thus form a definite "link"; on this depends the success of not only the first but subsequent sittings.

THE CIRCLE OF POWER

AT any sitting or seance, regardless of the number present, there is a psychic ring of power formed, and it was probably to define this that the magicians of old drew a circle round themselves when performing their magic rites. At this moment I can see this circle of power round you and the medium; to me it has a certain substance and looks like a light mist which is in continual movement. This mist extends about three feet away from you both in every direction; it is not stationary, and expands at times to four or five feet. I am in that circle with you.

The state of the circle shows the power existing at the sitting. If the conditions were bad (with a well-developed medium) the circle would still be there, but would be thick and heavy and not so strong. On the earth people generally think of a thing that is heavy and dense as strongest, but the difference in

the power of the fine and dense condition is like the difference between a heavy lead sword and a fine, light, steel one. When the power is dense and heavy it deadens my sensibilities and power of communication, for when I come into it it's such an effort that I leave outside much of what I want to say. It confuses me as it would you, if you found yourself in a room full of smoke or escaping gas, and it dulls the medium too. "What is this power and where does it emanate?" The power is the outcome of persistent right development of the medium. One just starting to develop would have none of that power, but by degrees it grows; it's a kind of psychic mist, a different degree of the kind of power given out by the medium at a materializing seance, and seems to come from the medium's aura. I have noticed all mediums have large auras, not only round the head, but generally, and these contain this psychic power; even an undeveloped psychic has a bigger aura than the ordinary individual.

As I told you before, the aura is part of the spirit body, which lies partly over and round

the physical, and therefore it seems more natural it should hold this power which pertains to the psychic and spiritual instead of its being contained within the material body, which is coarse in comparison, full of poisons, and liable to decay. For this power is connected with spirit, it comes from spirit, and is meant to be used for spiritual purposes, not for material things only, and when a medium uses this gift for material things only, the auric development is not so pronounced.

Some mediums develop quickly along one particular line and have not sufficient stability to keep up the mental and physical condition necessary for progressive and desirable development; the powers of these mediums deteriorate. It is when the psychic power is properly supported by suitable mental and physical conditions that the best kind of power grows round the medium.

When a spirit goes to a medium he sees the power coming from the medium. If it is his first visit to that particular medium, and he is experienced in communicating in this manner, he tries to feel the quality of the power—the

texture of it—to find the easiest and best way to use it. He may find he can use it to make the medium hear what he says, or it may be easier to use it to build up pictures and symbols of places, people, or things which may convey what he wants to express to the sitter; but the spirit may flounder through a large part, or even the whole, of a sitting without being able to discover how to use it properly or to the best advantage. This applies to normal or trance mediumship, as the control for the time being is in much the same condition as a normal medium. When the spirit finds the best method, he links up with the medium, uses all his energy, and concentrates on it; when he has established thoroughly good conditions, and there is harmony and sympathy between spirit, medium, and sitter, he can later use the power in other directions as well.

I have told you the power spreads, say, three or four feet each way, but if the conditions are very good it may extend much farther—a kind of branch of it may be made to reach out quite a long way in any particular direction; but that

is not desirable as a rule, for it uses up the power and you could get very little of anything else after in the ordinary way. For instance, if we told the present control to see what was going on in the garden, she could do it, but there would be much less power left for me to use to continue my conversation with you. This explains why sittings are bad if there are interruptions; say some one comes to the door, for instance, the medium visualizes who is knocking, and the power is projected to the door and cannot be collected properly again. The medium for a good sitting must consolidate the power.

It is often the sitter's fault if the sitting is a failure; for example, suppose the spirit communicating is a son, and has just managed to get thoroughly into the right condition, and the sitter says, "Is Uncle Jim there?" "Uncle Jim," who has probably been waiting outside the circle, comes into it at this invitation, probably bringing a parent or friend along with him. The power between the medium and son is thus deviated, and the medium tries to switch it on to "Uncle Jim,"

a new personality, and it may take some time to get the fresh condition right. If two spirits are equally in the power they can see each other properly, but not if one is outside or at the edge of it.

IDEAL SITTERS

AFTER sitting a little while, through certain mental and temperamental peculiarities, the sitter can affect the quality of the power present. Some people are especially suitable as sitters. The ideal is one who is equable, calm, well controlled, and receptive, with an alert mind that grasps a point quickly, and an affectionate disposition. Neither hysterical, nor cold, calculating people are much good; they both affect us adversely. The ideal medium has no very pronounced or prejudiced views on any subject, and cultivates an open mind as far as possible. To have good results sitters should be trained as well as mediums, and study so as to get the best conditions. Once good conditions are thoroughly established between spirit medium and sitter it makes all subsequent sittings easy, unless there is any physical cause such as great fatigue or illness on the part of either medium or sitter, and then

the check would only be temporary. A sitter who specializes in one particular direction is "difficult," for the mind in this case is not apt; it is set along certain lines, and it is not easy to make a satisfactory "link." Clever people are often very self-centred. Love makes the most satisfactory "link," which is best established through things known and familiar to the sitter. Sitters should realize the limitations are often their own, and should learn to control themselves physically and mentally, and to eliminate irritability, temper, and prejudice (if people could all do this the world would be Arcady!), and to cultivate that calm that comes, not of a lethargic mind, but of great self-control and self-knowledge. This is essential if the sitter is to benefit through this spirit communication, to learn something of the beauty of spiritual truths which are intended to be taught through it, and to get a step nearer God.

Of course we all agree that some of the methods of communication between the living and the dead (spirits discarnate and incarnate, for we are all equally spirits) are crude, but that is so because of your limitation of sight and

hearing. It is only possible to use readily accessible means, however simple. If a man is in prison and wants to communicate with his friend in the next cell, who may be only separated from him by the thickness of a wall, the easiest method would be to tap on the wall and use a code; it is the "condition in between" and not distance in this case that makes communication difficult, and it is just this fact that operates too under the circumstances we are discussing.

It is a purely arbitrary distinction to say that one form of communication is "higher" than another, and that therefore "trance" mediumship is preferable to sitting at a table, for instance; it is far less laborious and quicker for the sitters certainly, but not necessarily "higher" in any sense. The beauty, dignity, and interest of anything received from the other side depends on the sitters. You might as well say it is "higher" to receive a message from a friend through "wireless" instead of through the good old-fashioned telegram. (It might be in point of altitude!) After all, it's the subject-matter, and not the method of transmission that is the

main thing. I have been with spirit friends when they have been communicating with their people, and have heard not only tests but most interesting and beautiful facts of their life here given through the table; it has been a communion of souls fortified by love and aspiration, a common means to a sacred end. On the other hand, I have heard you complain of trance addresses that consisted of a series of ordinary Platitudes that anyone might have uttered without troubling to go into trance! Of course some of these methods are much more accessible to the majority of people, and are abused in consequence; but this is not a subject to play about with, it should be treated as a serious or indeed sacred matter or left severely alone; it is dangerous to play with fire, and if people lightly and carelessly invite the attendance of discarnate spirits they may live to regret it. At best they can only get frivolous, untruthful, and unmeaning messages, and at worst they are opening the door to admit uninvited guests whose influence they may find it difficult to eradicate.

MAN'S WAY OF PROGRESS

SOME people have the spiritual in them so strongly developed they feel and know instinctively the truth of survival, and do not need to be convinced through physical or mental phenomena. It is well even for these to understand the subject in a practical manner, for it is useful in convincing others who are less evolved and more sceptical. For all the means, whatever they be, are intended to lead to one end, the proof that man *is* a spirit and therefore survives death. Man's evolution proceeds in a cycle, for he comes from the spiritual (indeed from God) and, however long it takes, works his way, creating his personality in his development through the physical and mental, back to the spiritual again.

Until he attains absolute self-control and becomes really spiritual—that means till he acts even unconsciously under the direction of his spiritual nature—he is liable to slip back at times

to the last stage through which he has passed. This accounts for a highly mentally developed man, or a genius, acting at times in an immoral or even criminal manner. When a man is really spiritual he must have controlled and conquered these phases; there is no question therefore of their recurring. When he attains the spiritual, it means he has linked on again to the Divine source and can draw all he needs from it. Though these stages are required for man's development it is not necessary to spend many years in each stage. The quickest way is to learn to put self aside. If he is selfish in the first stage, he will only think of doing what is best for his *physical* self but not for his soul, and may in consequence carelessly, even if not deliberately, injure others. When he begins to consider if his actions will hurt others, he is progressing, and will find happiness in the sense of having done well. Man may go through a whole life in the physical stage only, but in the records of the ages there are few people who have learnt nothing of good, even under these circumstances; a man may appear a thoroughly bad man and may have specialized in one form

of vice, and the sense of the onlooker's perspective being blurred by its predominance he may not realize that, in spite of this, the sinner has learnt something—he may be kind to the poor, or tender to children and animals, for instance. A man like this on passing out of his body goes to the lowest Astral, where he comes in time to a sense of his wrongdoing, for his mind carries the knowledge of all he has done; he is among people like himself, and sees his own vices reflected in all around him, each one an object-lesson. By consistently trying to live up to his higher self a man solves the riddle of how to attain happiness, for he lays up for himself no regrets and gathers to himself respect, and love, and sympathy, and a deep and lasting content.

MAN'S PERSONALITY

THE spirit-body grows with and round the physical one, for the spirit attached to the body is providing itself automatically, and as an act of self-preservation, with a "shell" or form to use when it is dissociated from the flesh. The atmosphere provides the minute and refined kind of material required. There is something in a spirit above consciousness, for it is a little bit of the Divine itself, as it comes from the all-knowing consciousness, the Universal Spirit. A babe is born with a brain of certain capacity; the conscious mind is limited from the beginning by this. The origin of subconscious mind is that bit of God which we call spirit; it grows and only develops as subconscious mind by recording certain experiences of the physical body. The subconscious mind starts growing directly the spirit is attached to the body. As soon as the conscious mind begins to work it registers on the subconscious.

As the subconscious is the spirit mind it is much less limited, and registers everything even before the conscious mind can grasp it, for this operates through the brain.

Directly the conscious mind starts working there is will-power, and the personality begins to develop; it is largely influenced by early impressions. The subconscious mind knows its origin, and tries to safeguard and support the growing personality. It repeats continually: "I come from God—be God-like," in its endeavour to influence it. This has been called conscience.

While developing through the body the earth conditions may tempt the personality to express itself through its lower animal senses; the will-power is there and the spirit calls, but the personality puts the will-power aside and shuts off the voice of the spirit-mind. A personality in a first incarnation is inclined to be animal and rather brutish, for it has had no individual experience of spirit-life, and it is feeling the sense of novelty, and is living to the full the life of the physical to which it has first awakened. As the personality grows, the spirit

body grows in keeping, and in this case it would be coarse and the aura badly shaped, a spirit-body suited for the lowest Astral. God does not decide the quality of the spirit-body; man himself does.

In the Astral this personality is in a stupid state because it is undeveloped except in a physical sense, so that when cut off from its earth-body it feels lost. In a genuine haunting the personality is so unused to anything but the physical it hangs about in a blind unreasoning manner; it can't understand or think in its new state, and wants to move about in a mechanical way in the old conditions which it recognizes. It can only do so for a time, because that bit of God is tugging it, and it is bound to prevail in the end, however long it takes, because the new body, the Astral, though still coarse, is more akin to the spirit than the old one, therefore it will be drawn to the place to which it belongs eventually.

SPIRITUALISM AND OCCULTISM

OCCULTISM must not be confused with Spiritualism, for the latter is a comparatively simple though fundamental creed, for it only claims

1. That man is a spirit, and survives death;
2. That communication is possible between the living and the so-called dead.

Obviously this can in no way lessen any one's religious belief, whatever it may be, for it proves the life after death, which is the tenet of practically all religions, and to the Christian the "communion of saints" becomes a real experience.

The knowledge thus gained should be the stepping-stone to spiritual (not occult) development. The phenomena of Spiritualism is necessary to convince people of these facts, but they are not an end in themselves, and for people who attempt to learn nothing further terminate in a *cul-de-sac*. These are the very

people who say, apropos of the subject, "It's all right, but does not lead one anywhere!" They might as well go along the street with their eyes fixed on the pavement, and then wonder why they don't see the sky! Once they are convinced that they have, or rather are, spirits, and survive death, it is up to them to learn to realize the fact and try to live beautifully. The spirit is always waiting and anxious to develop, but cannot do so until the mind and body are ready. By developing spirituality I mean cultivating the conscious knowledge of the presence of God, not only in the individual soul, but in everything and everywhere. Prayer, if it comes from the heart, is a very great help, but is worse than futile if mechanical. God speaks through all nature; those whose ears are attuned hear Him, and those whose eyes are opened in the light of this knowledge understand His power manifest in the beauty around. He speaks more through trees and flowers than through human beings, because these things are true, there is no "acting" nor "posing" about them. God cannot express Himself through insincerity. Thus it is easier

for Him to manifest through a simple soul than a self-centred and artificial genius. The practice of Occultism is wise for very few people, and only old souls at that. Some of its rudimentary laws, travelling in the Astral for instance, I have already told you something about,¹ because so many people do this unconsciously during sleep. This is in no way harmful, for it is an automatic process, and consequently they must be sufficiently evolved to benefit by it, but it is a different matter to employ these Divine laws determinedly and consciously on the earth plane; people who do this undertake deliberate and certain serious responsibilities. It is well, therefore, to understand something of the subject intelligently, if only by way of precaution, for the large majority of people are not yet ready to use these powers, and the times and environment are unsuitable. The Occultist knows his guides personally, and can communicate directly with them. He learns many strange, curious, and wonderful things; he is able to draw the Astrals of other people to himself. He can bring back to earth the

¹*Claude's Book.*

memory of all his experiences whilst travelling in the Astral. He can project his Astral body at will to any given place at any particular time. The truth of these statements has been, and can be, verified and definitely proved. The danger lies in this, that in order to develop the power to this extent a man has had to detach himself so much from material things, mental as well as physical, that he loses his sense of proportion, as to do it he must shut himself off from other people, and often becomes selfish and psychically self-centred in consequence. These Occultists feel a kind of intolerance of their fellow-creatures. They don't lose sympathy or pity, but they have lost the power of definite action in a material way, which makes it almost impossible for them to help others in a real, practical, or common-sense manner. This knowledge can be acquired by any mentally and psychically developed person, who is an old soul, given the desire and the necessary perseverance; it is generally the last that is lacking. If a man is wise, kind, broadminded, and unselfish, and uses this power to promote good, to succour and help others, he

is safe; but otherwise it brings its own nemesis, for it leaves him suddenly, not only powerless with regard to the occult force of which he has been so sure, but depleted physically and mentally. I have seen it many times.

I believe there will come a time when people will have evolved sufficiently to use occult laws wisely and well. A new generation who will not be content with the knowledge of only material things, but will study spiritual and psychic laws, and live in consequence with certain ideals in view—they will realize every man his duty to his neighbour, and through that his duty to his own higher self, and therefore to God.

THE GREAT WEAVER

THERE is no "chance" about the way people meet and come into each other's lives, it is all part of a plan; and perhaps it will be easiest explained if we think of God as the Great Weaver, the Earth as the frame, and all the people on it as the strands that move in and out, forming a pattern on a wonderful carpet. The Great Weaver is also a great magician, and as He attaches each little coloured thread to the frame He endows it with life and will-power, and shows it what line it must follow to form the pattern He intends to make. Let's take Mr. Yellow Thread, and say he has to help to make a rose. As he starts whirling and twirling his way across the frame, fitting in with various other threads each in their correct position, all goes well; then, suddenly, he tires of his part and goes off at a tangent, causing tangle and confusion to Mr. Red Strand and Lady Blue, whose lines he

crosses. Eventually he mixes things up till he is almost choked, and comes to a standstill. If he realizes his mistake and is truly anxious to repair the mischief he has done, he will do his very best, first of all to disentangle and put straight Mr. Red Strand and Lady Blue, as he is responsible for their troubles, and then try to work back to his original place. No amount of repentance alone will help him; he must have the will to undo the wrong. If he has not the will, the Great Weaver does not do the work for him; what He does do is to cut Mr. Yellow Thread where he joins the frame, and withdraw him. By the intrusion and compulsory withdrawal of the alien thread, Mr. Red Strand and Lady Blue are left with little loops, uneven, and sagging; by making strenuous efforts they can tighten up their own pattern again so that it shows no trace of having been crossed by the wrong thread, and through this experience may even be firmer than before.

The work of the Great Weaver never stops, so another takes Mr. Yellow Thread's place, and the pattern continues to shape itself. He

is not broken to pieces and thrown away as useless, but is straightened out and put into correct shape and later on will be fastened to the frame again, and this time he will have to weave into a less conspicuous place, the background probably, where he will help to show up the beauty woven by Mr. Red Strand and Lady Blue. There are some underweavers also, the assistants to the Great Weaver (they are the highly developed spirits who live on the seventh sphere); they help all who desire it by directing them along the right lines. They can see the pattern, though not in such detail as the Great Weaver, and so can tell along what lines certain lives will fall, and therefore sometimes they foretell events. They can see that Mr. Plain Thread is now forming a "stem," and, if he works to the pattern the Great Weaver intends, he will eventually finish up in a beautiful rose; but if, instead, he runs amuck, he will be responsible for the disaster that results, for he cannot avoid involving others. The Great Weaver does not intend any thread to work its way alone, though it has an individual place; it must cross

and recross the frame with all the others, each weaving his little bit in the great colour scheme which none of us can understand, for we are too near to it to see it in the right perspective, and it is not yet complete.

MAN'S SPIRIT—FULFILLED IDEALS

YOU want to know how man differs from animals, as the same life, or God-force, animates him in common with them and all creation? Well, I told you before¹ that all force and power emanates from God, for He *is* all Power, He is also all Mind and all Love as well. The life-force that is throbbing through the Universe, manifesting itself in the existence of everything you see, is the cause of man's physical body also, but his spirit, which is his prerogative and peculiar to him, comes from God direct in the form of the "drop" I told you of before, and which for ever remains connected with its source. This "drop," the Divine spark, is a little bit of the God Mind, and it is this fact that makes the difference between even the lowest man and the noblest beast.

Man has to develop that spark by living up

¹*Claude's Book.*

to the best and highest in himself We have recently talked of how man has to grow in regular stages through the physical and mental to the spiritual, and how in order to be well balanced he has to conquer each stage ere he goes on his road of evolution. Sometimes a man in his anxiety to develop scorns the physical, and, despising his body, becomes eccentric; he neglects to cut his hair, or walks sideways like a crab, or develops other tiresome habits, through not having the correct poise. This brings its own nemesis, for the neglected body reacts on the brain and he becomes thoroughly unbalanced.

Everything and every phase has a reason and a purpose and its place in the great scheme of the Creator, and so probably this man has to return to earth later to remedy this neglect and learn to use and control the physical body in the way it is intended. Sometimes you come across these men when reincarnated, and they seem to be out of place; their lives are prosaic in the extreme, and their ostensible interests bounded by narrow limits, and yet you know and feel somehow that they are fitted

for other, different, and higher things. Though one cannot always judge by a man's social position or the nature of his work whether his life is "higher" or not, it is, after all, the manner of it and the use he makes of his opportunities that constitutes the real difference.

A man may be a village carpenter, and by his wholesome, honest, and kindly influence appreciably benefit the small community in which he lives, while another man, say a writer, for instance, may use his greater opportunity to decry what is good and disseminate what is unclean, dishonest, and cynical, caring nothing for the effect on other people, because he can by playing up to the worst in human nature earn more money and gain cheap notoriety.

In the spirit-world things are readjusted. This place might be called the "Land of Fulfilled Ideals," for here, if a man has honestly done his best on earth, he can realize his dreams, which may have been quite out of his reach before. I will give you an instance in my own experience. I came across a man one day who was standing outside a beautiful

building; he was regarding it with love in his eyes. I was so interested I stopped to speak to him. He told me he was one of the architects who had designed it, and that it meant a great deal to him. On earth from his early childhood he had wished to become an architect, and spent hours drawing designs and all his spare time in going to see, admire, and study various buildings. His father was a poor man, a jobbing tailor, and he did his best for his son, but his health failed and the lad had to join him in the little shop, where by slow degrees his ambition faded. Eventually he married, had children, and settled down to his birthright of drudgery, indifferent health, and poverty, but the love of design, of fine curves and imposing lines, remained, and on his scant holidays he still went to look at the buildings he loved. Well, he lived his life honestly, bearing his heavy burden bravely, and then came the inevitable end—death—which proved to him, as to most of us, but the door leading to the land of a fuller and more beautiful life, for his dreams have at last come true and his ideals have materialized.

MAN'S REINCARNATION

HAVING told you of man's beginning¹ as a new soul, you want to know by what process an old soul reincarnates?

In the first place, you must understand he only returns to earth when, and if, he is ready and desirous of doing so. The higher guides in consultation decide on a suitable environment, and then explain and discuss their reasons with him; they also give him special teaching in company with others who are ready to return also. When the time arrives and the physical body of the infant is in the early stage of its growth, the chosen spirit is sent to earth, where it remains in close juxtaposition with its future mother till by degrees the spirit becomes merged into her aura, and the "cord," which will ultimately connect the spirit with its new body, forms and, penetrating the mother's physical organism, attaches itself to the child.

¹*Claude's Book.*

The spirit then gradually decreases in size (concentrates, as it were), and at the time of birth is suitable for the little body, which it envelops and partly interpenetrates. The process is exactly the reverse in this one respect to that of a new soul, which has to grow from the "drop" I told you about, but is analogous in every other respect. It is a natural, reasonable, and simple process, and though it seems so "extraordinary" to you it's only because you are unused to the idea. I don't think it is any more wonderful than the growth of the physical organism. Just think how wonderful this would seem to a stranger from another planet if in his world people multiplied by some other process. He would hardly believe it when he was told that in the warmth, and darkness, and shelter of its mother's body a tiny germ grew to be the complex thing we know man's body to be in a few short months. From the time the spirit comes to earth for this reincarnation his spirit-mind becomes numbed and unconscious, and he awakes in the new body with a new consciousness, a "clean sheet" as it were. Oust as the child is unconscious submerged in

its mother's body, so the spirit is unconscious submerged in her aura). Some people think that a spirit is reabsorbed into a "general consciousness," a "world soul," as it were, before it returns, but this is not correct; all personality would be submerged, it would be like pouring a cup of water into the ocean and trying to collect it again. The difference between a reincarnated and a new soul is this: one has to grow a subconscious mind and the other has only to develop it. The new soul has the "germ" or "cell" of a mind when it comes from God; it is not ready-made.

The reincarnated spirit finds it easier to grow mentally because it has the advantage of an experienced subconscious underlying the conscious mind. In the case of a new soul the conscious mind has not the advantage of this impetus. An old soul can choose and pick out that which is permanent and valuable from that which is beautiful but temporary, and can trust his intuition and follow his instincts, if he tries to get into touch with his subconscious mind, for this will always direct him rightly. Most people want to do what their senses dictate, for

this is generally a pleasant road; the other may not be. But man must learn to control selfish desires; it is essential for his own evolution as well as for the good of others. Each time he gains mastery over himself he moves along his road of evolution. This is more difficult for a new soul, as he has to learn by experience; an old one has a reservoir of this to draw upon. Personality is born of the conscious and subconscious development; it expresses itself in manner and emotion, it is produced by exercising mind and will-power.

THE MISSING

YOU say it is so difficult to get reliable news about anyone who is "missing," for though some spirits say a man is "dead," others, through the same medium, say the identical man is a "prisoner" and so forth, and you do not understand what causes this discrepancy if all are equally honest. As a matter of fact, it is exceedingly difficult for spirits to tell sometimes if a man is dead or only "travelling in the astral"¹ in the manner I have already explained to you. If he is near his body and still connected with it, "the cord," indeed, the whole "astral," looks much coarser by its very proximity to the physical, by which it is affected, and, under these conditions, it is easy for a medium with clairvoyance to see it and know the man is not dead (the cord is made of the same kind of substance that emanates from the body of the medium at a materializing

¹*Claude's Book.*

seance and connects it with that of the materialization). If the spirits communicating come from the third sphere to find the missing man in the lower astral or on the earth, they cannot see him clearly, for it is out of their element, and their powers are blunted and limited in consequence, and he looks "misty" to them; just as I told you people on earth look to us normally. Some people here can sense their relatives there, but practically do not "see" them at all. You can understand under these circumstances they might easily be mistaken in their diagnosis. On the other hand, it is equally difficult if the missing man is sufficiently developed and is able to travel in the third sphere, for then his astral body is very refined, for the farther it is from the physical the more it looks like the real spirit-body and the cord becomes practically invisible; and it is no use asking the man himself, for he does not know and might easily give you an incorrect answer without any intention of being untruthful. I can give you an interesting instance within my own experience. I spoke to a man who I felt sure was merely travelling here temporarily, and said,

"Just come off the earth plane?" He replied, "No, I've been here a long time"; and yet, somehow, I felt he belonged to the earth, for to me he had a sense of incompleteness, though he did not seem conscious of it himself. I then said, "You feel to me as if you belonged to the earth"; and he reiterated, "No, I belong here." However, I felt so sure that I still persisted, and inquired, "Am I wrong then because I seem to sense there is part of you working on the earth plane?" and he replied, "You are right; I go to help on earth for a few hours every day." I continued to talk to him, and the upshot of the conversation was this: I discovered he regarded the hours spent here as his real life and those in his physical body as the "dream life," or as you regard your travels in the astral; and yet, if you met that man in the world in his physical body (unless he knows of and remembers his astral travels) you would find he looked upon things in the same way as you do.

I could not get him to understand I wanted to know if he was conscious of existing in his physical body; he only seemed to regard his

hours spent on earth as a natural process like sleep and as unreal as dreams to you. I found it was no good trying to convince him; and yet he is right, for the crucial point is that man is a spirit, and therefore the life here the real life, for man occupies a mortal body for so short a time that compared with his life as a spirit it seems but a day.

GOD'S SCHOOL

YOU say some people think my theories "are very advanced for the third sphere." Well, darling, though I am living there, I frequently go now to the higher spheres for special instruction, for, as I told you a long time ago, I am being trained to be a teacher, and have already begun my work. I was chosen for this because I was peculiarly suited for it, and not because I was in any way "better" or even as good as many beautiful spirits here. We will take my old simile, and consider God in the fight of the "Great HeadMaster" this time. The different spheres are the different classes or forms in His school; the seventh is the highest. The pupils there are very advanced, and in consequence learn a good deal from the Head-Master Himself; they are sufficiently educated to appreciate and understand His teaching. Those in the sixth are instructed by teachers from the seventh,

and so on down the different spheres, the pupils in each being taught according to their development and requirements. The source of knowledge is one and the same, only it is suited by the teachers to the various grades and degrees. The earth is the most elementary. Certain spirits (of whom I am one), who are required for special work, are sent to the higher spheres from the third for particular teaching. Knowledge is power; it is only a little knowledge that is dangerous. The guides tell me that to those people on earth who desire it, we must not deny knowledge, for it is better to run risks than to vegetate. I find learning is easy, the difficulty lies in remembering and projecting my thoughts through the medium when I come to earth. I cannot dwell therefore on the wonder, glory, and importance of the things I tell you as I should like to do.

I have told you before how the body of a spirit going from the third to the higher spheres undergoes certain changes. On those occasions I have to control my conditions mentally. I am aware of a dual consciousness within myself;

part of my mind is occupied in soothing and controlling my body and maintaining the correct poise, while the spiritual part is praying, and I feel as if I were reaching up to try and touch God and to pull myself up to Him.

DREAMS

YOU want to know if I can tell you what dreams are? Well, it's a very big subject, as there are so many kinds of dreams. I have not been much interested in sleep, from the physical point of view, as we don't need it here, and though it is a physical function, even all the physiological facts of sleep are not yet wholly understood.

The brain and senses, belonging as they do to the temporary part of man, require to be dulled or numbed at certain intervals in order to be rested, soothed, and invigorated, or they would burn themselves out. Nature has provided a reaction, and they practically close back on themselves. While awake, the senses are active because the brain is working; in sleep, the consciousness is numbed by automatic action—the deeper the sleep the more active the subconscious mind becomes. The actual cerebral change which takes place, as with all other

involuntary actions of the physical body, is an act of natural self-preservation, and works through nature consciousness. When God created nature, He gave it a great general consciousness of its own through the Life-force (you might almost truly say God breathed upon it), which results in actions of self-preservation.

For instance, as you know, certain flowers close at night, some birds who require it migrate to warmer climates every year to escape the cold of winter, and so forth. In everything living on the earth there is this nature consciousness. It is especially pronounced in man, for he is the highest form of life manifest there, and he has will-power in addition, and, through this, can misuse this nature consciousness if he chooses; but, if he does, because it is potent, it punishes him eventually. For sound sleep the brain ought to be thoroughly numbed, and in this case there would be no dream—to dream shows that one part of the brain is still working, and therefore some sense is not sufficiently dulled; or indigestion, or worry, may keep certain

nerves "taut," so to speak, and they do not relax sufficiently, as this is necessary too to ensure perfect sleep. The momentary activity of a certain sense may induce what appears to the sleeper to be a long dream (it may actually last two seconds), but what really happens is this: the quickened sense telegraphs the fact to the brain, which connects up the sensation with an impression already there. For instance, a sharp sudden noise like a pistol-shot may cause quite an elaborate dream of a revolution or of the war; the noise taps a record on the memory of something heard or read of, if not actually experienced. Or, in the same way, a feeling of cold may bring about a dream of drowning, or of the Arctic regions, or touch some other memory record in affinity with this sensation, or along the same lines. Owing to the quiescence of the other senses, connected memories can come through from the subconscious mind more easily, and therefore may be of things long forgotten and unrecognized normally, for the brain is more in touch with the subconscious mind during sleep. Owing to mechanical action of the brain itself, there

might be some kind of a dream, even if the spirit was out of the body, but it would not be a long, connected, or interesting dream, for the subconscious mind would be away with the spirit.

Sometimes the travelling spirit, immediately on its return to the body, tries to imprint the memory of its experiences on the brain, and these get confused with the mechanical action of which I have just spoken; the result is intermingling and incongruity. Some people, they are very few, can remember their spirit experiences, and, if they are sufficiently evolved for this, their guides may tell them sometimes of impending events; some few other spirits, who find they cannot bring these memories through to their waking consciousness correctly in an elaborate or detailed way, have learnt to impress a sign or a symbol on the brain which they know will convey a certain meaning to themselves in their normal waking condition. Thus you will hear some one say (quite a sensible, level-headed person too), "I dreamt last night of a bouquet of white flowers tied with ribbon that always means a wedding"; or, "I saw a

travelling-trunk locked and labelled; that generally means a long journey for me," and so forth. This particular spirit has learnt that only in this simple primitive way, through symbols, can it convey information to the limited normal mind of the body with which it is connected.

THE POWER OF MIND

HOW can you learn to remember spirit-travels? By training the brain to remember physical experiences correctly and thoroughly a sort of memory training course. Start by thinking and trying to recall everything you did yesterday, remembering it not only in minute detail but in proper sequence; then try to remember in the same way and as fully what you did the day before yesterday, and the day before that, and so on—it requires a great deal of practice and a great deal of patience, but it is the best foundation for recalling psychic and spiritual experiences. Through these material scenes you are forcing the memory back as regards *time*. You would not need to force the memory back so far in this respect to recall spiritual experiences, but you would need to force it farther as regards *distance*. As I have often told you, time has no meaning for us here,

but distance has—though to those of us who advance it becomes of less and less significance; it has to be reckoned with, however, by the newcomer. For travelling under particular conditions we have to learn to control the forces and powers within ourselves so as to be able to go through certain experiences. A novice is only allowed to walk about here as if he were on the earth; if he has to go on a journey guides go with in order to protect him—in fact they have to work and concentrate on him to keep him "intact" during his voyage through space! (Yes, what I am saying is literally a fact.) If a new-comer took himself from here to the earth plane (if he could), his body would be almost falling to pieces; it would be flopping about because the currents and forces in the atmosphere, would be too powerful for him. When I come to you I concentrate and will my body to stiffen and consolidate, and not until I feel I have absolute mental command over myself in detail, even down to my toes and ears, do I start. I had to learn how to locate in my mind the exact place or distance from my mind to where my toes would be (we measure everything from the

head in this case), for I must set the mental picture to get exactly five toes on each foot. I must then switch off and yet retain the idea while I think of what the top of my head looks like (I know it seems to you a troublesome thing to have to do, but remember our consciousness or mind can hold a hundredfold what yours will). I do all this because as soon as I get in touch with these atmospheric forces I have to hold myself together strongly to resist them. Now, if I am not in a hurry to reach my destination, I do not trouble to do anything further than to keep a clear picture of myself in the proportions in which I appear in my own sphere, and I project my thoughts all the time to the place to which I am going, but the first consideration is always my body. If I were in a great hurry, directly I started I should get the picture of myself very clear, and then I should quickly but gradually contract my body from within (yes, I know it sounds extraordinary, but you must remember there is an elasticity about our bodies,—only an advanced spirit can do this, not a new-comer). I begin by drawing my whole consciousness within myself, and in so

doing I draw upward and inward each part of my body, making myself very self-centred and bringing my extremities nearer to my consciousness. I have told you my body is made of atoms, but because they are minutely fine I can actually consolidate them into a very small space, there is so much God-force holding them together. When I get near my destination I gradually and consciously expand my body to its normal dimensions. I only contract my body in this way for emergency-travelling, and I know spirits who have been here many years and who cannot do it; it is only intended for those who have serious and special work to do, in which case it is expedient.

I know it sounds difficult to realize, Mum, and I will try and explain it further; but you must understand that in our sphere *mind does govern matter*. On earth it is often the other way. There, for instance, suppose a man's liver is out of order his mind gets depressed; my mind, here, would *mend* whatever part of me was not quite right (if that were possible). In our own conditions our bodies are quite as solid as yours, but,

in as far as they are matter, they are completely under the control of the trained mind. Your physical body contains a good proportion of water (I don't know how much, but you could easily inquire). Suppose that water could be temporarily expelled into the atmosphere, your body would become much lighter and would shrink. My body here has certain gases and moisture in it (in greater proportion than the amount of actual atoms it contains); to contract my body I expel those gases and that moisture, and this enables me to draw the atoms closer in. When I get near my destination, the atoms of my body, my life-force, my consciousness, and my spirit are all there—it's only the gases and moisture that are missing. I, in order to regain my normal size, draw in the gases and moisture of your sphere, and it is better for me to do so, though it's not absolutely essential. The advantage is this: that through absorbing a certain amount of the physical condition around you I am more easily able to get into touch with you and earth-things.

The spirits who travel to earth comparatively slowly, and do not go through this experience,

arrive of course just as they left their own sphere, and their bodies therefore contain their normal moisture and gases; they are not able on this account to perceive and understand physical and material conditions so well. Sometimes spirits returning to earth have not the faintest idea of the physical conditions round them; they don't even know where they are, they only know they are near some one they love. This puzzles people on earth, and they say, "Why, John Willie, two years ago you said you could only I 'sense' me, and now you say you can see me and everything quite clearly!" and "John Willie" may not have the desire or ability to explain all he has learnt in the interval. Now, Mum, I know some sentimental people will say, "Fancy my bright boy having to take these horrible old earth conditions again!" "Yes, but it's only for a little while, and he gets rid of them before he gets "home."

At a materializing seance sometimes miniature figures are seen, and the usual and rather vague explanation is that the power was not sufficient to build them up to the normal size. It is alleged this happens with mediums whose powers are

dwindling. If this were the case, the guides would only materialize the faces and heads of the spirits. My theory is this: these miniature figures are those of spirits who have contracted their bodies for travelling (as I have just explained), and, finding themselves in the limiting and curious conditions prevalent at a materializing seance, where extraordinary power is being manipulated, are unable to reabsorb the materials they require at the moment to regain their normal proportions. You need not pity them, Mum; they are not like flies in a spider's web, they can withdraw if they wish and return later; but they do not do so, for they know they may lose their opportunity of materializing, for the material must be used immediately it is ready. One can imagine it might be painful and rather horrifying to a sitter who does not understand, and who says, "Has my dear boy shrunk to that size; he was such a fine figure when he was here!" Apropos of all I have said about mind controlling matter, it is quite wonderful how much can be done in this way on earth under certain conditions. Experiments have proved that it is possible to make a red

mark or raise a blister on a hypnotized patient's body by merely touching him with a finger and telling him this would be the result. The body has obeyed the command of the mind.

SPIRIT HELPERS

IF they have first to learn how to appear, you want to know why it is that some spirits, practically at the moment of death, manage to come to people on earth? In these cases it is generally a thought-form (I have explained fully about these to you before¹), especially if the spirit is seen in very "material" conditions, such as wounded, covered with mud, in tattered clothes, etc. (as men would have looked, for instance, who had passed out on the battlefield).

It might even be a thought-form not consciously projected by the spirit itself. There is always a link between the spirits of people who truly love each other, a sort of unconscious telepathy, and the passing out of one under these conditions would give a "pull" or "jerk" to the spirit of the other who remained. To simplify the explanation let us take a typical case. Say an elderly man called Max had a

¹*Claude's Book.*

young brother abroad, to whom he was much attached, and one day this boy appeared to him in spirit, deathly pale, and with a terrible wound in his head. Max would feel sure his brother was dead.

The boy might have had time to project his thought to his brother before he became unconscious, or, if not, his spirit in its passing would "Pull" or "jerk" his brother's spirit, with which he was in affinity. Max's spirit would then try to get the knowledge through to his conscious mind, and as soon as it succeeded Max would think of his brother, and unknowingly, under the peculiar conditions, psychometrize and so develop the picture of the boy's bodily conditions. (Being in a physical body himself, he would naturally imagine his brother in the same state.) Some people would not be able to visualize the condition they sensed, so would see no "spirit" nor "vision," but would psychometrize the boy's *sensations* only, and would feel acute depression, anxiety, or fear instead; they would then not be able to say definitely what had happened but would feel "something was wrong."

Now you want to know why, and to what extent, spirits are allowed to return to earth to communicate with friends there. As a matter of mercy, spirits are allowed to return to give their friends the assurance of their continued existence, and so to assuage their grief; but communication is not permitted indefinitely, unless it is for their mutual spiritual benefit. After a time, sitters who go for purely material or selfish reasons find that the spirit-friends fail or have to leave them. A spirit realizes that, after a certain point, he can do no more for his earth-friend; he is not permitted to shoulder every burden, and so make life smooth or easy—even if he could. Along life's highway people must walk alone; they must overcome obstacles and distinguish sign-posts for themselves—that is what they are in the world for, to learn life's lessons and so develop character. Spirit laws are like nature's laws. If you always carried a baby, for fear it might knock or hurt itself, it would never learn to walk alone. Bumps and knocks are the luck of life, and, through them, the wise man learns how (not to passively endure) but to *conquer*. The man

who has learnt to conquer and to control himself is the man who will be able to conquer and control other people, for he will have developed so much mind and will-power.

I acknowledge it does seem sometimes as if certain people were helped from the other side; but that is because these people are keeping to the pattern on the great carpet, and going along the right lines. The assistant weavers (guides) are always ready and anxious to guide and advise, but they may not coerce, and man must use his power of free will and decide for himself. I told you the God-mind works in a great universal way; but even on the seventh sphere interests become more personal—God's laws become individualized. The spirits there who have earned this high estate, some of them "through great tribulation," advise, and strengthen, and encourage those in the spheres below; they also work and plan for the benefit of people on earth, and in this latter case they direct spirits in the third sphere, who pass on the help and knowledge to those in the world—for they are naturally more in touch with it.

PREMONITIONS—CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

I HAVE told you I cannot foretell material events in detail, unless they are in the plan, the pattern on the great carpet as it were, and then only if I am told the colour scheme by the higher guides.

These guides work to promote God's wishes on earth, and in specific cases they select particular people there whom they consider suitable to do certain things, and try to influence and guide them in that direction. But I have impressed on you before that every man has to work out his own salvation, and for this reason he is endowed with free will, and though he may be directed he cannot be driven along any particular road. As it is always easier to understand, suppose I give you an imaginary illustration. Suppose you lived in some rather quiet and inaccessible spot in Wales, but the guides saw you were psychic, also intelligent, level-headed, and practical, and thought you

might do good work for others in London if you lived there, they would suggest and try and implant that idea in your mind. Well, if I spoke to you I might say (knowing you and knowing the plan), "Some day you will live in London, and do some good and useful work there." If the plan matured, and you went to London later and took up the work, you would say, "Claude prophesied I would do this some day!" What would happen if you did not follow the plan? Nothing! No thunderbolt would fall from Heaven to destroy you, or anything of that sort; but you would have lost a golden opportunity, which would not recur, of improving yourself greatly and benefiting others, and the guides would find some one else to do the work. I might even have elaborated the prophecy, and said, "You will meet a tall, dark, thin man, with whom you will work." I might be able to know this through meeting his spirit-friends, who, knowing his qualities and the qualities he lacked, felt for some particular work your combined energies might be just right, and intended to try and bring this about. He might be very mystical and

clever, for instance, but not sufficiently practical, and so required help in just that particular line in which you excelled.

An old spirit has a curious power of its own of sensing great changes, and it knows of its own physical death and its own physical birth. In the former case it is told of it in the course of its astral travels by guides (while still connected with its earth-body), and the latter I have already explained to you in reincarnation.

A spirit, even when knowing its own "death" is near, may not be able to get the knowledge through to its own physical brain directly, and in that case it sometimes tells some other spirit, with a view to being retold the fact itself when it is back again and fully conscious in its physical body. And when the knowledge does get through in this way, you call it premonition.

It is very few people, who are told these things, and only when, and if, it is desirable and necessary they should know. (I am not speaking, of course, of the kind of people who imagine their last hour has come every time they get a pain.) When this knowledge is really given to people, they experience a curious spiritual

"bracing"—an "uplift" as it were; the spirit strengthens, calms, and controls its physical body till it becomes almost superhuman in its power of endurance. Many of the martyrs of old, who died such terrible deaths, were evidence of this, and, in our own day, during the war, there have been many examples. The spirit tunes the mental and physical up to a very high rate of vibration till it attains almost a state of exaltation: the spirit knows there will be no depressing after-effects—no reaction. This quickening of vibration can be effected by very diverse and opposite means—by prayer—or by drink (I know the juxtaposition sounds horrible); but remember a higher rate of vibration does not necessarily mean a higher spiritual status (mediums and psychics are only people who can see, and hear, and sense much higher and quicker rates of vibration than the ordinary individual), and the same effect may be caused by totally different means. Great joy will move you to tears as well as great sorrow. If you raise the rate of vibration of the body in a spiritual and pure way—by prayer, for instance—there will be no reaction; but there will be

an acute and depressing one if you raise it by drink or drugs. This spiritual exaltation, this quickening, came to many men during the war. Numbers of us here believe that His presence with us in that terrible time was veritably Christ's second coming to earth. If He had come again reincarnated as a man He would have been more "despised and rejected" than before, in a world that was so far away from God and spiritual things, where man was judged so largely not by what he was but by what he had, where temporal power and money were the great desideratum. So, instead, Christ poured out the power of God that was in Himself (for the more He gave the more He received) on thousands of men, who, by their physical sacrifice, brought back to thousands of homes, thoughts, and hopes, and knowledge of holy, spiritual, and beautiful truths. This power, this inspiration, this influence, call it what you will, was so potent it was almost like a "soul-covering" for the time being to all who could receive it. If, even through His limited physical body, He could while on earth outpour healing and work

wonders, you can imagine how great is His power now that He has no such limitation. Here we never trouble to think and wonder if Christ was born of a virgin or not, etc.; for we know the events connected with His physical body do not matter at all. It was the *God in Him* (He was more divine than any man) that was the great moving power that has carried His teaching so far over the world, because, being of God, it touched the God in every man who could instinctively recognize and respond to the truth. I think Christ was the greatest, truest Socialist that ever lived. He recognized the *true* brotherhood of man, He knew all men owned one common origin—God; and He had infinite compassion, for He alone realized how far they had fallen short of what they might have been, and ought to have been, if they lived up to their splendid birthright.

"THE EGO" AND "COUNTERPARTS"

THE Ego cannot be defined; it could be anywhere in space. It is the Divine spark; it is not in a man's body, but is connected with it by a very fine thread or "tube."

When the "drop" of God-force breaks away from God to come to earth and animate a human body (as I previously explained to you¹), part of it remains behind; this part is the "Ego," the reservoir of divinity. It is severed from the body at death, never from the spirit, for man is always connected with God—disconnection would mean annihilation. As man desires to draw from the God-force, the "tube" connecting him with that strengthens and enlarges, and increases his capacity to receive it.

I told you also when the "drop" of God-force that makes the spirit of man separates from God and comes to the world, it divides into halves and goes to two separate mothers,

¹*Claude's Book.*

and thus a boy and girl are always born from each "drop."

In fact, on the earth plane things are generally constituted with a "counterpart," an opposite; they are male and female, positive and negative. The union of these creates the proper balance and produces something.

The positive is described as the transmitter, the negative as the receiver; at a seance for materialization the medium places the sitters alternately, positive and negative, in order to produce something physical.

Certain plants are positive and negative, and it is their union by fertilization which produces the fruit; it is the mingling of sun and rain which makes conditions for the growth and health of vegetation. Man often forgets the necessity for this ideal mating within himself in order to produce character; he sometimes goes to extremes, and becomes too positive or too negative, and thus loses balance and upsets the harmony necessary for ideal production.

If a man cultivates mental qualities alone and neglects his body, he becomes unhealthy; if he lives only in the senses or physical, he

becomes a clod (I won't say a brute; that is an insult to animals). A man must choose the happy medium between the ideal and the practical. If a man is receptive (by putting himself in the right condition physically, mentally, and spiritually), he expands the channel or "tube" that connects him with God; he prepares himself to receive the power which is projected down that "tube" to him. If a man opens himself to receive it, he can get all he will of God; he expands like a flower.

The brain won't hold this thought till it has developed enough to support it; just as a baby's feet have to grow strong enough to support its body before it can walk.

The "bit of God" in man is "im-," or rather "un"-personal; it is sent to become personal, and to so develop and go back to God impersonal but no longer unpersonal. It is a "bit of life," but has no individuality—that it has to grow and develop here.

It takes a long time to develop a fine, true personality, a "whole" personality—more than one earth-life as a rule.

The "flabby" people one meets have not

developed one. Some people have a certain amount of personality, but it is all one-sided; to be complete it must be many-sided. The word is generally used loosely. A very aggressive or irritable man is sometimes described as a "strong" personality; he is not so really, he has merely developed an idiosyncrasy. Another person will "pose"; he is peculiar, and will also be spoken of as a "personality" (it ought to be peculiarity!). The same remark applies to him, he is "one-sided" too. A real "whole" personality is one that is perfectly balanced (or as nearly as possible)—who is physically, mentally, and spiritually in right proportion.

Many people are imperfectly developed—a genius who is not spiritual, or an idealist who is not practical. They have each a side missing, and they will not realize the best in life till they cultivate that side. The soul is like a rough diamond, the beauty of which is concealed till it is cut and polished. The earth is the workshop in which the cutting and polishing will be done. It is easier to be good and to know what is right than man realizes, for

the little bit that connects him with God is always tugging at him, and he does not understand he can get all he wants if he will only "link up" to receive it.

If anyone persists in living only through his senses or in the physical, he suffers for it eventually, for the physical turns on itself if expressed too much, and disease results.

The "little bit of God" tries to work on his soul, his soul to affect his mind, his mind to control his body. This is a rule, for while in the body he cannot reach to the God part of himself except through these intermediate states, he cannot touch the divine without working through the mental and spiritual; these states are dependent on each other.

If he does not make his body good, his hands are going to "grasp" things, not give them. If he thinks rightly but acts wrongly, he has broken or misused a "link" of the chain that connects him with God. Unless he thinks rightly his hand can't act rightly; that's why a person of low mental development does not achieve much, even with his hands. When the physical and mental work in harmony it is a

good big step forward; it is better for a new soul than to try and develop the spiritual first, for then he becomes visionary (though it does not often happen; as a rule the physical is first developed, then the mental, and lastly the spiritual). When the mental and physical work well there is hope for the spiritual, because the spiritual is dependent on unison; it cannot enter into inharmonious conditions.

When the mental is absolutely dominant, you get a selfish, calculating, cold-blooded person; if the physical dominates the mental, you get sensuality.

When a man learns to control, and harmonize, and balance the two, his spirit gets its opportunity, and you have a splendid man, a "whole" man. There is another alternative: sometimes the spirit tries to control before this ideal state is reached, and then in the man there is a struggle, a dual personality.

At times he is spiritual, at others dominated by the physical. Occasionally this accounts for what you call a "religious humbug "; he probably

is quite in earnest at times (when the spirit in him has the upper hand), and then it loses its hold, and the physical predominates, and he becomes a different being.

He has not the correct poise or balance.

MAN'S MAP OF EVOLUTION

I HAVE already told you how man has to separate and develop apart from God, the source of his life, in order to attain individuality and perfect himself before he can return to Him. Through the limitations of his physical body man learns judgment. He wanders far from God, learning of evil to master it—conquering the lower self of his physical body in order to control it. My teacher recently showed me some most interesting diagrams or maps illustrating in colour and line certain men's lives and their way of evolution, and as it was most helpful and instructive, I will try and explain the principle to you.

To simplify matters before, I said man evolved in a circle; as a matter of fact his course is not a perfect circle, it is almost more "pear"-shaped, and proceeds in a series of spirals, thus: (shown on following page).

[Missing Illustration]

Each loop or spiral represents an incarnation or life on earth; the whole is the total of his experience. In the diagrams that I was shown, the general outline and size were practically the same in all, the variation was in the number and colour of the "loops."

Some had as few as three—these were the people who earnestly tried to learn every lesson and benefit by every experience; others had as many as thirty spirals in the picture of their lives—they were those who did not learn quickly nor try to benefit by experience.

The downward curve of each loop is the coming to earth of the spirit, the upward curve is its return to the spirit-world. You will notice the loops become longer, for, as the spirit progresses, it passes back higher into the spirit-world; at first it may only return to the lowest astral. I have already told you a good deal about the "aura,"¹ but as it will help my explanation of the colours in the picture, I must remind you of certain details. You know, for instance, that a man's character is expressed by his aura, for its colours are decided and

¹*Claude's Book.*

regulated by his thoughts and desires. So, in the diagram of "A.'s" life of seven incarnations which I am going to explain to you, you will remember that the man's aura while on earth would have actually shown the colours by which he is represented in the picture.

The infinitesimal "drop" that God sends to form the nucleus of each individual man's spirit is, of course, pure and perfect—so "A.'s" life-map starts with a white line. (See diagram.)

However, by the time he left the earth after his first incarnation his colour was a dark, murky red, indicating a low and sensual disposition. He realized when he got back to the astral what he had to eradicate, and he returned to earth for his second incarnation, improved, but still red, a paler shade and no longer murky. If he had been entirely purged during his sojourn in the astral, his personality would have been "washed out," for it is only by *accumulated* experience that personality develops. Thus the aura shows one colour until the individual develops some fresh attribute which automatically produces another shade. (I don't say the red was not streaked

or flecked with any other colour; I am speaking of the one that predominates.) Prompted by his subconscious memory he had a natural desire to try and curb his sensual instincts this second time, and he became a depressed, surly, heavy type of man, going to the other extreme through repression, and in consequence changed to brown tinged with red, for he had relapses and gave way also to sudden violent outbursts of temper. He went back to the astral a dull, depressed brown, not a good colour but better than the murky red. These were his lowest physical stages; he had not developed mentally so far, he had not consciously tried, and that is the thing that counts. The third occasion he arrived on earth a much lighter brown, and this time, prompted by his subconscious mind, he fought against becoming the slave of his physical body, either through sensuality or depression (one is often the reaction of the other); he tried to develop mentally, and went in for study, and was by way of becoming a recluse. The more he progressed, the more yellow mixed with the brown of him, and he left the earth eventually a fawn colour. The fourth

time he came back much lighter in colour, still desirous of developing mentally, but from a higher standpoint; he was kinder too, but not demonstrative, and troubled occasionally with a few flecks of the old red, which, when regulated, was rather good, as by this time yellow predominated, and the combined effect was orange colour, which improved the cold, mental, aloof attitude with a warm, human feeling, and he departed this time a beautiful yellow. His sojourn after this was in a higher sphere of the spirit-world, and he learnt he must develop two more attributes, love and spirituality. So when he returned to earth again for the fifth time, he strove for spiritual grace as well as mental attainments, and so blue entered his aura, and, with the yellow already there, turned to a beautiful bright pale green, the colour of hope. He accomplished much, and before he left earth again he was a beautiful pure blue, which denotes spirituality. He had conquered his physical disabilities, and attained mental and a certain amount of spiritual development, but in a rather cold, detached, aesthetic way, and he knew now that it remained for him to learn to

love and perhaps sacrifice himself. So back he came for the sixth time to God's school, and became a very clever writer, but gave up many earthly chances and opportunities of advancement for love of an invalid wife, and, at last, as he had learnt to sacrifice his own desires and wishes and to truly love, a beautiful pink showed in his aura, and with the blue already there blended to perfect mauve, the sign of a great all-round development. Having attained this, he went back this time an iridescent, glowing figure—yellow, blue, pink, mauve. He had worked out the imperfections and purified his colours, for the beautiful pink, pure, perfect, unselfish love was the cleansed, refined, spiritualized remainder of the murky, sensual red of his first incarnation. He returned even once again for the seventh time; it was especially his wish, in order to become a reformer and leader of men; after this he went back to the spirit-world for good. There he now looks like a wonderful, iridescent opal, radiant with every shade of beautiful colour. I know, Mum, for "A." is my teacher, and the map of life he showed me was his own.

THE LESSONS OF LIFE

I HAVE explained how man has to evolve by passing through the material, then the mental, to the spiritual, which is the highest stage of his development (they are generally separate and well-defined stages); but once man has conquered the two earlier, he is so well balanced he uses all three together in the right manner and proportion. You can liken this progression to music. When you begin to play the piano you have to learn the position of each note and its relative value to the others in the octave, and you play five-finger exercises of single notes, for if you tried to combine them without knowledge or experience you would make discords; but when you are thoroughly conversant with the separate notes you can put your hands on the piano practically at random and easily strike several notes together, producing harmonious chords. The first, the material stage, has to be conquered before

there is any progress, and until it is no one can be really happy.

You say you know some people who think of nothing but material things, and yet seem perfectly happy and have apparently all that heart can desire. Apparently—yes—but not really, for material things alone cannot suffice for long. That "little bit of God" within is tireless, it will keep on tugging continually, and so there is always something wanting—an emptiness, an unrest that is ever there, however carefully it may be concealed. Why do you suppose so many people who have much of this world's goods gamble, drink, or live fast lives? They want to drown this feeling of "emptiness," for they are not prepared to sacrifice or risk anything, even though, on the whole, life has not brought them all they hoped and expected from it under the circumstances. Life is made up of comparisons; it is a continual comparing of extremes. The materialist envies the spiritual man, who, he recognizes, has found an anodyne for that irrepressible discontent; and the spiritual man envies the materialist, not because he desires his worldly

possessions for himself, but because he feels they might be so great a power for good if used aright. These extremes are only extremes in as far as men make them so. There is no reason at all (in fact it would be the ideal thing) why a man should not be thoroughly versed in material and practical things and be thoroughly spiritual too; they are not *meant* to be antagonistic, but, like different notes in a chord, are intended to blend and make one perfect and harmonious whole. On this account "New Thought," when properly applied, is wonderfully efficacious, because it teaches how to use the mental to bridge over the extremes of the material and spiritual—so many people concentrate on the one without attempting to study the other. People are in the world to learn, and everything, even what seems "very hard luck," is a lesson sent to teach something or to save a greater evil.

However much it hurts at the time, it may be the foundation of your immortality. Mummy, I feel perhaps you won't like me to say this, but you know how much you have grown mentally and spiritually since I "died,"

don't you? You are not like the same woman. You learnt your lesson through tears, and tribulation, and great grief, but you learnt all of good you could from it, and many people are happier through your knowledge, for you have an understanding, a sympathy, and compassion you could never have had otherwise, and you are always ready now to comfort and help others in consequence. What was your cross will lead eventually to your crown. I am certainly not going to say I was "killed" in order that you should be so taught, for that is not the case. My death was inevitable, for it was in the pattern on the carpet, or it would not have occurred; but when it happened it was open to you to learn the lesson as you did, or to become embittered, or to repress your grief and shut away all memory of me as too tragic to talk and think about—whereas, as it is, you never connect me with tragedy or grief, but rightly always with happiness, for now you know I live "for ever in the light."

GOD—THE WAR—THE CHRIST-SPIRIT

I ASKED one of my teachers why the war was allowed, and said I presumed it was entirely man's fault? The reply was that though man made the evil conditions that brought it about, there was also created through it a partnership between God and man, spirit and matter, good and evil. The evils which led to it had been accumulating and poisoning the body of mankind for a long time, and it was only when matters came to a head like a terrible abscess and burst, relieving the fever and inflammation and getting rid of the poison, that the cleansing process which was necessary could begin. God promised there should never be another great Flood, so, this time, the cleansing was accomplished through fire and the sword. The physical or lower part of man, which, animal-like, wants to seek and devour and retain power by brute force,—who kills to conquer, and even, when he is possessed by

the blood lust, conquers to kill,—this provided the animal or evil side; and so God sent His Spirit forth to help man to deeds of heroism, of self-sacrifice, to uplift him to counterbalance the effects of this terrible orgy of bloodshed, so that the war should not remain in the minds of this and later generations merely as a period of carnage and vileness, but that through it they should see how the knowledge of spiritual things had come home to mankind, how many people were brought back to God through physical suffering and through the parting of those who dearly loved each other. There has been a spiritual "knitting up" of spirits on either side of that division we call death. God enabled Jesus to gather and project for Him the Christ-spirit, even actually into the physical bodies of many men who died in the war.

"Why did so many 'good' men die?" Well, the Christ-spirit could not have entered if they had not been good—though often you would not have realized it. A man might die, for instance, with a coarse joke upon his lips, and yet it might have been the Christ-spirit in him that caused him to make that joke. He might

have felt it was a moment of terrible strain and tension, and in the very fear of his own heart he did what he could, according to his lights, to cheer his comrades in a pure spirit of unselfishness, and this is the true Christ-spirit. If only the cruel, selfish, bad men, the "failures" of the world, had been killed, there would have been no lesson for the rest of mankind, would there? For, after all, however much they tried to disguise it, it would have been a relief on the whole, and, though most people would not have expressed it so crudely, they would no doubt have thought it "a good riddance of bad rubbish." People would not have anguished, and longed, and sought for communion with them in the same way; and in seeking the spirits of those they loved, many have found their own souls. This Christ-spirit is a wonderful thing; in our physical bodies we inherit generations of materialism, in Jesus it shone through and overcame the flesh. By living in the right way it is possible to heal or improve the bodies bequeathed by parents. Many people, through the power of the spirit, have overcome and conquered the

limitations imposed on them by physical infirmity, and their spirits are more beautiful and shine more brightly in consequence. God is so great, so vast, so altogether beyond anything we can really ever understand, that He would have been always an abstraction and unknowable; but the Christ-spirit, as part of the God-spirit as it materialized through Jesus, locates our knowledge of some of the attributes of God and brings them within our understanding—translates them, as it were, in our terms, gives us as an ideal something that is practical and possible. God has revealed Himself before at other times through various teachers, each suited to, and limited by, his times and environment.

When you read the life of Jesus you realize it was a life of service and unselfishness, and through it all, and the mainspring of it all, was a great compassion. The sick, the possessed of devils, the lepers, the mourners, the sinners came to Him, ever sure of His love, His help, and healing. There are many in the world to-day who would indignantly deny that they were Christians. They have, they say, outgrown

dogmas, and creeds, and orthodox beliefs, for they found them narrow and unscientific and limiting; but their hearts are filled with kindness nevertheless, and they work unselfishly for the good of their fellow-men. When they come over here, Mummy, they will realize with some surprise that the compassion that filled their hearts reached and touched them because they were attuned to Him, and so they were the followers of Christ after all, without knowing it.

DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

I HAVE explained in the diagram of "A.'s" life how man's evolution progresses in a series of horizontal spirals—this is in the geographical sense. From the spiritual point of view he progresses in an upward spiral, for he gets steadily and gradually higher in character through his experiences.

Spiritually, therefore, he would be higher in his last earth-life than in the first. People frequently ask why it is necessary for a spirit to come back to earth when it could progress in the spirit-world. The whole point is this: it is *not the spirit* that has to learn to progress through contact with the physical—it is the *personality*. In the spirit-world man progresses spiritually, but he cannot develop personality there. Earth's lessons are necessary for this, for the spirit develops personality through the senses of the physical body by using them aright and by overcoming the temptations of

those senses, and so learning self-restraint. Christ was the example set before us, the ideal, but men worship Him instead of trying to model their personality on His. Personality is the child of spirit and body, the result of their union, and is never lost; we are *ourselves* in the spirit-world. If it were possible for a spirit to develop in the spirit-world without returning to earth again after only one short life there, it might be merely a few months or weeks even, it seems unnecessary and a waste of time for that spirit to have ever gone to earth at all, as it could have learnt nothing under these circumstances. In fact, if men can develop without earth's lessons, why does God ever send them into the world? If it is all merely a matter of luck, then there is no reason and no law in the universe. The spirit itself, the "Divine Spark," being of God, is always perfect; it's the personality that is wrong. Personality is the quality through which you choose to do right or wrong. People who are jealous, lustful, evil tempered, covetous, etc., are so because they have not developed personality; that is why they choose what is wrong. What part of a murderer makes

him commit murder? Not the spirit of him—that came from God; it is his uncontrolled, undeveloped personality. What constitutes the difference in people even in their faults? Anger, lust, jealousy, covetousness, etc., have all to be conquered eventually, but it is not laid down that these things must be overcome in this or any particular order. The conditions of "A.'s" physical life may bring covetousness to him first to overcome, while "B." may have to learn to control anger, meanwhile "C." is wrestling perhaps with jealousy and so forth. Spirits are the same and equal; it's the personalities of men that differ. No important trait of the character of the personality is changed in the spirit-world, but it is improved, and the corners are rounded off, and a sense of beauty generally developed. I never cared much for music on earth, therefore I shall not here become a musician or composer, but I have learnt to appreciate and enjoy hearing music, and that is because spirit responds naturally to beauty; so, being in the spirit-world where it is not trammelled, one is able to appreciate and understand beauty better, whether it be of sound, or colour,

or form. Sometimes people do not realize that spiritual development makes a man responsive to beauty, and you will occasionally hear some one say rather suspiciously something of this kind: "Well, my John Willie never cared for scenery on earth, but now he often describes it to me; I can't understand why!" While on earth John Willie's spirit was not given its opportunity, he was limited by his physical body; but here it is free to develop, and he will be able to see the beauty of pictures and scenery though he will not become a painter. Once out of the physical body we are out of the world of matter into that of spirit. So even in the lowest astral, after a time, there is a natural spiritual quickening, for the spirit is in its own conditions and can make itself felt eventually even by the low personality to which it is connected, and which will therefore inevitably progress, however slowly. This spirit, though it has not done wrong, has been in contact with an unclean, evil personality, in unclean, evil conditions, so for a little while its beauty and brightness are dimmed and clouded by those conditions; but back in its own sphere the quickening comes in

time, and the muddled, groping, struggling personality is roused to desire something better, and as soon as the thought comes: "What can I do to raise myself?" it begins to progress, and help is forthcoming. As he progresses he desires higher development—every step leads to another; it is like turning corners and seeing new vistas continually. The personality at last learns to say, "Never mind the way, I'll take *any* so long as it's the *best* way for my evolution"; then, realizing he can only strengthen, purify, and improve his personality through the trials and temptations of life on earth, he comes back to be further schooled. "To him that *overcometh*, a crown of life is given." You cannot win your crown here, Mum, for there is no envy, nor jealousy, nor lust, nor covetousness, nor any other evil thing to overcome.

DUAL PERSONALITY

YOU want to know if I can explain what is sometimes called "dual personality," and what causes a man after a severe illness or shock to appear at times, for long or short periods, a totally different character—a refined, sweet-tempered man, for instance, to become coarse, vindictive, and bad tempered. Some people attribute this to actual obsession; they think a separate and independent evil entity takes possession of his body for the time being. These cases are very rare, I should imagine, for it is impossible to get this control over any individual against their own wish, but it might be possible if anyone developed psychically, dabbled in things supernormal and occult, and then deliberately made themselves receptive to any and every discarnate spirit without any discrimination. No one living in a great city, with its mixed population of good and evil, leaves all the doors and windows of their house open to admit

any loafer or ruffian who likes to walk in; well, no more does any person of sense leave the door of their mind open for anyone who chooses to come in and take possession. The golden rule is to guard the door of the mind *always*, and no one and nothing can enter unless you permit it. Other people think it is the lower part of a man's ordinary dual personality (for every one has a higher and lower side) that has suddenly overcome the good in him; but that is not very likely either, for if he has lived a refined and decent life for years, he must have conquered these crude and elementary passions, and they would have become distasteful to him. "Dual personality" is a result and natural outcome of previous incarnations, in each of which man suffers from, learns through, and tries to overcome, different failings and vices. We will say if A.," for instance, has reached his fourth spiral (is living for the fourth time on earth); he has therefore four sources which he may tap or draw upon in certain abnormal circumstances, and there are four lines along which his mind can travel back.

The great shock, illness, anesthetics, or conscious

psychic development, or whatever it is that shakes the physical organism, affects his brain and puts his conscious and subconscious mind in touch with each other—"links them up," as it were, for a short or long period as the case may be. The conscious thus taps the subconscious mind, and that holds the knowledge of all previous memories and may "throw back" to any past experience in any previous life. Always remember the subconscious mind of each person is an "information bureau" in which a clear and complete record of *all* experiences in every life of that individual is kept. I will try and make this point clear. Suppose "A.," who is a refined, quiet, peaceable man (in his fourth incarnation), is attacked one night by a burglar, seriously injured in the head, and very ill from the shock; when he recovers he appears to have developed a second personality, for at times, for long or short periods, he is totally different, surly, violent tempered, and vindictive. What has happened is this: his last conscious thought when attacked by the burglar was one of *anger*, the blow on the head rendered him unconscious

with this record on his brain. Unconsciousness means losing cognizance of all physical conditions and surroundings, and people generally only understand the conscious mind up to this point (*i.e.* where it loses touch with physical conditions). As a matter of fact, it is under these conditions only that the conscious mind can get into touch with the subconscious, and this it automatically proceeds to do, for the conscious mind is always working, though not in this case on the physical. Though it is not a very good simile (it is the best I can think of) I might compare the conscious mind to a looking-glass on a swivel; normally it reflects (and records) physical conditions, but abnormally (when the owner is unconscious) the looking-glass is turned and is reflecting the subconscious or spirit-mind, a different phase of existence altogether. To return to "A.," as the last feeling in his conscious mind when it linked up with the subconscious was one of acute anger, it may (if the unconsciousness be deep and prolonged) connect up with and tap the memory of a time (say "A.'s" first incarnation), when he was a violent-tempered and

vindictive individual, and this was more or less his chronic condition. On reawaking to consciousness this feeling would remain, but only for a few moments, unless there were complications, such as injury to the brain, in which case the conscious mind could not properly reassert itself, for the brain is a very delicate, subtle, and complicated machine, and might eventually consign the man to a lunatic asylum. If this condition were understood and treated *immediately*, it might be cured by one of two methods. First, by suggestion—by linking up the conscious and subconscious mind and coaxing that wayward memory back from the conscious to the subconscious mind again without the patient's knowledge; or, in the second place, by telling the patient (if he is a suitable subject) the facts of the case, and getting him to cooperate by "suggestion" himself. The brain is only capable of holding the experiences of this present life; if it were meant to hold the memory of one, two, three, or more previous incarnations it would be made one, two, three, or more times as large. That is why God provided the subconscious mind; it is capable

of holding any amount of experiences and memories without risk of strain, because it belongs to the indestructible realm of spirit, and is what we might call the spiritual equivalent of the physical brain.

THE PREROGATIVE OF SPIRIT

YOU say as it is possible to rake up the evil of the past, you suppose it is equally easy to evoke the good? As a matter of fact it is much easier, for the evil of the past can only be brought back to memory as I told you through unfortunate abnormal physical conditions such as illness or accident, but to evoke the good is natural and right. Through the power of free will all that is beautiful and helpful in your past is at your service, for good is the prerogative of the spirit which soars above evil and can never be touched or hurt. Usually a man advances in each life spiritually, irrespective of his earth conditions, and the link between his spirit and personality becomes stronger, for the longer they are together the greater the influence of the spirit over the personality. These two are connected from the beginning; it is only the body that has changed

each time. The more the spirit progresses on its upward course the more independent the personality becomes of the claims and limitations of the physical. It is rather like a man having to run a complicated machine made up of several different parts which he has to learn to understand and manage severally, but is obliged meanwhile to keep the whole thing going as best he can in a rough-and-ready way; the consequence is that little accidents happen, and occasionally unexpected catastrophes occur. When the two parts, the spirit and personality, have worked for some time together they learn to fit in, work smoothly with, and manage the third part of the machine, the physical body. The personality has every opportunity of being good if it will; the balance is greatly in that direction, for the personality is *never* severed from the spirit and is therefore connected with it for all its time in the spirit-world as well as during the times it is on earth in a physical body. As the spirit is above limitation and can only hold what is good, the personality is always linked up with a reservoir of purity and beauty. The spirit itself is ever and always

linked up with God, as I explained before,¹ and as God continually pours out the power and force which creates, animates, and maintains everything, the spirit can draw upon and learn to use that power to manifest all that it desires of good and beauty, the attributes of God. The spirit learns to interpret God in material ways through the physical; the love of God through kindness, love, affection, mercy, sympathy, for instance; the power of God through helping, arranging, organizing; the beauty of God in the arts, and so forth. The greater the power of the spirit the more it shines through and above the physical, refining and beautifying it. The longer a man tries to do right the easier it becomes, for he links up with the right conditions. The great thing is to *think* what is good and right *always*, and then try and live up to this. Have fine ideals and let them materialize in life and character. It does not matter what work you have to do; do it beautifully, however trivial or mundane it may appear, for on the things you touch you leave some thought-impression. A wound

¹*Claude's Book.*

dressed with a bandage made by a woman who thought beautifully would carry with it what I might call almost the "fragrance" of purity and holiness, and would be more efficacious in consequence. Thought of any kind has a power, it can be constructive or destructive. If you thought, even beautiful thoughts, for years without ever trying to materialize them, your mentality would degenerate, for you would become a recluse or a dreamer and get absentminded or careless. Unless you express thought in a material way it reacts upon the mind in time; this is what accounts often for religious mania. If you are intensely musical, you relieve your mind by materializing the thoughts in sound; if you are intensely emotionally religious, unless you relieve your overcharged brain by practical good work of some kind, the thoughts and emotions react on themselves and unbalance the mind.

PRAYER

YOU want to know why it is, if God is merciful, He does not always answer prayer? He does *always* answer prayer, though it may not be in the particular way expected or desired; but it must be real prayer, an opening of the heart, a linking up with the Spirit, not a mechanical repetition of formal words. This is no use at all, and it would be as effective if you burnt a joss-stick. The prayer is answered in the *best* way for the one who prays—not always perhaps the pleasantest or easiest; but, as every event in a life is but one incident in the whole, it is best in the sense of its effect on the life as a whole, its result on character, the lessons it teaches, the experience it gives, and so forth. Also you must remember earth's limitations make it impossible for all prayers to be answered exactly as desired. For instance, in the case of a child under certain painful conditions of disease, its father, though

loving it dearly, might pray for its death, feeling life would be too hard for it under the circumstances, while its mother might pray fervently for it to live; obviously they could not both have their desires fulfilled. Then two people living next door to each other might pray, one for rain and one for fine weather, and so on. The cases might be multiplied indefinitely. Probably a million people pray in London for contrary and various things to happen at once. God cannot alter His laws to suit individual cases; the universe would soon be in a state of chaos if this were possible. When a man prays he is putting himself in touch with spirit. The man's own spirit is the link between his physical self and God; or I might express it by saying the subconscious mind is the link between the conscious mind and God. I have often impressed upon you that God is impersonal and infinite. He does not therefore answer prayer in a specified or finite way; but He always sends *power* in response to prayer, which is materialized in the way that is best for the one who prays. Praying is formulating prayer in the conscious mind. It is then

projected into the subconscious (spirit-mind) which acts almost as a filter as it were, for when it leaves the spirit-mind it goes on to God as a petition for help, for strength, for guidance in a general way, but not in detail. The knowledge of the detail required remains with the spirit-mind, and when the power is given by God in answer to the prayer, it is used by the spirit-mind in the best way—whatever that way may be. The spirit, being of God, knows what is right and best for the personality, and with the assistance of his guides diverts and uses the power accordingly. I will try and explain. Suppose a man prays for wealth, and really intends to use it to good ends, but his spirit knows his limitations, and that, though his intention is excellent, he is really not capable of using it rightly. The power would in this case be used not in giving him the wealth he asks for, but in building up and strengthening his character. If his spirit knew he was ready and capable of using wealth aright, he would receive his answer in the way he desired, for his spirit, In co-operation with his guides, would put him in the way to get it. I have

explained before how God uses discarnate spirits to do His work, to help, comfort, and direct those on earth. You can call these "God's helpers" what you will—guides, ministering angels, or God's messengers; they materialize the God-power for physical needs and purposes. We might think again of men as "pilots," and their lives as little ships or boats sent out by God from His harbour into the sea of the world. Can't you imagine one sailing merrily along in fine, calm weather, and the pilot "A." sleeping lazily, care-free, and happy, drifting along just where the wind and tide take him, troubling about nothing? Meanwhile the weather changes, a storm rises, he wakes up to find he has almost run upon the rocks which loom through the spray and gloom before him. He is thoroughly frightened, and prays, "O God! take me out of this, move these terrible rocks, still the storm, save me!" He is shaken, helpless, and terrified, for he has become weak in will and body from sloth and indulgence. The rocks do not move, nor is the storm stilled in order to let him relapse into his life of ease again. But the prayer is heard,

the mists part, and he sees a little cleft in the rocks, a tiny creek where he may escape the worst violence of the storm; but to get into that shelter he has to strain every nerve and sinew and muscle, and reach it by his own efforts—and by so doing he saves his life. One can imagine him resentfully thinking out things: "I never did any harm, I just went on my own way, and don't deserve this ill luck," etc. Yes, but he did no good either, so he indirectly did harm through neglect. Other boats passed him, heavily laden, and with weary rowers, and some were old and battered. The men in them begged for a little food, or water, or even only words of sympathy; but "A." had only turned over on his cushions and paid no heed, he therefore required the rough lesson which galvanized him into unwilling activity. You can also imagine another boat with quite another kind of pilot. "B" apparently works hard, he strains at his oars, his face is tired and lined, his eyes bloodshot with his efforts and fatigue; but he makes no headway, and one can imagine his prayer would be something like this: "O God! ease

my burden, lighten my boat. I work, and strain, and pull till I am weary and spent, still I make no headway. It is more than I can bear; lighten my burden, Lord!" His burden is lightened, but not perhaps in the way he expected, for he is shown that when he put out to sea he was provided, as is every one, with the two essential things—a rudder by which to guide his boat, and a chart by which to steer his course. The rudder is his free will, and the chart is Truth. In this case he had used his free will, his rudder, to guide him; but as he never troubled to consult his chart he had chosen his course wrongly, for he was pulling unwittingly against the winds and currents, thus making them his enemies instead of his friends. This being pointed out to him, he learnt to study his chart and altered his course accordingly; and so his unnecessary burden was lightened, though naturally it took him some time to get over his great fatigue and strain. God teaches people to help themselves. If men learn to pray for the right things in the right way, their prayers are answered as they desire. If we pray for an open mind, and for

help to see and realize truth, it will be given us; if we pray for courage to act up to the truth when we see it, it will be given us too; and if we pray that we may be helped to be truly charitable, we shall learn how to become that also—to have understanding, and sympathy, to be helpful and compassionate, as Christ was. If we truly pray for and so obtain these things, we shall steer our life-ships safely into God's most beautiful harbour. Learn and pray to go God's way, for to work in harmony with His laws means honour and safety; but with God's laws against us we can make no headway, for His tides, His currents, His winds are too mighty for us, and we shall break ourselves against them eventually.